

Horfield and District Allotments Association

Newsletter Spring 2015

Greetings Plot Holders & Members,

What a difference a year makes. This time last year we were wondering if the fields would ever dry out enough for us to work the soil and here we are – watering already.

In this newsletter you will find a full report of the AGM, for which I do not apologise, as it contains much that is news in the Association as well as acknowledgement of outstanding contributions from members. Attendance at H&DAA AGM is always impressive but there are many who are not able to attend and as a self managed Association everyone is entitled to be informed.

The Committee is currently considering expenditure for the next year. One suggestion put forward is that we create wildlife friendly areas, in difficult to cultivate corners, by planting flora to attract nectar feeding insects. If you have any suggestions on this or any other project let us know.

As you know we didn't have a summer/autumn show last year and when put to the AGM there was little support for holding one this year. Many of our members participate in the Community Garden & Organic Orchard events. If you have any ideas for dedicated H&DAA events – let us know.

Enough administration. Looking round the fields in the winter the potential for the growing of winter veg is quite striking. You may say this is not easy on a small plot. Philip will persuade you otherwise with his excellent article below (if you are not convinced have you seen the price of cavalo nero in the shops? not to mention purple sprouting broccoli, both super foods & very easy to grow).

Happy Gardening, Christine.

AGM

The Chairman welcomed about 50 members, plot holders and guests: Steve Clampin & Janet Hathway Bristol City Council Allotments Office, Lucy Mitchell, Community Garden project worker. Glenis Morgan, Councilor Henleaze, Lib Dem: Tim Malnick Councilor Bishopston, Green Party

Report from the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee: Written and read by Neil Pirie. He thanked the hedge team for their work on the Davis/Baptist/Donkey Lane hedge which has been laid and the gaps filled with new saplings. A donation of saplings from the Woodland Trust is due to arrive in the spring.

The solar powered water pump has saved the Association over £600. He thanked Pete for his work on this project.

The solar panels are now connected to batteries which will power the Eco House, which is available to hire for community groups.

The Community Orchard continues to thrive Capital works this year included: Tree work on Golden Hill & Birchall; hauling way renewal on Golden Hill; installation of hard standing & repairs to the BT wall on Wessex; filling of pot holes on Donkey Lane (although this is not the responsibility of the Association).

The policy regarding neglected plots is working well due to the vigilance of field reps & Marjorie (Secretary) in identification & follow up.

Demand for plots has declined nationally but we still have waiting lists.

Charitable status will be re-applied for in 2015.

He thanked the members for compliance with the limitation on the use of petrol trimmers.

New raised beds are being installed adjacent to the Monk Rd car park, by Pete and volunteers. These will be for use by new & retiring plot holders.

He thanked the directors & field reps for their work.

Bee-Keeping ; presentation

Rob Sanders gave an entertaining & informative presentation on the joys and benefits of bee-keeping.

Facebook proposal:

Paddy Uglow made a concise case for the setting up of an H&DAA facebook page. Mitch Crossingham offered to co-moderate the page which would be for H&DAA members only. The suggestion was favourably received (see below)

Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

A summary financial report was distributed to members present. Full audited accounts are available to members on request.

The treasurer reported that the accounts for 2013/14 were complicated by the incorporation of the income and expenditure associated with the Community Garden Project. The financial impact of the project on the Association was neutral because its expenditure in 2013/4 was fully met by grant income from the 'Big Food Project'. From 2014/15 the Project will be a separate financial entity and will therefore no longer be incorporated into the Associations accounts

The decision by the directors to increase the rate of depreciation charged for the assets acquired more than ten years ago produces an accounting loss of £3850 for the year. This technical change does not reduce the Associations positive cash flow for the year.

When these technical issues are eliminated the income and expenditure figures are £11,103 and £8,866 respectively. Once bank interest & the associated tax charges are included it produces a surplus of £2,665. Apart from the water rates, the various elements of expenditure were in line with previous years. The reduction in water charges was entirely due to the water pumping scheme on Golden Hill which has meant that a significant part of the site is largely self sufficient.

The treasurer underlined that the ability to keep the rents considerably below those charged by the City Council was entirely due to the administration and physical work carried out by volunteers.

The meeting adopted the accounts: for the year ended 30th Sept 2014. The meeting reappointed Stone & Co as accountants.

Resolutions;

The meeting overwhelmingly accepted a rent increase of 20p per perch in each of the next five years (2016-2020). This increase will allow the Association to maintain and improve the sites while still maintaining rents below those charged by the City Council.

Community Garden Report:

Lucy Mitchell reported on the progress, achievements and future goals of the Garden following their move to independence from H&DAA last March.

- Events have continued to be well supported and attract impressive attendance.
- The straw built Eco House is nearly complete and available to groups for hire.
- The Garden has benefited from the input of about 450 volunteers, with a regular Wednesday attendance of 20 – 40 volunteers.
- For children the garden runs Golden Fun Adventure days and accommodates the Golden Buds Toddler Group. The site is also used by Bishop Rd School and Ashley Down Primary as well as local nurseries. The pond area is available to school groups at £2-3 per head.
- Raised beds are available for groups to hire for £55 per year and are currently being used by Beanstalks Nursery, Bishop Rd Primary School, Silvacare (Residential housing for adults with learning difficulties), Bishopston Beavers, a local childminding group, Second Step mental health charity and Willow Day care centre for adults with dementia.
- Fund raising in the last year yielded £750 from plant sales, £2000 from events & £500 from compost sales. The 'Friends of the Garden' monthly donation by standing order scheme now has 34 contributors.
- Sponsorship has been received from: the John James Foundation, Quartet, the lottery Awards for All scheme, Gloucester Rd W1, Bishopston Garden Society and Waitrose Henleaze.
- Events throughout the year are advertised on the web site – the next big event will be the Spring Fayre on May 9th.
- Lucy thanked all who had contributed to the success of the Garden including those who anonymously donate plants – they never have too many beans!
- In the coming year they intend to work with more adults with learning difficulties and are looking into starting an afterschool club and to host children's parties.

BCC Allotments Officer:

Steve Clampin reported on the changes in the Allotments Office.

Presentation of prizes: Prizes were presented by Phyllis Brooks as follows:

Ted Hill cup (for plot holder making the most progress in the 1st year of tenancy January 2012-2013) to Kate Castle 29 St. Agnes,

Field prizes (new tenants who have made good progress): Mr & Mrs Farthing 12a Baptist, Ms. Martin 13a Grahams, Mr Harris 9 Longs, Mr Cox 33 St. Agnes.

The Phyllis Brooks award for outstanding service to the Association: Jo Madden, previously of 6a Davis.

General News

H&DAA on Facebook

Horfield and District Allotment Association now has its very own Facebook group! (48 members already). Allotment holder Paddy Uglow (Longs field) is an online communications officer and multimedia freelancer and was disappointed not to find a group already in existence. Undeterred, he took the matter to the H&DAA committee and set up Horfield and District Allotment Association Chat with the help of Mitch Crossingham.

To join the group search Facebook for the title, follow the link on the H&DAA website, or go directly to www.facebook.com/groups/handdaa

The group is open to any allotment holders in the Association fields, and is for allotment related chat, questions, swaps and sharing.

Election of officers

At the March committee meeting the following officers were elected:

Chairman: Neil Pirie.

Deputy Chairman: Pete Clew

Treasurer: Brian Styles

Secretary: Marjorie McCartney

Field Reps: At the same meeting Fiona tendered her resignation as Baptist Field rep. The Chairman expressed the gratitude of the committee for her contribution.

Wild Life Areas

One of the areas proposed for this project is the triangular plot (28a) on Baptist, adjacent to the fence running parallel with Longmead Ave. If you would like to be involved with the development of this area please contact Mitch on: 07970784535.
or: mitch@crossingham.co.uk

Working Parties on Birchall Field:

Two working parties were held in February to clear an area of plum suckers and to cut back the side of the main haulway. Many thanks to Tony and Liz, Mike, Jenny, Sue and David.

Work Parties Golden Hill

Hedging work is on hold for the summer after a winter of spectacular progress. The Woodland trust has donated 105 hedging plants and there is promise of more in the Autumn.

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

Community Garden News

We've been busy down at the Golden Hill Community Garden and we'd love to invite all the ploholders along to our big **Spring Fair on Saturday 9th May 1-4**. It'll also be the grand opening of the Bishopston Bale House the gorgeous strawbale building that Pete and co have been beavering away on for the last year. We've got LOADS of plants for sale but would love some more so if you've over sown anything or have some spares we'd be very grateful! We're also selling compost £5 a barrow - get in touch with Pete.

In January we were awarded Green Capital money by the neighbourhood partnership to build more raised beds which will be available for use by volunteers without access to gardens at home, ploholders who are leaving their plots but don't want to leave the allotments, and if we've got any left then they'll go to folks on the waiting list for a plot but who might need a season's practice on a small patch first.

We've plenty more going on with weekly toddler groups, holiday activities for children, school and nursery visits and more. If you'd like to get regular updates from the garden then get in touch to join our mailing list (ghcgarden@gmail.com)

and we welcome anyone and everyone to come along to one of our open Wednesday 10-4.

See you in the garden

Lucy Mitchell
Community Project Worker
07506 905 394
www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com

Please note I work Part time usually Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Notices

Resolutions for AGM 2016 should be submitted to the secretary before the December committee meeting (Dec 8th)

Plot inspections – June

Please make sure that your plot number is visible

Who to contact:

Organic compost , £5.0 a barrow: - Pete 975 6647

Change address, lost key, give up plot, have a friend helping who would like to join as a member : - Christine

Know what's happening in:

H&DAA: <http://horfieldanddistrictallotments.webeden.co.uk>

HOCO: www.community-orchard.org.uk

GHCG: www.thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com

Ashley Down Shop –

For all gardening supplies
Open to H&DAA members

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

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

Associate Members: A number of members have not paid their annual subscription for 2015. 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.

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.

Community Clarification – Living Together

Plot holders on Golden Hill enjoy the advantage of having the Horfield Organic Community Orchard (HOCO) and the Golden Hill Community Garden (GHCG) as neighbours. A little clarification regarding the status of these two organizations seems to be required. Both HOCO & GHCG are autonomous organizations, each run by a community of volunteers. They are tenants of the Association in exactly the same way that plot holders are tenants. As such they enjoy the same rights & responsibilities. The areas they occupy are not public areas in the sense that they are not areas in which compost can be deposited or removed, fruit should not be picked or plants removed, rubbish should not be deposited & children should not be allowed unsupervised access. In return the members of HOCO & GHCG will not wander about your plot, poke your veggies, eat your fruit or drop litter on your plot. They will, however, invite you to their many excellent open days, events and workshops.

Many thanks - Christine

Growing two crops of vegetables each year

Growing some really nice summer vegetables are what we all try to do – who can resist runner beans, peas, tomatoes & new potatoes straight from plot to pot. This is all very well but allotment holders are missing out if they just concentrate on these favourites. Expensive winter vegetables can be grown as well and it is often possible to grow two crops in the same ground each year.

A few years ago I decided to give up my allotment as I was producing far too much and concentrated on growing in my rear garden which is about 2.5 perch including a 6 x 6 greenhouse. A book by Charles Dowding about growing winter vegetables came to my attention and with its help, I am producing much more than I would have thought possible. The trick is easy – raise the next crop from seed in a sheltered environment and have it all ready to plant out as soon as the previous crop has been harvested. Here are some examples:

- a. I love peas so I sowed Excellenz, a first early, in modules on 10th January in the kitchen and then out to the greenhouse a couple of weeks later. On 1st March, after a bit of hardening off, they were planted into big pots on my patio (with protection from birds). With any luck, they'll be over before I need those pots for tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and aubergines in late May.
- b. My runner beans will be planted out mid May after raising them in root trainers. I've sown a number of radish seeds into that bed as a catch crop as well as Winter Density lettuce plants raised from seed sown in the greenhouse last October/November. I'll also try a few spring onions.
- c. Hurst Greenshaft peas were sown in modules in early February in the kitchen & greenhouse as above, then planted out on 15th March into a prepared bed, heavily netted. With luck, they will be harvested by late June/early July when swede sown in modules late May should be ready to go out. As I've got a lot of ground under peas, curly kale and brussel sprouts sown at similar times will join the swede.
- d. Chitted potatoes as soon as they were available – first & second earlies – and planted them on 9th March into a bed previously covered for a month by black sheeting. This was to dry the bed out a bit and raise the temperature. These will be followed by an early Sweetcorn variety sown in mid May in root trainers and planted out in mid/late June as the potatoes are harvested. This is a little early but I do like my charlotte small. In early July, dwarf bean seeds will under-plant the sweetcorn and we get 3 crops on one piece of ground.
- e. Leeks raised in pots from a late February sowing (kitchen/greenhouse again) will be transferred to a spare piece of ground in early May and allowed to grow large. They will then be dibbed into a patch vacated by winter cabbage planted out after my outdoor tomatoes were harvested last September.

- f. My outdoor tomatoes this year will follow broad beans sown in root trainers in November in the greenhouse and planted out after hardening in February. With luck, I'll harvest the beans in June and plant out some large tomato plants from 6" pots.
- g. Someone is saying – what about carrots? The easy answer is to sow Amsterdam forcing seeds into a bucket in the greenhouse in February/March, put the buckets outside later & harvest when young & sweet around June. Sow a second crop in July using the same buckets for an autumn/Christmas crop. Change the earth each year, of course, and make sure it has some sand/compost mixed in to make it light.

Of course, any spare ground gets radish & lettuce seed sown in it.

Now the details of what I'm growing for winter cropping this year:

1. Leeks – as shown above
2. Swede – sow in seed trays or a seed bed in May, thin out and either transplant once you have 4 leaves or raise in a 6" pot until the ground is ready
3. Cauliflower Triumphant (ready in January) – same treatment as swede
4. Winter cauliflowers ready in April/May can be grown, varieties such as Walcheren Winter 3 or Aalsmeer. These are sown as for Swede.
5. Cabbage Offenham 2 (spring greens) – sow in a seed bed in August and transplant when large enough
6. Curly Kale – Sow in seed beds in May for transplant in August
7. Perpetual Spinach – Sow in July in place or you can pot raise them for the first month
8. Parsnip – these, I'm afraid, have to be sown in situ between April & early June, but they can still follow on from crops like spring greens
9. Brussels Sprouts – as for swede

This lot does come at a price. Two crops a year means more inputs in terms of compost or manures of various types. This I just distribute on the top of the ground when cleared of a crop and my huge workforce of worms does the rest. No surprises for guessing that crop rotation is a bit of a nightmare. Don't forget to protect your crops, the winter ones in particular as pigeons love all brassicas.

It's all a matter of planning and split second timing. Things do go wrong and you sometimes have to dig up/harvest less loved crops early if you need the ground. This is a small price to pay.

Philip Drew

A Good Growing Season to All Our Members