

# HOTWELLS & DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

June 2019

Registered under the Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 Registered No: 6359R.

Registered Office: 2 Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol, BS3 2JT

### Introduction (Bob Corfield)

Welcome to the HwDAA June Newsletter. The main news of the last few weeks is that the association has a new Chair. Roger Coffin moved from Bristol to York recently after just over a year in the chair. He did a fantastic job while he was our chairman - many thanks to Roger. After our efforts to recruit someone from outside the committee produced no results, Jenny Hendy who was the secretary volunteered to do the job. This made the secretary's post vacant and Chris Hanmer (KL1) volunteered to carry out the tasks as secretary. We've also decided to have a Vice Chair in order to provide continuity and yours truly has volunteered. See the committee page on the website for all the details.

Allotment sites are always vulnerable to break ins and robberies and we had another one recently on KL!. In the end we lost nothing as the thieves left their haul on the site! This is why it is so important to keep the gate codes as secure as possible. Never give the gate code to someone you don't recognise even if they sound convincing. "I'm a new tenant and I've forgotten the code" has been used on more than one occasion in the past. If they are genuine, they will have a letter via email from me which contains the gate code, or they can contact the site rep. We always inform the police if there is a break in and if they can't usually do anything, it at least builds up a pattern for police data and gives us a crime report number for insurance should this be required. Paul Finch, our environmental rep, has taken on the task of reporting any break ins to the police; see his article in this newsletter.

### From the Chair (Jenny Hendy)

Sadly Roger Coffin has moved away from Bristol and so had to give up his plot and resign from his role as Chair. I have agreed to act as Chair until the next AGM and am very pleased that Chris Hanmer is replacing me as secretary.

Roger is a hard act to follow and I hope to keep things moving along smoothly. My hope is for HwDAA to support well cultivated and productive allotments, tended by contented tenants. This year's round of site inspections shows that all sites and by far the majority of plots are well tended, about to produce a bumper crop of fruit and veg, and are beautiful to look at, despite a prolonged dry patch.

Please feel free to contact me (via the website or the HwDAA office) with any thoughts or queries, although our dedicated site reps are usually the best starting point for plot or site related issues.

I also volunteer in the shop (often 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month).  
I wish all tenants a fruitful summer, with just the right amount of rain!

## Slug Bait (Bob Corfield/Paul Finch)

In June 2020 a ban on the use of metaldehyde slug pellets will be introduced. Until that time it can still be used but we'll be running down our stocks in the shop and replacing with a ferric phosphate based product or similar. On the other hand, here's some thoughts on using slug pellets by Paul Finch (our environmental rep):

We are what we eat (and grow)  
....so is wildlife.

Pellets are actually one of the least effective methods of slug control, killing no more than 10% of the slug population in the average garden.

We should all strive to grow fruit & veg without resorting to chemicals. It may not harm us directly but can harm wildlife which ultimately will have an effect on everything. Different poisons have varying consequences on birds/animals/insects. Pellets contain Metaldehyde. It is less toxic than

Methiocarb the other (lesser) found ingredient. One pellet with Metaldehyde every 10cm is enough not to harm hedgehogs but most folk scatter larger quantities or form small piles. Methiocarb is more toxic, breaks down slower and is harmful to other insects (inc earthworms and beetles).

There's plenty of harmless alternatives to using Slug pellets, to include.

- Beer traps, Ensure lip of the trap is at least 2cm above the soil surface.
- Baked crushed egg shells / sharp sand lime, forest bark, wood ash, human hair and soot
- Copper tape (around pots), copper pipe laid around plants (copper produces a tiny "shock" to slugs
- Encouraging wildlife (Hedgehogs, newts, frogs, toads centipedes etc and even nematodes). Create a small pond!

Do your pellets disappear? Pellets include a substance which detracts some other creatures from eating them. However, this does not include rats so they will eat them and not die.

## Tick in the box (Bob Corfield)

Ticks are small blood sucking bugs that appear on allotments in the spring and summer. They often attach themselves to you (and your dog) in all sorts of odd places but mainly arms or legs particularly if you've been working in long grass or using a strimmer. If you get a slightly inflamed itchy spot on your skin with a small black centre, you've probably been attacked by a tick. You need to be careful how you remove them since often the head will stay embedded in your skin after an attempt to remove them so the spot can become infected. The answer is to get a tick removal tool - available on eBay for a small cost. This tool allows you to twist out the tick completely. I've often been ticked and this tool is just what's needed.



## Co-ordination with the Police (Paul Finch)

Following the recent break-ins to the KL1 & KL2 sites the committee has decided it sensible to streamline the reporting of any such activity to one person who, in turn, can

report to and liaise with Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This hopefully will simplify matters and will enable a central log to be kept. Therefore if any tenant witnesses or is the subject of criminal activity on any of the HwDAA sites please report it without delay to your site rep or, if they're unavailable, to Paul Finch either directly or via a message using the website contact page.

Clearly serious matters would warrant a direct 999 call.

Fortunately all HwDAA sites are in BS3 so fall into the same police Community Beat area. Whilst acts of theft and minor offences are unlikely to be acted upon by the police it is vitally important that ALL incidents are recorded so the police can build a picture and keep track. Should anyone be caught it might be possible to help with past crimes.

With the above in mind it would appear the favourite items on the thieves' shopping list are petrol powered tools. If you have any strimmers, lawn mowers etc it would be prudent to mark with your postcode. Obviously the best option would be not to store on site but realise this is not practicable for most. Ideally the very best option is to replace those noisy polluting instruments with battery or hand powered alternatives!! "Electric" Strimmers, for example, have been ignored by the criminals as invariably the batteries are at their homes being re-charged. Such a strimmer without a battery is like a shed without a water butt....

## Shop News (Steve Fay)

Some of you may have noticed that our supplies of compost, manure and growbags got a bit erratic recently. This was because our very helpful 'Wedmore Wonder' Terry Moore who delivered the stuff followed the collapse of his van by abruptly announcing his retirement. He was kind enough however to recommend us to Mark Kidner who agreed to take over delivery.

After a spell of getting used to the new arrangements we're now confident that regular supplies can be maintained. One significant change however is that Mark has to fit in deliveries with his job so they happen at fairly short notice. In the past Phil Cass was able to arrange for volunteers to help with the unloading but that's now not so easy. Can I suggest that if anybody on Alderman Moores sees the trailer being unloaded that they volunteer a hand? – It's in your way anyway so you can't get past! Deliveries are now one pallet at a time so it doesn't take long.

We are aware that our compost products are all peat-based which is not to everybody's taste. We are often given recommendations for organic supplies and Phil investigates each one. The problem we face each time is price – it's no use stocking the stuff unless we can price to sell. If you do find what might be a viable source please bear in mind that the shop selling price will contain a profit element – we don't lug this stuff around for fun. As a guide this will often be about 33% on delivered cost. If this is taken into account and you still think a source is a viable proposition please give Phil details.

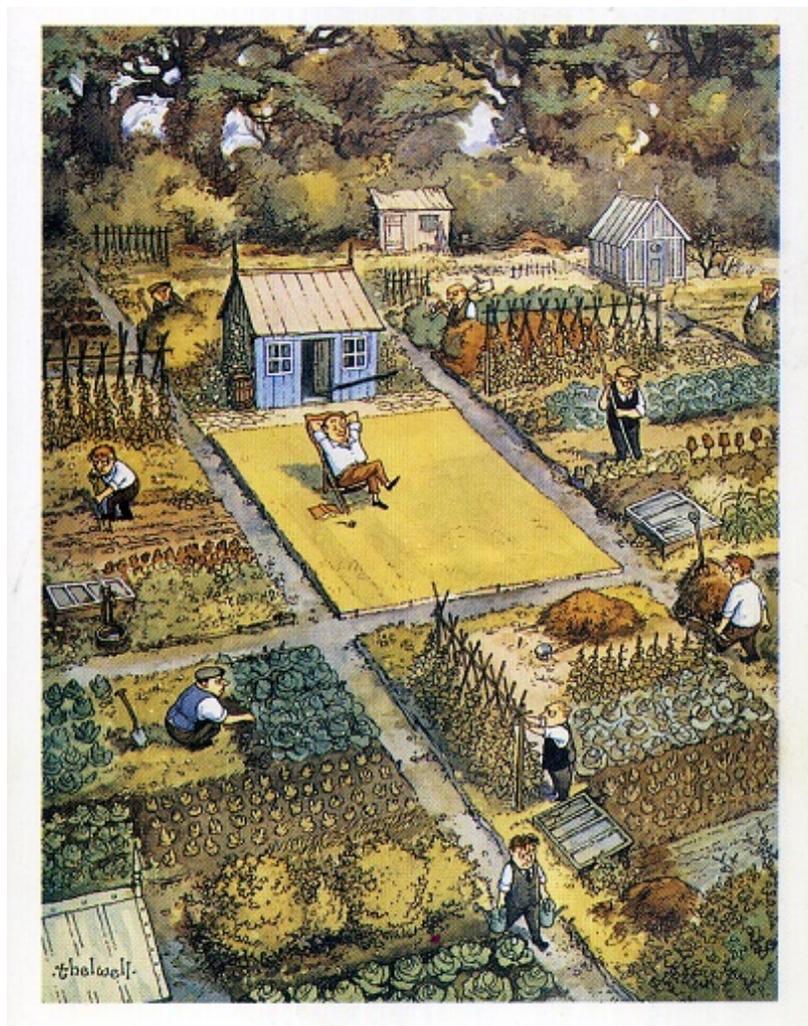
Despite the compost blip the shop gives every indication of thriving which is encouraging for us volunteers. A lot of this is of course down to Lesley Woodward and her seeds but on the hardware side our netting, insect barrier and the like are popular. As you would expect our prices are very competitive so if you haven't given the shop a try come along. Location, opening times etc are on the website.

Thanks to you who continue to bring in items, our stock of second-hand tools is currently, if temporarily, healthy. Phil even steps in with a bit of renovation of classic items before they are sold on. He was recently handed a wheeled flame gun resembling a WW1 artillery piece. I wouldn't dare sell it but if he gets it going he might reward an audience with a demo (not near the emporium, he doesn't! (ed)).

Finally I have noticed that sales of **garden lime** are slow. Lime is an important aid to soil fertility so its lack of use is a bit concerning given that allotment plots are generally subject to intensive cultivation over a long period. It is usually applied at the start of the winter months so some guidance will appear in the winter newsletter. I can put something together but if anyone is already familiar with the subject an article would be gratefully received.

### Alderman Moore Working Party (Bob Corfield/Phil Cass)

Phil Cass (Site Rep Alderman Moore) is keen to put together a list of volunteers who would be willing to help in mending roads, creating cut through paths, clear plots etc. If you would like to help Phil please contact him via the website or on 07811 623 136.



*Postcard of an untypical HwDAA allotment. Drawn by Norman Thelwell it appeared in "Punch" magazine 31st May 1954 - exactly 65 years ago.*