

Bath & North East Somerset Allotments Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

William Jay room, United Reformed Church Halls, Grove Street, Bath BA2 6PJ

Monday, 23rd October 2017, 7pm

Attendees: 59 people attended

Members:

Lucy Ashley	Erica Draisey	Pauline Magrath
John Ashley	David Edwards	Judy Murray
Tim Baines	Judy Enticknap	Daniel Peel
Andrew Baker	Grenville Gore-Langton	David Pole
Annie Beardsley	John Gregory	Stella Pole
Simon Burrows	David Haigh	Marion Potter
Melvyn Caldwell	Alison Haley	Mike Purcell
Jane Callan	Maria Humphries	Evren Sener
Jan Chapman	Les Hynes	Hilary Sheppard
Brian Chappill	Gill Jacklin	Michael Stanley
Sue Clinick	Stephen Jones	Jane Thomason
Jackie Cosgrave	Kim Jones	Caroline Thompson
Martin Coulson	Sue Kendall	Barbara Walker
Diana Cray	Tim Kingham	Ron White
Peter Cray	Janet Olechno	Jacky Wilkinson
Madeline Dossor	Anne Love	Virginia Williamson
Philip Dossor	Jon Lucas	Helen Woodley
Sharon Dowding	Nick Madden	
Jenny Dixon	Pat Madden	

Non members:

Judith Banks - B&NES Allotments Department

Amanda and Darren Stevens, Ros Thomson - prospective new members

(1) Apologies:

Received from : Stephanie Lockhart, Christopher Walters, Anna Rutherford, Kate Mills, Vernon Herridge

(2) Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 24th October 2016.

Minutes approved.

Proposer Anne Love, seconder Judith Jordan.

Carried unanimously.

(3) Matters Arising from 2016 AGM minutes, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

John Gregory (Ring Common) raised the point re % of plot that could be taken by flowers / non edible. Virginia Williamson confirmed this was set at 25%.

John Gregory then raised a further question regarding a new category of member 'Leisure Gardener' and if the same %s applied. *Confirmation of this point is that the Allotment Association has a category of Leisure Gardener that is for gardeners who do not have an allotment and for which there is no regulation.*

(4) Officers' Reports: Introduction from the Chairman (i) Treasurer (ii) Membership Secretary (iii) Trading Hut (iv) Planning

In the absence of a Chairman Maria Humphries gave an overview of key points from the year noting that again it had been a good year with a number of positives but also a number of challenges:-

- **Membership** - it was re-iterated that the more membership the Allotment Association has the more weight it has with the Council and so to encourage our fellow tenants to join. A main success this year has been the implementation of membership software which will help to streamline the membership process. Unfortunately Sharon has decided it is time to step down, Maria thanked Sharon for her support of the Association over the years and that the Association looks forward to this support continuing as Sharon is standing as joint site representative for Claremont. The opportunity will be taken to re-structure the Officer roles with a proposal to combine Treasurer & Membership secretary, a model that is successful in other similar organisations.
- **Association income** - the Associations funds are healthy and again the Association will not be increasing membership fees this year.
- **Site representatives & officers**
 - the Association has welcomed the following new site representatives this year:-
 - Sharon Dowding - joint site representative for Claremont
 - Hillary Sheppard & Ron White - joint site representatives for Corston View taking over from Kim & Stephen Jones
 - Anne Love & Jim Lee - joint site representatives for Lower Common East taking over from Julian Hardenberg
 - Kerry Rogers - Moorfields

- the Association has decided that existing site representatives / officers would 'adopt' sites without site representatives although they are not tenants of that site:-
 - Lucy Ashley - Brookfield Park
 - Virginia Williamson - Lyncombe Vale
 - Maria Humphries & Andrew Baker - King Georges Road
- the following site representatives have stepped down during this year and the Association thanks them for their support:-
 - Stephanie Lockhart - Larkhall
 - Pauline Magrath - Lower Common West
 - Julian Hardenberg - Lower Common East
 - Jackie Miller - Bloomfield Road
 - Steve Cross - Canal Gardens
- the Association welcomes Jenny Dixon who has taken on the role of Publicity and has already injected some new life into the Association newsletters
- **Trading Hut** - noted that Tim has decided it is time to reduce his Trading Hut activities.
- **Events** - again the Association were pleased to welcome Mikron Theatre to Bloomfield for an entertaining afternoon and the Showcase Event although financially positive needs to be found a better venue to increase footfall.
- **The Council** - in last years AGM an improved relationship was noted and the Association are pleased to report that with Mark Cassidy now in place as Head of Parks this relationship continues to improve. The last sub forum was especially positive with agreement of where the Association can support the Council. It was noted that the Association stands by their commitment to not go down the self managed route until it is clear what this means but that due to the continual budget cuts there is a need to be realistic about the amount of non essential maintenance that the Council can do - to this end the Association has agreed to support noticeboard maintenance and to work with the council to address the management of vacant plots. There are though a few less positive areas which the Association continue to work with the Council to improve, namely:-
 - the ongoing debate around the 'More Plots' funding (covered by Virginia Williamson as part of the Planning update)
 - the increased administration and cost for events which caused us to cancel our Produce Show at short notice - a topic that effects all small events some of which have no income and raise money for Charity.
 - the change in Council allotment approach to plot inspections and in the personnel performing the plot inspections has had a detrimental and sometimes distressing impact on tenants - although we are hopeful that the majority of issues are now resolved this is an area we need to address to prevent the same issue next year.
- Maria then thanked the site representatives and officers for their input during the year.

(i) The Treasurer Judith Jordan presented her report and accounts, shown below.

Treasurer's Report 2016/7

Period covering 1/10/2016 to 30/09/2017

The opening bank balance carried forward from the last financial year was £4602.78 and the closing balance at the end of the year (30/09/2017) was £4711.36 so the finances are in a healthy position with income slightly exceeding expenditure in 2016/17 by £108.58. The petty cash remained the same at £30.45, making the overall balance at the end of the year £4741.81

Income

Revenue from membership increased slightly on the previous year in part because the adoption of the new software appears to have encouraged more prompt renewals. A more accurate picture of membership is provided in the membership secretary's report because membership revenue in any particular financial year is sensitive to the timing of members' payments.

An allotment 'showcase' event was held in the Spring. This attracted a reasonable level of interest and produced a small surplus of revenue over expenditure. Unfortunately we were not able to hold the Annual Produce event (in conjunction with Bath Organic Growers) this year due to changes in Council policy with regard to events.

Expenditure

In terms of expenditure, our memberships were renewed with RHS and the National Allotment Association. What appears to be a steep rise in insurance cost is, in fact, primarily a feature of timing. The renewal date for our public liability insurance coincides with the start of our Association's financial year. Last year the insurer was slow to bank the cheque and this year the insurer was very prompt hence two year's insurance are displayed within a single financial year. That said, the insurance premium has risen from £468.32 to £495.54 primarily as a result of changes in the government's insurance premium tax. In addition we hold insurance for 'events' with the RHS – this year the insurance element has been separated from the membership element so expenditure on memberships appears down and insurance costs appear up. Office expenses were slightly higher than the previous year with stationery costing £45.50, postage £270.97, and printing £85.81. The adoption of new membership software (which costs £60 per annum and is listed as part of website costs) is likely to result in significant savings in postage in the forthcoming year.

Judith Jordan, Treasurer (04/10/17)

Questions arising

Tim Kingham asked why the financial year was September to September. Judith responded that there was no other reason than this was what has been decided at a point in time and was as per the Constitution. Action taken to assess if the financial year should be changed. Jon Lucas requested that in next years accounts there is a separate section to detail the maintenance costs that would otherwise have been incurred by the Council.

B&NES Allotments Association - Accounts

£	2016-17	2015-16
Income		
Membership	1,819.50	1,475.50
Miscellaneous	0.00	75.00
Events	247.11	226.78
Total	2,066.61	1,777.28
Expenditure		
Membership & subs *	58.00	158.00
Insurance	1,052.34	468.32
Website	106.79	50.49
Office	402.28	322.89
Events	138.02	440.88
Meetings / room hire	78.00	84.33
Research and planning	29.60	7.00
Miscellaneous	93.00	0.00
Total	1,958.03	1,531.91
Net	108.58	245.37
Bank Reconciliation		
Starting balance at Co-Op bank	4,602.78	
Net income 2015-16	108.58	
Reduction in petty cash (+)	0.00	
Balance at Co-Op bank 30/09/17	4,711.36	
Petty cash in hand	30.45	
Total balance 30/09/17	4,741.81	

* Membership of RHS and Garden Organics

(ii) The Membership Secretary Sharon Dowding presented her report shown below.

Membership Secretary's Report

It's been a positive year again and the membership has increased by 12%. The membership for the year ending 2017 stands at 269.

The increase is represented by 43 new members and 37 cancellations. A significant number of new members have joined recently at the end of the membership year, these will have extended memberships into the year ending 2018.

Our membership count is approximately 20% of Council allotment plots.

The graph shows little difference in percentage by site from last year. The exception being Abbey View where the membership percentage has doubled. The top 5 are :- Abbey View 30%, Canal Gardens 37%, Lyncombe Hill 40%, Lower Common West 61%, Claremont Road 68%.

Renewals this year have been sent via the new software which has seen a tremendous early return. You would have noticed that the new software has issued individual member numbers, this will influence the number count in future. To date the membership has been counted by the monies received, one membership per fee. Some of these have two members attributed to that fee, the new software has separated these individuals and counted them as two members per membership fee. This new system allows the addition of a second person on their membership and several people have already added their partners and allotment helpers.

If it were in place at the end of 2017 it would have counted this years total as 302.

After 15 plus years as membership secretary I now feel that it is time to stand down. A number of factors have influenced my decision.

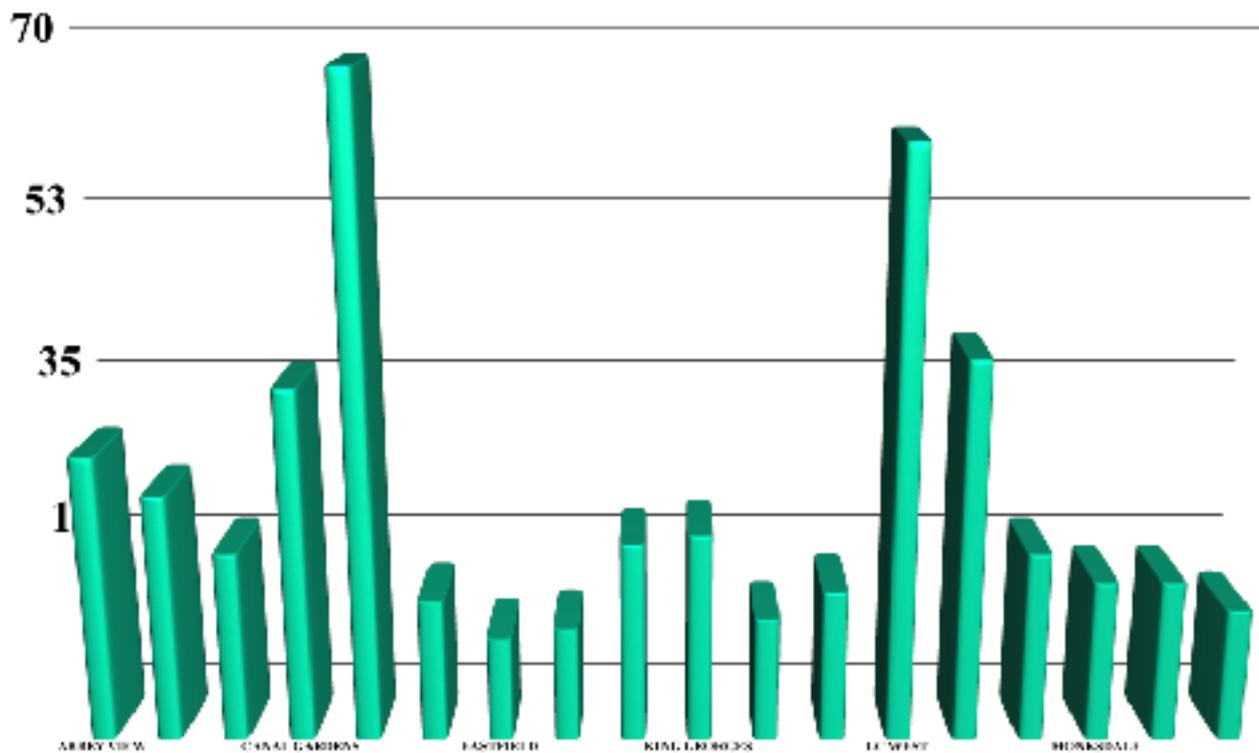
Primarily the new software has become self sufficient all bar the non email members and the information being received from members can easily be referenced and applied from the receiver rather than going through so many parties before implementation.

Therefore this will be my last Membership Secretary's Report.

I thank everyone for their support over the years and will undoubtedly see many of you again as I am still standing as Site Rep for Claremont.

I wish all of you all the very best for the future, may your veggies flourish and your snails diminish.

There were no issues arising from this report. No questions were raised.



PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP PER SITE 2017

(iii) Tim Baines from the Trading Hut presented his report and accounts shown below.

The Trading Hut has had another good year and despite making a small loss has ended the year with over £3000 in the bank account and approximately £2000 in stock.

Tim pointed out that by looking at the seed cost and income it can be seen that it is break even showing that benefits are passed onto the members.

The Autumn sale again was very successful taking about £600 over two weekends.

Tim raised that he will be standing down as Trading Hut buyer and that someone was needed to fill that role to support Pauline, Daisy and the other volunteers. Tim noted that this was a role that could be shared and that he would act as mentor and that if not filled it did raise a risk over the future of the Trading Hut.

There were no issues arising from this report. No questions were raised.

TRADING HUT ACCOUNTS 2016 TO 2017			
£	2016/2017		2015/2016
Income			
Seeds*	2,302		2,444
Sundries*	2,640		3,003
Float >£50	0		-17
Total	4,942		5,430
Expenditure			
Seeds	2,259		2,290
Sundries	2,811		1,711
Admin	207		166
Total	5,277		4,167
Profit/Loss	-335		1,262
Bank reconciliation	2016/2017		2015/2016
Opening bank balance	3,570		2,291
Income	4,942		5,447
Expenditure	5,277		4,167
Closing bank balance	3,235		3,570
End of year Float total	65		33
Bank balance plus float total	3,300		3,603

(iv) The Planning Officer Virginia Williamson presented her report shown below

PLANNING ISSUES

1. Planning applications

- Last year I reported that an application adjacent to **Abbey View** had been refused planning permission. The owner's appeal was turned down by the Planning Inspector.
- There are currently two linked planning applications affecting **Combe Down** allotments, submitted by the adjacent quarry. One is to extend quarry workings onto the allotments, and other is to provide replacement allotments on an adjacent paddock. Planning policy for mineral extraction trumps allotment policy, and these are not statutory allotments because the land is privately owned, and therefore don't have legal protection. B&NES Planners have prepared planning conditions which would provide good quality replacement plots and require the quarry owners to restore previously quarried land in preparation for future allotments, but the owners are currently resisting them. B&NES failed to enforce similar conditions for the last quarry extension in 2001 and we are pushing hard for the conditions to be applied this time. The application will go back to the Council's planning committee in a few months' time.

2. More Plots for Bath Project

- More Plots budget

Last year, I reported "We still haven't been provided with detailed accounts for the loan of £200,000 for the More Plots project" and that "several of us on the committee with experience of managing multi-million pound public sector budgets find it inexplicable why this information isn't readily available". Embarrassingly, it is still not available, the reason given to us being changes in Parks management staff and changes in Financial staff, holidays, etc. It affects us all, because our rents were increased in 2013/14 above the due rate to cover the loan repayments.

We need clarity on this soon, certainly before accepting any further "above due rate" increases in rents. If necessary, we will take the issue to the relevant Cabinet member.

- King George's Road raised beds

Raised beds have now been built on the area of King George's Road allotments which Curo applied (unsuccessfully) to develop for housing. They are due to be filled with soil in the next couple of weeks, and hopefully they'll be available for waiting tenants soon.

- Fairfield Valley - new site

The design for Fairfield Valley was revised, from a fairly random layout of plots across an open, natural area, to 22 plots laid out conventionally with paths in between and water troughs, enclosed by a 1.8m deer fence on three sides, the fourth side being an existing hedge backing onto gardens. There'll be vehicle access but no parking. We understand that the remainder of the site will be grazed.

- Potential sites and their funding

We have now been provided with a spreadsheet listing expenditure on the More Plots Project but there is still doubt about the total income. This issue is linked to the terms of the loan,

mentioned above. For the past two years, planning issues have not been included on the sub-forum agendas, instead discussed in an ad hoc way. I believe this is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient oversight. The next site for development is adjacent to the Park & Ride at Newbridge.

Questions arising

1. Helen Woodley asked about the status of Lansdown View, Virginia responded that the planning application has been turned down.
2. Simon Burrows (Combe Down) thanked the Association and especially Virginia for the support provided re Combe Down allotments.

(5) Auditor's report and acceptance of Accounts

The Association accounts have been formally audited / examined by Helene Law (independent reviewer) and the report communicated to the Association members. Maria Humphries proposed for the accounts to be accepted - this was proposed by Virginia Williamson and seconded by Andrew Baker.

12 October 2017

B&NES Allotment Association Account Year Ended September 2017

I have reviewed the accounts and found them in good order.

The accounts were clear and all the expenditure were appropriate for the running of the **Allo** Association

I am happy that Judith has kept the books in good order and will support her going forward.

Yours faithfully,



Helene Law ACMA

Helene Law is standing down as our reviewer / auditor. Judith is seeking a replacement.

(6) Change to Officer roles

Proposal for changes to Officer roles as follows:-

- Removal of Vice-chair role
- Removal of Archivist role
- Merge of Membership Secretary and Treasurer roles
- Publicity Officer to be renamed as Publicity & Communications Officer

Maria Humphries requested approval - this was proposed by Sharon Dowding and seconded by Simon Burrows and carried unanimously.

POST AGM UPDATE: *Further to the AGM a couple of queries were raised and concern that appropriate notice / discussion had not been made on this point.*

Therefore in March 2018 the following email was sent with feedback from Helen Woodley regarding the Archivist role and Tim Baines re the membership, treasurer and vice chair roles. This will be included in the 2018 AGM and following further consideration the separate Treasurer and Membership Secretary roles will be retained.

“Dear Members,

At the 2017 AGM we proposed the following changes in the Officer roles.

Proposal for changes to Officer roles as follows:-

- Removal of Vice-chair role*
- Removal of Archivist role*
- Merge of Membership Secretary and Treasurer roles*
- Publicity Officer to be renamed as Publicity & Communications Officer*

It has been pointed out that this constitutes a change to the Allotment Association Constitution and that as such we did not follow the correct procedure as laid out in the Constitution "No rules may be altered except at an AGM or a Special General Meeting called for that purpose, of which fourteen days' notice must be given".

This email is therefore to formally communicate the following proposals - we will not call a SGM for this but include it in the 2018 AGM.

Proposal for changes to Officer roles as follows:-

- Removal of Vice-chair role*
- Merge of Membership Secretary and Treasurer roles*
- Publicity Officer to be renamed as Publicity & Communications Officer*

We have removed the proposal to remove the Archivist role as on re-checking this had been removed prior to the setting of the current Constitution in 2012.

We are also proposing a change of date for the AGM from October to November to give more time for the annual accounts to be completed and reviewed.”

(7) Election of Officers and Site Representatives

The positions of Chair is open with a request made during the AGM for any candidates to come forward to Maria Humphries (Secretary).

Nominees for Election

Maria Humphries proposed for all Officers and Site Representatives to be re-elected 'en bloc' - this was proposed by Simon Burrows and seconded by Sharon Dowding and carried unanimously.

Officers	Name
Chair	Vacancy
Vice-chair	Proposed and agreed to remove role (<i>See above point - referred to 2018 AGM</i>)
Secretary	Maria Humphries
Membership secretary	Judith Jordan - proposed and agreed to merge with Treasurer role (<i>See above point - referred to 2018 AGM</i>)
Treasurer	Judith Jordan - proposed and agreed to merge with Membership Secretary role (<i>See above point - referred to 2018 AGM</i>)
Planning officer	Virginia Williamson
Publicity officer	Jenny Dixon - proposed and agreed to change role description to Publicity and communications officer
Trading Hut (co-opted)	Vacancy
Archivist	Proposed and agreed to remove role (<i>See above point - referred to 2018 AGM</i>)

Site representatives

Site	Representative
Abbey View	Christina Craig
Brookfield Park	Lucy Ashley
Claremont Road	Francis Dowding and Sharon Dowding
Corston View	Hillary Sheppard & Ron White
Eastfield Avenue	Kate Dixon (tbc)
Fairfield Park	Vernon Herridge
Foxhill	Deborah Velleman (tbc)
Hampton Row	Catherine Parker

Site	Representative
High Common	Lucy Ashley
King Georges Road	Maria Humphries & Andrew Baker
Lower Common East	Anne Love & Jim Lee
Lyncombe Hill Farm	Steve Marshall
Lyncombe Vale	Virginia Williamson
Mendip Gardens	Guy Bardoe
Monksdale	Maria Humphries & Andrew Baker
Moorfields	Kerry Rogers
Ring Common	Peter Cray

The following sites have no representative - please contact Maria Humphries if you are interested in becoming a site rep.

Sites
Avon Park, Bloomfield Road, Canal Gardens, Combe Down, Larkhall, Lower Common West

Questions arising

1. John Gregory asked about approaching the Council if you are an Association member and if you had to go via the Site Representative - Maria Humphries responded that it is the members choice if they go via their Site Representative or direct but that it was useful to involve Site reps so that they are aware of any issues.

(8) Any other business.

Controlling Potato Blight - Judy Enticknap

- Judy raised the topic of how to control potato blight as there is differing advice available, RHS advises to burn which is obviously an issue as we are not allowed bonfires at certain times of year, other advice is to take it to landfill.
- Agreed that the Association would include information in a future newsletter to help support members with this topic.
- Nick Madden advised some blight resistant seed potatoes - Vale Sovereign and Sarpo Mira

Weedkiller

- Nick Madden raised a concern re use of weedkiller without regard to impact on neighbouring plots.
- Agreed that the Association would include information in a future newsletter to help support members with this topic.
- Judy Enticknap noted that Roundup is now believed to not break down for 20 years.