

Wendover Ashbrook Allotment Association

Newsletter – Spring/Easter 2022

After some very mild weather March ended with a cold snap and snow. This was just in time to coincide with the blossom appearing on our plum tree. Hopefully some hardy insects have already done their job and we'll still get a crop.

Many of the plots are in good shape and early planting of potatoes is under way. Broad beans are in evidence on quite a few plots, as are garlic and onions. I wish the jackdaws would stop pulling these out as they don't ever seem to eat them but simply use them for amusement.

Our AGM, was held in St Annes Hall on Friday the 19th of November 2021. There were twenty-one attendees and five apologies. Two new shareholders were welcomed to the Association making a total now forty-four..

Your committee and officers of the Association, listed below, were happy to continue in their roles for a further year and were re-elected en-bloc by a show of hands.

Bob Bulpett (Chairman), John Currell (Secretary), Neville Morton (Treasurer), Sharon Peters, Peter Lockett, Wayne Griffiths, Alison Woods and Margaret Winstanley. Additionally, Matthew Wren will attend committee meetings as Website Administrator.

MANAGEMENT

Our Secretary, John Currell, takes responsibility for managing the allocation of tenancies, monitors the site with regard to the condition and utilisation of plots (with regular site inspections) and keeps tenants informed of ongoing issues by email. As you will know there has been considerable damage to our car parking area and the driveway leading to Cold Comfort Farm. The new owners of Cold Comfort have volunteered to make good the damage and John will be liaising with them to ensure that this project does not disadvantage us or increase our maintenance costs. Although our annual expenditure is generally covered by income from rents and manure sales, our financial reserves are not substantial and at our recent committee meeting it was agreed that our rent should be increased to £3 a pole from September 2022. This is still considerably lower than the rents charged by local authorities.

Our rules allow tenants to erect modest sized sheds and greenhouses and also to construct raised beds and similar structures that assist with plot cultivation. There has been a growth in the number of larger shed and structures in recent years and this has reduced the proportion of cultivated land. This is taken into account during regular site inspections. Please remember that the tenancy agreement you signed requires you to contact John for advice and approval before starting any new construction. Additionally, it is clear that we now experience very strong winds at almost any time of the year. Tenants must ensure that structures are stable and well supported and that loose items are secured to avoid damage or possible injury.

We do presently permit bonfires on our site. This is on the condition that fires are only lit when the wind is blowing away from the houses adjoining our site and at the end of the day, preferably at sunset. Definitely not on a sunny afternoon when our neighbours are likely to be enjoying their gardens.

SITE MAINTENANCE

Committee members Alison Woods and Wayne Griffiths look after issues concerning site maintenance and will organise working groups of volunteers as required to deal with repairs to fencing, driveways etc. We are fortunate that Francis Biggerstaff and Robin Beattie are still

frequently on site to help with advice and perhaps assist, for example with starting the communal mowers. The efforts of all the maintenance team are entirely voluntary and much appreciated.

The communal muck heaps will be topped up when weather permits and supplies become available. The charge for muck remains at £1.20 per barrow load.

GRASS CUTTING

Keith Waterman has circulated a new rota for the volunteer mowing team who look after the central grass roadway, the parking areas at each end of the site and the area around the garage. This team does not mow the pathways around individual plots and you are expected to keep the pathways around your plot reasonably level and mown regularly. If you don't have your own equipment, you can use the shared mower and strimmer for a small donation to cover petrol cost.

WEBSITE and NOTICEBOARDS

Our website has been changed to <https://ashbrookallotments.com/> where you will find all the old useful links and more, including details of upcoming events, items for sale and handy hints.

Matthew Wren, our Webmaster has worked hard on this and would welcome contributions. We also now have a Facebook page that you can find at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ashbrookallotments> This can be used for posting comments and matters of interest to other plot-holders.

Details of meetings and forthcoming events are also posted on the notice boards by the gates and on the central garage.

CORONA VIRUS COVID-19

This nasty virus appears to have been largely controlled but it is still affecting all our lives. We must continue to take due precautions, such as using hand sanitisers and not spreading infections.

SOCIAL EVENTS

On a happier note, it has been agreed that the Social Saturdays, organised by Derek Patton, will be held on the second Saturday of each month in 2022, i.e., on the following dates; Saturday 9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, 13th August and Rent Day on the 24th Sept. Volunteers would be most welcome to assist and provide cakes.

GROW TO GIVE

The weekly produce collections for the foodbank are planned to start again in June. As you know, we at Ashbrook have been staunch supporters of this project over the last couple of years. With the economic climate as it is, the need for support for the foodbanks is going to be even more crucial. So, it will be much appreciated if we can all try to grow a bit more and regularly contribute to the Sunday produce collections from the garage.