

Notes on the meeting between STAA and ECC Allotments Dept.

5.12.24

Present: Cat Chambers, Nick Mead, Amanda Ziff, John Butler, Becky Wells

Agenda:

1:An Agreement between ECC & STAA re mutually supporting each other regarding the maintenance of vacant plots and the clearing of very over-grown and/or rubbish-filled plots e.g Plots 139B and 111 at Cowick Lane.

In principle this is a strong possibility. Becky will resend the Agreement Proposal document to Cat, Nick and Amanda. If Cat approves it she will send it to the Legal Team for their approval. They will also need a copy of the STAA insurance. A decision should have been made by the end of the financial year (end of March)

2:The maintenance of tracks and toilets.

The door on the composting loo at Cowick Lane will be fixed as a matter of urgency. Nick has come to an arrangement with the contractors at Flowerpot Fields to have their waste hard-core but this may be some time. Meanwhile, Cat suggested buying some stone to fill in pot-holes on the flat areas of the tracks. Becky will share a proposal for a more permanent solution to the sloping areas of Cowick Lane. It may well be cost-effective and sustainable rather than endless short-term measures.

3:The Forum.

Despite 4 of the delegates from STAA not having received them, the Minutes for the last Forum meeting were sent out some weeks ago. Amanda will resend to John Butler. A pre-forum meeting was thought to be useful and Cat would see what room was available (Rennes Room had been used for the Forum in the past) for an evening meeting, to allow all tenants to attend. The idea would be discussed at the next Forum meeting on 6 February 2025 and, if approved would be taken forward.

4:The Bee-keeping Agreement.

Becky will forward Glendra Read's email containing two links to Bee Agreements used by other local authorities.

5: A possible probationary period for new tenants.

This was discussed at some length and in some detail with general agreement with the idea. It was thought that it could be linked with a deposit scheme for new tenants.

6: Let & Check volunteers taking photos of plots at the time of letting.

The photos Amanda takes as part of her pre-eviction visit would be used as a rule. If a tenant relinquished a plot, photos would be taken to show that it was being left in a fit state. STAA Committee would draw up a Let and Check process, applicable to all STAA sites and including photos to illustrate non-cultivation. This should standardise the process.

AOB: STAA tenants would be the eyes on site for ECC Allotments Department and report ECC operatives who spend time in the van, scrolling on phones or not completing a task. TBC after discussion at STAA committee meeting.

Where possible, Nick will warn of a maintenance visit so that a tenant on site can see that it was facilitated. TBC