

Wendover Ashbrook Allotment Association

Newsletter – Autumn 2017

This has been a somewhat unusual growing season; with a slow start followed by a period of very hot weather that caused fruit to ripen early and many vegetables to mature a couple of weeks earlier than usual. I know that many of you enjoyed heavy crops of potatoes but mine were not so good this year. My carrots, cabbages, beans and sweet corn have compensated though, so we'll not go hungry.

Our allotment site looks excellent at this time of year, with fine displays of flowers and productive fruit and vegetable plots that are often commented on by visitors. The recent site inspections by our secretary John Currell and his team show that the condition of the site is steadily improving and very few plots are in need of additional maintenance.

MANAGEMENT

The business of managing the allotments in terms of tenancies also falls to John Currell and, as we are approaching Rent Day he has asked me to include the following message:

“Are you enjoying your allotment experience so much that you would like to take on a larger plot?

On the other hand; is your plot becoming too much for you – would you like to have a smaller holding? “

In either case, the Secretary would like to know as soon as possible. Not later than Rent Day. We have a waiting list and, to be fair to everyone, we would like to identify and allocate vacant plots as soon as possible and well before winter sets in. You can contact John by email (j_m.currell@ntlworld.com) or in person on the allotment.

SITE MAINTENANCE

The central driveway and grass parking area have again been kept in order by the volunteer mowing group. This system works well and contributes greatly to the overall quality of the site. If you would like to join the volunteers please let us know.

Francis Biggerstaff and Robin Beattie are frequently on hand to offer advice and support on practical matters, such as how and where to site a shed, and they also maintain the mowers, rotavator and trimmers. If you don't have your own mower remember you can hire one for just £1 per session to help you keep the paths around your plot in good condition.

This year we experienced several periods of windy weather that caused some damage to sheds and other structures. One or two compost bins were relocated by the wind, one of them even damaging my vegetable cage. It is important to make sure that shed roofs are securely attached and that loose sheets of material are weighted down before the autumn storms arrive.

We can partly alleviate this problem by making sure that our boundary hedge adjoining the field is maintained at a sensible height, for example two metres. Trees on this boundary should also be preserved unless they are becoming dangerous. If you have any concerns or questions regarding the trees or hedge please contact us. Our maintenance team (Francis and Robin) will then inspect the site and determine what can be done. .

WEBSITE and NOTICEBOARDS

The website (wendoverashbrookallotments.weebly.com), which is maintained by Rebecca Miller, contains a wealth of helpful information about our allotment association, recipes, tips on allotment growing (contributed by John Marshall) and a number of useful links to other sites. These provide information on the use and effects of pesticides, fertilisers, weed killers etc and can help you to make an informed choice on how to garden. Whether you choose to become organic, embrace the 'no-dig' technique or wish to encourage pollinating insects there is plenty of advice available.

The notice boards are used to post contact information, copies of our regulations and details of upcoming events.

RENT DAY

Rent Day this year will be on **Saturday 30th September** and Neville Morton will be at the allotment garage to receive your payments between 9:30 and 12:30. We hope to be serving coffee, tea and cake, and look forward to seeing you there. You might also consider taking along excess produce and swapping courgettes for runner beans for example.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Several Social Saturdays were arranged by Derek Patton this year. These were a good opportunity to sample some excellent cakes and bacon butties as well as having a chat with fellow gardeners. The summer barbecue, organised by Jenny Summerfield, was held on the 13th August. The weather was fine and we had an enjoyable evening despite low numbers of attendees. We now have two large barbecues so hopefully more folk will turn up to the next one. Thanks for running this Jenny and for the delicious homemade fruit tarts you supplied.

MEETINGS

The next Committee Meeting will be held on Monday 30th of October. Please let the Secretary or me know if you have any items you would like to be brought to the attention of the committee.

The shareholders **Annual General Meeting** will be held in the Library Room at 7:30pm on Friday the 10th of November. All plotholders are invited to attend but only shareholders are entitled to vote on any matters during the initial, formal part of the meeting. This will be followed by a social event, which this year will include a presentation on the web-site and wine and nibbles.

Bob Bulpett – Chairman WAAA

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