

Wendover Ashbrook Allotment Association

Newsletter – Spring/Easter 2018

At this time of year I anticipate those warm Spring days when I can make a real start on my plot by planting out my early brassicas, onion sets and potatoes. As I start this newsletter (in mid-March) we still have a substantial covering of snow courtesy of a second blast of the beastly easterly winds. As a result I still need to rotavate my plot and tidy up the wreckage of my vegetable frame, which collapsed in the heavy snow in December.

At our AGM, which was held in the Library Room on the 10th of November 2017, we were pleased to report that eight new shareholders had accepted the invitation from the committee to take up shares in the Association. We now have 42 shareholders out of a total of around 86 tenants. We intend to continue with the process whereby tenants will be invited to become shareholders after a qualifying period, subject to recommendation from the management team using an objective assessment approach based on the regular site inspections.

Officers elected for 2018 are; Bob Bulpett (chairman), John Currell (secretary), Neville Morton (treasurer), Sharon Peters, Mary Tanner, Francis Biggerstaff, Peter Lockett and Margaret Winstanley. Additionally Rebecca Miller will continue to attend committee meetings as Website administrator.

I'm sorry to report that after many years of service to the Association Ken Parkins has resigned from the committee. Ken was the secretary of the Association for many years and his support and experience of our rules and procedures was and is much appreciated.

MANAGEMENT

Our secretary John Currell is responsible for managing the allotment tenancies, sending out documents and generally running the Ashbrook site. The regular site inspections, conducted by John and his team are an essential management tool, which help us to keep the allotments in good order and identify any potential issues before they become problems.

With regard to constructions such as sheds, greenhouses or other substantial features, these should be located so as not to inconvenience adjacent ploholders and must not obstruct access via interconnecting pathways or the main drives. Those ploholders backing onto the field at the West side of the site should remember to leave a three metre gap between the boundary and any construction. Please contact John for advice and approval before starting any building.

SITE MAINTENANCE

Francis Biggerstaff and Robin Beattie continue to provide much needed and much appreciated support and are generally on or around the site most days. They carry out many regular maintenance tasks; looking after the water tanks, fences and other items that we rely on. They also maintain the small petrol mower, rotavator and small strimmer, which are located in the shed behind the garage and are available for general use by tenants for a small donation. If you wish to make use of these items please see Francis or Robin to arrange access and to receive instruction in their use.

Keith Waterman has kindly circulated a new rota for the volunteer mowing team who look after the central grass roadway, the parking areas and the area around the garage. Many thanks to Keith and the other members of the mowing team for helping to keep the shared paths and other grassed areas in good order.

I must include a few grumbles here, they are the usual ones but still relevant:

- 1) The communal 'honesty' manure heaps, are now a feature of the site and are much appreciated by many of us as a convenient way of obtaining manure. One or two of you still regularly mountaineer up these heaps to get material from the top. This may be easier at the time but it results in crushing and wastage of the muck around the base of the heap. Please don't do it.
- 2) Don't contaminate the water tanks with mud, fertiliser or weed killer.
- 3) Don't light bonfires when the wind is blowing towards neighbouring houses and it is a good idea to wait until dusk to avoid complaints from other ploholders and watchful nearby residents. Also please check with Robin before placing material on the maintenance bonfire heap. This fire is for maintenance purposes, not to enable tenants to dispose of their own rubbish.
- 4) It is a requirement that you keep the pathways around your plot reasonably level and mown regularly. There is no excuse for not doing this as we have made a mower and strimmer available for you to use for a small donation to cover petrol cost.

WEBSITE and NOTICEBOARDS

The website (wendoverashbrookallotments.weebly.com), managed by Rebecca Miller is a mine of useful information with practical guidance from John Marshall, details and instructions for use of shared equipment and links to other gardening websites.

Rebecca would welcome details and photographs of successes and failures.

The notice boards are also an important source of information and we will continue to post details of dates for social events, items for sale and general information and notices.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Our popular social Saturday mornings will again be organised by Derek Patton and he has timetabled the first Saturday of the month for 2018: 7th April, 5th May and 2nd June.

Come along and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and a slice of cake while you swap ideas, plants and generally have a chat with fellow plot-holders. Please contact Derek by email (derekpatton@email.com) if you are willing to help on the day or can provide cakes etc.

Volunteers are needed to organise the social Saturdays for July and August. Please contact Derek or John Currell if you able to help.

The sun is shining, most of the snow has gone, and I'm off into the greenhouse to plant seeds.

Best wishes for the 2018 season,

Bob Bulpett – Chairman WAAA

robert.bulpett@yahoo.com