

Craven Vale & Whitehawk Hill Allotment Society
2nd Annual General Meeting

Sunday 24 April 2016
The Mad Hatter Inn

Jane Hawkins	5 CV
Abby Hone	66 CV
James Gilderoy	37/2 CV
Jenny Embleton	118 CV
Emma Barnard	47/1 CV
Jane Griffin	46 & 47 WH
Tessa Pawsey	25 WH
Paul Skelly	36/2
Danny Ball	88 WH

Minutes of the 1st AGM, 26 May 2015

The minutes were agreed.

Matters arising:

- it was still hoped to arrange an archaeological tour of the site when Dr Matt Pope was available;
- Jane Griffin had been appointed CVWHAS representative to Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation;
- Dr Tony Spiers had completed a botanical survey of the site; no rare wild plants had been identified.

Chair's report

Jane Hawkin's full report is attached at **Annex A**. Jane's key points were to thank the committee members and other volunteers for all the hard work that had been put in over the year and to encourage more volunteers to help the Society to make best use of the Hub.

Treasurer's report

The Society has £225 available in operating funds. A full report is an **Annex B**.

Brighton & Hove Allotment Federation

Jane Griffin (CVWHAS rep at BHAF) reported on the BHAF AGM. Reducing council funding for the allotment service was the main topic of discussion. Water is the main cost for running each site and a number of water conservation measures were mooted including limiting the water supply to certain times of the day, seeking

Southern Water sponsorship for water butts and requiring new sheds to have water capture equipment. Suggestions for raising additional income included voluntary contributions (not supported), raising the concession age to 65 and charging an additional £10 per year.

Any comments can be passed to Jane to report back to BHAF.

All plotholders were urged not to waste water and to report any leaks to their site rep and to the allotment officer (allotments@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

Nominations for committee members

The following were nominated and elected unopposed:

Chair – Jane Hawkins
Treasurer – Jenny Embleton
Secretary – James Gilderoy
Committee member – Emma Barnard
Committee member – Nick Fry
Committee member – Tessa Pawsey
Committee member – vacant

'Save Craven Vale' campaign

The Planning Inspector has confirmed that Part 1 of the City Plan is sound in relation to planning law and relevant planning guidance and was subsequently approved by BHCC. As such, Urban Fringe Areas, including the allotment site, have been identified in the City Plan as having the *potential* for housing development. Part 2 of the City Plan process will include site specific inquiries in public into each site to determine whether or not they should be allocated for housing in the plan.

The allotment site is described as site 31. A [further assessment](#) of the site published in November 2015 shows that a wider area of potential has been indicated (see map, p93, chapter4), which now includes an area of the Whitehawk Hill site.

There is no timetable yet for consideration of the proposals in Part 2.

Hub spring and summer opening

The Hub will be open on 1 May for the seedling swap. Society members were encouraged to bring cakes etc for the event and to help out during the day. It was anticipated that the Hub would open every two weeks thereafter, depending on demand.

Amendment to constitution

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to improve financial control and transparency and is standard wording for small clubs. The proposed wording is highlighted in the constitution attached at **Annex C**. This will be voted on at the next meeting.

Any Other Business

All plotholders had been reminded that dogs should be kept on short leads at all times (rule 10.1) unless they are in an enclosed plot. Plotholders that fail to keep dogs on leads will be reported to the council, which could result in the termination of their tenancy.

There had been several recent incidents of unrestrained and aggressive dogs, including an attack on another dog. Plotholders should report any similar incidents to their site rep and to the council allotments officer (allotments@brighton-hove.gov.uk).

Butterfly Conservation

Jamie Burston from Butterfly Conservation provided information on identifying species and providing habitat to encourage butterflies and moths. Further information can be found at the [Butterfly Conservation](#) website.

Chair's Report

Chair's report on the year since the last AGM on 26/4/15:

Many thanks to fellow committee members who have been brilliant with ideas, getting the Hub going, supporting me in all sorts of ways. Special thanks to Emma and Nick who have kept our social media presence going despite there often being not much news to post on Twitter and Facebook. They have always managed to find something topical. We now have almost 1000 signatures on our online 'SaveCravenVale' petition, too. And thanks to James our secretary for the minutes and help with the agendas etc, etc – and to Abby, our treasurer.

Also many thanks to non-committee helpers Paul, Max and Andrew, who all contribute a lot to our allotment society.

AGM 26/4/15 – we took the first steps to elect site reps and a representative to BHAF committee – as per new allotment policy. These were ratified at the July meeting – Jane H & Pete elected as site reps for Craven Vale, plus Laura Timperley joined us as a new site rep. Pete, Jacob and Jane G elected as site reps for Whitehawk Hill. Jane Griffin elected as representative from our allotment society to BHAF.

The hub lock-up shipping container was erected and the shop opened. (Many thanks are due to Nick Fry in his role as 'director of operations'). We started a **Hub membership scheme** where members benefit from the Society's membership of Kings Seeds – being able to order seeds through the Society at a massive discount. (Many people took advantage of this, although some people didn't get around to picking up their seed catalogues – they are still in the lock-up). Jenny Embleton did a fantastic job as 'seed secretary', sorting out the foibles of King's Seeds brand-new computerised system – which had teething problems.

Hub official launch party, end of September, was a great success. A beautiful autumn day with many visitors, including children who took part in the drawing activity. We still have the results pinned up inside the lock-up.

Throughout the winter months the hub opened on the first Sunday of the month attracting plot holders and co-workers to have a cup of tea (and usually some cake) and a good gossip, share ideas on seasonal allotment jobs to do, etc. We had a swap shop where raspberry runners were donated, along with surplus squash and pumpkins, winter-sowing broad bean seeds, etc.

Weekly hub opening for the Spring/Summer is about to start. We need volunteers. Please put your name on the sheet. Next week is the **Seedling Swap** [*– Tessa explained how this would work*]

Plots etc – some people took advantage of the **new-ish policy on upsizing plots**. A plot holder with a 125 sq m plot can 'express an interest' in 'upsizing to take over the

other half of the original 250 sq metre plot if/when it becomes vacant. This is to fall in line with the new-ish policy of offering a choice of large and small plot size. Not always possible to do, of course.

The **late Autumn & Winter months** were not great on Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill. The **weather was dreadful for any winter work** on the plots. There were **several thefts of whole rows of crops** from the two sites – unprecedented in previous years. Pallets left on plots were used as ladders to get over the fencing. Many reports were made to the police and the promise was made of regular PCSO patrols at night. The most likely explanation for the thefts was the huge increase in homeless people sleeping rough near our two sites – hungry and desperate people taking advantage of ‘free’ food. But who can be sure?

The **January Allotment Federation meeting** at Patcham highlighted the **budget problems the allotment service is experiencing**, with many cuts being made to Council services in general. There was **a lot of discussion on the allotment subsidy**. Our city-wide collective **rents do not cover the cost of running and servicing the allotments**. An allotment subsidy has made up the shortfall in past years. Many thoughts on this, ranging from we should not be subsidised when huge cuts were being made to front-line council services, to any rent increase is totally unacceptable.

Also at the Federation meeting much talk on **water usage with the new electronic meters recently installed on all sites**. Our allotment rents scarcely cover the cost of water, let alone everything else. Water can now be switched on and off centrally and accurate records of water usage kept. A possible future policy might be to charge for excessive usage on a site – with the extra costs incurred being shared across all plot holders. A lot of discussion has happened on this topic. Personally, I feel that some people are profligate with water – even leaving hoses running unattended, discharging water into the ground. Perhaps a sustainable water-usage discussion/workshop needs to happen? E.g – always water in the morning or evening, not at midday. Use butts to collect water run-off from sheds and greenhouses. Never use a spray or use a hose un-held (both against allotment rules anyway.)

(At this point there has been no further information circulated on managing cuts to the allotment service)

February – a well-attended stand at **Seedy Sunday**, which included Tessa being interviewed by Charlotte from ‘Growing Wild’ on radio reverb – and a great interview it was!

Also in February – **the City Plan** raised its head again. The very good news is that Part 1 (the general overview) was signed off by the Government’s planning inspector. Had this not happened then all local control of the process would have been lost. She accepted the downscaled target figure of 13,200 new homes to be built, instead of the original figure of 30,000 +. In the process, the ‘Urban Fringe Assessment’ (where Craven Vale was first identified as a possible site for housing)

was revisited and the same useless land agent consultancy identified parts of Whitehawk Hill as being possible for development, too. We got much help in understanding the significance of this from the planning department and from Councillor Robert Nemeth from Hove, who is an expert on the built environment, and also bee keeper to the Carers' Plot on Craven Vale. It seems that City Plan Part 1 has no real role in deciding on specific development sites, that will happen when Part 2 of the City plan is looked at in detail in the future.

Allotment Federation AGM in April – **our delegate, Jane Griffin, was elected to the Allotment Federation Committee.** Congratulations to Jane. All of the discussion at the meeting was on gardening for wildlife and encouraging biodiversity. Bit of a change from the usual AGM!

Latest News: A beetle not recorded in Sussex since the 1970s was found on Craven Vale site, by nature-loving, wildlife-spotting plot holder Vicki. We had a visit from Graeme Lyons, senior ecologist at Sussex Wildlife Trust, accompanied by huge net, gps recording system, specimen bottles and a big plastic tray. The beetle was not found on this occasion, but Graeme did find some interesting stuff, including a rare snail he hadn't seen before. Vicki's beetle was officially ID'd by the County Recorder (via Graeme), using the excellent photo she had taken (and posted on Twitter). It is **Chrysolina sanguinolenta** or **Toad Flax leaf beetle**. Obviously, with City Plan Part 2 being looked at soon, our little beetle might come in useful in presenting our two sites having much wildlife and Biodiversity value, etc. (*More info on toadflax available at the hub.*)

Finally, very special thanks to Abby, who is stepping down from the treasurer role and from the committee. She has been an amazing treasurer – successfully bidding for grants for us, and has been a key member of the committee.

Jane Hawkins

24/4/16

Chair, Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill Allotments Society

Annex B

Treasurer's Report

At today's date meeting there is £436.29 in the bank.

£211.00 of this is restricted funds (i.e. payments received for key deposits – not available for general use)

£225.29 operating funds generated through shop sales/memberships.

Grant funds:

Environment Sustainability Grant Applied
for in Autumn 2015.

Award of £250 made on 20th January 2016. Monies were received in CVWHAS bank account on 23rd March 2016.

Re-reading feedback from community grants team, seems funding could also be used towards general running costs, however, for future bids CVWHAS need to make a clearer case re: how monies would be used more specifically. CVWHAS original bid made was to plant up the hub site with fruit trees etc to create a stronger 'demonstration' area for existing and future plot holders.

Recent donations are helping hub site 'develop' so suggest to incoming treasurer/committee that some of grant monies are used towards the following:

- ❖ Water butt/saving facility at hub, to demonstrate ease of harvesting water (pertinent given recent discussion re: water bills for site)
- ❖ Supporting measures for new creature found on site i.e. seeds that help sustain it, plant up hub accordingly to demonstrate to others how to support such wildlife/creatures

A simple Evaluation Report will need to be completed and submitted to BHCC asap re: how monies granted have been spent and other activities completed throughout the year in which the grant was given (2015/16).

Reference should be made in the Evaluation Report to how we have met conditions i.e. we have updated our Constitution with text re: financial management. It is also suggested that we give further thought to detailing 'decision making' and 'dissolution' in the constitution.

BHAF Development fund ideas 2016/17

- ❖ notice boards
- ❖ green roof
- ❖ water butt

Annex C

Proposed Amendment

Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill Allotments Society

Constitution

This constitution was adopted by 20 members of the Society on 30 November 2014.

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill Allotments Society, which can also be known as CVWHAS.
2. The members shall be all tenants and co-workers who garden at the Craven Vale and Whitehawk Hill Allotments on Beresford Road and Whitehawk Hill Road, East Brighton.
3. The aim(s) of the club shall be
 - a. to discuss matters relevant to the members
 - b. to agree and carry ways of improving the experience of gardening at the site, and
 - c. to communicate opinions shared by a majority of members to other relevant bodies.
4. The club shall be governed by General Meetings of members which will be held at least once a year.
5. General meetings will be advertised (at minimum) by notices placed at all entrances to the allotment site at least one month before the date of the General Meeting.
6. The club may select representatives to speak on behalf of the club to other relevant bodies, and to report back to the club from any meetings such representatives may attend.
7. The club's finances shall be administered as follows:
 - a. a bank account will be maintained on behalf of the group at a bank agreed by the committee
 - b. signatories to the account will be the officers of the association.
 - c. each cheque will require two signatures one of whom will normally be the Treasurer
 - d. records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given to each meeting
 - e. an annual statement of accounts will be presented to the Annual General Meeting, and
 - f. all money raised by the Association will be spent solely on the objects laid out in the constitution.
8. This constitution may be amended or extended by a General Meeting of the club provided notice of a **change to the constitution** has been advertised in accordance with rule 5 above.