

Meeting notes - Allotment Managers meeting 26.09.2018

	Item	Notes	Action
1	Introductions		
	Actions from last minutes	These are covered under agenda items.	
2	Composting toilets – last call	<p>Joseph Mangar reported that there was sufficient funding remaining for 4-5 toilets. Priority will be given to smaller sites, as larger sites will be expected to raise their own funds or make a contribution. Ward Forums are very receptive to applications as they recognise the community value of allotments. Advice regarding Ward Forum applications is available via the EAP.</p> <p>Brent Meadow allotments requested a toilet.</p> <p>Applicants are asked to contact Joseph Mangar in the first instance.</p> <p>The final date for EAP-funded applications is 30th November 2018.</p>	
3	EAP newsletter distribution	<p>The newsletter is an important vehicle for keeping people in touch with what is happening across the borough, e.g. LBE plans, and events at allotment sites.</p> <p>Patrick Williams, the editor of the EAP newsletter, requested articles/ news/ photos on any allotment related topic for publication.</p> <p>PW stated that circulation of the newsletter is a perennial concern. Owing to GDPR legislation the EAP is unable to hold contact details for individual plot holders unless they subscribe themselves via EAP website or direct to PW. PW thus requested that all managers/ associations distribute the newsletter to their tenants via their site email distribution lists. He also requested to be added to site email distribution lists. He found that people responsible for communications changed frequently and he wasn't always kept in the loop.</p> <p>A number of plot holders are still unaware of the EAP and what it does for allotments in Ealing. The people involved in the EAP have a wide range of experience and expertise, and are well placed to provide help and advice such as providing fundraising advice or helping sites with particular issues such as the development threat to Jerome Allotments.</p> <p>A question was asked re whether it was ok to circulate the newsletter to the wider community – this is to be encouraged.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>

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4	Non-cultivation procedures	<p>Chris Welsh reported that the procedures are being tightened in the new version of the rules.</p> <p>Patrick Williams requested that LBE should inform the manager of any appeals against eviction, as the manager may have supplementary information on the background of the case. This was agreed by CW.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed by all that the most appropriate time for beginning the non-cultivation process was in the spring.</p> <p>Tenants were still given a 3 week notice period for evictions – no warning period was given for any other type of eviction.</p>	LBE
5	Rent Collection	<p>Issues had been reported last year with some tenants not receiving letters (noting that Local Associations are responsible for sending their own letters out).</p> <p>This was due to issues with the Council's system, which were hopefully resolved for this year.</p> <p>Responding to a question re the best time to send the rents to the Council, CW stated that the end of Nov was preferred, but that any time up to the end of Jan would be ideal.</p> <p>It was noted that there is a planned rent increase of 3% for 2019-20. This is part of a wider review in the borough, and reflects the increased costs e.g. utilities and repairs. It should be noted that other leisure charges will increase by 5%.</p> <p><i>Membership subscriptions:</i> it was noted that several Local Associations collect subscriptions, and several are planning to. This is a useful way of covering the annual running costs, and of giving tenants a chance to contribute something. It was advised that ideally a minimum of 6 months' notice should be given.</p>	All
6	LBE cash office	CW announced that the Council's Cash Office was closing with effect from 1 st Oct 2018. Rents could no longer be paid in cash at the Council offices.	

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7	Raised beds	<p>A number of sites, including Ascott, were trialling renting out raised beds. Mike Bunyan (Jubilee Gardens) had worked out that 8-10 beds would fit into a 5 pole plot.</p> <p>There were a number of reasons for installing them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some areas such as Acton have a huge demand for plots but limited availability – raised beds helped to satisfy demand; • Ascott were using them for long-standing plot holders who could no longer manage a whole plot but wished to retain the social advantages of allotments; • Others were using them to enable new gardeners to learn the required skills before taking on a larger plot. <p>Ascott had obtained Ward Forum funding to finance theirs.</p> <p>CW stated that the Parks dept often had soil available which could be provided to fill the raised beds.</p> <p>It was agreed that the subject would be discussed at the next EAP meeting in November, with the intention of agreeing a set of guidelines re sizes, rental amounts, materials and maintenance.</p> <p>Recommendations would be published in the winter EAP newsletter.</p>	EAP
8	LBE winter work list	<p>The works list for winter 2018/19 is complete and the budget is fully committed.</p> <p>Additional requests will be considered and added to future planning – please send as soon as possible.</p>	All
9	Updating of Allotment Rules	<p>LBE have worked with members of the EAP committee to review the rules of tenancy. Copies will be sent out to managers in the next few days.</p> <p>The rules section had been moved to the front of the document, before the Health and Safety section.</p> <p>Existing rules will still apply, but have been updated for clarity and to aid managers.</p>	LBE

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10	Clarification of rules for keeping livestock and bees	<p>LBE are to send out a letter to managers asking them to check on chickens/ other livestock – this would give managers authority to do so.</p> <p>It would not normally be appropriate for a whole plot to be converted to a chicken run (though managers' discretion applied).</p> <p>It was confirmed that cockerels are definitely not allowed due to the nuisance caused to neighbours.</p> <p>Ealing Beekeepers Association had guidelines re the optimum density of hives. Beekeepers are expected to be a member of a local beekeeping association.</p>	LBE
11	Colony	<p>An upgrade was expected soon which would make it easier to use.</p> <p>Following a query, David would ask for password changes to be controlled by the user, rather than the administrator.</p>	
12	Rubbish Clearance	<p>A number of issues with the existing contractor, Amey, were noted. The contract was due to expire in 2020, and allotments would be a low priority until then.</p> <p>LBE were looking at other contractors in the interim. A new asbestos removal contractor has been appointed following issues with the previous one.</p> <p>CW stated that managers/ associations could be reimbursed via rent collections for hiring skips or using a registered waste removal firm, subject to asking permission first.</p> <p>Note: this is only for the purpose of re-letting of plots and will not be a rubbish collection service. Tenants are to dispose of their own waste appropriately.</p>	
13	Bonfires	<p>CW reported that bonfire rules had been updated.</p> <p>LBE were preparing permanent signs to be displayed at all sites to make the guidelines clear.</p> <p>Bonfires had been banned completely from some sites due to recurrent issues and complaints from neighbours.</p>	LBE
14	GDPR guidance	Managers were asked to use the rent collection as an opportunity to remind/ seek tenants' permission to use their email addresses for communication purposes.	ALL

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15	AOB	The use of solar pumps to fill water butts from water tanks would be at the managers' discretion.	
	Next Meeting	April 2019 (Date TBC)	