

Bulletin

October 2026

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The Future of Allotments Survey

Allotments are often seen to be something of a Cinderella service for local Councils, which is to say that they are typically viewed as a low priority so rather neglected and overlooked. However, as more and more Councils, including Bath and North East Somerset, formally acknowledge a Climate Emergency, it is important to remind them of the important role that allotments play in promoting sustainability, encouraging biodiversity and building resilience to climate change and that is before we add in their contribution to local food growing and provision of green space.

The Association's representatives are working hard behind the scenes, lobbying local Councillors and Council Officers, to make sure that we achieve proper recognition for the contribution allotments make to environmental objectives. We feel that with appropriate management and investment we can make an even bigger contribution in the future. To make sure that our discussions with the Council reflect the priorities and views of plot holders and those on the waiting list for allotments, we asked the BANES Allotment Officer to send out our short questionnaire. If you have received his email and have filled in the questionnaire, then many thanks. If you missed the message, there is still time to complete it (closing date 5th October 2026). The link to the questionnaire is [here](#). We will let you know the findings.



Trading Hut

The Trading Hut will be open from 10.00 to 12.00 on Saturday 10th and 24th October 2026.

Don't forget to submit your seed orders by 31st October. If you haven't yet collected a King's seed catalogue, you can get one from the Trading Hut.

Date for your Diary

AGM 7th November 2026

Venue: Museum of Bath at Work
Time: 6.30 for tea and cakes prior to a prompt 7.00 p.m. start. The guest speaker will be announced shortly.

Summer Fun: The Health, Activity and Food (HAF) Project



Left: Contributions from LCE to the HAF programme.



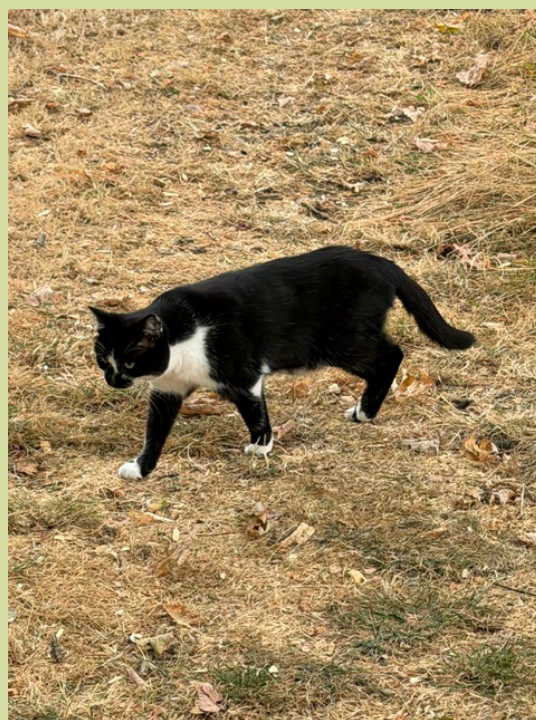
Right: Discovering the delights of fresh sweetcorn

This summer the Association was involved with partner organisations in a local Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) project. The HAF programme, funded by the Department of Education, aims to provide healthy food plus enriching and fun activities during the school holidays for children of Reception to Year 11 age that meet the eligibility criteria.

Bath Allotment Association collaborated with CropDrop and other HAF providers to set up some growing and tasting experiences for those on the programme. Produce from the nearby allotment sites was donated and compared with supermarket offerings. The children were invited to taste different fruit and veg, share their thoughts on whether they thought the food came from a supermarket or had been grown locally, and explain why they thought this. The sessions also covered how fruit and veg are grown, why they look the way they do, why they might taste differently, how fruit and veg are transported and the distance they might have travelled, as well as packaging that is used. The kids loved popping pea and bean pods, comparing cucumbers, tomatoes and apples and giving their opinions on what they liked and disliked.

BATH ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

This Month's Allotment Cat



A feline friend visiting the King George's Road allotments on the site open day during our Allotment Trails weekend. The hot summer obviously took its toll on the paths.

If you have a photo of a pet that hangs out on your allotment, do [send it in](#).

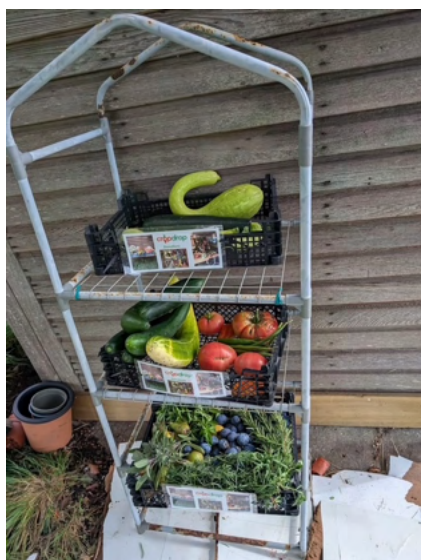
They also learned a lot while having fun. A big thank you to Fiona Bell from CropDrop, Maria, Andrew, Charlie, Sally and Mike from BAA plus all the other allotmenters that helped make these worthwhile activities a success.

Update on CropDrop

Despite the absence of rain this summer, members managed to keep contributions flowing to CropDrop.

Bloomfield, High Common, Lower Common East and Monksdale continue to supply partner organisations on a regular basis again this year.

Genesis Life Project who partnered with the Claremont site, unfortunately, has been unable to sustain collections this summer so Claremont and Larkhall are now supplying New Oriel Hall. A big thank you to all those who have contributed produce to the scheme and helped with the collections and deliveries.



The CropDrop collection point at LCE



Fabulous Success for Oasis Pantry

One of our CropDrop partners, Oasis Pantries has been awarded a £272 m grant from the National Lottery. The Pantries provide low-cost, high-quality food to local residents who qualify and have two centres in Bath – one in the Roundhill Centre at Southdown and the other at the Oasis Church, the Paragon. You can find out more about their activities and successful bid [here](#).

Spotlight on Foxhill Allotments

For those who aren't familiar with Foxhill Allotments, they are a single strip of allotments between Hawthorn Grove and Bradford Road, alongside a grassed open space popular with dog walkers and locals. This is one of Bath's smaller sites with only 10 plots and a long waiting list, officially quoted as 4 years.



Views of the Foxhill site supplied by plot holder, Carol Stone

Improvements to the whole site were mooted several years ago by B&NES Council, the landowner, and a masterplan was drawn up, to include more allotment plots, some communal planting beds and orchard trees. However, the plans were never implemented. In the meantime, there has been substantial loss of allotment plots in nearby Combe Down creating even more demand for plots on this side of the City. As you can imagine, the Association was delighted to hear that the previously planned improvements, including additional plots on the site, were finally going ahead. Unfortunately, closer inspection of the plans revealed several revisions that detract somewhat from the original intent. Objections to certain aspects of the new design have been lodged and we await the outcome. You can find out more about the proposed developments [here](#).

Our thanks to Carol Stone for updating us on this site and monitoring what is happening with the proposed developments.

Unfortunately, we don't have a site rep at Foxhill at the moment. If you are willing to take on this role, do please let us know. In the meantime, any queries can be directed to Erica at chairman@banes-allotments.org.uk.



Welcome to our new site
representatives on the
Brookfield site



We are delighted to welcome Les Gower and Betty Bhandari as the new representatives on the Brookfield site. They can be contacted by email [here](#).

Recent Events and Activities

A Lovely Late Summer Afternoon at the Annual Flower and Produce Show

The sun shone again for this year's annual flower and produce show held in conjunction with Claverton Down Horticultural Society (CDHS) – their 82nd annual show. A glorious display of fruit, vegetables, flowers, artwork, baking, preserves and much more filled the marquee and our members featured large among the prize winners. Music played, teas and cakes were consumed, pets paraded and many interesting stalls visited. All in all, a fine traditional afternoon out for all the family. Thanks to CDHS and all the volunteers for keeping the tradition going. The event is always the first Saturday in September so why not start planning your entries for 2027.



Left: Multiple prize winners Heidi and Daniel who are based on Bloomfield site. Right: Some excellent carved vegetables alongside the entries in the homemade wines, spirits and preserves categories.



A clean sweep by BAA members in the beetroot category!



More Water Butts and More Compost

Following calls for expressions of interest, the Association has again organised deliveries of water butts and compost. The water butts are offered to members at a heavily discounted price, thanks to the "Water My Plot" grant. Charlie at the Trading Hut in collaboration with site reps has organised bulk deliveries of compost from Muck and Mulch to interested sites that have vehicle access. Thanks to all those who volunteered and gave up time to organise these deliveries.

Our multi-talented members

Many of our members are multi-talented. Not only do they grow their own fruit and veg but they also create fabulous craft items.



Tanya with her BAA monkey winning first prize.



Jo with her amazing straw creations

Many congratulations to Tanya Lock who won first prize in the 'small textile projects' category at the Annual Show with her wonderful BAA monkey. Tanya is a member on the Monksdale site. SS Great Monkey came into being when Tanya was teaching someone how to crochet. Having swapped to a smaller crochet hook, she was surprised at the difference this made to the sizing. Hence the monkey's full name Surprisingly Small Great Monkey! Tanya says SS was great fun to make and dress in an embroidered BAA t-shirt with finishing touches of flat cap and pencil behind his ear.

We were also amazed by the talent of milliner, Jo Willis, a member on the Bloomfield site. Jo specialises in period hats and bonnets for film and television and, as you can see from the straw work on her stall at the Annual Show, her skill is astonishing.

You can find out more about Jo's creations [here](#).



When a tree branch fell across the doors of the Trading Hut in early September, we thought we weren't going to be able to get at the items stored inside in time for the Annual Show.

Fortunately, Gerard and the Parks department came to the rescue, removing the very heavy branch so that we were able to extract the things we needed!



STOP PRESS: THE NEW LOCAL PLAN

The Council launched its final public consultation on the Draft New Local Plan on 18 September. **It closes on 30 October.** You can view the plan and the [consultation portal](#) on the Councils website. This is the final stage before an examination by an Inspector, in the long process of formally adopting the New Local Plan. The most important issue in everyone's minds will no doubt be the locations that the Council has selected for large scale housing development.

The provision of **Green Infrastructure** (which includes allotments) is an important element of the Draft New Plan. The Association submitted a number of comments to the last round of consultations (the Options Consultation) last year. I'm pleased to say that some of these have been accepted, especially some of our nominated Local Green Space designations. However other omissions will need further representations. I am currently working on them now.

One key issue is that in relation to **New Open Space Standards** (Appendix 2, para 6.10, page 7) the provision of allotments on site by a developer will only be required on sites for 200 houses or over. Many of the newly allocated sites will fall below this level, and in those cases a payment in lieu is said to be acceptable. We all know that this system simply doesn't work because the Council cannot find the land for new allotments.

The **New Open Space Standards** also state that travel distances to an allotment site should be 1.2 km or a 20 minute walk. Currently it is 900m or 15 minutes. This change has not been justified, nor discussed with the BAA. Your opinion on this would be welcomed.

Finally, the Councils much awaited **B&NES Open Space Assessment** can be found in the Evidence Base (third item). This 168-page paper is a classic example of number crunching. I haven't had time yet to digest it, but I noticed in Table 6.3 it concludes that 86% of households in the Combe Down Ward have access to allotments. **Hmm.**

Overall, allotments and local food growing figure very low in the scheme of things. Policies in the current Local Plan protecting existing allotments and requiring provision for allotments in future developments are being kept (or saved). However, it remains in doubt as to whether the increase in demand for allotments caused by the massive increase in house building could possibly be satisfied using the current policies.



Let's provide a co-ordinated
response to the draft new local
plan

The public is being strongly advised to coordinate responses. The BAA committee will therefore be writing a response on behalf of our members.

I would welcome any feedback you may have on this document or anything else you may want us to say on your behalf.

[Jacky Wilkinson](#)

BAA Planning Officer