

## BRIAR ROAD ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION (BRAHA)

### ANNUAL REPORT 2022 -2023

**Introduction.** This report covers the period from July 2022 to the end of June 2023. The BRAHA Committee has decided that due to poor attendances in previous years an Annual General Meeting will only be called this year if enough plot-holders request one.

**The Committee.** The current members of the Committee are: Alan Charles (Acting Chair), Tom Crosland (Hon. Treasurer), Graham Day, Peter Edwards, Helena Fogel (Minute Secretary), Alison Horwood, Dennis Leigh (Site Co-ordinator), Philippa McCabe, Ben Renton (Hon. Secretary), and Gill Ware. New committee members are always welcome. Alan Charles remains the Acting Chair until a permanent Chair is appointed. All committee members are willing and able to stay in post for a further year. BRAHA Committee Members are always available to deal with any site-related problems and queries that may arise. To contact a committee member details of their plot numbers can be found on the notice boards near the Andover Road gate and outside the hut and on our website <https://e-voice.org.uk/braha/email> or email [briarallotments@gmail.com](mailto:briarallotments@gmail.com) . Alternatively a message can be left at the hut. The Committee meets once a month to review site issues and plan plot activities.

**The Site.** Most site plots are presently, or in the process of being, let. The council Allotments Officer regularly inspects our site and has written to those whose plots are giving cause for concern requesting that immediate action is taken to improve them, failing which eviction notices follow.

**The Finances.** As at 30 June 2023 BRAHA had a total of £4663.20 in the bank, with£1400.00 of that balance allocated to Plot 35.

**Community Hut.** The Community Hut has been re-opened post-covid and is again accessible to all site plot-holders. A First Aid kit is held in the hut. Please make sure that you are familiar with the hut entry code and the way the lock works in case you need to gain access in a hurry. Speak to a committee member if you do not know the hut entry code.

**Fund raising.** It was decided not to attend the 2023 Twickenham May Fair this year. Instead the Committee was able to raise funds with the return of our pre-Christmas social in 2022 and two seed, plant and tool sales in April and May 2023. Attendances at all three events were high and the plant sales in 2023 were very successful. It is intended to have our 2023 pre-Christmas social later this year, to which all are welcome.

**Accessible Plot (Number 35) – The Raised Bed Project.** Work has continued during the year on the project to construct several raised bed mini-plots for use by plot-holders who no longer feel able to manage a full sized allotment. The site has been cleared and levelled, 8 raised beds of two different heights have been constructed and filled with top soil, and a donated shed erected. The beds are ready for use and one plot-holder took up residence before leaving due for personal reasons. Future plans include the erection of a greenhouse\* and a polytunnel. The committee extends its thanks to

the many volunteers who gave their time to get the project off the ground, especially those who assisted in moving over 10 tonnes of topsoil from the Andover Road gate and adjacent pathway into the beds. Anyone interested in exchanging their full-sized plot for a raised bed on the accessible site should contact a committee member. (\*completed post report period)

**Wildlife.** Our site remains home to a wide variety of wildlife – some welcome, some not – birds and mammals predominating. Plot-holders are asked to do whatever they can to ensure that this diversity is maintained and supported.

**Volunteer Days.** Each year the committee organises volunteer days to ensure that the site is kept looking presentable. Much effort this year has concentrated on establishing the accessible plot but we shall continue with the more routine jobs like entry-path weeding and compost bin emptying as the year progresses. The more volunteers we can muster the easier the tasks become, so if you can spare an hour or two when the call comes we shall be pleased to see you.

**Allotment Officer.** We are pleased that the Council has appointed a new full-time Allotments Officer with adequate support staff. Her name is Jo Rogers and the committee has established an excellent working relationship with her. She inherited a significant backlog of work and problems and has worked hard to clear them. Plot inspections and follow up action has resumed, the waiting list is undergoing a thorough review, and each allotment site – including ours – has been visited to learn about the problems and issues each face. We look forward to a long and productive relationship with Jo.

**BRAG (Borough of Richmond Allotment Group).** The Association has two seats allocated on the BRAG committee. BRAG is an umbrella group of all the allotment sites in the Borough which meets to discuss issues common to each site and to liaise with the Allotments Officer. Our representatives aim to learn from the best practices from other sites and to impart our experiences of running our own for the benefit of others. For example our communal compost bin facilities has been visited by several site representatives interested in setting up their own, and interest has been shown in copying our accessible plot idea.

**Summary.** Post-corona virus our site is fully functional again and continues to be well worked. The Associations' finances are sound, even without the contribution from the May Fair, leaving us in a strong position to cope with any unforeseen problems which may come our way. We welcome the many newcomers to our site, some of whom have faced a big challenge preparing their plots for cultivation, and we look forward to seeing the remaining beds on accessible plot number 35 occupied in the near future.

**Footnote.** The Committee has agreed that this will be the last Annual Report. The introduction of the monthly newsletter is felt to be a better way to keep plot-holders informed of events etc.