Notes of meeting of the Greening Wingrove Board

23rd April 2024

Present: Katy Sillem, Jo Ellis, Alistair Ford, Mark Copsey, Stuart Muir

Apologies were received from Don Morrison.

KS tabled a short paper which she had written in response to a discussion following the AGM on the previous Saturday. There had been a conflict over the use of space in the garden and she felt that this highlighted issues that needed to be resolved. (Paper to be circulated.)

There was a discussion over board meeting locations and attendance. It was agreed that the ideal location would be a neutral space, safe to get to, with internet access.

It was noted that some Directors haven’t attended meetings for some time – which could be a reason for removing them.

MC argued that some members don’t understand liabilities as well as responsibilities. Training would be a good idea.

KS asked if there was a membership list. AF had a version of a membership list, which he circulated. According to the Constitution all members have to be agreed by the Board.

Complaints process: MC noted that a complaint was made last year, but wasn’t dealt with due to the lack of a complaints process. Agreed – a complaints procedure to be drafted.

Use of space: the conflict which sparked this meeting centred around the potential relocation of the raised beds. MC: moving the beds was agreed in principle but not in detail. Ben Page is supposed to be drawing up a new layout for the BG. Changes to the layout shouldn’t be made until this is agreed.

Agreed: our line should be that a new layout is being developed and that no changes will be made until this is agreed. Poster to this effect should be put up in the BG, giving people the opportunity to participate in the process.

Decision-making process: need to be clear how decisions are made. The BG is at present the fiefdom of a couple of people.

General meetings: KS: there should be general meetings at which all members can contribute

Control of social media: MP has got access and has given the GW one to Dave Webb, but the BG one linked to his personal FB account which makes it difficult for anyone else to use it

Secondary organisations: there are several organisations which use the BG regularly: the gardening group, yoga group, art group, Northern Slice and Bonsai Billabong. There’s no clarity over who does what – rights and responsibilities. Decisions have been taken without Board approval (eg the positioning of the stage) and in some cases the garden has been left untidy or dangerous (eg with an axe left next to the pizza oven)

AF: the BG is the responsibility of GW, therefore secondary organisations’ activities need to be brought to us

KS: there needs to be a discussion with each group about what they want from the BG, and what rules need to be followed in return. The carrot is the use of the space.

There could be a standard agreement for all groups using the space, plus an extended one for groups (like NS and BB) who use it a lot.

MC: the problem is that we’re not allowed to sub-let. Not clear whether occasional bookings are sub-letting.

Discussions with Urban Green re renting the space have taken place; UG want to change the letting agreement to one that permits sub-letting, but haven’t got back to us about this.

MC: there needs to be a plan about how the garden is maintained. There has been an unwritten agreement that NS manage the BG in lieu of rent. MC tried to draft up an agreement with MP, but MP changed his mind about it.

People’s Gardening group: use of the beds was never agreed as such. They used to be the responsibility of the Time Exchange. When this folded, the gardeners simply carried on. KS has spoken to them and gained some knowledge of their priorities.

Bonsai Billabong: never actually given permission to move in. COC was evicted from his allotment and moved in to the BG instead. There needs to be limits set on his activities

Current conflict between all users.

KS was asked to put herself forward as Chair, and agreed.

Agreed: the next meeting should contain discussion of:

* Election of Chair, with 10-minute presentations from candidates.
* Complaints procedure (draft to be tabled)
* Model agreement for use of the Bike Garden – to be tabled
* Operating procedures, including: remodelling of the garden; bookings; control of social media.
* General meetings.

Date and time of next meeting: 7.30, Tuesday 7th May.