

Bidford On Avon Allotment Association

Association Annual General Meeting 23rd October 2023
held at The Parish Room, Bramley Way, Bidford-on-Avon

Committee members present: Kirsty Bax (Treasurer), Jackie Williams (Secretary)

Elisabeth Uggerlose (Clerk to Parish Council)

Welcome

The meeting was opened at 19:03, with members and guests welcomed and thanked for attending.

Apologies

Committee apologies received from April Webb, Wayne Gibson and Paul Hulbert. Three member apologies received prior to the meeting, with five apologies via attending members.

In the absence of the Chair, the Treasurer took charge of the meeting.

Chair's Report

This had been circulated by the Chair, April Webb in advance of the meeting and was read out by Kirsty.

This year has been a mixed year both in growing terms and personally. The growing season has had its triumphs along with its tribulations, with the weather significantly impacting our efforts and outcomes. Future projections from the Centre of Hydrology and the Met Office suggest during forthcoming summers, the number of dry days will increase, with fewer but heavier rainfalls in between. The impacts of climate change cannot be ignored, and we as a site must become ever more environmentally focused regarding water storage, use and how we manage our plots for environmental integrity and health to enable continued growing success.

At last year's AGM several concerns and ideas were highlighted, and I am pleased to say many of these have gained traction and lively debate; however, there is still much work to be done in the long term. Such topics include continued research into the realities of an onsite toilet and extension of mains water availability to certain areas. As you can appreciate, there are always more elements to consider than first anticipated as research deepens and legalities are revealed.

With the dark cloud of break-ins and thefts, a notable success is the recent installation of solar-powered CCTV. Initially, one 360-degree camera has been installed to trial the system, positioned on the main entrance tracks; however, there are plans to extend the CCTV to cover other critical areas in the coming months if finances allow.

You may remember in March 2023; we asked plot holders to complete a 'plot holders questionnaire' to better understand the Bidford Allotments Community, our current land use

practices and interest in proposed activities and changes on the site. A full breakdown of the results will be available at the AGM for all plot holders to view. However, for those unable to attend, this is also attached to this report for your perusal. With autumn in full swing, I will take this opportunity to look forward and hope the 2024 growing season brings you closer to nature on your plots and that we continue to evolve and work with the challenges we face.

Comments: The meeting was advised of an amendment to the report. At the 2nd October meeting it was agreed the initial siting of the pole was not acceptable and agreed other arrangements would be made in consultation with Parish Council. Further, the camera could not be commissioned until the process of registration had been completed. Unfortunately, there seemed to be a miscommunication and the camera was erected, however this will be dealt with on an urgent basis. Kirsty advised she had viewed images from the camera and it is very clear. Hopefully the cameras will prove effective in dealing with thefts and anti-social behaviour around the area.

The questionnaire report results mentioned in the report are available to view on the side table.

Treasurer's Report:

Current Balance (at 23/10/23): £3063.17
Unpresented Cheques: £88.33
Rent due to PC (Oct23-Mar24): £710.97
Bank compensation from account setup: £350
Deposits returned 2023: £12.50 (cheque unpresented currently)
Deposits retained 2023: £12.50
Deposits currently held: £1375
Deposit new since Oct22: £425
Allotment costs since October22: £31 (being renewal of National Allotment Society membership)

When the first CCTV equipment was approved by Parish Council, funding approved for a second camera if the trial proves successful.

The majority of rents due 1st October 2023 have been paid, with a small number outstanding. Through NSALG the members have access to discounted purchases from the Kings Seeds catalogue and available on the side table.

Allocation Report

There are ten people on the waiting list.
There are a number of plots to be offered.

Security

Cemetery gate – concerns were voiced that is not always being locked and Secretary confirmed this has recently been discussed with PC Clerk. Elisabeth advised this has been discussed with the contractor who assures her it is locked every night. Committee will continue to liaise with Elisabeth on this matter.

Bonfires

This agenda item was requested by a member of the Association. The concern is fires creating a nuisance to other plotholders and the village in general. The general feeling is that whilst fires cannot be stopped, there is a need for consideration of the weather conditions and what is being burnt to not cause a nuisance to our neighbours on and off the allotments. Composting should /also be encouraged as all green waste should be re-introduced to the land rather than removed.

Community Plot

Malcolm Dewsbury asked if the plot is 'working' and Sarah Griffiths queried it's purpose.

Kirsty advised the plot has been tidied and the shed has been moved onto the patio area in preparation for making use of it. The idea of the community plot has been well received in feedback on the questionnaire, with members interested in a variety of activities from plant/seed swaps and barbecues to stocks of manure and woodchip. The outgoing Committee also felt this would be good base for educational sessions.

A lottery grant was applied for to develop the space, however this was unsuccessful due to insufficient community involvement being shown. An application can be sent in again when the plot has developed more and its purpose is better understood. Sarah Griffiths said she has seen lottery funding in place on other sites where there is no external community involvement so wondered if we'd applied for a particular type of grant Kirsty (who had dealt with the application) felt Community in its wider context is maybe something lottery are focussing on at the moment.

Jackie suggested a collection point could be made for surplus harvest, which could then be taken to the Community Fridge being set up in the village by the Parish Council, although she hadn't yet put the idea to committee nor the PC. Malcolm Dewsbury said he delivers for foodbanks and they have begun taking fruit and vegetables, so another opportunity to avoid waste by sharing excess harvest with the wider community.

The Your Village Your Voice group is looking to set up a 'Men's Shed' and Jackie suggested this group could potentially get involved in the maintaining the community plot. Philip Harling said he has seen community plots be successful, but it needs a working group to keep it going, rather than being left to the committee.

The idea to put a shipping container on the plot for storage was discussed. At Welford tenants have the option to rent space inside to store their tools. This idea will be noted for consideration as the plan develops.

AOB:

The water taps were discussed as it is felt something more than remedial repair work is needed to some. The Secretary advised the water taps fall under the remit of the Parish Council, however the Committee have at times carried out repairs in order to avoid delays. Jackie suggested ploholders should be encouraged to harvest rainwater, which can be done from a simple shelter of legs and roof if no shed is available. Maybe this is something for ploholders to consider collaborating on near their plots, especially as dividing plots has left some cut-off from tap access.

Due to work commitments the committee have less time to prepare plots for letting, At the October meeting the committee agreed to stop clearing plots to bare earth, rather to offer plots as they are. The thought behind this move is to not be giving a false view of how the ground will look if not kept tidy. Plots wouldn't be offered with rubbish on them, or very high in weeds, but in a state to show the reality of allotmenting and any weeds of particular note on a plot can be pointed out. Jackie asked if anyone had any objections or thoughts on this decision and it was generally agreed as a realistic way to move forward.

It was highlighted the webpage does not have a copy of the Constitution. The Secretary advised she had noticed this herself today and has sent a copy for upload.

New Committee

Nomination forms have been received as follows:

April Webb	Proposed: Jackie Williams	Seconded: Sarah Griffiths
Jackie Williams	Proposed: April Webb	Seconded: Jackie Williams

From the floor nominations

Philip Harling	Proposed: Kirsty Bax	Seconded: Sarah Griffiths
Kirsty Bax	Proposed: Jackie Williams	Seconded: Malcolm Smith
Paul Hulbert	Proposed: Kirsty Bax	Seconded: Malcolm Dewsbury

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 20:17