

Notes from Barrow in Bloom AGM Meeting 03
held on 29th January 2024
Parish Council Offices

Present: Barrow In Bloom Officers:

Annette Richardson (AR) - Chair, Alison Rushton (AFR) - Treasurer

Bloom Volunteers – Honor Neale, Julie Binch, Andy Northcote-Smith

Barrow Parish Council - Alice Gardam, Cllr Sandie Forrest, Caroline Drake

Jerusalem Island Gardeners: Val Thompson

Charnwood BC – Julie-Anne Byrne, Cllr Claire Forrest

Description

1. Welcome and Apologies: Annette thanked everyone for coming and introductions were made. Apologies received from Liz Goldsworthy – Secretary, Linny Beaumont – Canal and River Trust, Alexa Stott, Cllr Hilary Fryer, Tilly Yates and Pat Moore – Nott Garden, Margaret Bellamy and Jeanette Hollis – Barrow Gardening Club, Sue Sharpe – Barrow in Bloom EMIB Committee.

2. Agree Notes from AGM02: The notes were agreed.

3. Summary of the Year to Date:

Hours	2,572 hours (up from 1600 in '22)
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Volunteers	61 different people, over 40 hours average
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Railway Station: Completed painting the fence at Platform 2. Weekly watering and weeding of planters. 100 Sleepers installed to form a continuous planter for colour throughout the year. Test piece of community artwork installed after workshops run with Barrow Scouts.

King George V Sensory Gardens: Lots of new perennial planting introduced to replace plants that were removed due to being oversized. Woodchip added annually. Weekly watering and weeding throughout much of the year.

Riverside View & Piets Close: Competition was held for a new name for the Bridge Street Amenity area with 425 votes. Annual painting of benches and planters at Riverside View, with newly painted benches at Piets Close. Weekly watering and weeding of all planters. Green Flag Award for 2nd year – 40km of riverside from Loughborough to Leicester. Bulb Planting – daffs, snowdrops, and crocus, donated by idVerde, with hedgerow species such as dogwood, dogrose, and hawthorn, funded via Magic Little Grants. *Post meeting addition: Memorial bench installed with over 60 plaques added.*

Towpath Repairs: A new path installed at Deep Lock with the CRT Towpath Team over 4 weeks in spring.

Deep Lock and Deep Lock Approach: Deep Lock continues to be weeded and watered weekly. Deep Lock Approach – volunteers cleared the remaining brambles and nettles on the riverside to plant a range of UK native species trees and plants to help support a more diverse environment. Wildflowers seeds sown likely to be lost due to high flood waters.

Bat Event: Working alongside idVerde and Leicestershire & Rutland Bat Group, we ran a very successful bat box making event followed by a walk in August.

Holy Trinity Church Memorial Garden: Annual painting of benches was supported by staff from COOP. Some weeding and watering of the roses and geranium throughout the year – plants chosen to withstand drought conditions

Nott Garden: Ownership of the garden has changed from WI. Old raised bed was removed, dug over and a new bed dug closer to the pavement for easier viewing and maintenance.

Millennium Park: New entrance area cleared in March and new wildflowers planted by WAB volunteers in Apr-May. Wildflower wave on the banking along Fishpool Way is improving each year thanks to volunteers

removing the arisings after flowering. Old wildflower area was cleared of lots of overhanging branches and saplings to bring more sunlight into the area to continue the improvements here.

Cotes Road Wildflower Verge: Volunteers scarified patches of land near the front of the verge, to sow seeds and young plants, but these quickly became overgrown with the more established thuggish grasses there. Half the area was strimmed and arisings cleared but this is becoming far too big a task for volunteers to continue and new methods of management are being discussed.

NEW - Pennywort Clearance: New task undertaken after donation of tools from CRT. Land and water-based teams were able to keep the canal section clear, along with the area around Barrow Bridge.

Footpaths Group: As well as maintaining a variety of footpaths, in and around the village, the team provide the main workforce behind lots of the individual areas supported by Bloom, be it Riverside View, King George's, or Millennium Park.

Litter Picking: No group events held in 2023 due to the success of individual solo pickers who keep the village parks and local roads clear throughout the year.

Wild About Barrow: Bird boxes installed in previous years were checked and most had been used. 3 appeared to be missing from the Holbourne Close area.

None of this could have been done without:

Volunteers: Who turn up week after week, in all weathers and for all types of tasks. A really great team to work alongside.

Parish Council: Thanks for continued support throughout the year, in terms of insurance as well as for all the cakes and refreshments provided for various volunteer events throughout the year.

Charnwood Borough Council: Thanks for all the community bins provided to our footpaths team, and continued support for helping our volunteers keep the village looking good. Thanks for the Members Grants funding from both of our Councillors.

Canal and River Trust & East Midlands Railway: Improvements the groups have been able to make are very much also down to the people we directly interact with to get the work approved. Both representatives wanted to also pass on their thanks to the teams involved.

4. Financial Report: Alison updated the meeting on the funding situation - We had total income of £5,179.02 for our financial year commencing on 1st November 2022. This can be broken down into 6 main areas as shown on the Financial Report.

Railway Station: The largest project for income was the railway station which received grants from Community Rail Network, EMR, BPC and CBC totalling £3,326. These were spent on plants, art supplies and equipment such as marine plywood, sleepers, and trugs to move topsoil. Almost all the money was spent - £3,283.48

Barrow Deep Lock Approach: The Deep Lock Approach had an income of £600. This was spent on a range of spring flowering bulbs and some native shrubs and plants such as dogwood, red campion and forget-me-not. The spend here was £421.25.

Bat Event: The bat event was very popular and the whole of the £265 was spent on material for participants to assemble and decorate the boxes.

Barrow Green Spaces: We were awarded a total of £628.02 (which includes £200 carried forward from the previous year, and £200 brought forward from this year) by Barrow Parish Council, for which we are very grateful. This was mainly used to improve King George V sensory gardens with various shrubs, bulbs, and

planting. Wildflower plug plants and seeds were also bought for the Cotes Road verge and the Millennium Park. £561.25 was spent on our green spaces.

Members Grant 22-23: The Members Grant of £500 from CBC was used to plant various plants in the village at a cost of £401.44.

Donations: We were lucky to receive £60 in donations which were used to buy some gloves and tools for the Barrow Footpaths Group and a few plants.

Claire informed the meeting that the Charnwood Councillors Members grant scheme was being replaced next FY with an alternative Community based scheme and would provide details once known.

5. Re-election of Officers: Annette and Alison were happy to be re-elected in their current roles and were nominated, seconded, and unanimously voted in. Liz had informed Annette prior to the meeting that she wished to stand down. Annette thanks Liz for all her work during her 3 years as Secretary. Prior to the meeting, Alison Bowley volunteered to be our new Secretary and was unanimously voted in.

6. Future Plans:

Footpaths Group: Tasks will continue to run every 2 weeks throughout the year, also supporting specific areas tasks as required.

Litter Picking Group: Special Flood Clearance group litter picks will be organised now the relevant safety gloves have been provided by CBC. Solo litter picks will also continue around the village and connecting roads.

Station Adoption Group: Storage Box to be installed for tools. Summer flowering bedding and perennials in the new sleeper planters, new Willow Hurdles to be made and added. New artwork on the fence from different community groups. A new Notice Board is overdue to be installed to show work completed and planned by volunteers with a view to encourage local business investment.

A replacement shelter for Platform 1 will be installed in March. Some sleepers will be removed as it will be recessed into the embankment. No shelters or seating to be provided for platform 2 due to the risk they can be used to gain access to the fast lines.

We will continue to work with Barrow Scouts and Community Rail to increase awareness of Rail Safety under 'Partnership for Change'.

- Riverside View and Deep Lock
- Deep Lock Approach
- King George V Sensory Gardens
- Holy Trinity Church Memorial Gardens

Project Teams to continue to plant summer bedding and perennials, and to weed and water throughout the year

Flint Lane Hedgerow: Approx 50 Saplings donated by CBC will be planted alongside the existing hedgerow that volunteers planted 2 years ago

Piets Close: New Wildflower area was identified in 2023 and left to grow rather than be mowed is to be seeded in spring with drifts of flowers. Details to be confirmed with CBC. Funding in place. Leicestershire County Council partnership scheme? Potential for inclusion in new scheme - Parish Pilot- to have more help from LCC for Volunteers to maintain the footpaths

Bat Box Installation: The bat boxes made at the 2023 event will be installed around the village in agreed locations to maximise the chances of them providing new homes for local bats. The makers of the boxes will be given details of where they have been placed.

Hall Orchard Primary School: Working alongside other community groups and businesses to help improve the gardening spaces within the school. Also looking at working with East Midlands Railways and

Community Rail Network to produce Rail Safety related course work that includes History, Geography, Local Landmarks etc, as well as a trip on the train.

East Midlands in Bloom 2023: Annette explained the Competition is due in the first 2 weeks of July. Dates confirmed with the judge allocated nearer the time. A small team (Sue S and Caroline) has been formed to create a portfolio and help decide a Theme and Judging Route and what areas to include to showcase the work done by volunteers in all related community groups such as those looking after the planters outside the community library, and the Nott Garden Team. We also hope to also include groups such as Barrow Scouts and Hall Orchard School.

We are planning to talk to groups such as Barrow Greener Living Group, Incredible Edible, members from the local Allotments within and around the village and Loughborough University to confirm if they wish to be included. This will hopefully lead to collaboration and sharing of ideas and knowledge in future years.

Val confirmed that the volunteers from Jerusalem Island would be happy to continue to be part of the Bloom entry. Alice informed the meeting that a short video taken on Jerusalem Island had been made and could be used for the entry.

Julie Byrne and Claire both offered support to the committee as additional members of the group alongside Alison Bowley who had offered prior to the meeting.

Post Meeting update: It is the RHS 60th Anniversary in 2024 and the Bloom Theme is Friendship.

7. Any Other Business:

Barrow Gardening Club and Open Gardens: Both groups have now folded/ceased to operate due to a shortage of volunteers being available to help administer the groups. Val also mentioned that additional volunteers were welcome to help on the Island.

Dog Fouling was discussed and information was provided by Julie Byrne on how to report it to Charnwood Borough Council for the Serco Waste teams to clear up.

https://vof.charnwood.gov.uk/form/auto/es_dog_fouling_report

Post meeting addition: River Dredging: Cllr Fryer sent in a question for Canal and River Trust about its local dredging schedule or policy. This was forwarded to CRT and the following reply was received: CRT carry out dredging to aid navigation and NOT for flood relief – this is the responsibility of the Environmental Agency. CRT will confirm if they (CRT) have any plans to dredge locally but suggest EA is contacted to confirm their plans for flood relief dredging.

General Comments: Volunteers present mentioned how much they enjoyed supporting the groups within Bloom and the amount of pride and pleasure it gives to them when walking around the village. Members of the Parish Council wished to thank all those volunteers that took part in all the different groups, both Bloom groups and the other community groups within the village.

Annette closed the meeting by again thanking all for attending and there ongoing support.