

BHAF Site Rep and Association meeting

23. January 2019

BHAF: Mark, Simon, Josephina, Richard, Hannes

Council: Bruce Riach

Apologies: Jane Griffin, Rosie Barnard, Ted Chapman, Edy Daily, Jeff Woods, Hilary Standing, Jo Watson,

Discussion: BHAF proposal to ban glyphosate use on allotments.  
Reasons already given in recent newsletter, include health risks and risks to the environment and the strategy aim to encourage organic gardening and increase bio-diversity.

* Mark
  + Email poll suggests that 80% of plot holders who responded are in favour of banning glyphosate use. The poll was not extensive, 100 plot holders took part.
  + BHCC Councillors voted to recommend a ban on glyphosate usage 2 years ago, but it has not yet been implemented, since no cost viable alternative has been found
  + Show of hands: 90% of the room are in favour of a ban
* Bruce Riach (Allotment Officer)
  + Allotment Office not in favour of ban since those products are legal, a ban would be hard to enforce (and may not be legal?)– in short it would be too complicated and cumbersome
  + Instead Bruce suggested to encourage minimal usage (via reps/associations/shops)
  + The aim of increases Biodiversity is probably the best angle to take in pushing to decrease its use (See the Open Spaces Strategy) rather than the health concerns.
* Josephina (BHAF Committee)
  + Allotments are not the same as city gardens/parks and pavements – food is grown on allotments! In favour of ban
  + Also many existing allotment rules are hard to enforce or police (for example rules against harassment) but it does not mean that we should not have those rules.
* 2 site reps present were against a ban
  + Legal products, not enforceable, no alternatives on the market (apart from home frown methods like vinegar or hot water)
  + Some new herbicides do not contain Glyphosate, how would we know if the herbicide used was actually Glyphosate
* Simon (BHAF Committee)
  + We should be pushing to stop all synthetic herbicide use on food growing land not just Glyphosate.

* BHOGG
  + Agreed that it is a complex issue but supported the idea of a ban. Suggested the BHCC/BHAF should be bold and be trail blazers!
* In summary
  + Ban seems to be an unrealistic aim at present
  + Excessive use (or mis-use) should be an offence (and added to the rules)
  + Site reps/associations/BHAF should increase publicity of the issues and encourage plot holders to not use it – try harder, don’t ban it

**Allotment Donations:**

* The requests for donations which accompanied last year’s bills raised over £6k – good initiative £6k not to be sniffed at! will keep it going. Plot holders need to be thanked for their donations.

**Election Process:**

* 90% of the time there is no election, people are not rushing to take on this voluntary role. People rarely want to stand against current site reps as they are mostly very happy with them.
* In rare situations where plot holders are not all happy with their current site rep there should be a mechanism for them to be replaced.. Hence elections.
* When there needs to be an election, all plot holders need to be able to vote and the election needs to be transparent and fair – harder to do then say
  + BHAF and council need to review the current process and improve it. It is currently not satisfactory.
  + To reduce overheads/time spent on elections: Elections should only be every 2-3 years
  + We need to discuss whether elections should be done ‘all at once’ (perhaps using a postal vote which goes out with the invoices) or staggered, such that only 1/3 of the sites (potentially) have an election each year.
  + Need to find an economic way to contact plot holders
  + On sites without Associations it is the Council and BHAF who are tasked with organising the elections and we need to make sure they are fair, open, inclusive and transparent and protected from any interference.
  + Currently sites with Associations elect their own Site Reps. Only about 15-20% of plot holders are members of the Associations on some sites. When reps are elected via Associations, plot holders which are not Association members still need to have an open, inclusive and fair vote. This is harder for Associations to manage as they do not have the contact details for all plot holders. Nor possibly the resources to manage the elections in the way the Council would on sites without Associations. We can’t have a two tier approach where sites with an Association do not get the same open and fair and inclusive election as those without Associations.
  + Overall process needs to be reviewed, improved and tidied up
  + Council is looking for feedback from associations

Water saving:

* Lower Roedale wants to trial an electric water valve to shut off water over night
  + Should save water from hoses left on overnight (it happens!) and from leaks
* Bruce is in favour of trial. Wants to be involved to find out reliability/durability of solution
  + Plot holders should be informed of the measure.