

BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Autumn 2020

Outdoor Meeting Wednesday 16th September at 6 p.m. on Millennium Green (Mountfield)

All BADAS members are invited to attend this year's AGM on the Millennium Green, next to Mountfield (Rax Lane).

We have decided to hold the event outside in order to enable us all to feel safer and more secure in these uncertain times. Bridport Town Council have kindly offered to provide us with a gazebo or two, so that even if the weather is a bit inclement, we can still go ahead. I'm sure that as gardeners you'll all be able to dress appropriately for the conditions! Some refreshments will be provided, and there will be some seating for those who require it.

We will be covering the usual business of an AGM – election of officers, presentation of accounts etc. but this year **we will also be marking the retirement of our outgoing Chair, Colin Sparkes**, so I hope as many members as possible will try to be there to wish him well.

Mandy Rathbone

Colin Sparkes

I hear that Colin Sparkes is standing down as Chairman of the Bridport & District Allotments Society, after nearly 22 years on the committee – a very fine achievement.

I met Colin way back in 1997. I had recently taken on an allotment at St. Mary's, Skilling, and I had to pass his plot (no. 1 – which he has to this day) in order to access mine. We were soon on nodding terms which rapidly developed into casual acquaintance, then regular conversations and friendship.

The creation of the Bridport Allotments Society was very much the brainchild of Tim Crabtree, who had been involved with the Bridport Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and was in the process of creating the West Dorset Food and Land Trust (now the Local Food Links). A fellow 'allotmenteer', he had been exploring the idea of setting up a body to promote allotments and protect existing sites as well as the rights of tenants. One has to remember that in the 1980s and '90s interest in having an allotment had waned, and several councils in Britain were selling their sites to companies for housing and other developments. Tim was anxious to avoid such a fate in Bridport.

Tim approached Colin and me, and we met in Tim's tiny office on the first floor of the Literary and Scientific Institute before its closure and eventual refurbishment. It was there



that we hatched our plans and prepared a draft Constitution. As there were three of us, and we needed three 'officers', the decision was made (I can't remember if we drew straws!) that I would be Chair, Colin would be Treasurer and Tim took the role of Secretary. The die was well and truly cast!

The next step was to hold an inaugural meeting. Fortunately, from the start Bridport Town Council was supportive of the Society, and we were able to use a small room within the Town Hall in the early days. From memory, 8 people turned up (5, plus the 3 of us!), so, in November 1998, Bridport Allotments Society was officially launched.

Colin has, without doubt, been the mainstay of the Society since its inception. As Treasurer, he set up the system of recording members and the membership card (virtually unchanged to this day), and through his contacts he was able to organise % discount on purchases for members at Groves Nurseries and Humphries Homestyle. The Society changed its name to Bridport & District Allotments Society in 2004, "to persuade and advise the adjacent Parish Councils on the establishment of allotments", and he was instrumental in setting this up.

In 2005, Colin took over as Chairman, and (apart from a brief 9 month interregnum in 2008, when Neil and Pauline Ford jointly took on the Chairman's role) continues in that position today. Whilst I'm sure he would be the first to admit that he has been blessed with a very supportive committee, the truth is that it is Colin's enthusiasm, dynamism and expertise in horticultural matters that has made "BADAS" the success it is today, with some 200 members. Its original remit – to protect existing allotment sites – has been well and truly met, with Bridport Town Council adding to its stock, and recently, Bradpole and Symondsburys allocating more land for allotments.

Enjoy your "retirement", Colin, and thanks for the last 22 years!

Bob Driscoll, August 2020

Become a Food Security and Climate Change Ambassador

As we look toward uncertain futures, amidst an increasingly uncertain present, local communities can play a major role in resilience and adaptation.

In December 2019, *Seeding our Future's* founder, Alan Heeks, set up an open meeting in Bridport, inviting local organisations and individuals to explore how we could adapt to the growing impacts of climate change. The SoF team are focusing on *Food Security*: exploring how local producers, consumers, and distributors can cooperate and innovate to strengthen the local food economy, in particular its resilience to climate change.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the fragility of the food system and the need to shorten supply chains. There has been a threefold increase in purchasing from our local farm shops, as well as a sharp rise in the numbers of people growing veg at home or on their allotments.

Wouldn't it be great if there was a food security and climate change Ambassador in every allotment in the Bridport area? Being an 'Ambassador' means being prepared to share your experience, and to experiment with climate adaptive growing methods and produce.

So far, Ambassadors are Rachel Millson from the Symene Community Land Trust allotment, Lin Scrannage from the Flaxhayes community plot, Julie Penfold from the West Road allotments, and Sarah Wilberforce from the Edible Garden at St Mary's, with gardeners Tia Perrella and Burt Mitchell. They have much experience to share.

If you'd be happy to join in, please get in touch with Candida

Seeing Our Future has published a pioneering report **Growing Through Climate Change, which explores** climate adaptive growing methods and indications of crops which will be suitable to the changing climate in the Southwest. We are investigating a Dorset Diet – whereby most of our food could be sourced within a short radius, and the feasibility of creating a local food hub in Bridport.

To find out more and to subscribe to an occasional e-newsletter, visit <https://futurescanning.org/local-communities/>

Candida Dunford-Wood

To all BADAS Members

On 16th September we will be holding our Annual General Meeting – more details on the front page of this newsletter.

This year our Chair of many years, Colin Sparkes, has announced that he will be retiring from post. Traditionally all BADAS committee members stand down but state their willingness to be re-elected unless there is someone else who wishes to take over. This is an opportunity for BADAS members to have a real say in what BADAS does for its members.

So, we (the committee) are looking for BADAS members who would like to be part of the committee for the year 20/21. If, in addition, you would also like to take on a committee role – Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor etc – we would love to hear from you, preferably in advance of the AGM.

Even if you are not able to come to the AGM, you can still be elected in your absence, if we know you want to take part.

Of course this year some of our regular activities have been curtailed – no Summer Walkabout and BBQ – but hopefully 2021 will see a return to something more like normal.

We look forward to hearing from you.

(No) Potato Day 2021

Just one further note – we have heard from Pennard's that they will not be holding their usual Potato Days in 2021 due to ongoing Covid 19 issues.

However they have come up with some suggestions and we can discuss these on 16th September too.

Bridport and District Allotments Society

Membership of the Bridport & District Allotments Society costs £2 per annum, and gives entitlement to discounts e.g. on some items at Groves. Our Membership Secretary/Treasurer Mandy Rathbone will be pleased to receive your subscriptions at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] For information please contact Mandy by email [REDACTED]

Receiving the newsletter: We now send out the newsletter, meeting agenda and minutes by email — if any member is unable to receive these by email, please contact the Secretary, Lynne Atkinson, on [REDACTED] to receive a copy by post or hand delivery.

Website: visit our website at:
www.bridportallotmentsociety.co.uk