

Blandford Allotment Society
www.blandfordallotments.co.uk
Minutes of virtual Committee meeting held
On Friday 8th May 2020

Committee Members: Ian Ricketts – Chairman, John Harding – Treasurer, Barbara Marjoram – Plot allocator/Seed Secretary, Virginia Barnard – Webmaster, Ann Edwards – Social Secretary, Phil Williams – Elizabeth Road, Ken Pearce – Plot Enforcer, Diane Mawer, Peter Brundish, Dave Buchan.

1. The Minutes of the meeting dated 11th February 2020 have been approved and signed by the Chairman.

2. REPORTS

- (a) Report from Chairman – Ian Ricketts

Work party mentioned in the February minutes was a great success. Lots of pea sticks and bean poles were cut, all helpers were able to have one bundle of pea sticks or bean poles. Elizabeth Road agreement has been done and sent off to the Town Council for approval, ready to send out in September.

Below are the proposed rent increases for 2020/21 for Lamperd's Field and Elizabeth Road.

1. Review of Garden Allotment Rents at Lamperd's Field for 2021/22 (the existing amount for 2020/21 is £37.00)

The Town Council suggests an increase of 2.5%, which is an increase of £0.92, making it a total rent of £37.92 per 250 sqm.

2. Rents at Elizabeth Road Allotments for 2020/21 (the existing amount for 2019/20 is 21p per square metre)

The Town Council suggests an increase of 2.5%, which is an increase of £0.01, making it a total rent of £0.22 per sqm.

All have been agreed by the Committee on behalf of plot holders and Blandford Town Council has been informed..

Regarding Normans old plot at Elizabeth Road, this has been sprayed and has been rented out.

We are lucky to be able to go to the allotments, and most plots are all up together. The measures that are in place are working well. All are complying with Covid 19 regulations, but let's not get complacent and please keep up the good work.

Regarding Covid-19 we have put in place all that has been asked of us from the Town Council and checking with the National Allotment Society web site for the latest updates. So far things are working well. A big thank you to all for keeping to the new ways of working. The burn plot is no more. It has been turned back in to plots as we now have a waiting list. It has been brought to the Committee's attention that someone has been driving on a plot while turning corners - please drive carefully around the site. Also, some tools have been taken from a plot. This will not be tolerated. Any person found to be taking tools will be asked to leave immediately. I have had a number of inquiries about getting a skip for plot holders to dump rubbish.

We have said no as we had one a few years ago and it was abused. Most of rubbish from plots can be composted and it is expected that the recycling centre will soon be open. Blandford carnival has been cancelled. Hopefully it will go ahead next year in 2021. All coffee mornings have been cancelled and we will review the potato competition and the AGM nearer the time.

Regarding rats in compost bins. Please keep an eye on your bins. So far we have caught 5 rats. If you find you have rats then Bartletts have traps. I find the best bait is peanut butter or Nutella.

11 plot holders have been contacted about the state of their plots. 2 have given up, 2 are self-isolating and 1 has down sized. 3 yellow cards have been sent out but the rest have restarted working their plots.

(b) Report from Treasurer – John Harding

As at 03/05/20 the bank balance stood at £2469.19 with petty cash at £371.31

All rents are paid up to date and there will be no further major bills to pay before the 30th June (our financial year end), when my *predicted* carried forward figure will be approx. £1000 ahead of last year. I shall therefore be reporting to the Town Council at annual review that the finances are healthy.

Action points from our last meeting:

I did check with the person who has previously made signs. Their machine has apparently broken down at present and as yet they have not come back to me.

(c) Report from Plot Allocator/Seed Secretary – Barbara Marjoram

Once the country went into lockdown it was felt prudent to suspend letting new plots. However, I have now restarted letting and 5 x 1/4 and 2 x 1/2 plots have been let in the last few days. Although we have vacant plots (both ER and LF sites) the waiting list is greater than available plots. I am gradually addressing the waiting list in turn of enquiry.

Lamperd's Field Hut - As you know we do not have any paid employees - indeed the Committee and work party is made up of individuals who give up their own time at their own cost. We would be grateful if some of you would help out by adding your name to the hut cleaning rota. Please sign up for 1 month. At the moment, it only entails sweeping out the hut. When the toilets and kitchen re- open (not in the foreseeable future), they will need to be kept clean and tidy too. The sign up list is on the notice board as you enter the shed on the left hand side.

We do not have any refuse collection and we would therefore be grateful if you could take your rubbish home.

We thank you for your assistance with this.

Fly Tipping - There has been another incident of fly tipping at Lamperd's Field. This is unacceptable and unfair on other plot holders. Please keep any rubbish on your own plots until you are able to take it to the waste recycling centre, when it re-opens. (It has since opened on 11th May.) Any person found fly tipping will have their tenancy

immediately withdrawn. The Plot Allocator has been giving new tenants of Elizabeth Road plots a copy of the 'draft' (it remains draft until we hear back from the council) - the Guidelines that the Committee have agreed that is specific to Elizabeth Road plots.

The potato competition weigh in will take place, on 1st August, even if we cannot have a coffee morning. Plot holders will be required to deliver their potato bag, clearly labelled, to Lamperds Field car park. Once weighing has taken place they can then collect their bag.

(d) Report from Plot Allocator – Diane Mawer

Nothing to report.

(e) Report from Plot Enforcer – Ken Pearce

Nothing to report.

(f) Report from Phil Williams, Elizabeth Road

On Elizabeth Road allotments, things seem to be going quite well at the moment. Norman's plot has been sprayed and new plot holders are waiting to take over. It has been split into two as it was originally.

Two ladies on a small quarter plot are keen to have a bigger one but the first one they were after is not available, although it is not being cultivated as such and only has some perennial flowers growing on it. The second one, is a plot that hasn't been cultivated, but the holder says they are self-isolating. So we wait to hear about that one. At the far end, (the garages end), the tap that was actually on the allotment side of the fence has been moved to now be on the path side. The plot holder was not happy about people walking over her plot to gain access to the tap and asked for it to be moved.

There is still someone on the last allotment using pliers to turn the tap. I believe the person using the Town Councils piece of waste ground has been approached by the Council about using the water and using pliers also.

I wonder if it would be an idea to give the new plot holders or maybe all, an information sheet to let them know what their responsibilities are regarding gates, paths etc.(not exactly rules, just information). If the Committee think it's a good idea we could discuss this further. This obviously is just to cover us until the Council approve the proposed rules for Elizabeth Road.

Please remember that, at Elizabeth Road Allotments, BONFIRES ARE NOT ALLOWED AT ANY TIME OF DAY - by Order of Blandford Town Council.

(g) Report from the Webmaster – Virginia Barnard

The website traffic continues to increase, which is good news, indicating that we are gaining a stronger online presence.

Comparing the statistics for traffic to the website in the first quarter

	2019	2020
February	499	1,280
March	767	1,337
April	916	1,692

The statistics also show that the majority of visitors look at all the pages of the website with the most accessed being the Contact Us and Profile pages. The majority of traffic is from the UK, as expected, but we also attract visitors from the USA, Germany, Russian Federation, Israel, France and China; the time spent online is, on average, 10mins-60mins.

Social Media (Facebook) is also very popular with the allotment holders.

It may be worth considering starting a Blog or engaging with Instagram or Twitter for the younger members? I would need to research this further in terms of the time and commitment this would generate.

(h) Upkeep of allotments – Dave Buchan

No report.

(i) Report from Social Secretary – Ann Edwards

Because of Covid 19, sadly, all coffee mornings have been cancelled until further notice. The potato Competition on 1st August will be reviewed nearer the date. The Blandford Carnival is cancelled this year, so we will not be able to enter our float. The Annual Barbecue on 5th July is likely to be cancelled. I would like to see some way of carrying out the monthly raffle which took place at coffee mornings. It was very popular – I would really welcome suggestions as to how we might do this, bearing in mind the current Covid 19 Government restrictions. Multiple notices have been produced and erected at road level listing Covid 19 regulations for Lamperd's Field plot holders.

(j) Report from Committee Member – Peter Brundish

No report

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

REMINDER FROM THE COMMITTEE for new plot holders and others!!! about some important issues which have recently arisen.....

- 1) All work involved in the day to day running of the allotments is carried out by volunteers. Please do not make their job more difficult by not abiding by the agreement that we all have signed.
- 2) With no burning plot or rubbish collection from the site, all rubbish must be disposed of by allotment holders. No dumping anywhere on the site is allowed, which includes stones and weeds.
- 3) Access paths to allotments are the responsibility of the plot holder and should be kept mown, clear and tidy.
- 4) Allotment holders who are only cultivating part of their plot must keep invasive weeds on the other areas under control.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBA