

## BIRMINGHAM AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS CONFEDERATION

### Minutes of Executive Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 at Bordesley Green Allotments

**Attendance:** Hester Blewitt - Ward End Gardeners, Dave Hubball - Thornbridge, David Read - Ward End Gardeners, Peter Thomas - May Lane, Len Tubbs - The Brambles, Ross White - Harborne Lane, Keith Yardley - Station Road, John Whittaker- The Leys, Dave Rawlings - Aldridge Rd, Cheryl Butler - Thornbridge.

**Apologies;** Clive Fenn- Birches Green, Sue Griffith - Harborne Hill, Luke Richards - Thornbridge, Joe Brown - May Lane

Observers: Yvonne Brooks - Pereira Rd, Chris Cullen - Ward End Gardeners

**Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> June meeting** accepted as a true record

#### Matters arising

**Flo Pickering Fund:** David Read has been in contact with Antony Downe at City Architects Dept and been told that negotiations are still going on about the Court Lane building, hopefully to be completed in next few weeks. Queries as to why capital works items like this are coming out of FP Fund when it's supposed to be for fencing, drives and new toilet facilities. D.Read to follow up with Antony Downe.

**Bank mandate changes** as agreed at last meeting. Dave Rawlings to sort out with H.Blewitt & P.Thomas as new signatories.

**Working group** set up at last Exec met in June and considered in more detail the proposed new structure and came up with 6 areas for subgroups and possible convenors. Agreed that these subgroups will now be set up and each Exec member would join 1 or more. Agreed also we would invite along other people from associations who have shown an interest and have experience and ideas to contribute.

	Working sub group	Remit	Suggested lead:	Exec members
1.	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Confirm our obligations and responsibilities</li><li>● Review organisational structure options (incorporation, charity, co-op etc) and recommend our future legal identity, draft organisational structure and outline Implementation Plan</li><li>● Design policies, strategies, specific objectives and rules</li><li>● Identify stakeholders/partnerships including working with BCC</li><li>● Identify risks, issues, resource requirements and job descriptions</li><li>● Training Plan</li></ul>	Ross White	Keith Yardley David Read Sue Griffith?
2.	Disputes Procedures & Area Advisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Agree standards, disputes process and procedures</li><li>● Conflict resolution procedure</li><li>● Coordinating and training Area Advisors</li></ul>	Hester Blewitt	Len Tubbs Yvonne Brooks + Area Advisors?
3.	Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Accounting processes and reporting</li><li>● Capital receipts</li><li>● Resources</li></ul>	David Read	Dave Rawlings

4.	Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Website maintenance</li> <li>● Facebook maintenance</li> <li>● Build a professional reputation</li> <li>● Manage the relationships and communicate with Stakeholders</li> <li>● Develop an outline Marketing Plan</li> </ul>	Clive Fenn?	Ross White
5.	Standards and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agree operational standards of working</li> <li>● Design, develop and maintain written procedures</li> <li>● Management Agreement with BCC</li> </ul>	Hester Blewitt or ANOther	Yvonne Brooks
6.	Annual Show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Run all aspects of the Annual Show</li> </ul>	Dave Hubball	Stewart Freeth, John Whittaker, Peter Thomas, Chris Cullen

The convenors of each group will need to organise an initial face to face meeting before the next Exec to plan out how they are going to move things forward. Agreed that use of emails, zoom or whatever, will enable groups to progress matters without the need for lots of face to face meetings. Subgroups will report progress to Exec meetings.

**Co-options.** Yvonne Brooks interested in joining the Executive. Agreed she would be co-opted

## Secretary's Report

1. Item of correspondence from David Draycott, Moor Lane association, on a new research project "Make the case for Birmingham's Allotments" – something similar to a study done in Brighton which demonstrated the economic and social benefits of allotment sites. Agreed to circulate this to associations as a request from the BDAC to support the proposal. Suggested a deadline for responses is included (need D Draycott to say)
2. Notices of re-entry. The Allotments Officer is sending copies of what is being sent to ploholders on recommendation from Associations, where they have failed to cultivate plots. Some accepting, some appealing to BDAC to intervene. Secretary is dealing and liaising with BCC and Area Advisor if one is available to investigate.
3. Complaints. A number of complaints have been lodged, mainly between ploholders and committees rather than between 2 or more ploholders. Complaints procedure is not a lot of help and training is needed for Area Advisors if they are to be expected to organise a mediation process which is difficult and needs skill/experience. This could be part of what the subgroup considers.
4. Newsletter. Barbara Smith has drafted the latest newsletter, and sent it through for proofreading. Agreed to circulate to Exec members for approval, deadline the coming weekend, so it can then be circulated to Associations. Agreed Association secretaries should be encouraged to forward it by email to all their members with email addresses. Agreed paper copies should also be made available.

## Insurance

Keith Yardley has been in touch with the Allotments Officer who has sent insurance policy document and interpretation

## **Treasurers Report**

Dave Rawlings reported a balance in the General Fund of £12,469.75 Income figures are £7,706.43 Insurance and Expenditure of £35.07. Balance carried forward £20,141.18

Deposit account £10,713.33

## **Any other business**

### **1. NAS Annual General Meeting - and Water Plus issues**

Ross White reported attending (as did Dave Rawlings, Dave Hubball) Cheryl \*\*\* and that it was interesting: amongst other things, problems in getting issues with Water Plus resolved were discussed Peter Thomas commented on email from the Allotments Officer who said she was having problems getting issues sorted with Water Plus too. David Read said there were different rates for different types of water supply i.e. agricultural or domestic. All of our supplies should be VAT free because sites are classified as agricultural BUT if some water is discharged into the drains (eg from washing) and toilets, Water Plus may add VAT to an estimated proportion of the bill. Keith Yardley said he had had constructive dealings with Water Plus and said that any issues should be handed back to BCC. Agreed that the Secretary would contact the Allotments Officer to clarify

### **2. First Aid Training Sessions**

The Secretary reminded people about the availability of ESF funds for first aid training for eligible people (pensioners, people on benefits or otherwise not economically active), only till the end of 2023, so was in the process of organising 4 one day sessions in different parts of the city, at allotment sites which have suitable venues. Some have already offered eg Boulevard (for North), Upplands (for West). Other possibilities include Bordesley Green (for East), Moor Green (for South). More details will be provided to those involved in organising.

### **3. Tombola at Show.**

Chris Cullen requested donations of items for the Tombola at the Annual BDAC Show. These can be brought along to next meeting.

**Date of next Executive Meeting; Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August.**

The meeting closed at 8.45pm