

NOTES ALLOTMENT SITE SECRETARIES MEETING

**TUESDAY 3RD MARCH 2015
7 PM, THE LAURIES CENTRE**

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Present: Parks and Countryside Team, Wirral Council

Mary Worrall, Senior Manager
Anthony Bestwick, Operations Manager
Dave Lowe, Technical Support
Chris Osborne, Graduate Officer

Site Secretaries

Ann Smith, Ashton Park
Dave McCann, Beaconsfield Road
John McCulloch, Belvidere Road
John Skillen, Boundary Road
Hilary Calkin, Buckingham Road
Karen Leason, Carlett Park
Joyce Sumner, Dawson
Denise Argent, Earlston Gardens
Ronald Jones, Fairview Road
Liz Heydon, Fairview Road
Ken Dowden, Grange Hill
Ken Hobbs, Hill Road
Charlie Boarer, Love Lane
Mike Griffiths, Manor Drive
Kevin Gilbert, Molyneux
Richard Sillitoe, Newton Park
Peter Ryan, Ormonde
Joy Hogg, Plymyard
Elizabeth McCarroll, Salacre lane
Rose Chandler, Sandringham Avenue
Marie Veron, Sumner Road
John Rigby, Teehey Lane
Peter McLoughlin, Thornton
Gary Williams, Tollemache
Tony Niblock, Upton Road
Ann Horrocks, Wingate

Apologies: Elizabeth Rendell, Bebington Road
Richard Littler, Forwood Road
Emma Edwards, Mountwood

NOTES OF LAST MEETING

Mary Worrall is currently taking the lead on Allotment issues, with assistance from Anthony Bestwick who is being provided with additional support from Kerry Evans and Dave Lowe. Chris Osborne, a Graduate Officer is currently on placement from Corporate and is also supporting on allotment issues.

ALLOTMENTS SOFTWARE UPDATE

The Council's current software systems for dealing with Allotments are outdated, and will not be able to be used on windows 7 computers (currently being rolled out across the Council). In view of this, it has been decided that the Allotments database needs to be updated to a more modern system which is capable of running on the new computers.

Currently, this exercise is in the process of "soft-market testing," which involves researching and analysing software packages in order to develop a suitable specification for a replacement for the existing system.

It was acknowledged by all in attendance that this was a necessary step.

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Allotments Strategy is now scheduled to be completed in June. Questions were raised regarding the strategy and whether it applies to self-managed sites. This was confirmed as self-managed sites still hold a lease agreement with the Council for the land.

FINANCIAL REPORT AND WORKS PROGRAMME

There have been no new significant spends from the Allotments budget, and there is approximately £30k remaining. A number of work tasks on different sites have been identified, and it was requested from the site secretaries for any further suggestions they may have as to where further works could occur.

A works programme has been issued to accompany this note (see Appendix A).

WAITING LISTS UPDATE

Dave Lowe is currently working through the waiting lists and contacting individuals to gauge the continued interest in a plot. Several updated waiting lists were handed to the relevant secretaries; however others are still in process, with those on the waiting list having been given a deadline

to respond to. The remaining updated lists are to be sent out during March 2015.

The issue of rent non-payments was also raised, and will be checked. A full tenancy list was also requested once this action has been completed.

RESTRUCTURE UPDATE

The restructure consultation feedback is being considered by Mark Smith (Head of Environment and Regulation). A finalised structure decision is expected by the end of March 2015.

AOB

Question was asked about skips. It had been previously decided that the use of skips was to be removed, and that societies were to encourage plot holders to sort out the removal of their own waste. Issue was raised regarding this, mentioning that some plots are too difficult to clear without skips due to the amount of waste left on them. It was also agreed that the Council/Site secretaries will conduct an inspection of plots following their vacation, and instruct prior owner to clear it should it be in a poor state.

The dates for the Allotment competition were announced with judgement taking place from Tuesday 14th July – Friday 17th July. Posters will be sent out prior to these dates and should be displayed on site notice boards. Request made for a more precise time as to when the judges will arrive on site.

Wirral Flower and Veg. Show 10th Anniversary to take place on 9th August. All produce must be in by 8th August. Forms will be online soon.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Suggested Date: Tuesday 2nd June, Location TBC