

Wendover Ashbrook Allotment Association

Newsletter – Spring/Easter 2020

This Spring is likely to be memorable but not in a nice way. The rapid spread of infection and equally rapid development in control measures will have an enormous impact on us all. The old and vulnerable are now required to keep themselves safe and avoid unnecessary contact with others to delay infection by Covid-19. The possibility that we will have to remain indoors for the next 12 weeks is becoming more likely every day. I hope that self-isolation on our plots will be acceptable provided we keep our distance and communicate by waving.

I have made a start on my plot but the heavy rain and high winds that we have experienced since early autumn have left the ground sodden and some structures a bit wobbly. One benefit that I had not anticipated is the total absence of white fly or aphids on my late cauliflowers and purple sprouting broccoli.

At our AGM, which was held in the Library Room on the 22nd of November 2019, we were pleased to report that six new shareholders had accepted the invitation from the committee to take up shares in the Association. We currently have 123 plots varying in size from 2.5 poles to 20 poles, which is equivalent to a nominal 155.5 pole plots. These are occupied by 88 tenants of whom 45 are shareholders.

Your committee and officers of the Association were re-elected unopposed for 2020.

Bob Bulpett (Chairman), John Currell (Secretary), Neville Morton (Treasurer), Sharon Peters, Mary Tanner, Francis Biggerstaff, Peter Lockett, Alison Woods and Margaret Winstanley. Additionally Rebecca Miller will continue to attend committee meetings as Website Administrator.

MANAGEMENT

We rely heavily on the organisational skills of our Secretary, John Currell, who arranges tenancies, keeps a check on site conditions and keeps us all informed by regular emailings. John also authorises the erection of sheds, greenhouses and other substantial structures. As always, I would like to remind all of you that the tenancy agreement you signed requires you to contact John for advice and approval before starting any new construction.

SITE MAINTENANCE

Francis Biggerstaff and Robin Beattie, now ably supported by Alison Woods, are on site most days and provide us with much needed support. In addition to general work around the site they look after the shared equipment including mowers and strimmers and will assist if these items need refuelling or are difficult to start. Time permitting, they may also be able to help if you are struggling to erect a shed or move a water butt. Their efforts are entirely voluntary and much appreciated.

We plan to restock the communal muck heaps when weather permits and supplies become available. The charge for muck remains at £1.20 per barrow load.

The new parking area at the southern end of the site has withstood the exceptionally wet winter and provides valuable additional parking space. The boundary between the parking area and the adjoining plot is now clearly identified by the fine boundary fence constructed by Robin Beattie. Hopefully, this will prevent cars overshooting the car park and becoming trapped.

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

Please take the time to look at our website (wendoverashbrookallotments.weebly.com), managed by Rebecca Miller. This 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.

We also post details of meetings and forthcoming events on the notice boards by the gates and on the central garage.

CENTENARY OF WAAA

Although allotment gardening had been undertaken on the site from an earlier date, it has now been established that WAAA was first formally founded as a Registered Friendly Society on 3rd August 1920. Hence, the Association reached its Centenary year in 2020. The site was purchased from the Rothschild Estate in 1922.

We intend to publish a short article on the history of our Association in the Wendover News. Additionally we had planned to hold an Evening Hog Roast Barbeque to celebrate this anniversary on Saturday 20th June. Unfortunately this must now be in doubt due to the corona virus.

SOCIAL EVENTS

It had been agreed to hold the Social Saturdays in 2020 on the following dates; Saturday 25th April, 23rd May, 18th July, 15th August and Rent Day on the 26th Sept. However, these events will obviously not take place until the corona virus lock-down has passed.

CORONA VIRUS COVID-19

Clearly the virus is massively affecting all our lives and this will inevitably spread to include our activities on the allotments. I am sure that many of us are looking forward to "isolating" ourselves on our plots. But, we must do so having due consideration to the government advice and the wellbeing of our fellow gardeners; i.e. by hand washing, and ensuring physical separation etc.

One area which might cause concern is the use of the communal mowers and access to the manure/mower books which are locked in the small shed. At this stage, we do not suggest any restriction of access to the shed / mowers. However, we would ask tenants to wear gloves and try to clean any elements which they have touched with their hands.

Happy gardening 2020

Bob Bulpett – Chairman WAAA

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