



Introduction

Welcome to the September issue of the HwDAA Newsletter. There's some important information from our Treasurer John Buchanan about plot rents and discounts. On a more sombre note, Bob Franks' death (see below) means we've lost a champion of the allotments cause. He will be missed by many particularly current and past committee members. There's a piece by Paul Finch about peat free compost – yes, the Association is now Peat Free and I can confirm that the loose stuff is very good. He's also provided a short piece on wildlife.

Bob Corfield
Editor

From the Chair

Much has happened since the April Newsletter. Our allotments continue to look spectacular as they bear the fruits of the time and attention given this strange year.

Again, the most important part of my contribution to the Newsletter is to note the developments (some spurred on by necessity) that have happened during the lock down and to thank the volunteers who have made them happen.

In the absence of inspections site reps have continued to keep in touch with tenants, offer help where necessary and check that plots are tended and productive where possible.

The shop has re-opened after a considerable amount of work getting it as "Covid secure" as possible. A very welcome new group of volunteers has enabled us to have two people working at a time, speeding up serving and allowing screens, tills etc to be cleaned regularly. Cash handling has been reduced (see treasurer's report below). Seeds have been restocked and available throughout, now moving on to autumn perishables. **If you would like to offer help please talk with your site rep, Angie Tonge or me, via the website.**

The circumstances have encouraged us to experiment with online ordering from the shop along with increased use of the website for updated information and easier contact between tenants.

Our waiting list has grown significantly over the last six months, now over 200. Site reps have been letting vacated plots throughout, ensuring new tenants are aware of and observing the Covid related restrictions. Several tenants, instead of relinquishing their plots entirely, have decided to

reduce to a half or less. One veteran told me he wished he'd done it years ago! **If you wish to reduce the size of your plot please speak to your site rep.**

The committee has kept functioning through email and some Zoom groups. We met in Sept just before meetings were again restricted – as one committee member noted, everything continued to work smoothly without meetings. We are now considering how to manage the AGM, usually held in January.

Unfortunately we have decided the toilets will remain closed at least until March. If tempted to use a neighbour's plot (please don't) be aware that some tenants have placed wildlife cameras. There have been interesting sightings not all noted in the wildlife report below.

Finally, again, a huge thank you to all volunteers - the committee, site reps, shop workers who make everything that is reported in this newsletter (and the newsletter itself) possible.

Jenny

Bob Franks

Bob Franks who died recently was our Committee Chairman from the early 2000's until 2013. We owe a great deal to Bob; the Association would not be in the healthy position it is today without the enthusiasm and organisation with which he ran the Association's business for many years. His commitment to the welfare of our tenants was absolute. He drove through many schemes to improve our infrastructure such as the Alderman Moore shop and complete replacement of our water supply system.

Even after he retired as chairman and gave up his plot on Alderman Moore he would drop in to the shop on a Saturday morning for a coffee and a chat. He will be missed by many

Bob Corfield.(KL1)

Memories of Bob

Bob's efforts on broadening the profile of allotments meant he had contacts far and wide in local government and, as I and others found out, in local media. On Dec 5th 2013 I met him and a Radio Bristol reporter down on my allotment on KL2. We had a 30 minute chat about what was going on in winter on the plot. Great fun for me, although I'm not sure a wintry plot made great radio.

Lesley Woodward (KL2)

You are so very right about the immense contribution that Bob made at a time when HwDAA was at a low ebb. I only came in on the tail end of his time on the Committee. He was a true legend and I hope the Association will think of an appropriate way to remember him by – another cup maybe?

John Holland (wc)

Bob was someone that I knew for the past 20 years, mostly through his tireless efforts when chairing the Hotwells & District Allotments Association, and on the Allotments Panel/Forum. He was a key player in developing the Allotments Strategy which saw the regeneration of Bristol Allotments. Latterly he was the Site Representative for the Kenmore Road site. I also had some involvement with Bob on the Northern Slopes back in Wild City days, when I managed the Wild City team for a short while, and, of course, latterly in my current role. Even more recently I

understand that Bob stood in as Chair of the Allotments Forum when no-one else could be found to do it.

Steve Clampin (BA & Bristol Council)

Treasurer's News (John Buchanan)

Rents

At a recent meeting of the Committee it was agreed that plot rents for the year starting on 1 October 2020 will be held at the same level as the current year.

It was further agreed to hold the rents at the same level for the following year starting on 1 October 2021.

Discounts

Tenants with 25 years tenure currently receive a discount on their rent. This is becoming a growing financial burden on the Association. The Committee has therefore decided to end this discount from 1 October 2022. Anyone currently receiving this discount, or becoming entitled to it in the next two years, will continue to receive the discount and will not be affected.

Tenants who are in receipt of certain Government benefits are entitled to a discount on their rent. Starting for the year 2021 - 22 the criteria for receiving the discount will be widened to include anyone in receipt of Universal Credit or any of the benefits that are being rolled into Universal Credit.

Alderman Moore Shop - Contactless is coming

We are currently holding trials of a card reader in the shop so that we will be able to take contactless payments in the near future.

Peat Free Compost – Change 20 (Paul Finch)

This year will go down in history as the year of change and it will in the allotment shop as well. We're doing away with Peat (except Pete who'll still be Stores Manager). The Government pledged to phase out the use of peat in garden products by 2020 and a target to eliminate peat use by ALL by 2030. There's still a long way to go but collectively we can make a difference.

Peat bogs

Each year almost 32 million cubic yards of peat were harvested for horticultural use. Peat bogs hold 10 times more carbon than all other ecosystems, including forests and is a rare natural resource. Over 95% of the UK's peat bogs have gone: delicate ecosystems and wildlife habitats have been irreversibly eroded. Peat bogs take hundreds, if not thousands of years to form. They only grow a few millimeters (or less) per year. Those that exist in the UK are protected with most imported peat coming from Ireland and the Baltic States. No commercial extraction sites have ever been returned to their former glory so it's vital we change to sustainable green waste-derived compost which will play an essential role in replacing peat (and as locally sourced as possible).

Read more: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2020/01/are-you-planning-to-go-peat-free-in-your-garden/> - (Which? Mag website)

Consequentially from now on only peat free compost will be sold in the allotment shop. Stocks of an all purpose compost are now available from a market leading supplier: Melcourt Industries Ltd. who are relatively locally based at Long Newnton, Glos near Tetbury. 50 litre bags on sale at £6 each.

In addition to the peat free compost supplies have also been secured of a green waste compost, containing no animal manure, and ideal as a general purpose soil improver/mulch.

It is certified under Government regulations (called PAS 100) and has a typical NPK value of 7, 3, 2.5. (Further in-depth analysis available).

This has been available in the shop for a while and is proving very popular. Shop purchased bags are £4 a bag or £10 for three bags. Furthermore, two allotment sites (KL1 and Alderman Moore) have seen bulk deliveries where tenants can help themselves having remitted the appropriate amount to the treasurer. The price here is £4 per wheelbarrow or a bargain figure of £20 for as much as you require *on your plot* for a year. It is envisaged other sites will have such deliveries once suitable areas have been designated.

There are added advantages of the loose compost so, without getting bogged down:

- Has Certificate of Conformity as per the Compost Certification Scheme
- Delivered on site removes the need for plastic bags
- Locally sourced from green waste ex Bristol and Bath (gardens and parks etc)
- Good source of organic matter

This green compost provides slow release of major and micro nutrients. It improves soil structure therefore workability and rooting potential whilst increasing the moisture retention and soil drainage.

Go Peat Free-Save our Bogs

PF-SOB

Wildlife on our sites (Paul Finch)

Have you seen any interesting creatures on the allotment?
Here are two specimens seen in August.



Figure 1



Figure 2

- 1) Palmate Newt. Found under a plank of wood. Approx 8cms in length.
- 2) Pale Tussock caterpillar on a Squash leaf. Striking bright yellow-green with black bands between body segments. Yellow/whitish hairs, a row of yellow tufts on top and a red tuft at the rear. Develops into a very drab moth. Beware, the spikes can irritate the skin.

If you spot any interesting wildlife try and get a photo and send it in to hwdaa@hwdaa.co.uk and it will go on the website and maybe the next newsletter.

Rent Invoices (Bob Corfield)

As this newsletter goes out, so are the rent invoices for 2020/21. The majority will go by email so if you haven't received yours in the next few days, first check your junk folder, then, if still not found contact John Buchanan via the website contact page.