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**Minutes of the 2017 BHAF AGM 29.3.17**

**Apologies:** none

**Chairman's report:**

Minutes of the last AGM approved

Mitigating cuts in the allotment service.

Rob Walker attended Forum Meetings. *Jim to report further*.

Forum meetings well attended with good feedback.

Site Reps Focus Meetings. *Feedback from Maureen Winder*.

Site Rep elections. *Feedback from Richard Howard.*

Rules Revision, ongoing. *Josephina working with DavidCooper and Jane Griffin*

Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill Hub.

Design students given the chance to design a covered outdoor meeting space adjacent to the hub.

Tight time constraints restricted the process and the ideas were not carried out.

However, it was felt to be a good opportunity to encourage future collaborations on different allotment sites.

Food Waste Initiatives around the city.

Love Activists feeding homeless and refugees wanted to involve allotments. Felt to be too problematic to spread city-wide.

Brighton Allotments hit the national media.

As part of the Brighton festival with a big feature in the Guardian, Marc Rees put on a promenade performance at Roedale Valley.

Allan ended with a personal item about growing dye plants and flax encouraging growing for experimentation.

**Treasurer's Report:**

**BHAF levy -**   
Includes, room rentals, web hosting and email, poster printing, communication expenses, postage, site reps expenses: **£1943**

**Initiatives for plot holders -**  
Workshops and kids' competition. **£200**   
Last year Apple Pruning workshops on several sites very successful.

**Development Fund**

This year we had £6000 allocated from the council for site developments across Brighton and Hove. We spent 45% **(£2730**) of the fund.

* + New roof at Moulescoomb Estate site (£700)
  + Manure box maintenance at Hoggs Plat (£195)
  + Notice board at Windmill Hill (£470)
  + Poly tunnel at Roedale Valley (£665)
  + Strimmer and gas cooker at St Louie (£250)
  + Design for new meeting area at Whitehawk (£120)
  + Community Plot Materials Roedale Valley (£253)
  + Tenantry Down Association get together supplies (£78)

This year only half of the money was used. If it's not used it can’t be carried over.

Asking for suggestions for the future.

**The election of BHAF Committee** voted/ carried.

**Mark Carroll: review of waiting lis**

203 vacant plots,

1038 on waiting list,

3044 total plots.

This is felt to be a healthy position.

**Jim Mayor: Report on Deputation**

* BHCC asked asked for help in identifying ways to make the allotment service cost neutral.
* The operating deficit of the allotment service in 2015/16 was £37K.
* A 32% rental increase could close the gap?
* A deputation to BHCC’s ETS Committee provides a transparent, apolitical & formal communication channel, and requires a formal response.
* Deputation submitted to ETS Committee 29th November.

Council want to make service cost neutral. Rob Walker suggested 32% rent increase.

Frustrated by lack of improvement to the service. These are the principles behind our deputation.

We agree that allotments should be as self supporting as possible.

**Our Principles**

* We recognise the council’s budget pressures.
* Generally support the view that allotments should be as self-sufficient as possible – but with caveats.
  + We need to protect access to allotments for all.
  + Our rents are already amongst the most expensive.
  + Raising rents isn’t the only way to bridge a funding gap.
  + It is unclear how current costs are calculated.
  + The relative cost (37K) is low for unlocked benefits.
  + Salami slicing isn’t the best way forward for BHCC.
* A new income related concession is needed to tackle in work poverty.

Allotments should be accessible to all including those in work poverty.

Ours are some of the most expensive in the country.

Costs are not clear.

Costs low in terms of wider budget.

Our deputation suggests:

A charge to join waiting list

Raise concessions in line with national retirement age

Opportunity to only take concession if needed.

Water costs £30,000 per year. Water leaks are big problem on sites across the city.   
Solutions; ongoing.

Investigate wider funding ops.

Institute efficient admin systems

Costs need to be clearer in future.

Council response:

Gas testing for water leaks taken place at Roedale Valley, next The Weald.

**Maureen Winder: report on Site Rep Workshops**

5 sessions to highlight concerns.

A role description for SRs was agreed in final session

DC hosting SR group training sessions; ongoing

**Questions** included toilets and waste on sites.

**Paul Campbell** explained Open Spaces Strategy

**Laurie Jackson** from Bug Life talk about importance of pollinators; hoverflies, bees etc.

Neonicotinoids disastrous effect.

How plot holders can help by growing useful plants for pollinators.  
**Beth Nicholls** from Sussex University asked people to sign up to ‘Team Pollinate’ to encourage and record pollinator behaviour. She will be visiting sites to ask people to sign up as well. The BHAF will help using Facebook and our newsletter.