BDAC Executive Meeting Minutes
Saturday 18th January 2025 2 pm
Meadow Road Allotments

Present: Chairman: David Read, Sec: Hester Blewitt, Treasurer: Yvonne Brookes, Keith Yardley (minutes) (KY), Len Tubbs (LT), Kerry McGahey (KM), Stuart Guest (SG), Tony Webb (TW), Clive Fenn (CF), Peter Astbury (Observer, Meadow Rd A.A.)

Apologies – Dave Reece (DRE), Kate Martin-Smith (KMS). **Absent:** Cheryl Butler (CB)

Minutes of 12th October 2024: Agreed and approved

The draft minutes of the Half Yearly meeting with members on 23rd November 2024 were agreed and will be presented to the members at the next general meeting/AGM for approval.

Matters arising

a. **Code of Conduct**. The Secretary had received some alternative wording from an Exec member covering 3 points which were supposed to replace in full the draft Code already proposed and circulated. Discussion followed with various issues raised by members about what a Code of Conduct should cover (compared to say, Standing Orders) and whether the 3 points were already covered by the circulated draft Code. The process was clarified as:

- A member is elected to the Executive and signs the Code. The Code applies until the person leaves the Executive even if several years later. If a person leaves and subsequently rejoins the Exec they need to sign it again.
- If an Exec member has a conflicting schedule between BDAC Exec and their local association needs, the Chairman confirmed that an individual will need to assess the importance of each need and decide which to attend or send their apologies to.

Proposed that the Code of Conduct as already circulated is adopted. Proposer Treasurer, seconded by SG and approved by the members with one abstention.

Action: The Secretary to send a copy of the Code to CF for our website.

b. **Flo Pickering Fund and process.**

We are still waiting because the Bankruptcy Commissioners for BCC have still not authorised payment for the agreed works to begin.

Finance Report

a. The Treasurer asked all to submit any expense claims at least monthly and gave our current financial situation as:

Current account	£30,031.96
Deposit account	£10,907.52
Show account	£ 6,872.59

b. Bank Account

The Treasurer is awaiting notification from Lloyds Bank that they will open an account. She is aiming to transfer all our funds into one account with Santander before transferring all funds to Lloyds, but they are resisting it.

Action: The Treasurer will continue to liaise with both banks

c. A draft **Expenses Policy** has been circulated for comments. Concerns raised about Exec members who give a lot of their time but are excluded from claiming travel costs for Exec meetings in the draft policy; insurance cover if people share a car to attend meetings; allowances for cyclists as well as drivers; and how/when claims are submitted and processed. On the question of insurance, there isn't a conflict as the driver is not asking other occupants to pay for the journey and claims are for a volunteer's expense not for a salaried employee.
The following changes were agreed:
    - Exec members will be able to claim travelling costs to Exec meetings
    - Cyclists' allowance will be 15p a mile
    - Claims can be made monthly or less often if small amounts, and payments should be made before 31st March each year.

    Vote: Proposer the Treasurer, seconded by DR and **new policy with these amendments approved by members.**

d. **Honorarium Payments**:
These were paid last year to those Exec members requesting them in line with custom & practice (some didn't claim including Officers). In the light of adopting the new Expenses policy which includes travel expenses for Exec meetings, it was accepted that honorariums could be phased out.
Agreed: To cease paying honorariums to BDAC Officers and Exec members as from 1st April 2025
Proposer Chairman, Seconded by Treasurer

e. **Finance Policy and Procedures**
A draft for the BDAC has been circulated in advance of the meeting, decision deferred.
Action: All Exec to review and to send comments to the Treasurer for next month's meeting.

Draft Policies from MOSA

A number of draft policies (Health and Safety, GDPR, Equality and Diversity) were circulated before the meeting with a view to getting them agreed so they could then be used and distributed as 'officially approved' BDAC policies for Associations. The meeting did not agree to endorse any of them yet although it is urgent for Associations to get advice and assistance when they are being asked to produce policies as part of the qualifying process in grant applications. Discussion and concerns raised as follows:

a. Plot Management Manual: KMS is developing this further, before it is recirculated.

a. Health and Safety: It was agreed that it is impractical/unwise for us to progress this until BCC acknowledge their specific responsibilities within H&S (eg training for Committees not provided as per Management Agreement which has not been signed).

a. GDPR - Data Protection. Policies like this should first be checked out by someone legally qualified and in addition, we need additional clarification regarding data retention and deletion as the typical BCC response is to destroy everything once leaving office but there are situations when this itself is illegal and may be seen as aiding and abetting an illegal act.
Action: The Chairman to contact Liz Bunting the previous NAS Legal Officer (now retired) to ascertain if she is willing to act as consultant to BDAC on matters such as the legal implications of

policies which BDAC recommends to Associations. This takes account of her long experience and the fact that new NAS Legal Officer is less available and overwhelmed by the amount of work.

BDAC – Constitution/Rules and Membership

Prior to the meeting, a proposed new set of Rules was circulated – at variance with what has been sent to the FCA following the November 2024 half yearly meeting with members. At this meeting attended by Association Committee representatives and plotholder tenants, people raised a number of concerns about how operational practices and voting would work within and between the significantly different numbers of plot holders in member associations and BDAC. Having listened to concerns and investigated the practicality of thousands of plotholders being consulted and voting on changes, the Officers have put forward a new option which would retain **individual plotholders as the BDAC members** who would become **Shareholders with voting rights**, (£1 share) with Associations as **non-Shareholder members without voting rights** (Option 2). This would be an alternative to the original option to have Associations only as BDAC members (Option 1), with Associations each needing to appoint 1 representative and undertake consultation and votes at site level. The Secretary produced a list of the pros and cons of both options. Following discussions, it was **agreed that the Executive would now recommend Option 2 in the consultation with BDAC members.**

Proposed by: The Chairman, seconded by KY. The motion was carried with 1 abstention.

Action 1: the Exec to research and recommend to the next AGM operational practices for communicating with and dealing with up to 7,000 plot holders and their respective associations

Action 2: The Secretary to send Exec an outline of required changes to documents.

Action 3: KM to send YB a copy of "The advantages of being in the NAS".

BDAC logo

CF confirmed that he has been trying to get responses from website participants to different designs of our logo. DR circulated another design (which was used to produce business cards a few months ago, as a temporary measure) and this was **agreed by all**.

Action 1: The Chairman to send the artwork to CV. The design will then need to be shown on <u>all</u> our electronic publications and documents in accordance with our new corporate structure.

Action 2: to discuss the role we want our Facebook pages to portray at our next meeting.

Any Other Business

a. KY confirmed that he has now scanned all the 25 years paper minutes that were in the box handed over by Clive our previous Chairman. Although he was hoping to avoid reading them a quick observation noted that 23 years ago there was a discussion of a 25 or 50 year lease in negotiation at £3,500 pa. There are also references to way leave payments for the installation of telephone poles etc which may be profitable to us.

Action 1: KY to read all minutes and to try to identify on-going opportunities and obligations taken on by previous committees.

a. KY has also noted that Clive's box contains copies of several legal Agreements such as land registry docs.

Action 2: KY to review before passing to our current Chairman.

a. TW has again asked that meetings begin at 1pm, not 2pm. The Treasurer stated that she is unable to attend Saturday meetings until 2pm. After discussion, agreed to continue 2pm starts.

a. It was suggested we review/collate an asset register.

Action: All members to notify the Treasurer of which BDAC assets they are aware of which will then become an asset register and be part of the Finance report.

a. The Secretary reported that Donegal Rd allotments have now transferred to come under Sutton Coldfield Council management, but this info did not come officially from BCC.