

**Blandford Allotment Society**  
[www.blandfordallotments.co.uk](http://www.blandfordallotments.co.uk)  
**Minutes of Committee meeting held**  
**On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October at 11 a.m.**

*Present: Committee Members: Ian Ricketts – Chairman, John Harding – Treasurer, Barbara Marjoram – Plot allocator, Ann Edwards – Social Secretary, Virtual attendance -reports sent in by: Phil Williams – Elizabeth Road, Virginia Barnard – Webmaster, Annette Baxter – Seed Secretary.*

1. The Minutes of the meeting dated 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2. REPORTS

- (a) Report from Chairman – Ian Ricketts

- (1) Regarding Elizabeth Road, it has been arranged that “Bob” the builder will put tarmac down.

- (2) Covid

One notice needs to be updated. The rest of the notices are current. Ian will print off an up to date Town Council notice. Action: Ian

We have all coped with the restrictions and it is suggested that we all still stick to the current regulations.

- (3) Prize Day

Presentation of the prizes on 27<sup>th</sup> September went very well, with the Mayor attending and presenting. Forum Focus were also present to take a group photo. Many thanks to our Mayor and Nicci Brown.

- (4) Verbal and written abuse

In the course of implementing both the Town Council rules, and the present Covid rules, the Plot Allocator and other Committee Members had suffered both verbal and written abuse. Ian re-iterated that the Committee are representatives of the Council and to this end, they are responsible for ensuring the Council Regulations and Covid regulations are implemented/adhered to. It is stressed that the Committee are all volunteers who undertake the roles for no recompense in either monetary or kind. They use their own time and work at their own expense. So please take that into consideration – The Committee have their own plots to cultivate and lives outside the allotments.

The Committee has experienced some verbal and written abuse, over the last few months, which is unacceptable. We will not accept any abuse and/or threats – verbal or written. If there is any, then it will be reported to the Council who will take the appropriate action.

- (5) The chairman had been asked by a plot holder to put to the committee the possibility of creating a support system for new plot holders. The committee felt that given time, new plot holders will be communicating more with their neighbours, and

with the Committee. The Committee may be able to help short term if a person is having difficulty tending their plot. In this case, please let any member of the Committee know. The quickest way is to go through the website - [www.blandfordallotments.co.uk](http://www.blandfordallotments.co.uk) which gives the details of all Committee members.

#### (6) Work Party

There is no necessity for a special work party weekend. However, plot holders are welcome to come along to the weekly Wednesday morning work party which takes place from 9 to 12 pm. It is hoped more plot holders can turn up to give a hand please. The next work party is on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October, weather permitting! At this moment in time, it looks unlikely to take place. However, the next date is Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November- again, weather permitting.

#### (b) Treasurer's Report - John Harding

As at 22<sup>nd</sup>.October the bank balance stands at £7017.16 and petty cash held by me £284.75. I have recently issued a cheque for £1178.71 to the Blandford TC this being the rent due for the coming year plus the ring fence charges, this cheque has not yet been presented. I expect a fairly substantial Water bill to arrive in the next week or so which is likely to be around £2000 for the two sites summer period.

All but 5 plot holders have paid the rent for the coming year and I shall be asking the Council to send out final demand letters as soon as possible.

As we have not held an AGM this year I completed the annual accounts at the usual time this being to the 30<sup>th</sup> June, I have provided a copy of these accounts with this report and additionally I have added a sheet of dialogue which explains some of the figures. If any plot holder has a query over any figures or other issue please contact me 'treasurer@blandfordallotments.co.uk' (see attachment).

#### (c) Plot Allocator – Barbara Marjoram

It has been a busy time on the plots. We have had a number of plot holders either give up (due to work commitments, ill health etc.) others have down sized and a small number have not had their tenancy renewed (due to the poor cultivation of the plot). The Council are quite clear (See regulations) – plots must be cultivated and kept free from weeds etc. On behalf of the Council plot inspections are undertaken 2-3 times a year. Plot holders who do not reach the required standard are sent a letter, by the Council, giving the plot holder 4 weeks to address the state of their plot. Failure to do so results in the Council evicting the tenant.

We have been busy preparing plots for re-letting. Since the start of October 5 plots have been let at Elizabeth Road (there are no more available plots at this time) and 10 plots at Lamperd's Field; the remaining available plots will be let over the next few weeks as the long waiting list continues to be worked through.

Please ensure you advise the committee of any change of address and/or email otherwise you will not receive communications from us and/or the Council.

The allotment shed is for everyone's use – we would therefore ask for volunteers to add their name, for 2021, for a month, for cleaning duties – which are to sweep out the hut and ensure the toilets are clean, on a weekly basis. Your help is appreciated. The signup sheet is on the noticeboard, on the left, just inside the shed. Thanks.

(d) Phil and Carol Williams – Elizabeth Road

Nothing much to report at Elizabeth Road, but must say how good it is to see the new allotmentees making a start! Let's hope it continues.

Pity that there had been a complaint about the eucalyptus tree. We think the lady should remember that it's not the branches that are the problem to the neighbouring bungalow, but that the roots, which can do damage to the drains etc. The roots are very shallow. Committee members involved did their best with the equipment they had available.

(d) Webmaster – Virginia Barnard

The website traffic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters shows an increase. How much of this is due to the current climate is difficult to say but I suspect that it has and will start to level out shortly.

**Comparing the statistics for traffic to the website in the second quarter.**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
May	1,455	1,453
June	1,049	1,092
July	1,750	2,324

**Comparing the statistics for traffic to the website in the third quarter.**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
August	1,746	2,480
September	1,750	2,643
October	1,815	1,531

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.

There were 9 enquiries via the website contact pages, requesting plot information, between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.

There is nothing flagged up on the TSOHOST server to say there are any current problems.

(e) Report from Dave Buchan – No report

(f) Social Secretary – Ann Edwards

Just two items:

1. We have arranged 3 sessions on 3 different days, entitled "Sweet peas and their upkeep". Dave (Jack) Miles, a well known sweet pea prize winner, has kindly agreed to give us a demonstration and talk on sweet peas. At the end of each session, there will be an opportunity to purchase prize winning sweet pea seeds. The talk and demonstration will last about an hour. Everyone must wear masks and social distance. Only 5 places are available at each talk. Talks will be in Lamperds Field Shed. Dates are: Saturday 31st October at 11 am, Sunday 1st November at 11 am and Wednesday 4th November at 7 pm. There are 3 places available on Saturday 31st October, 5 available on Sunday 1st November and 5 available on the evening of Wednesday 4th November. Please book your place asap by contacting [chairperson@blandfordallotments.co.uk](mailto:chairperson@blandfordallotments.co.uk) or speaking to anyone on the Committee (see website).
2. We expect to have a Christmas raffle this year, keeping within the Covid 19 restrictions! Any gifts for the raffle would be gratefully received please. There will be a slightly different way of you being able to buy the tickets. All will be revealed in a week or so.

(g) Committee Member – Peter Brundish - Nothing to report.

(h) Committee Member – Ken Pearce

Ken informed the Committee that he wishes to step down.

(i) Seed Secretary – Annette Baxter

Seed orders have been coming in at a steady pace. So far I have received orders for over £1600. With one week left before the deadline, I am hoping for a few more. There have been many instances of what I can only call creative adding up and scattiness but most of the gremlins have now been sorted. It has been a bit of a learning curve for me and I may do things a little different next year. All good fun though.

**3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 11 am.**

*Ann Edwards (email: [secretary@blandfordallotments.co.uk](mailto:secretary@blandfordallotments.co.uk)) – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020*

Please note: Treasurer's attachment.