

Notes from Barrow in Bloom AGM Meeting 02
held on 13th January 2023
Parish Council Offices

Present: Barrow In Bloom Officers:

Annette Richardson (AR) - Chair, Alison Rushton (AFR) - Treasurer, Liz Goldsworthy – Secretary

Bloom Volunteers - Karen Libby, Andy Northcote-Smith

Charnwood BC – Julie-Anne Byrne

Barrow Parish Council - Alice Gardham, Sandie Forrest

Canal & River Trust – Linny Beaumont

Barrow Gardening Club - Maggie Bellamy

Barrow WI – Alison Bowley

Description

1. Welcome and Apologies: Annette introduced Peter Proudlove, a committee member for Leicester & Rutland Bat Group who presented a brief update of his group's work in relation to our bat population. Bat Conservation Trust website good source of information on hibernation sites and bat box location.

Annette thanked Peter for his very interesting presentation and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were then made. Apologies received from Lin Webb of Barrow Open Gardens & BUSCA

2. Agree Notes from AGM01: The notes were agreed.

3. Summary of the Year to Date: Alison talked about the Wild About Barrow projects including bird and bat box placed around the village after advice from RSPB. The boxes have been inspected and most have been used successfully. Wildflowers were also sown in Millennium Park and Cotes Road.

Volunteers from the Footpaths, Litter Picking & Projects teams had 2 main projects during 2022:

- Bridge Street Amenity Area - working with local business with approval from Charnwood Borough Council they undertook the renovation and installation of new planters, refurbishment of several benches, railings, and the wall. Bulb planting, scrapping back and removal of tonnes of waste weed infested gravel followed by installation of new topsoil and grass seeds. Additional watering teams were needed during the drought to keep everything alive. A location for a new village commemorative bench was agreed. A new planter and bench were installed at Deep Lock.
- Railway Station Adoption – for any work to be undertaken our volunteers needed to have safety briefings and all ideas for improvements required approval by various safety boards before work could commence. However, despite these restrictions new pink planters were installed and planted up with colourful annuals which also required its own watering team. Volunteers also started improvements to the station such as fence painting and weeding.
- Other projects- utilisation of road closures for in-depth litter picking along Barrow Road. New planting at King George V Park - thank you to Maggie for plant donation. Holy Trinity Church Memorial garden - 3 benches restored with 1 further to be reinstated shortly, and the maintenance of rose bushes and beds.
- Press coverage and awards - litter picking, station adoption, Top Team Award won by the Footpaths Group, Green Flag and Rural Environment Awards also won.
- Over 1600 hours of volunteering hours during 2022. More than 50 volunteers supporting village activities.

Thank you to all volunteers involved with the above projects.

4. Financial Report: Alison updated the meeting on the funding situation, including various grants received and status of the bank account. Funding is available for 2023 to assist with current projects. Station Adoption hours can also be converted into funding – approx. £4k to date. Note: The Auditor signed off accounts were available prior to the meeting for inspection by those attended.

5. Re-election of Officers: All officers were happy to be re-elected and all were nominated, seconded, and unanimously voted in.

6. Future Plans: Wild About Barrow: - Alison discussed ideas for improving local biodiversity for Millennium Park entrance, Cotes Road verge, and Piets Close. The proposals will need to be taken forward with the appropriate Councils for discussions outside of this meeting forum. It should be possible to utilise current funding. Work with other community groups is needed to increase awareness and maintenance of our local bat and bird population, including family involvement.

Footpaths, Litter Picking & Projects teams: Annette confirmed that

- Footpaths Group will continue to meet every 2 weeks throughout the year continuing their successful partner relationships with Barrow Parish Council (BPC), the Canal & River Trust (CRT), and Charnwood Borough Council (CBC).
- Litter Picking Group will focus on Great British Spring Clean events.
- The groups will be working with CRT and CBC to continue improvements to Bridge Street Amenity Area including the introduction of new river side native planting, and removal of bramble from Piets Close, and towpath improvements at Deep Lock.
- Volunteers and CRT will also work closely on a Pennywort removal campaign, also liaising with Barrow Boating and other local canoeing groups.
- Volunteers will work alongside CBC and Idverde to improve local CBC maintained Green Spaces around Humphrey Perkins Schools. It is hoped to also engage with the school's Eco-Warriors.

Railway Station Adoption Group: Annette confirmed that

- The group will continue to meet at least monthly. All plans still need approval via East Midlands Railways (EMR) before work can go ahead.
- Platform 1 - sleepers to be installed along the embankment edging. Native drought resistant shrubs to be introduced once rain water capture and storage is installed.
- Platform 2 – the fence painting will be completed once the weather improves with artwork from local children to be installed.
- Bridge – EMR and volunteers hope to team up with Graffwerk to put street art on the internal faces of the connecting bridge. Local groups and residents will be involved to decide theme and colours etc.
- Bicycle Area - increase available lighting plus colourful artwork.
- Working with EMR to improve general maintenance.
- Sponsorship Development - local businesses to be approached to help sponsor improvements

7. East Midlands in Bloom 2023: Entry into the 2023 competition was discussed and all agreed it was too late to begin the collection of evidence from groups external to Bloom for this year. BPC also stated that their time was limited due to preparations for the Coronation.

It was agreed that entry for EMiB 2024 should be possible despite increased entry costs, and preparations are to be started to confirm residents interested in forming a committee. It was also agreed that a

Portfolio should be submitted with our entry so as many groups and events can be included regardless of the eventual judging route selected.

8. Any Other Business: Maggie confirmed that the Gardening club membership was approximate 50 people and their members were happy to continue looking after Jerusalem Island. The installation of the water pipe this year was most welcome. BPC are also to install a railing on the steps to ensure safety of their members. The club also asked for help with producing a video for the club and various ideas and suggestions were made and noted.

The WI garden on Nottingham Road suffered damage last year and changes have been requested including moving its location forward slightly and removing a substantial amount of soil to lower the height to ground level. CBC have been involved and supportive of the changes requested.

CBC confirmed that Hoops and Litter pickers currently on loan to Bloom via BPC can be transferred permanently for use by any Barrow residents.

Annette thanked everyone attending for their ongoing support; Barrow Parish Council for their support and funding, and Charnwood Borough Council and the Canal and River Trust for their continued encouragement and support.