

# ***Horfield and District Allotments Association***

## ***Newsletter Spring 2014***

### **Greetings to all our members,**

Here we are at the start of a new growing season full of hope and anticipation. The winter rain and lack of frost has left the soil on some of the fields very heavy and lumpy. A warning to anyone new to gardening on clay soil – it will go from wet and lumpy to dry and hard as concrete in a matter of days, so time is of the essence. If warm wet winters are to become the norm then an over wintering green manure crop is worth considering. It doesn't have to be anything special, red mustard, land cress, rocket & perpetual spinach will happily grow all winter from an August sowing and as a bonus you can eat it.

This has been an eventful year, especially on Golden Hill where we have all been impressed by the new cost saving hydraulics (which have recently been upgraded) and the colourful and creative activities centered on the Community Garden. Flooding in the garden was impressively mild; the new drainage has done its stuff.

Costs this year have, as usual been mainly water, installation of new water troughs and maintenance of fences & trees. Interestingly the badgers on Birchall cost us £600 for structural support of their set.

As a self managed Association AGM is the most important event of our year, so below you will find a fairly comprehensive account of proceedings.

Page five gives a roundup of events & other useful information, please save it.

Wishing you all a good growing season,  
Christine.

### **AGM Report**

The Chairman welcomed about 70 members & plot holders and guests: Mr Steve Clampin (BCC Allotments Manager), Danielle Radice local Green Party councilor and Lucy Mitchell Community Garden project worker.

#### **Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman expressed great sadness at the deaths of four long term and much loved committee members in the last year – John Molton, Ken Smith, Val Chainey and Alan Lock. He thanked field reps and other volunteers involved with HDAA, who like those four people above, give their time for the benefit of the community.

He described the solar pump now functioning on Golden Hill which will reduce water costs.

He thanked the working parties and especially Roger Hake for the hedging work on Golden Hill which has transformed the Donkey Lane boundary.

He informed members that HDAA's charity application is now awaiting a decision from the Charity Commission.

He mentioned Good Earth Gardening the book published recently by plot holder Tim Foster.

Finally he thanked those who had provided refreshments at the meeting.

#### **Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report**

Full audited accounts are available to members on request.

Brian Styles made the following points:

Rents total is down slightly as there are plots which are vacant due to neglect. This has meant that they could not be re-let immediately. He asked members wishing to give up to do so before their plots get too bad.

There is still high occupancy and waiting lists on all sites.

HDAA rents are about half those charged by Bristol CC although direct comparison is difficult as the plots are measured differently.

He urged members to use water effectively, collect it and not waste it, not to bring trees onto plots other than fruit trees on dwarf rootstock and not to bring rubble onto site as it can be dangerous, and difficult and expensive to remove.

In response to a question he said that about 9% of HDAA income is from hut rents.

#### **Resolutions**

A resolution was proposed by Nina Linton, seconded by Vicky Meadows thus: Rent for an Association owned hut will be collected from a tenant for a maximum of 12 years. After that no further rent is payable by that tenant.

Brian Styles spoke on behalf of the Committee to oppose the resolution. A vote was taken with Steve Clampin acting as teller. The resolution was lost by a large majority.

#### **Community Garden Report:**

Lucy Mitchell gave an enthusiastic and interesting description of progress over the year. There is now a frog shaped pizza oven on site. The CG has exceeded its' targets with over 2000 attendances. It is used by over 30 community groups and has more than 350 volunteers.

- Lottery funding ends in March the CG will become independent from HDAA. It will need £7000 a year to continue to employ a worker for 1 day a week and there are lots of plans for financial sustainability. These include:
- A toddler group
- Hiring out the eco build cob shelter (due to be built this Spring)
- Workshops
- Funding applications
- Childrens' adventure days
- A "Friends of the CG" scheme aiming for £2000 pa.

- Selling produce and organic compost
- Bulk buying and selling of imperishables

She asked if any members would be plant fosterers, and also asked that people refrain from dumping old carpet on site. She reminded all that the CG Spring Fair is May 10<sup>th</sup> and finally thanked members for support.

Neil Pirie thanked Lucy and asked for active people to join the CG committee. He also asked for suggestions for publicizing the Friends scheme.

**BCC Allotments Officer:** Steve Clampin  
His department is now self funding.

There is some money from allotment sales which Associations can apply for for capital works  
He praised the self management of HDAA but warned that it works only because members want it. He is concerned that where self management is forced as a money saving measure it may not work.

He had been greatly impressed by the CG when he visited recently with Steven Williams MP.

He reported that BCC evicts quickly from neglected plots and re-lets quickly with a 50% rent reduction for 2 years if plots are very overgrown.

**Presentation of prizes:**



**Prizes were awarded by Phyllis Brooks as follows:**

**Ted Hill cup** (for plot holder making the most progress in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of tenancy January 2012-2013) to David Lodge 1a and 14 Birchall field.



*Photos by Marjorie McCartney*

**Field prizes** (new tenants who have made good progress):  
Ruttley and Palmer 19 Davis field.

**Phyllis Brooks cup** (for benefit to the HDAA) to Roger Hake for leading the working parties which have transformed hedges on Golden Hill and other work he has done on Birchall field

## General News

### Golden Hill - The Tower of Power

There have been some more developments in connection with the solar panels and the pump. After changing most of the taps for troughs on Golden Hill, something which we are sure will help in ensuring a more efficient use of our water, we are now installing a second tank in an attempt to increase our water storage. We hope that this will mean that we can maintain a more regular supply from the pump system, thereby making us less dependent on mains water, and therefore saving us money, as well as being environmentally beneficial. We can all help in this by using water more sparingly, especially in the summer months. Once young plants have been watered in, they really shouldn't need much watering again. Let the roots work down into the clay which is only about 9 inches from the surface, and they will thrive. Root crops and winter vegetables do not usually need watering, summer greens and legumes may when they are reaching maturity or flowering. ( See the watering chart on page 6)

We are also using the power of the sun to provide us with electricity for the eco building, due to be started in April. The solar panels will charge a battery, which we can use for lighting and as a power source for other things. Onwards and upwards!  
Pete.



*The solar panels powering the water pump*

**Associate Members:** A number of members have not paid their annual subscription for 2014. If you are one of these, but you wish to continue as a member of the Association, send your £5.00 to H&DAA, 14 Stadium Rd. Bristol, BS6 7YE. If we do not hear from you by the end of June we will assume you have retired and will not send you any more newsletters. This does not apply to plot holders who have paid rent; your sub is included in your rent bill.

It is now closed season for bonfires – no more combustion before October

**Reduced Rents:** If you are in receipt of a means tested benefit you may be entitled to a rent reduction. Applications have to be processed by the City Council. To obtain an application form visit BCC web site, see your Field Rep or call Christine on 3301639 It is important that you do this before the end of August, don't leave it until your rent bill arrives.

**Field Reps:-**As you will see from the list at the end of this newsletter – we have two new field reps, Jamie on Grahams who will be working with Rhoda, and Mitch on Baptist working with Joe & Fiona.

### **Tell Eric Pickles that allotments must not be sold off!**

Responsible department: Department for Communities and Local Government

Eric Pickles, the Communities Secretary, is examining plans to free local authorities from a 103-year-old obligation to provide plots of public land for cultivation by gardeners. The proposals could see local authorities, many of them strapped for cash under government-imposed cuts, selling off allotment land for social housing or even for profit to major companies.

If you wish to express your opposition see the e-petition at: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/61225>



## **Roots and Fruits at Horfield Organic Community Orchard**

Orchard Roots Bristol (ORB) explored and celebrated fruit growing in a particular place – Horfield Organic Community Orchard (HOCO), which came to life in 1998 on some very overgrown allotment plots in Davis field. The stories gathered during the Heritage Lottery Funded project blossomed, cross-pollinated, and matured to a fruitful harvest.

Orchard members, past and present, took part in a workshop that wove together their memories and experiences – from inspiration and planning, to the perspiration of clearing and planting, and the ongoing labours of pruning, composting, and harvesting 100 fruiting trees, bushes and vines. Stories from allotment holders and people with connections to Long Ashton Research Station, recorded at the 'Know Your Orchard Roots Bristol' event last June, rounded out the picture.

Researchers at Bristol Record Office into historic land use showed the area was mainly rough pasture for grazing, and woodland. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Bristol expanded, the larger fields were redefined as smaller allotment garden plots.

Learning, sharing, and fun flavoured all ORB activities and events. Stories and images gathered during the project will be on show for all to see at this year's HOCO open days. As a result of the funding our orchard trees now have permanent name labels, and the heritage of very local varieties is better appreciated. A large reproduction of the 1843 Horfield Parish tithe map held at Bristol Record Office will also be on display. The distinctive 'elbow' shaped plot (number 58) now cultivated by HOCO, can clearly be seen on a new Orchard map, which will become available on the website and as a poster this year.

Orchards are shaped by human culture and by nature. The ORB project shows how a voluntary community group transformed a small area of marginal, hard to cultivate clay on limestone, into a fruitful and beautiful orchard that inspires learning, growing, and community celebrations.

All are welcome to find out more at our public open days in 2014:

**Summer Orchard Open Day**  
(part of the Get Growing Trail)  
Saturday 7 June, 1-5pm

**Apple Day**  
Sunday 19 October, 2-4pm

We also have plans to develop the former polytunnel area into a **Home Orchard Plot** – a mini-orchard for a small garden or space.

Contact: Shannon Smith (HOCO co-ordinator)  
hocohello@gmail.com  
0117 373 1587  
[www.community-orchard.org.uk](http://www.community-orchard.org.uk)

# Golden Hill Community Garden

Hi everyone,

As of 1st April the Golden Hill Community Garden is now independent of the allotment association and has entered a world past our original lottery funding. Thank you to the wonderful association who have created and supported this project, made it possible, backed all our schemes and helped us dream up new ones and especially heartfelt thanks to Brian, Neil, Clare, Tim and Pete - you're amazing! In the last two and a half years we've exceeded our wildest dreams in terms of numbers and participation and wild schemes (froggy oven and tower of power solar pump!) and have not just created a community garden but a fabulous community of gardeners!

And as the sun begins to shine and our polytunnels fill with green shoots it's hard not to be brimful of optimism for a fabulous future. Our current big building scheme is a straw bale eco-build, started in April and finished by July if everything goes to plan. So in the future we'll have a beautiful indoor space which we can heat in winter and rent out for kids parties, workshops, tea parties or whatever! This is a hugely exciting project so make sure you come down and check on our progress.

Our big Spring Fair will be on 10th May 1-4 (suggested donation for adults £1). Any and all offers of help, cakes, spare plants or ANYTHING gratefully received. This event is more important than ever to help us raise money to keep the project going. So please come down on the day to support us - there'll be kids activities, fabulous music from Bristol Voices and a brass band, pizza from the clay frog, loads of seedling for sale (heaps of brassicas!) and MORE!

Your support and goodwill have been crucial in making the project such a success! To ensure the continuation of this fab garden we are asking people to become Friends of Golden Hill Community Garden and donate £2 a month. In return you'll have our eternal gratitude and be invited for pizza one summer's evening to say thank you! More info on the website or please please get in touch!

Other goings on include our popular parent and toddler group - The Golden Buds- Tuesdays in term time 10-11:30 £4.50. And although we are full at the moment there are often spaces coming up so if you know any 18 month-4 year olds who like digging holes, getting muddy, finding newts, making things and singing about compost then get in touch!

We are also running our Golden Adventure days for 6-12 year olds full of bow and arrows and games and pizza and art and lots of slightly feral outdoor fun. In the Easter holidays we lived the story of Robin Hood, gave everyone's imagination a real work out and the day was described by Lewis age 7 as "The best club I have ever been to!" Get

involved Tuesdays in the holidays 10-4. More details about this and other goings on the website.

We are continuing to work with local community groups who have become Golden Groups and now rent out a raised bed and use the garden independently. These include Willow day care (adults with dementia), Bean Stalks Nursery, Silvacare (adults with learning difficulties), and Bishop Road Primary. We've still got a couple of raised beds spare if you know any groups that might be interested - it's just £50 for the year, they can use all our tools and we'll even water the beds when they can't make it.

And of course we still have our open volunteering every Wednesday! In March and April we've had about 40 people a week at our open volunteering days which is incredible. I don't know of any project as little as ours that is so buzzing with such a diverse range of people. Thank you every one and here's to plenty more years growing together!

Also if you don't already know we're selling fantastic organic compost, lovely and fine, dark and weed free. Just £4 a barrow - contact Pete



**Lucy Mitchell**  
**Community Project Worker**  
**The Golden Hill Community Garden: Horfield's**  
**Accessible Allotment and Edible Forest**  
**07506 905 394**  
[www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com](http://www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com)

## Community Garden

### Spring Fair

10th May 1-4 pm

(suggested donation for adults £1).

Any and all offers of help, cakes, spare plants or ANYTHING gratefully received

### The Golden Buds

Parent and toddler group

Tuesdays in term time 10-11:30am

£4.50.

### Golden Adventure days

for 6-12 year olds full of bow and arrows and games and pizza and art and lots of slightly feral outdoor fun.

Tuesdays in the holidays 10am-4.0pm.

More details about this and other goings on the website.

[www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com](http://www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com)

## Community Orchard

### Saturday 10 May

If the weather is fine, and the blossom is blooming (it may have all gone over by then!), we'll open the orchard to the public for a spontaneous **Blossom Day** event, from 2-5pm.

### Summer Orchard Open Day

(part of the Get Growing Trail)

Saturday 7 June, 1-5pm

### Apple Day

Sunday 19 October, 2-4pm

[www.community-orchard.org.uk](http://www.community-orchard.org.uk)

### Ashley Down Shop –

For all gardening supplies

Open to H&DAA members

Saturday & Sunday: 10.30 – 12 [foot of station road]

Know what's happening in H&DAA

<http://horfieldanddistrictallotments.webden.co.uk>

**Resolutions for AGM 2015 should be submitted to the secretary before the December committee meeting (Dec 8<sup>th</sup>)**

### Who to contact:

Organic compost , £4.0 a barrow: - Pete 975 6647

Change address, lost key, give up plot : - Christine  
[christine\\_styles@hotmail.com](mailto:christine_styles@hotmail.com)

Felt/preservative for hut – your field rep.

### Plot inspections – June

Please make sure that your plot number is visible

### Work Parties

Hedging work is on hold for the summer after a winter of spectacular progress.

Watch notice boards for the resumption of work in the autumn.

Finally, in response to popular demand here is Philip's guide to watering first published May 2009

## Watering Vegetables

Water is one of the essentials to make plants grow and most gardeners assume that keeping vegetables well watered will pay dividends. In fact, this is not always the case and excess water can result in rotting, leaching of nutrients, dilution of taste, poor late growth and poor keeping qualities (in onions).

All vegetables need water to start with, either from seed or when planted out. After this establishment phase is over, they usually grow very strongly and push roots wide and deep, 2 feet or more is common. This is usually early season when water is freely available in the soil and extra watering is totally unnecessary and can result in a weak root growth (with a poor subsequent performance) or the production of large amounts of something you don't want – foliage on peas, for example. When the plant has grown, the onset of flower and seed formation, which is often the product you do want, means that the plant's emphasis changes to the production of these and root formation stops. It is at this time that many plants need extra water and they respond very well if you apply it. Each vegetable does vary and the above is not a universal rule.

Watering technique is also important. Roots are usually deep and you need impractically large quantities of water to get enough down there. The only way to help the plant is to target the roots – light sprays over the foliage or wetting ground are useless. This targeting is assisted if you build in depressions in the soil around the plant (peas/beans) or bury a bottomless bottle next to the plant roots (tomatoes). Often, though, you are just wasting time and water as the guide below shows. To give an idea of the magnitude of the task of manual watering, putting the equivalent on 1" of rain on a full size plot would require 6,350 litres, comfortably more than 6 tons!

One way of avoiding the time, expense and work of watering is to reduce evaporation by using a mulch around the plants. This should be applied after watering and, if more water is needed, pulled aside temporarily whilst the extra is applied.

Here are some rules to show the effects of water on crops and the most beneficial time to apply it. Crops are divided into 3 categories: **Category A:** Responds well to frequent watering **Category B:** Water only at sensitive stages shown & **Category C:** Not very responsive, water only as advised

Crop	Category	Watering recommended in normal summers
Beetroot	C	Before soil gets too dry, just along the rows
Beans (All)	B	When flowering and throughout pod formation
Broccoli (Winter)	C	After transplanting
Brussels Sprouts	C	After transplanting
Summer Cabbages/Calabrese	A	Most efficient is one watering 2 weeks before cutting
Carrots	C	Before soil gets too dry, just along the rows
Cauliflower	A	See Cabbages
Leeks	C	After transplanting
Lettuces	A	Throughout their life
Marrows/Courgettes	A	Frequently once fruits form
Onion – bulb	C	Do not water in later stages
Onion – Spring	C	Before soil gets too dry, just along the rows
Parsnips	C	Before soil gets too dry, just along the rows
Peas	B	When flowering and throughout pod formation
Potatoes – early	B	When at size of marbles. Cat A if high yields are needed, but may affect taste
Potatoes – Main	B	When at size of marbles
Radishes	C	Before soil gets too dry, just along the rows
Shallots	C	Rarely needed
Spinach	A	Frequently
Swede/Turnip	C	Before soil gets too dry
Sweet corn	B	At tassel and cob formation
Tomatoes	B	To establish, then when flowering & in fruit. Too much will reduce fruit flavour

