

# Annual Report

## May 2021



This “year” has been a short one as we get our AGMs back into the spring calendar, Our last report was in September 2020 so since then our monthly meetings have been on zoom with the core management team being reliable, creative and as well as moving projects along. They have all been open meetings and it is great when members can join us bringing their ideas, questions, solutions and their company.

The notes from all the meetings have been emailed out to members so we hope this enables you all to feel involved with the process and in touch with what is happening in each portion. Our Facebook Page is beginning to gain some traction as I get to grips with the difference between a page and a profile If anyone would like to add pictures of their Blakeney Hill Growers activities do please add them or send them to me to add so that the 117 followers can enjoy the day to day beauty of our hillside meadows and the fun we get up to.

Kate Wyatt has stepped back from being a part of the management group and the goat portion in preparation for moving on to a new chapter of her life, I would like to say that her vision and commitment is a large part of why Blakeney Hill Growers is here today and to express my deep thanks and appreciation and wish you and Michael all the best in your new adventures. I know you will still be in touch and continue to be a part of our social fabric.

We are applying for Awards for All Money with the aim of starting an Orchard portion and a tool library as well as maintaining and improving the fences and garden beds. If successful then we will be getting to work from mid August on this and hope that more people will join us to take advantage of these new portions. We currently have 12 households involved on an active weekly basis and several others that drop in now and again. There have been several enquires from households interested in what we do and a few more that have signed up as members, a big welcome to them and I am sure we are all looking forward to working and celebrating the seasons together in person more over the coming year.

*Beki Hoyland*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I took over from Richard last year, and I would like to thank Richard for the fantastic work he has done in looking after BHG accounts. Even though we are only a small organisation, we have to submit our accounts to Companies House every year and they are open for public scrutiny.

This year (April 2020 – March 2021) we made a small loss of £146, but fortunately we still have around £1000 in our accounts, due to the fundraising efforts of the committee, and everyone paying their fees on time.

I look forward to working closely with BHG this year (I am in the bee portion) and see us growing stronger as a community organisation, and involving more people in fun and environmentally sustainable activities.

*Steve Shaw*

## Bees

Last summer was not a great one for honey production, nationally and for us. Our usual dividend of three jars plus of honey per portion member was reduced to one jar each. However we were able to generate two new colonies by splitting existing hives and we picked up a swarm.



This doubled our productive colonies to six plus the top bar hive, all of which survived the winter and are now building up towards this year's honey flow. Given better weather for the next critical eight weeks should see us with a decent honey harvest. Read the bee reports on the web page to see how our ladies perform. This year, with the reduced Covid restrictions, has seen more of the portion coming to our bee inspection sessions. I am grateful for their support.



*Richard Andrews*

# Garden

In spite of the unusual weather patterns and two lockdowns we are now emerging into a late cold spring together again as a group once more, and recently joined by a young family with five children. We managed to keep the garden growing working in pairs and communicating through texts and messages, and the outcome has been really successful, for the garden and for our mental health.



The garden area is looking well under control and a 'dead hedge' has been created to provide a controlled store of cut undergrowth allowing natural decomposition and a haven for wildlife, locking up carbon instead of releasing it into the atmosphere in traditional bonfires. The empty vegetable beds have been mulched with manure and compost then covered over to suppress weeds until ready for the new season crops. With each year the heavy clay soil is improving.



We have been concentrating on extending the harvest through the winter with the polytunnel providing fresh salads; the leeks are just finished, chard and purple sprouting still being harvested; fresh shoots of Good King Henry and rhubarb are now coming available, broad beans are not far behind, and peas and potatoes have been planted out. In the polytunnel the first tomato plants have gone in and new lettuce planted.



The cold weather has made seed germination tricky this year but we have shared out the seed to start off at home and despite some losses between us are bringing on lots of plants for this years harvest.

Red Kite have been seen once again soaring over our heads and lifting our hearts.

*Pauline Winstanley*



# Goats



I took over the goat portion from Kate in September and have enjoyed taking on more of the responsibility. We milked through until December, this is a picture of Sol, (9) learning to milk during half term when he came to work for a couple of days, he is keen to be a farmer and wanted some experience.

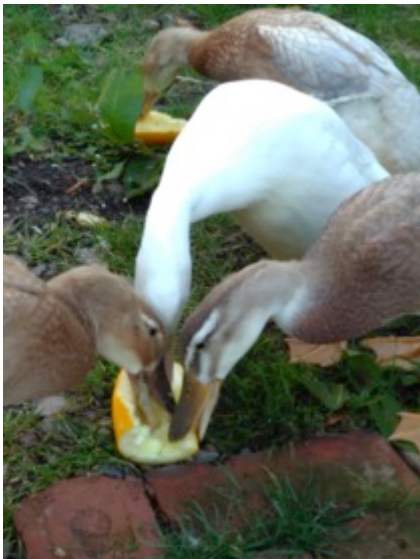
We spent time beating, cutting and rolling bracken on the field in the autumn and have made a good connection to a farmer in Awre who has an “unimproved”

meadow that he cuts for hay and is happy for us to buy off the field this coming June. Ami and Ava are about 12 years old and looking for retirement so will be going to stay in the beautiful grounds of a long stay hospital in South Wales with some donkeys where they will have all the attention and tit bits their hearts could desire. It will be odd on the field without them but we are getting 2 goats on loan over the summer that are in milk so milking will recommence this weekend and with luck Blossom and Fern will Kid just in time for the summer holidays and so we should have milk through to Christmas again.

The goat team has 7 households involved but we have room for another milking team/person each week.



# Ducks



We have 5 laying ducks and 1 drake, they are all laying and when we make sure the magpie does not get to the eggs before us we have a good supply. There are four of us in the duck portion so room for more to join us.

They are lovely characters and as you can see here quite partial to an overgrown marrow.

*Beki Hoyland*