

Bosden Farm Allotments Association - Meeting Minutes – Wednesday 31st May 2017 – The Harvester
– 7.15pm

Present:-

Andy Humphrey (AH)

Claire Read (CR)

John Irwin – National Allotments Society (JI)

Mark Shaw (MS)

Ian Gardiner (IG)

Gareth Mincherton (GM)

Faye Nightall (FN)

Paul Butterworth (PB)

Apologies:-

Helen Savage

Paul McIntyre

William Law

Amanda Thorley

- 1) Welcome to new members.
Faye Nightall, Paul Butterworth and Gareth Mincherton have recently joined the waiting list. FN asked about the size of the plots. MS explained that the plots were half plots, around 150 sq yards. There was discussion regarding the costs of water. MS expressed that at present, they don't currently pay for water on their sites – Dial Park and Brinnington.

- 2) Visit from John Irwin – The National Allotments Association
We discussed with John the progress, or lack of progress with our application. We explained that the project has been stuck at the point of trying to obtain consent from The Education Funding Agency for 'disposal' of the land; for some time. CR informed that the latest update from Laura Booth was that she had heard from the Executive Member that he has been chasing it up with the Education Funding Agency to try to get an answer. MS expressed that Stockport Allotments are due to have a meeting with Ian Walmsley from Greenspace Team and they will try to push this forward with him. JI expressed that many processes stop

around Election time. CR expressed that we have been at this point for a considerable amount of time. JI advised that we contact Paul Edgeworth (Property Services at the Council) on a monthly basis and regularly engage with the Councillors.

JI felt that the situation was mainly positive and felt that the Council would have said if they were not willing for this to happen.

JI expressed the importance of obtaining a long lease – around 25 years in order to get funding. However, he did also suggest that if we are offered a five year lease initially, to take this. MS informed that Allotments Stockport are currently trying to negotiate a 25 year lease around all allotment sites. We could start with a smaller lease and build up to a longer lease when all up and running.

GM asked about the approximate cost of a plot. MS informed that in Stockport, a Half Plot, rent, insurance, membership of NSALG, Allotments Stockport and the Association costs in total - £25 per year.

JI advised that costs in Tameside were significantly higher, around £138 (including £20 water and £10 Membership).

FN asked about grants and how these would be spent. MS explained that Stockport Council do little to help run a site and Allotments Stockport are trying to get all members to manage all sites.

GM asked about opposition and the issues previously raised regarding aesthetics and security were discussed.

We discussed with JI regarding support from The National Allotments Society in the set up of the site once approved. JI expressed that the first point will be to negotiate the lease, of which we must have advice from The National Allotments Society before anything is signed. Once the lease is negotiated, The National Allotments Society Planning scheme can support with the structure.

FN asked what can be grown on the site and asked about flowers. MS informed that some sites have a policy for 10% flowers on a site. The Flowery Fields site grows flowers along the paths and this looks very good.

Storage was discussed. MS expressed that nothing of value should be left on site. MS expressed that a Communal Building would be useful for when it rains and a container to store tools etc.

Greenhouses and sheds are usually negotiated with the Council on the lease. Greenhouses can attract vandalism and take a lot of looking after, requiring watering twice a day in warm periods.

GM asked with regard to chickens. JI expressed that they would most likely not be allowed due to the close proximity to houses. MS and GM expressed an interest in Bees. MS said the rules regarding bees are usually 4 per plot but should really be 4 per site as too many would

not help the bees due to too high a population – there is a need to be a member of The National Bee Keeping Association.

GM asked about electricity. MS expressed that there wouldn't be unless installed solar panels.

FN asked regarding fruit trees. JI informed that fruit trees must be on dwarf stock as there can be shading problems. Suggestions that there could be Communal trees in one area due to the site being small.

Involving the Community was discussed and the opportunity for a plot that is accessible or a charitable organisation could use.

FN asked how many sites are organic. MS expressed that there are not many sites that are wholly organic and this cannot be enforced. If neighbouring plots use weed killers, this will affect your plot.

FN asked about the waiting list for our plot. CR expressed that this is currently at 39. MS expressed that we need to be clear about how the waiting list will work. CR expressed that this has always been in chronological order. Most sites have a three month probationary period and plot holders need to be clear that there is a lot of work involved. We need to ensure that all people in Stockport can access the waiting list. Everyone needs to have a copy of the rules which need to be clear, concise, given to everyone and signed for.

GM asked what a realistic budget is to set up a site. JI expressed that we need to try to get as much as we can. There are options to apply for Funding, for example, to The National Lottery. We may need £50k minimum to get up and running.

3) Previous Meeting Minutes and further updates

CR discussed the advertising and publicity we have given to the proposal. JI expressed that as we now have almost double on the waiting list that we have plots, we don't need to advertise further and need to concentrate on obtaining permission for the site.

4) Action plan of Tasks

CR to contact Paul Edgeworth at the Council on a monthly basis for an update regarding the EFA and to try to push this forward.

MS and IG to meet with Ian Walmsley to try to also progress the application.

The Association is to keep in regular contact with the Councillors.

5) Any other business

Next meeting date: To be confirmed – Not a Wednesday