

**Minutes of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at  
the Blandford Forum Corn Exchange  
On Friday 28th September 2018 at 7 pm**  
Chaired by Ian Ricketts

Those Present: *Ian Ricketts – Chairperson, John Harding – Treasurer, Ann Edwards – Social Secretary/Minute Taker, Pat Richardson – Webmaster, Diane Mawer – Plot Allocator, Ken Pearce – Plot Allocator, Cllr Harold Gilpin of Blandford Town Council, plus 50 Allotment Holders.*

Apologies for absence: *Barbara Marjoram, Craig Whelan, Peter Brundish, Virginia Barnard*

1. Welcome

Ian welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular the Town Councillor, Harold Gilpin, representing the Blandford Town Council.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

A copy of last year's minutes, this year's agenda and the Treasurer's report for 2018 were given to all members present. The minutes and Financial Report were agreed and signed. Ian thanked everyone on the Committee for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

Ian said it had been a tough growing year. We missed out spring and went straight from winter to summer in one day! Plot holders were tired of watering – most yields of crops were down, except for the good old courgettes that seem to grow whatever the weather!

Works carried out this year

The biggest job was the felling of the trees between us and the bungalows. This was carried out by contractors via the Council. We were asked to take down the rabbit fence to make it easier for them and re-erect afterwards. We had a work party to do this, and there was a very good turnout. The fence was back in no time. A big thank you to all those involved. The same weekend, we planted the old troughs inside the gate. They gave a good show all through the summer. The other work day planned in March was to cut pea and bean sticks, but this was cancelled due to snow. We did cut some later on one of the Tuesday Working Party mornings. If you can spare an hour or two, we will be pleased to see you. Other works – a new water trough and tops for troughs, and at Elizabeth Road, new taps. Vacant plots were also strimmed there. We are planning more work parties – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 10 am, and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March 10 am.

GDPR

General data protection regulation – As a society, we have to show that all the information plot holders provide us with is kept safe. Ann, John and myself attended a workshop in the Corn Exchange. They are pleased with our security arrangements. We only pass on plot holders' information to Kings Seed and the Allotment Society.

Facebook

The Facebook page has been going for over a year and at present we have 64 members. It is a closed group, so only allotment holders and their families are able to join. It is only for general chit chat and sharing of advice. All other information can be found on the website [www.blandfordallotments.com](http://www.blandfordallotments.com)

Site Security

There are now good security signs on the gate. We will be changing the code on the gate lock. All will be informed with the new code at a later date.

## Seeds

Barbara Marjoram is our Vice-Chairman and Seed Secretary. We will be doing Kings Seeds again as they are good value and as a Society we make a small amount. We also make a small amount of money on the dung, which helps pay for petrol/diesel, weed killer etc.

### 5. Presentation by Harold Gilpin

Councillor Galpin was welcomed by the Chairman and introduced to the meeting. Cllr Galpin said that there are no plans to relocate the allotments for the foreseeable future, and even though talks are ongoing, nothing will happen for several years. In any event, allotment holders won't lose out, as they will be allocated an allotment, like for like, according to the details already thrashed out and agreed between the Town Council and the Blandford Allotment Society Committee.

Regarding Elizabeth Road, the Town Council is exploring the possibility of acquiring this site and will keep the Committee informed.

He said it would please him to see a good number of allotment holders attending Town Council Meetings. In fact, there is one in two weeks time. Councillor Gilpin to inform the Chairman of meetings.

### 6. Treasurer's Report – John Harding

John said that most of the figures (on the attached report) are self-explanatory. This year he had included a column showing last year's figures as a comparison.

Income – Brought forward is some £270, better than that being carried forward to this year, but there was an outstanding water bill of around £500 to pay. Rental Payments – some 7% up on the previous year. Seeds – Purchased at a preferential rate through Kings Seeds – a National Allotment Society benefit. Part Exchange – We required a new good strimmer which you will see in the expenditure column, cost £411. To offset part of this cost, we had a brush cutter and a hedge trimmer, no longer required, which we traded in for £195. BBQ – the barbecue was delayed this year until July, so no donations. Miscellaneous – is a figure which reflects receipts for sales of manure and other money raising activities, where we buy and sell to the Members at a small profit. Thanks to Ian Ricketts for his activities in this area.

Expenditure – Blandford TC – the contribution we make to the Council. Strimmer purchase – already mentioned. Website – Cost of upkeep of the website is slightly down on last year, thanks to the valued input from Craig Whelan. Water – Last year Andrew informed us that we still had an outstanding water bill to pay, that accounts for the large amount shown. NAS Membership – this is obligatory for members and gives benefits of discounted seeds, purchased through Kings seeds, an insurance that covers you, should you accidentally damage other members' person or property, a quarterly magazine and general advise on a range of matters. Kings Seeds – already covered. Insurance – Public liability/Employee Liability etc. DVLA – This is to replace the mislaid registration document for the tractor. DVLA – This the cost of a replacement tractor registration document. Tractor insurance – Self explanatory. Electricity – Costs for Lamperd's Field shed. BBQ – Last year's barbecue costs charged out in July 2017. Miscellaneous – All the little costs such as padlocks, taps etc. and purchase for resale to members, resulting in miscellaneous receipts. Water trough and fittings – purchased to replace a leaking trough. This has now been reimbursed from the ring-fenced fund which means our carried forward figure is now enhanced by this amount. You will also see that this year, at the request of a councillor, we have attempted to produce a simple inventory of the assets that we hold.

### The Coming Year

The brought forward figure should stand us in good stead. However, we are concerned about the summer water bill which, having taken a reading from the meter in early August, looked to be heading for roughly triple the cost of last year's summer bill. We have had rain since then and summer crops have come to an end, but the bill could well be over twice last summer's.....we could stand this extra cost. Equally, concerning though, is the possibility that after such a difficult summer, some tenants

may not wish to renew. We hope that this is not too many. The council have been kept up to date with our concerns about any possible shortfall, due to these two issues and may be able to offer some help should these circumstances cause financial problems.

7. Report on Plot Allocations

Ken said that this time last year, he reported that at Elizabeth Road there were 5 empty plots and no waiting list. We managed to fill a few during the year and with one not renewing we now have 3 empty plots.

At Lamperd's Field, we were also in a good position last year, having filled all the plots and having a short waiting list. Unfortunately, as the year has gone on, we have lost some plot holders and now have 13 vacant plots.

Ken reported that he hoped we get some more interest, this coming year. He stressed that if we were to move in the distant future, existing plot holders are assured of a like for like plot.

8. Report on Elizabeth Road – Phil Williams – Nothing to report.

9. Report from Social Secretary – Ann Edwards

As minute taker, since the last AGM, Ann had taken the minutes of 8 Committee meetings, the last one being on 11th September. All of these minutes can be accessed on our website, [www.blandfordallotments.com](http://www.blandfordallotments.com).

(a) Annual Barbecue

This took place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July, with some 50 people attending. The Committee worked hard to erect a marquee and gazebo, and put up tables chairs and barbecue. This was a great success. Food that everyone brought was excellent, as were the meats cooked on the barbecue by the men on the committee.

(b) Plot Judging

Judging for the best plot was done in July by Dave Miles, as usual, and we will know the lucky winner tonight.

(c) Monthly Coffee Mornings

Each month, we have had a coffee morning at 11 am on the first Saturday of the month. We are now having to cater regularly for about 20 people and have 25 stacking chairs. My grateful thanks to Annabelle Valentine, Mike Holloway, Malcolm Fowler, Vlad Gorre and others for their brilliant talks. Thanks to Ian's wife for fresh cake!

(d) List of Events September 2017 to September 2018

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Coffee Morning - Talk and demonstration of apple pressing by Vlad Gorre.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017 – Coffee Morning - Talk on Simple Home Brewing by Annabelle Valentine.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017 – Christmas Gathering with mulled wine and Christmas nibbles.

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 – Coffee Morning – Talk on Dahlias lead by Ann Edwards and Dave Buchan

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 – Coffee Morning had to be cancelled because of the ice and snow, so we were unable to cut pea sticks on that day.

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2018 – Coffee Morning – Talk by Mike Holloway on Fuchsias.

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018 – Coffee Morning – Talk by Annabelle Valentine “Tips for Beginner Allotmenters”

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018 – Coffee Morning – Talk by Mike Holloway on Sensory Gardens.

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018 – Coffee Morning – Talk by Malcom Fowler – “Making Mead”

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018 – ANNUAL BARBECUE

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018 – Coffee Morning – Bring along your favourite recipe using courgettes or beetroot.

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 – Coffee Morning – A chance to chat to your Committee before the Annual General Meeting at the end of the month.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – Coffee Morning – Vlad Gorre “Apple Pressing and More – Bring apples.

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018 – By popular request – Malcolm Fowler “Mead 2 – Making and Tasting ! “.

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 – Christmas Gathering – Mulled wine, Christmas nibbles and grand raffle.

A huge thank you to everyone for supporting all the social events!

10. Report from Pat Richardson – Webmaster

Our website address is [www.blandfordallotments.com](http://www.blandfordallotments.com).

Our webpage has continued to attract viewers enquiring about renting an allotment, checking out the photos of our gardeners on their allotments and looking for information about our increasingly popular coffee mornings and talks given by a variety of speakers on the first Saturday of the month.

Alongside our Facebook page, which Ian set up as a closed group of our allotment holders, rather than being open to the public as is the website, these two methods of communication are working well.

This year, Craig has come on board to help with the development of the website due to his expertise in this area and he has already found a way of reducing the annual premium from Wix.com as well as tweaking some of the pages to enable more efficient moving through the pages.

When I set up the website several years ago, I did so using Windows 10 software which worked well for a few years. Unfortunately, as I moved to an Android system and now onto an Ipad, I was unable to edit the site on these different platforms but I was quite happy to hand over to Craig to continue developing the website. I now learn he has handed in his resignation so we are looking for someone to take over.

It is not a hard job as Ann does most of the work, sending us the minutes of the committee meetings to add to the website and any other posters. We try to keep the content up-to-date by altering the text mainly on the front page.

11. Presentation of Awards – Ian Ricketts

Again we had Dave Miles to judge the plots. Ian walked around with him on a hot day in July. For the second year running, Judith Potts is the winner of the best plot at Lamperd's Field. Barry Gould is the winner at Elizabeth Road, and Darren Adams wins the best small plot.

12. Committee Structure 2018 – 2019 – Ian Ricketts

Ian said that the majority of current committee members are willing to be re-elected, and that the Webmasters, Pat Richardson and Craig Whelan wished to step down. He proposed a vote for the re-election of existing Committee Members willing to be re-elected - Ian Ricketts, John Harding, Ann Edwards, Diane Mawer, Ken Pearce, Dave Buchan, Peter Brundish and Phil Williams. The vote was carried unanimously.

New Webmaster

Virginia Barnard had been proposed and seconded. A vote was taken from the floor which was unanimous in agreement. She was duly elected.

13. AOB

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.40 pm, with the Chairman thanking everyone for attending.

14. Date of next Committee Meeting is Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October at 7 pm, in Lamperd's Field Allotment Shed.

Ann Edwards (Social Sec.) 30.9.18