



**Bridport Community Orchard Group**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held via Zoom (hosted by Ian Bark)**  
**On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Jenn Baker, Ian Bark, Paul Arthur, Michele Read, Alison Todd, Robin Boston, Luisa Orza, David Hawkins, Will Austin (Town Council Town Clerk).

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Chair Jenn Baker welcomed all to the meeting (9 people that included the Chair). Apologies from Daryl Chambers (Town Council Town Surveyor) and Louise Finnis.

**2. Minutes of Last AGM Meeting - Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

Approved by Ian Bark and seconded by David Hawkins as an accurate record of the meeting. Jenn reminded the meeting that due to Covid 19 we had been unable to hold an AGM in 2021.

**3. Chair's Report (Jenn Baker)**

I ended last year's report hoping that 2021 would see us gradually getting back to "normal" again. Well, it's turning out to be a slow process.

As we all work outside, the general maintenance of the orchards have not been impacted upon too much although we were still working under the "Rule of 6" at the beginning of the year when the tree pruning took place. Before we started pruning we had a request via our website from the Hilfield Friary in North Dorset for some scions (cuttings) of our local trees for their newly planned orchard. We were only too happy to oblige and wish them all good luck for a thriving new orchard.

Sadly, the standard Bryanston gage succumbed to canker and had to be removed but we do have another one being trained as an espalier on the easterly fence which we will keep a close eye on and hope it doesn't go the same way. A new tree has been purchased to replace the gage – this time a damson which we don't currently have in the orchard. We've also bought a dwarf Stella cherry which we shall fan train in the allotment.

Due to restrictive Covid regulations, and also a diminished committee, we took the decision not to hold our usual events this year. Of course, we still produced our lovely apple juice from this year's harvest so we booked a stall at the Bridport market in October and another at the Christmas market in December. We sold the bottled juice along with home made cakes and biscuits and preserves (well done to our creative volunteers!) and a selection of plants. We also had bags of our tasty late season apples for people to try. Both events went very well so we shall most likely have the stalls again in future years.

Happily, we continue to get many compliments from the people who come and enjoy the orchard in all seasons which makes all our work worthwhile.

The Community Allotment has progressed well this year as people gradually came back after the lockdowns. This year we've replaced one of the allotment sheds which was falling to pieces and once again Danny and Ian made a magnificent job of the base preparations before the shed was constructed. It is now fitted out with all sorts of useful hooks and shelves to store everything neatly away. Work is in progress to install guttering and a water butt at one end then the task will be complete.

As always may I extend grateful thanks to Daryl Chambers and Will Austin at Bridport Town Council for their continued support in keeping the Community Orchards, both at St Mary's and Jubilee Green, pleasant places to visit. A special vote of thanks to the Council's ground staff who, amongst many other tasks, installed new seats and benches in the orchard replacing the elderly ones that had been there since the start in 2010.

Thanks also to Sally Lloyd and Michele Read who have stepped down from the committee this year. We hope they will both continue to be valued volunteers. Finally, a big thank you to all our volunteers, including the Orchard committee, without whom these valuable green spaces would not be able to continue.



#### 4. Treasurer's Report (Ian Bark)

Sadly 2021 has once again been an extraordinary year thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic and it has inevitably had an impact on the Bridport Community Orchard Group in a number of ways, not least financially.

The table below gives the comparative position in our Current and Deposit accounts at the end of 2020 and 2021.

|                              | End 2020         | End 2021         |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Account              | 797.23           | 664.36           |
| Deposit Account              | 2,002.94.        | 1,103.53         |
| <b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b> | <b>£2,800.17</b> | <b>£1,769.89</b> |

We began the year in a healthy position with £2,002.94 in our deposit account. However, this included £735 in restricted funds which was used towards the purchase of a new allotment shed. The new shed cost £1,199.00 which halved the funds available in the deposit account. The good news is that we do not have a need for similar large item purchases in the next few years. The funds available in the deposit account will cover any emergency spending needs.

Our total income for this year was £1,453.25 and our expenditure £2517.83. When the cost of the purchase of the new shed is factored in at the end of this financial year we achieved a small £89.42 operating profit. This is down to the money raised through the sale of our apple juice and other produce at two farmers markets. Thank you to all those involved in the juicing and peopling the market stalls.

We also received a generous donation from the Northover family following the passing of Hazel Northover, a regular user and lover of the orchard.

Despite the challenges I believe we have been able to hold our own financially. When the cost of known spends such as the new allotment shed are factored in all in all we end the year in a healthy financial position.

The 2021 accounts have been signed off by a qualified auditor.

Finally, Jenn thanked Ian for his diligent work as Treasurer (a view echoed by all present), and acknowledged that he had inherited the "perfect model" from David Hawkins.

#### 5. Election of Committee (Ian Bark)

Ian took the lead on this item. He stated that the committee (6 members) had effectively stood down, and that Michele (one of the 6) was resigning forthwith. Ian asked Paul if any individuals had put their names forward to be members of the committee, and Paul stated there had been one application from Louisa (Lu) Orza. The five remaining members (Ian, Jenn, Paul, Robin and Alison) would be pleased to continue to serve. Ian asked the meeting to confirm that they were happy for the re-election of the five committee members plus new member Lu, and there was unanimous confirmation from all those present.

#### 6. Any Other Business and Questions and Answers

The following was raised:

- Robin asked when the officers of the committee would be elected, and Jenn said this is done at the first committee meeting after the AGM, which this time would be 2<sup>nd</sup> February
- Michele thanked everybody for the lovely gift and card she had recently been presented by Jenn
- Ian said he would distribute the electronic version of the new Newsletter to all the committee and all volunteers
- Will said he wanted to take this opportunity to thank all the committee and all volunteers for their dedication to keeping both orchards in such good shape. He said that anti-social behaviour at Jubilee Green seemed to have quietened down of late. He apologised that he had missed Wassail due to family commitments



- Will said that he was very pleased to say that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town Council and BCOG had been signed off by the Town Councillors at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022. He thanked Jenn and Paul for the hard work they had recently put in to ensure it accurately reflected the individual and joint responsibilities taken on by the two organisations
- Robin thanked the Town Council for the new benches they had supplied to Jubilee Green, which are much appreciated by the visitors to that orchard
- Jenn mentioned that there had been far fewer troublemakers visiting the orchard at St Mary's Church Field during the last year
- Robin thanked Jenn and Colin for dedicating so much of their time to the orchard, and in particular for Colin's mowing. He said they were a credit to Bridport
- Will said that he would ensure a supply of festival plastic re-use cups would be made available to BCOG. Ian said this would be a good contribution to our plastic free status
- Paul promised Lu an email containing some background information on the orchard and its management

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm. Minutes written by Paul Arthur, and approved by Chair Jenn Baker on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022.