

HOTWELLS & DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

January 2021

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 our first newsletter of 2021. Once again we are in lockdown which has caused our Shop management group some head scratching about how we handle the sale of potatoes, onions, seeds etc during the first few months of the year. We've had to go for on-line ordering of potatoes and we will be sending out details shortly of how you can order on-line and also how they will be got to you. Vicki Wass who is our new seeds rep but is helping with this year's potato sales has written more about this below. Once we've got the potato sales sorted we will be giving some thought to how we sell onions and seeds – also on-line. If you're not on-line or computer savvy, there's a suggestion of how you can order anyway – see my short piece below.

From the Chair (Jenny Hendy)

Happier New Year to all our tenants (hopefully). Many people, from all sites, have said how particularly thankful they are to have had an allotment over the last year – access to exercise, fresh air, fresh food, wildlife (not the slugs) the changing seasons, some tranquillity etc.... And now the beginning of '21 is looking similar.

Again, a huge thanks to everyone who has helped keep things running: the site reps, the shop group (see all the info about on-line shop sales), maintenance, shop and do-anything volunteers,. In the last newsletter we welcomed the shop's decision to go peat free, reduce use of plastic and organise deliveries of green waste /compost. Over a hundred tenants have used the green compost across three sites.

We have had Zoom meetings for most of the year and now recognise that we will need to run our **AGM by Zoom**. We will do this on **Saturday Feb 27th at 2.00pm**. Reports, details of the agenda and a Zoom link will be circulated towards the end of January. The Zoom meetings lack the opportunity for casual chat and catch up on the more interesting topics of germination, composting, pests etc but they keep us safe and legal.

All our COVID precautions on sites and in the shop have been based on Government and National Allotment Society regulations and guidance. NAS recommends that allotment associations cancel inspection during lockdown. We cancelled inspections during 2020 and kept in touch with any tenants who let us know that they couldn't tend their plot for COVID related reasons. Again, thanks to neighbours who helped out with weeding, grass cutting and covering untended plots.

We hope to restart the usual round of checks that plots are cultivated and productive in April, though this depends on the changing situation. Please let your site rep know if you are unable to work your plot or maintain your shed in the months before inspections restart.

The growing appreciation of the delights of allotments has led to a huge increase in our waiting list (now over 300). I was explaining our inspection policy to a new tenant and he immediately said "Got it – use it or lose it". – a great summary.

I mentioned volunteers above, too many to name. However, Lesley Woodward is leaving her current roles soon and her work for HwDAA must be noted. She has managed the ordering,

sorting and sales of seeds, potatoes and onions for many years – her systems were once described as a well oiled machine. It has been a brilliant and growing service for tenants who've benefitted from good quality, good value stock. Perhaps as importantly many of us have also benefitted from her extensive knowledge of horticulture, seed varieties etc– always happily shared in the shop. Her contribution has been enormous.

And finally, most of our allotments last year were better than ever, reflecting the time spent and pleasure gained. Whatever happens this year I hope we again have bumper crops of fruit, veg, flowers and wildlife.

Shop & Potato Sales 2021 (Vicki Wass)

We anticipate that 623 kg of seed potatoes will be arriving in the shop in the week beginning 11th January. They will be weighed and bagged as soon as they arrive. We cannot have Potato Day this year nor will you be able to purchase your seed potatoes directly from the shop. Instead, you can order your seed potatoes on-line and they will be delivered to your site for collection from your site rep. in the coming weeks.

You will need to order and pay by BACS or cheque. Details of how to do this will be in the email sent to you on receipt of your order. After we have confirmation of payment, your order will be picked for you. Instructions for collection from your site will go out by email.

The important message here is that potatoes will be available through HwDAA as usual. Only the method of purchase and collection is different. If you would like to order HwDAA potatoes, you can do this via the website – details will be in the email we send when the potatoes arrive.

The selection of 19 varieties will be set out on the website with prices unchanged since last year. Most varieties are 70p per half kilo and £1.40 per full kilo. Specialist Albert Bartlett are £1 per half kilo and £2 per kilo. Full details of our potatoes are in an A-Z list which you can read on the website shop page.

Onions and Shallots for spring planting

Your onions and shallot sets will be ready for online order and site collection early in February. Ordering and collection will follow the same route as for potatoes.

Onions sets are Red Karmen and Sturon. Shallot sets are Golden Gourmet and Red Sun

How to use on-line ordering if you haven't got a computer. (Bob Corfield)

You will need to access the on-line ordering system via the website, but if you're not on-line or tech savvy, here's some suggestions about how to order.

1. Use your mobile phone – the website and the ordering form work just as well on a mobile phone of any make. Go to <https://www.hwdaa.co.uk> or search for Hotwells and District Allotments in Google and the site will pop up. Open the menu and look under "Shop" for the link.
2. Not got a mobile phone? – have your children or relatives got one so they could order for you? You don't need any log-on information to do this so anyone should be able to help you.
3. Get another friendly tenant to order on your behalf.
4. How do I know what to order? There's a copy of all the potatoes we will have for sale attached to this newsletter. (Off-line newsletter version only).

Website and Forum (Bob Corfield)

The website has been updated to a cleaner, easier to maintain format which now will work on any device from a widescreen PC to a mobile phone. I've also removed a few pages that no one had accessed for some time – recipes for example. Some may also remember that I have tried on more than one occasion to start up an allotment forum. Those efforts failed because the amount of work required could not be justified by the small number of people who joined. However, I've now found an excellent up and running forum which is country wide so it is full of useful tips, newsletters, advice etc all about allotments. There is a link to this forum (screen shot below) on our website menu. You can use it as a guest or if you want to post or ask a question you can join the forum yourself. Do give it a try.



Wildlife under stress (Paul Finch – environment rep)

Whilst us humans are having a bit of a tricky time at present our Wildlife have been having a tougher existence for much longer and continue to do so. Sadly, their worsening conditions are largely down to us. We can all help to address this problem by doing at least something no matter how small: it all helps. From creating a pond to planting more bee friendly plants, stop using unnecessary chemicals to using Peat Free compost (soon to be available on all sites).

Collectively we can make a bigger difference. The BS3 Wildlife Group are a passionate and dedicated bunch so it'll be invaluable to team up with them. Below is a message from Ben barker their secretary. I'm sure with their assistance the HwDAA can make more of a difference.

The BS3 Wildlife Group is aiming to collaborate with the HwDAA to increase the diversity of wildlife in our part of town. We are working already with local park groups, Windmill Hill City Farm and many individual wildlife gardeners as well as city-wide organisations such as Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol Parks. Bristol's recently published Ecological Emergency Strategy has become a useful focus for organisations across the city that wish to reverse the decline in insects and other creatures.

The BS3 Wildlife Group has two main aims. Firstly we wish to raise peoples' awareness of the threat to the native plants and wild creatures around them. We do this by sharing information and pictures on our Facebook and Instagram pages and by encouraging people to note down and share their sightings of butterflies, hedgehogs, birds and more. Our second aim is to improve local habitats. Many of our members are keen domestic or community gardeners. Others are linked to larger green spaces like parks or allotments. Of course, wildlife is probably not the main, certainly not the only, purpose of a park or an allotment area, but we urge each park and allotment group to consider how, amongst the other priorities, their space can be made safer and more hospitable for wildlife.

Several of these groups are now developing a 'wildlife action plan' for their space.

Several HwDAA members are already members of the BS3 Wildlife Group and others can join by contacting:

mywildbedminster@virginmedia.com

If no internet please phone/text Paul Finch on 07979651600

Membership is free and not restricted to those living in BS3.

Ben Barker (BS3 Wildlife Group)

Learn more, Grow More! (Martin Howard)

Avon Wildlife Trust Wildlife Gardening Club - Online Course



Avon Wildlife Trust

Three evening sessions, starting Wednesday January 13th. If you miss these there are more planned throughout the year, with topics including Encouraging Butterflies & Moths, Wildflowers & Pollinators and Management of Wildlife Friendly Food Growing. For more information:

<https://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/events/2021-01-13-wildlife-gardening-club>

Avon Organic Group: Starting An Organic Allotment

An evening online talk by Chris Collins on Thursday January 28th. For more information:

<http://www.groworganicbristol.org/>

Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop With Tim Foster

A day's session at Royate Hill on Sunday February 7th. This is a course in real life! For more

information: <https://www.bristolfoodnetwork.org/event/fruit-tree-pruning-workshop-with-tim-foster/>

Seeds and Potato rep (Bob Corfield)

Jenny has already written about our debt to Lesley Woodward who is giving up as the Seeds and Potato rep on the Committee. I would like to add my and the committee's appreciation of all the hard work Lesley has voluntarily carried out over the last few years. Running the seeds and potato desk is not an easy one. This includes organising our very successful potato days in past years which required a lot of organising and good management. Thank you Lesley.