

# **Bisley Community Composting Scheme CIC 09114883**

## **Annual Report: July 2020 – June 2021**

BCCS continues to be a successful and well-respected community scheme and recognised as a good local example of the circular economy. We celebrated our 15<sup>th</sup> birthday in November 2020 with a specially designed card.

The pandemic affected our operations from July 2020 and the site was only open by appointment in June 2020, fully open in July 2020, closed from January to March 2021, then open only by appointment until fully opening again in April 2021.

Despite COVID19, annual membership renewals have increased again to c150 and renewals are still coming in. To compensate members for a significant number of closed months we now run our membership annual renewal cycle from June to June.

During 2020-21 our allotment holders have become key beneficiaries of the unsieved compost, thus fulfilling one of our original aims for the scheme. Our unsieved and easily available compost – free to all allotment holders - has been highly valued because deliveries of manure were not possible during restrictions, and commercial compost was either not available or badly delayed by the national demand for compost at a key time for growing. Furthermore, awareness of the environmental impact of peat extraction and commercial compost containing peat has increased over the year, enhancing the community's appreciation of our locally derived and peat-free compost. We believe that if it had not been for COVID19 our income from our bagged compost would have been higher this year.

BCCS Directors agreed that BCCS would support Bisley's new Climate Action Network initially through our peat-free campaign and our interest in supporting those who "grow their own" with our compost. Climate Action Networks have renewed interest in community composting schemes, so we have received many requests for advice during 2020-21. As personal contacts were reduced through COVID19 we have initiated Zoom sessions and email advice to those interested in setting up their own community composting groups. Local initiatives in Brimscombe & Thrupp Parish, Chalford Parish's "ChalCAN" and Wotton Climate Action Group have all revived, and we have hosted visits as well as Zoom sessions. We have received interest too from further afield including a Leeds University MA student researching community compost (including food waste) schemes in his area, hosted a Zoom session with the West Lancashire Allotments Federation climate action group, with the Glencaple (Dumfries & Galloway) allotments group, and an incipient national community composting network. Two directors participated in the UCL Big Compost Experiment that resulted in a Cheltenham Science Festival digital presentation (with an audience of 200) and latterly a webinar organised by the Royal Chemistry Society. Another Director participated in a Radio Gloucestershire interview about composting toilet systems.

We continue to seek collaboration and funds to support research into our carbon footprint, including a failed collaborative bid to the National Lottery Climate Change fund with Stroud Transition Town.

We have a new Duke of Edinburgh student helping with site work this year.

Our Demonstration Beds are growing healing plants this year. The demonstration composting area continues to interest gardeners and our "Comfrey Elixir" demonstration tube is being well used by allotment holders. The biodiversity attracted to the scheme and surrounding hedgerows continues to thrive, attracting worms, farmland birds, slow worms, grass snakes, and hedgehogs.

We look forward to enhancing our peat-free campaign, creating more available peat-free compost, and welcoming more educational and community groups to our site again.

Thanks go to our part-time worker whose enthusiasm is a great credit and much appreciated, to our shredding team Nigel Rogers and Chris Load (now retired), and to the machine support for shredding and sieving provided by Alan Evans.

One new Director of the company – Martin Brown – was appointed during the year.