

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017/18

Well winter is almost over, hopefully, and we can look forward to the new growing season ahead. I hope that you all had a great festive season and managed to stay clear of all the nasty bugs that being couped up indoors brings.

Correction

I said in the last newsletter that there was no category for allotment sites in Fareham in Bloom Awards. Well it seems that I was wrong and we received a Silver Gilt certificate, which is now displayed in the site managers shed. Well done to everyone who helped make that possible.

Water off

The water was turned off on the 30th November and will be turned back on in March.

GQT

On Tuesday 7th November the WWAA co-hosted a recording of Gardener's Question Time, at the Victory Hall in Warsash. The event was well attended and made for an enjoyable and entertaining evening. From the recording, the production team made two programmes. One aired on the 24th November and a second on the 15th December. If anyone missed them, you can download the podcasts from the Radio 4 website. As mentioned in the programme, the reason for hosting GQT was to raise the profile of allotments locally. There is a misconception among people that allotments have long waiting lists so they don't bother applying for one. As you know, this is no longer the case in our area, so we need to bust the myth about availability. The demand for plots tends to go in cycles and currently we are on a downward trend, but this is likely to change over the next few years. Our job is to keep the allotments available for future generations to be able to grow and enjoy healthy food. The benefits of being outdoors and getting fresh air and exercise are also invaluable, as we all know. The WWAA committee are going to start a marketing campaign to promote the allotment life style and would greatly appreciate any help and ideas from members. Growing your own is not for everyone, but from a health point of view it sure beats sitting on the sofa watching TV, and if we spread the message it could help in many ways.

Tyres

The site has accumulated a number of old tyres over the years and they have become a bit of a problem. As they degrade, they leech toxins into the soil, which kind of defeats the point of growing your own veg., because you know what's in it. Under the new tenancy agreement tyres are not permitted on site, but with so many already there how would we know of any new arrivals? The decision was taken to clear the site of tyres for a reasonable cost rather than facing a hefty bill when we were compelled to get rid of them. The site managers collected nearly 200 tyres from across the site. This has cost a lot of money that could have been put to better use. As of now tyres or any other waste materials cannot be brought to the allotments.

Site Shop

The site shop re-opens on the 28th January for all your gardening requirements and some friendly advice. Seed potatoes will be available from 28th February.

Hedge

Before Xmas a group of volunteers got together to cut the hedge along the southern boundary. Despite the cold weather a lot got done and the trimmings have been left to dry on a plot close by. Many thanks to the plot holder for allowing us to do that; it was a great help. We hope to complete the job before the spring. The other hedges have been cut by a contractor who did a great job. As well as cutting hedges, we have to replace them, now the stock fencing has been placed on the inside we can do this. Once they are established our boundary will be secure again.

AGM

This took place on Monday 20th November. It was quite a convivial evening and was all over in an hour. For those who did not attend the minutes of the meeting are now on the website.

Funding

Although the rents have increased so have costs which means that the day to day running of the site uses up most of our income. It is prudent to keep something in reserve for the unforeseen so there is nothing left for any projects to improve the site for the enjoyment of the plot holders. When I read the gardening press I am quite envious of some of the allotments up and down the country who have opened cafes, compost toilets, communal polytunnels, central composting units etc. It is possible, it seems, to get funding for such projects from various organisations. A gentleman raised this very point at the AGM and kindly offered to help us if we ever wanted to make a bid. So if you have anything in mind that you think would enhance the site let us know your ideas.