BDAC Executive Meeting

Venue: Bordesley Green Allotments

Minutes of the Exec of 12th April 2025

Decisions and Action list: April 2025 Executive

Task	Who	When by
Obtain three insurance quotations for BCC Write to Val Lecky to put in writing/guarantee that we are reimbursed within 28 days of payment, or we will not pay it from our funds and ask the Council to pay it	DR DR	Urgent 16.4.25 Urgent 16.4.25
Matthew Boulton directly managed site: Contact BCC regarding site boundary responsibilities. Obtain a new lock and try to stop future theft by possibly welding it to a chain	 HB HB/TW	 Urgent 16.4.25
Social Proscribing Project: Raise issue of Project documents, Safeguarding policies (NHS) at Steering group, Advise Bordesley Green Allotment Association about Safeguarding policy	HB HB	Next Steering group meeting date tba
Bauhaus Bites project – volunteer needed to attend initial zoom meeting 12th May	HB + ANOther Exec member	ASAP
Circulate details of Veolia training sessions on recycling Add info to our website.	HB CF	ASAP
Find out more about purpose of the Chinese group's visit and then circulate info to sites to gauge interest in hosting visit	HB	ASAP
Include specific authorisation for BDAC's bank accounts in AGM agenda/minutes, identify new signatory for Show Account Engage new auditor and get auditing of accounts done in time for AGM Ensure AGM minutes specify bank approvals	DR/HB YB YB	ASAP 17th May 17th May
Circulate to Exec latest version of Rules for submitting to AGM Comment on latest version	DR All	16th April 18th April
Circulate details of Bham Community Matters workshops for small associations once dates agreed (to Exec & target assocns)	HB	ASAP
Supply finished policies which have yet to be legally checked, with a disclaimer, on request to associations. Item about their availability may also be advertised on our website with the same	HB CF	ASAP

disclaimer e.g. Plot Management Manual, GDPR (data protection), Safeguarding, Equality/diversity and inclusion,		
Send Steve Willis' contact details to CF	DR	ASAP
CF/HB to send House Style proposal to Exec members for comments when they receive it	HB/CF	ASAP
All to send pictures of good plots to CF who will then provide posters promoting competitions at next month's AGM	All CF	17th April AGM
2025 Competitions We need to drum up interest in entering esp Newcomers deadline April 17th. Consider details of the criteria to remove ambiguities e.g. can a plot holder be considered Newcomer if moving from a small plot to a whole plot from Oct 2023 etc? Most Improved Site' competition – criteria requested from judge Criteria and points Criteria and points for getting Gold, Silver etc awards: These details can be provided on request. Main criteria already explained on the website.	 All Events Working Group HB – RR CB HB	 ASAP ASAP ASAP
Send out AGM agenda to be sent out by 19th giving 28 days notice. Exec members to help at the AGM to register members/visitors, welcome people and circulate and help with refreshments.	DR/HB SG, DR, LT, KY	19th April 17th May
Put item & photo on Gospel Lane site defibrillator on website	DR/CF	ASAP
Circulate draft "New BDAC member Induction Briefing Note".	KY	19th April

Minutes

Present: David Read –(DR) Chair, Hester Blewitt –(HB) Secretary, Yvonne Brookes – (YB) Treasurer, Keith Yardley (KY - minutes), Clive Fenn (CF), Stuart Guest (SG), Dave Reece (DJR), Len Tubbs (LT), Tony Webb (TW).

Apologies: Kerry McGahey (KM), Kate Martin Smith (KMS). Not present: Cheryl Butler (CB)

Minutes of the Executive of 15th March 2025. **Agreed**

Matters Arising from March meeting: It was agreed that the action list should always include the responsible person(s) name (or All) and a date for completion.

Chair's Report:

- BOSF have regular meetings with Head of Parks Dept (Ed Currie) & another senior officer (Simon Needle) & invited BDAC to a zoom meeting on 26th March, which the 3 BDAC officers attended. We were told BCC is considering employing a full-time person in addition to Bernadette Wilson who works part time – this will be an extra call on the Allotment budget. Given that BDAC is trying to take on more responsibilities the future roles need to be considered. DR is monitoring developments.

- The BCC Commissioners are insisting on obtaining three quotations for insurance provision as the cost has risen substantially in recent years. All plots are assumed to have had no significant changes to their past insurance needs. The current insurance expires 22nd April 2025. As BCC took 7 months to reimburse us last year, it was decided to approach BCC asking for guarantees on earlier payment.
  Action: DR to research quotations, write to Val Leckey to put in writing/guarantee that we are reimbursed within 28 days of payment, or we will not pay it from our funds and ask the Council to pay it

Secretary's Report:

- HB referred to the circulated report on activities over past month. 14 associations were in contact since our last meeting with a wide range of issues and problems
- Direct sites- at Matthew Boulton a neighbouring vacant house has a wall which is about to collapse to which the site gate is attached. No-one knows owner of house & Allotments Officer has been asked to find out but hasn't yet. Also, as the gate lock is repeatedly stolen the general public can gain access. HB has been trying to get things sorted through a site contact who is prepared to take some responsibility, and we have a lock ready for use, but it needs welding to chain/post. TW has contacts with a company next to site.
  Action: HB to contact BCC to state that as the collapsing wall issue is a BCC responsibility
  Action: TW and HB to sort out fixing a new lock and try to stop future theft by possibly welding it to a chain and post.
- Growing Birmingham Project: discussions are continuing with BOSF and Social Farms and Gardens on preparing a funding bid for a project which will promote access and involvement in green spaces. This will employ one full-time Project Officer and BDAC is to benefit by having one day a week of the Officer's time on BDAC work. One element of budget is £8,000 per annum (over 3 years) for BDAC to cover costs of our involvement in the Project, in a total budget of approx. £250,000, but this risks being reduced or cut unless we can demonstrate why/how it would be used – eg on developing contacts, cost of IT support and value of time of BDAC Exec in working with the paid Project Officer
  Action: DR to write to other two partners about BDAC needs for budget
- Social Prescribing Project at Bordesley Green Allotments: BCC has released the ban on letting on this site on a temporary basis and has allowed the allocation of 14 plots for this two year project. The NHS funding (£85k approx.) has been held up, so the host NHS body Omnia Health Centre has not been able to recruit a Project Worker and begin the project on 1st April as hoped. This may be resolved in a week or so. As such the issues previously raised and project documents (PID, plan, budget etc) have not been requested yet. Discussion about type of referrals and risks for people on site if these are not appropriate. HB to also ask for a copy of their Safeguarding policy and responsibilities to ensure that current plot holders are not unknowingly at risk, and Bordesley Green Association would also need a Safeguarding Policy.
- A BCC officer Dominic Pender has invited BDAC to participate in 'Bauhaus Bites' which is a nature focussed project. We have been invited to an on-line discussion at 11am 12th May.
  Action: Volunteer from Exec requested to find out more information before we commit ourselves.

- Veolia, the refuse collection company have made contact to say they run training sessions on recycling in Stirchley and award grants of up to £1,000.
  Action: HB to circulate details, CF to add info to our website.
- We have received a request from a Chinese Group for them to visit a number of allotment sites to see how UK horticulture operates.
  Action: HB to contact for more details e.g. their objectives, then circulate to sites asking if any interested in receiving a delegation/visit.

Treasurer's Report:

- The financial report had been circulated before this meeting and no significant changes are expected before our AGM next month. The AGM will not be provided with this year's projected budget. It was noted that our expenses are likely to exceed our income, and we need to identify regular income sources. Santander Bank continues to change their requirements to release funds in our Show account.
  Action: next month's AGM minutes to specifically state the people authorised to manage each of our accounts. Additional signatories still required for Show Account and decisions to be ratified at AGM.
- BDAC auditors have not yet been appointed although we do expect the accounts will have been audited before the AGM.

Working Group Reports:
Governance:

- Liz Bunting is legally reviewing our latest draft of the governance documents, e.g. objects and powers of authority to ensure they include other responsibilities such as our BCC Agreement. The final versions should be finished in 4 days when DR will forward it to Exec members for **urgent** review. Comments must be received promptly in order for it to be circulated to members in the AGM papers issued on 19th April. The question of charging a membership fee may be considered at a later date.

MOSA:

- A report has previously been circulated on last month's activities. There were no questions. HB raised some key areas:
  Two workshops for associations on smaller sites (44 have less than 50 plots) planned to be delivered by Birmingham Community Matters in June/July, one in North, one in South of city. MOSA involvement in making workshop relevant to allotment associations.
  Action: HB to circulate details once known.
  Policies have/are being drafted. Given that associations are in urgent need in order to apply for third party funding the draft copies will be issued with a disclaimer until we have had them reviewed legally. They may also be advertised on our website with the same disclaimer e.g. Plot Management Manual, GDPR (data protection), Safeguarding, Equality/diversity and inclusion, available on request.

  The Working Group is also developing a Guide on keeping animals (hens, bees and rabbits) and Complaints policies and procedures for BDAC and associations. CF asked for a Guide for

individuals, so they know how to about their own association and an escalation process. It was noted that complaint investigation/mediation is very time consuming, and we have very limited resources available

- The MOSA priorities for next meeting in June are Dealing with Health and Safety issues with BCC and Security, fencing, paths and structures/buildings

Communications:

- CF confirmed the Cliffe Jones, Thorpe and Flo Pickering trophy competition information and entry forms are now on the BDAC website. Discussion about advertising them at AGM
- House style Proposal for BDAC is nearing completion. Attempts to find usable templates is proving difficult (HB/CF), but CF is still looking. Sample fonts demonstrated for comment; Fonts/colours need to consider readers with visual impairments, dyslexia
- **Actions**:
  DR to send email address of Steve Willis to CF;
  CF/HB to send House Style proposal to Exec members for comments when they receive it
  Anyone with pictures of good plots send to CF who will then provide posters promoting competitions at next month's AGM

Infrastructure:

- BCC has informed one site of 'imminent work' to begin, but no action has been seen to date.

Shows and Events:

- HB emphasised the 'Best Newcomer' entry deadline is next week 15th April, and for Best plot and Best Site it is 17th June. We need to promote interest in entering.
- The Working Group is asked to consider details of the criteria to remove ambiguities e.g Is a plot holder a Newcomer if moving from a small plot to a whole plot from Oct 2023 etc?
- Discussion about time/cost of judging – the judge for Best Plot/site is doing it on a voluntary basis, which may be unreasonable if we get lots of entries, but budget of £200 for competitions has already been set.
- Suggestion from the judge – he is willing to look at sites interested in entering 'Most Improved Site' competition next year. The meeting asked for suggested criteria
- Criteria and points for getting Gold, Silver etc awards: Cheryl is looking at these. These details can be provided on request. Main criteria already explained on the website.

Any Other Business

- DR read out a draft AGM agenda to be sent out by 19th giving 28 days notice. HB asked for helpers at the AGM to register members/visitors, welcome people and circulate and help with refreshments. Several volunteered
- Gospel Lane site defibrillator: agreed a picture will go on BDAC website
- KY is drafting an 'Induction Briefing Note' as a training aide for new members to this Executive and will circulate it before the AGM

The meeting ended at 16.15pm. **Next meeting is the AGM, Next Executive 14th June after AGM.**