

Blandford Allotment Society
www.blandfordallotments.co.uk
Minutes of meeting held at the Lamperd's Field Potting Shed
On Tuesday 12th February 2019 at 7 pm
Chaired by: Ian Ricketts

Present: Ian Ricketts – Chair, Barbara Marjoram – Vice Chair, Virginia Barnard – Webmaster, John Harding – Treasurer, Ann Edwards – Social Secretary, Peter Brundish – Committee Member, Ken Pearce – Plot Allocator, Diane Mawer – Plot Allocator, Phil Williams – Elizabeth Road.

Apologies for absence from Dave Buchan

1. The Minutes of the meeting dated 27th November 2018 were read and approved.

2. REPORTS

(a) Report from Chairman – Ian Ricketts

Two posts have been erected at Elizabeth Road. There are two more to be done. We have bought a new padlock for Lamperds Field and the new code has been circulated to allotment holders, plus a notice on the gate giving telephone numbers for those having any trouble. The new padlock code is working well – we have received only two calls for help.

The Tuesday work parties are still going well and there had been a good response from the email Ann had sent out inviting people to come and help. The next major Work Party is scheduled for March 17th to cut pea sticks etc. Ann to send out "round robin" to allotment holders inviting them to join in. Action: Ann

The cup for Best Allotment is in need of repair. Ian to get estimates. John said it is possible we can get finance for this repair, or a new one, from the ring fenced fund. To be investigated once Ian has received the estimates for both repair and replacement. To be discussed further. Action: Ian

Regarding the spring sowing of wild flowers from Kew, we will know February if they will be sending us a pack. Once received, we can decide where to sow. The bottom half of the burning plot was not thought to be a good choice. Action: Ian

Regarding the Community scheme, Ian said it would be at no cost to us. Once we receive approval from the Town Council, we can agree the details of the work. The group have their own tools and are fully supervised. The Committee agreed in principal, with details to be put to them before giving the go ahead. To be discussed further. Action: Ian

(b) Report from Vice Chair/Seed Secretary – Barbara Marjoram

Barbara reported that she had finally distributed all the seeds and potatoes that had been ordered from Kings Seeds. Barbara volunteered to be responsible for the potato competition. Action: Barbara

(c) Report from Treasurer – John Harding

The bank balance stands at £2092.73 and petty cash at £98.90 This compares favourably with last year when the bank balance was £1807. Since the last meeting I have received £387 in rents.

Following our last meeting I contacted the NAS to see if they could better our public liability insurance quote. They could not, neither would they have been able to quote for the tractor insurance due next month. In fact, I did not find them very helpful at all. I therefore left the insurance with Jelf and the premium was the same cost as last year - £308.78. I paid the NAS subs. of £369 and provided them with a list of the then paid up members who now are all affiliated members of the NAS. I have also paid an electric bill for £26.90 which happily is about half this time last year. The next big bill due in March is the tractor insurance which should be around £260.

(d) Report from the Plot Allocators – Ken Pearce and Diane Mawer

1. Elizabeth Road – We have had six new starters in November and December 2018 and one new starter in January 2019, with a possible new starter soon. The plot situation is 1 x full plot, 3 x half plots and 1 x quarter plot. We have one person leave due to a long recovery after operations – they had not started on their plot as they were fairly new.
 2. Lamperd’s Field – We have had 6 new starters in November and December 2018 and 4 new starters in January 2019. Plot available is now 1 x full plot, 5 x half plots and 1 x quarter plot. We have had one person leave without starting his plot and not having paid.
- If this trend continues, all plots will be filled by the Spring.

(e) Report from Phil Williams, Elizabeth Road

Very little to report apart from there is still a big problem with fly tipping and dog mess. This is at the far end of the Elizabeth Rd allotments where there is some unused land. There are many bags of rubbish dumped over the gate which was cleared recently by the Council. Unfortunately now more bags have appeared, some black bin bags and some just carrier bags. Obviously we don’t know what is in them. Where do we go from here? Also on one part of the allotment path where Byron Quaile helped clear back an over grown hedge someone is not picking up after their dog. There is quite a lot there and the dog bin is just a few feet away. It was agreed that Ian would contact the Town Council and NDDC for advice, and to take action to remove the offending mess and erect warning notices.

Action: Ian

(f) Report from the Webmaster – Virginia Barnard

The revised website is now being hosted by a UK company called TSOHOST. I purchased the basic start-up package to host a Wordpress website at £84.00 which is for 2 years web hosting and one year free domain name (£5.99) WIX were going to charge £111.00 this year plus £18.60 for the domain name so I think we have improved considerably on that by hosting in the UK.

New address is <https://www.blandfordallotments.co.uk>

The website now has a UK address and is covered by a SSL Certificate. Hence the HTTPS at the beginning of the URL..HTTP is insecure and is subject to eavesdropping attacks because the data being transferred from the web browser to the web server or between other endpoints is transmitted in plain text. This means attackers can intercept and view sensitive data, such as credit card details and account logins. When data is sent or posted through a browser using HTTPS, SSI, ensures that such information is encrypted and secure from interception.

The committee members now have specific email addresses. So far we have

chairperson@blandfordallotments.co.uk
treasurer@blandfordallotments.co.uk
secretary@blandfordallotments.co.uk
webmaster@blandfordallotments.co.uk
info@blandfordallotments.co.uk

Others can be created for whoever needs one.

Unfortunately, the old site .com is still ranked high on the Google search engine so anyone just searching for “Blandford Allotments” will be redirected to the old address. So, to begin with, it is important that the new address is entered into the top search bar on the browser page. However, the more people looking at the website increases the statistics and probably in about 3 months this new site will rank in the top three

and the old site will disappear. If not, then there are various software options I can use to help with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

I do have a couple of issues regarding WIX in that I have not been allowed to access the domain details, nor will they do so on our behalf, in order to apply a redirect to send visitors to the new site. They were prepared to allow me to do so if we paid for another year website hosting at £111.00 + £18.60 !! Secondly, WIX decided to help themselves to Craig Whelan's credit card to pay for the next year's domain name, although I had cancelled it along with the website. Fortunately, after a lot of emailing and arguing, Craig was refunded the money.

The website will now go through a period of consumer testing so it is likely some amendments will have to be made in the coming weeks, but this is normal.

Blandford Town Hall should be notified directly of the name change and perhaps an ad in the Forum Focus might create some interest helping to push up the rankings. Ian will visit the Town Council. Ann will circulate the information.

Action: Virginia/Ian/Ann

(g) Upkeep of allotments – Dave Buchan

No report.

(h) Report from Social Secretary – Ann Edwards

Events this year, so far:

Coffee Mornings (all with Ian's raffle):

March 2nd - Mike Holloway - Sweet Peas and more....)

April 6th – Ian Ricketts – Growing Potatoes (Potatoes etc. will be on sale to start the 'Potato competition'

May 4th – Virginia Barnard – Preparing your soil, clearing, laying out, fencing etc.

June 1st - tba

No coffee morning in July. We have the barbecue instead on Sunday 7th July.

August 3rd - Tasting - Bring your baking (and recipe) for courgette, carrot or beetroot.

September 7th - Meet your Committee, prior to the Annual General Meeting plus judging for the potato competition (biggest weight from one potato).

October 5th - Malcolm Fowler - Mead 3 - More Making and Tasting

November 2nd - tba

BARBECUE:

July 7th (Sunday at 2 pm) - (Annual Barbecue)

CHRISTMAS GATHERING:

December 7th – Mulled wine and Christmas nibbles plus Grand Christmas Raffle

The possibility of competitions was discussed and it was decided this year to have a competition for the heaviest harvest from one potato. Competition rules will be supplied. Barbara to oversee.

Action: Barbara

(i) Report from Committee Member – Peter Brundish

Peter reported that over the last 10 years, the tractor has not been serviced. He recommends that it should be done and will get a quote.

Action: Peter

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The question of red and yellow card warnings was brought up. It was decided to wait until Easter to issue these.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – **Tuesday 19th March 2019 at 7 pm in the Potting Shed at Lamperd's Field.**

5. The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.