

## **Member Communications: BAF June 2015 workshop notes**

### Engagement

- Get new joiners to help out from the start so they meet others and get to understand allotment issues
- More walking around the site, talking to people
- Draw people in; attract their attention and engage their interest
- Explain issues in a clear accessible manner
- If a site is split you can use field or path reps
- Have a welcoming atmosphere at the trading hut; a smile, tea/ coffee, chairs
- Contact people who are neighbours to neglected plots; to keep an eye on whether a plot-holder is ill
- Encourage working parties to contribute to communal work, e.g. mowing paths
- Have more social events

### Written communications

- Written communications are sometimes ignored; talking to people is often more effective
- But at times written communications are necessary, e.g. for expulsions
- Newsletters can be helpful to advise members of committee decisions
- Can have 'tips of the month' in regular newsletters
- Website could be useful to allow more members to express their views
- Some sites have language problems, when plot-holders can't use English well
- Short, simple messages are more likely to be read, e.g. short messages on a covered blackboard near a site entrance
- One site uses plastic pockets (like used for parking penalty notices) to stick plot-holder messages to sheds
- One site uses member surveys to get input on important matters, e.g. site services
- One site uses a blog for news and advice

### Difficult messages – discipline and enforcement

- Use a non-adversarial tone; explain the issue and why it's important; make sure you are very clear on what you want to be different
- Ensure policies are clear and communicated effectively to start with; members don't necessarily read policies/ tenancy agreements
- Try to find out the cause of the bad behaviour; is there a personal problem?
- Some people become regular defaulters; keep records so you build up evidence
- Have clear consequences for very bad behaviour
- Use descriptions or photos of what is/ isn't acceptable behaviour
- Language an issue? Can one of their family members help them communicate?