



Gnosall Allotments & Garden Association Newsletter

Issue 29

March 2016

ALLOTMENT UPDATE

You may be wondering about the situation regarding the allotments at the far end that regularly flood and the proposed works that Gnosall Parish Council are to do. At the moment we understand that they are waiting on the weather and for the plots to dry out enough for the contractor to get heavy machinery on the site. There was a delay earlier in the plans while GPC waited for the Environment Agency to approve the plans.

Has your allotment flooded? We are interested to know if your allotment has flooded at any time over the last couple of months or has your neighbour's allotment flooded. If so, please let us know. Email GAGA secretary, Simon Whittick, gnosallallotments@gmail.com or 'phone 823466.

Are you thinking of giving up your allotment? If you are, it would be very useful if you would let the Parish Council know so that they can allocate your plot to someone else, plot swap or waiting list, as early as possible. The rental year begins in April so, if you leave it 'till then, it could be May before GPC can allocate a plot and it will be after that before anyone else can start cultivating, which I am sure you can appreciate is getting a bit late.

For this year we have joined The National Allotment Society, a change from the National Allotment Council. We believe we will get more from our membership from the Society in the form of discounts for GAGA and you the member, advice on developing allotments and much more. More information in a later newsletter. We have some copies of their magazine which we will try to pass on. Let Simon Whittick know if you want to see a copy.

SHED

The first opening of the shed this year is planned to be on **Sunday March 6th**. Opening time will be from 10 am till noon, weather permitting.

We will also be opening the following weekend Sunday March 13th for our annual shed open day (see below)

If you still have your £1 shed voucher for the 2015/2016 season, you can still redeem it at the shed during March.

EVENTS

We are in the process of planning several events for this year- starting with

Shed Open Day Sunday March 13th

The shed open day is a chance for all members to come along and see what we have for sale in the shed and

share a cup of coffee/ tea and some light refreshments with the committee.

Looking ahead.....

Garden Talk with Macmillan Cancer Support

The details for this event will be confirmed shortly but it is likely to be held at the Royal Oak on a midweek evening towards the end of April. Once we have details of the speaker and the date, members will be informed and invited to buy tickets. Remember that all profits go to Macmillan Cancer Support, Gnosall to help them with their local fundraising. So you can have an enjoyable evening out and support a local charity.

Summer Barbeque

Last year the weather defeated us and we did not manage to hold our summer barbeque. We hope to be more successful this year and would like to hear from anyone interested in coming. Date for this event is still to be announced.

Gnosall Carnival - Saturday June 19th

We have agreed to run the plant stall at the carnival again this year. We are looking for plants from as many people as possible. We hope you will plant a few spare plants that we can sell them on the stall. Plants can be given to us in the week before the carnival or brought to the school field on the Saturday morning of the carnival.

G.A.G.A. Committee members

Ray Finney.....	A	Chairman
Simon Whittick..29		Secretary
Lynn Whittick....30		
Susan Howlett....		Treasurer
Phil Barnes.....	55	
Bob Colman.....	J	
Neil Fletcher.....	13	
Frank Insull.....	10	
Ann Newman.....	B/D	
Ray Woodward..	11	

The committee is keen to help all members and keep you informed on what is happening. If you have any questions, please do contact us at the shed or by phone/e-mail.

OUR WEBSITE

In keeping with the modern age, GAGA has a website with information on events, shed prices and opening times and other helpful information.

Why not have a look at what we offer if you are up to speed with computer technology (if not- get your children or grandchildren to show you!)

Visit <http://gnosallallotments.org.uk> or (if you use a smart phone or tablet, scan the QR code below.



POTATOES

Our seed potatoes have now arrived and are being distributed to those who ordered then in the Autumn.

As we are now buying in ready weighed bags, we will not have many spares in the shed.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Association does not run itself. It is your Association and behind the scenes, committee members organise potato & seed orders, stock and staff the shed through the season, organise events for members and local charities and they liaise with Gnosall Parish Council (who manage the allotments) over issues and problems.

Many of the committee have been involved since the association was reformed in 2009 and we could do with some "new blood" to help us. In particular we would like to increase the involvement of garden members, and do not currently have a committee member to represent their interests. We also would like more volunteers, not on committee, to help in the shed, we could have more opening times, help with working parties to keep the allotments tidy and much more.

If you, or anyone that you know, would like to help in any way, please contact any member of the committee or send an email to our secretary Simon Whittick at gnosallallotments@gmail.com or phone (01785 823466)

WHAT TO DO IN YOUR GARDEN OR ALLOTMENT

March Overview

Hopefully by now we are now standing on the threshold of Spring and the new gardening season. The days are beginning to lengthen and although it may not feel like it at times the temperatures are slowly increasing day by day.

The longer days are the real trigger to new growth and you will find that with the help of a little protection you can really go for those early sowings. They might not all make it but it is still worth a try and you will still have plenty of time to re-sow any misses.

Plan your work load for the month according to weather.

Sowing and Planting

Plant out early cultivars of potatoes towards



the end of the month, follow on planting out at regular intervals with the second earlies and first main crops into April but cover to protect from frost. Don't be tempted to plant out more potatoes than you can protect from any frosty weather further down the line.

Transplant any early peas, broad beans, cabbages or lettuce you may have started off earlier.

Sow the seed of Brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, broccoli, onions and leeks in short rows on a "nursery seed bed". These will be grown on to be transplanted in April.

Sow in rows in the open ground seeds of round seeded spinach, Swiss chard, early types of beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, Spring onions, peas, broad beans and turnips.

Plant out onion sets, shallots and garlic before they start to produce shoots. If you are buying any from the site shed or garden centres reject any that are shooting they will only bolt during the summer. Transplant any onions that were grown from seed sown last summer into rows. It is best to treat these as a sacrificial crop to be harvested and used from August onwards.

If you can offer the protection of a greenhouse sow the seed of celery, celeriac, French beans (they are hardy enough to be planted out before the runners), cauliflowers to transplant on the open soil next month.

General

Complete any unfinished digging and winter pruning. Clear the old leaves off strawberry plants and clean up the ground in between the plants before giving them a top dressing of a general fertiliser. Keep some fleece handy to protect the developing strawberry flowers from frost. Any frost damaged flowers are easily identified as they display a tell-tale "black eye" at the centre of the dead flower.

When the weather conditions allow it, complete the preparations of seed beds for direct seed sowing. Spread the job out over several days to allow the surface of the soil to dry out. (advice from National Allotment Society)

EMERGENCY

Emergency information for Allotments area.

In the event of an accident when calling for an ambulance / emergency services use the post code ST20 0EZ and the NGR: SJ 82733 20660.