

## **Notes of a Meeting with LBM Allotment Societies on Thursday 23 June 2011 held at Paddock Allotment**

### **PRESENT:**

#### **Allotment Society Members**

Jean & Richard Hancock – The Paddocks  
Annemarie Hedges – Havelock Road  
Sue & Ian Burgin – Havelock Road  
Jessica Lawrence – Cannizaro  
Jocelyn Gladwyn – Cannizaro  
Mike Gannaway – Brooklands  
Fred Taylor – Cottenham Park  
Bill Bailey – Cottenham Park  
Hazel Norman – Tamworth Farm  
Kathleen Stevens – Tamworth Farm  
Emma Townsend – Tamworth Farm  
Claire Shackleton – Western Road  
Bev Stansfield – New Barnes Allotments  
John Hitchman – New Barnes  
B. Fisher –  
Maire Denny – Thurleston Avenue  
Caroline Trumper – Martin Way  
Phil Neale – Martin Way  
Peter Obermuller – George Hill  
Howard Watson – George Hill

Doug Napier – Greenspaces Manager, London Borough of Merton – minute taker.

### **APOLOGIES:**

Danny Lovelock – Allotments Manager  
Francis McParland – Leisure & Culture Support Manager

- DN summarised the context and background to the allotments transformation project for the benefit of new attendees.
- There was a discussion around the make-up of the Gold, Silver and Bronze service offers. The current Council support for The Paddock was queried. Confirmed that Council currently supplies skips but not manure.
- There was a discussion around insurance matters and the relative responsibilities of the society/association and the Council. In DN's view day-to-day operational business would generally be the responsibility of the local society to insure with the Council being responsible for significant infrastructure.
- There was a discussion on the issue of compulsory membership of the society/association as this has generated some conflicts in the consultation process

so far. On the whole reps agree that all tenants should be members of their relevant local society but anticipate some resistance. It was generally felt that this would be a problem mainly with some existing tenants and much less so for new tenants. Members could simply exercise their right not to participate in allotment business and in effect pass responsibility to their elected/nominated officers; the only real issue other than that would be one of membership subscriptions and, of course, these could be a very nominal sum or even nil if the society so chose.

- Some members expressed continuing concerns in relation to future fees and charges, especially in relation to the imminent water levy and what the fee increases might be for self-managed sites.
- The disposal of waste and fly tipping was again raised as an issue. It was emphasised that under a self-management model tenants would be more inclined and empowered to take individual action to prevent abuses.
- Concern was expressed about the liability that might be imposed upon individual officers/committee member should the societies/associations encounter financial difficulties under the self-management model. CT suggested in general terms how this might be tackled and provided details of some relevant internet sites that provided further useful details in this respect. These were:

<http://www.allotments4all.co.uk/smf/index.php/topic,66470.0.html>

The second link is to the appropriate page on the FSA website containing the registration document, prices and all the information regarding to go about setting up as an Industrial Provident Society.

[http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pages/doing/small\\_firms/msr/societies/index.shtml](http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pages/doing/small_firms/msr/societies/index.shtml)

- The allotment representatives indicated their current or likely position in relation to the current options, recognising that some have not yet held a meeting/AGM to confirm the situation and that the Cottenham Park allotment site is keen to hold a ballot of all of its tenants very soon.

Site	Self Manage YES or NO	Service Standard
Brooklands	No	Gold
Cannizaro	No	Gold
Cottenham Park	No	Gold
Durnsford Road	No	Gold
Eastfields	No	Not indicated
Effra Road	No	Not indicated
Eveline	Unknown but unlikely	No communications

Havelock	No	Gold
Martin Way	Unknown	
New Barnes	No	Gold
Phipps Bridge	Unknown	
Tamworth Farm	No	Silver/Bronze
Thurlston	No	Not indicated
Western	Yes	

- DN was asked to consider how the allotment reps might be updated on the situation on “live” Notices to Quit.
- There was a discussion around the Council’s terms in relation to the time period for tenants to rectify problems relating to non-cultivation. There was unanimous agreement within the group that these should be formally reduced to 2 months.
- It was agreed that the next meeting of the steering group should occur at the end of July by which time most of the allotment sites should have firmed up their preferences as the Council would like to conclude this matter in time for the annual allotment billing time in order to advise all tenants of the forward plan and future fees.