



# Gnosall Allotments and Gardens Association Newsletter



Issue 51

March 2024

## NEWS UPDATE

With the first signs of spring showing, gardeners and allotment holders will soon be starting the annual round of sowing and planting. This newsletter gives updates on what GAGA has planned for the season.

## UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH GNOSALL PARISH COUNCIL

Our chairperson and Stu Ridgewell from the Parish Council had a walk around the allotments recently to see which had been most affected by the highwater-table and flooded, and also which plots have been actively cultivated in the last 12 months and those which do not appear to be tended.

The Parish Council will be reviewing rental charges for those plots most affected by the water and will be contacting the relevant tenants. Renewal invites will be sent out to all allotment holders by end of February or early March to ensure that any plots not taken up can be allocated as early as possible in the growing session.

The potholes in the drive within the allotments will be filled in once the area is dry. Attempting to do it when there is standing water would be a waste of materials and money, as the work would be unstable and liable to collapse again.

Jane also asked that the trees on the approach road to the Shed be trimmed to enable deliveries to the Shed to take place. This request has been passed to the Borough Council.

## RUBBISH COLLECTION DATES

We have been advised by the Parish Council that there will be refuse collections at the Allotments from 9am to 10am on:

- Saturday 23rd March
- Saturday 13th July
- Saturday 14th December

## SHED OPENING

The first opening of the shed this season is planned for Sunday March 3rd from 10 am to 12 noon. (subject to weather conditions!). We then plan to open most Sundays through the growing season. In response to some members not being able to get to the shed on a Sunday, we plan to have a special opening on Good Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. This will be instead of opening on Easter Sunday.

## SHED OPEN DAY

We will be holding an Open day on Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>, opening from 10 am till 2pm with special discount offers, Tea and coffee and plenty of advice.

## PEAT FREE COMPOST

A date for the Governments ban on the harvest, manufacture and sale of peat based growing media has yet to be set, BUT it is coming.... Time is running out for us to legally sell Peat based compost, we know it's still a popular option for members and we can confirm its availability for the 2024 GAGA Shed season that starts Sunday 3rd March 2024.

Peat is a non-renewable resource, as this is harvested the carbon trapped inside is released into the environment in vast quantities adding to already increased levels thanks to our reliance on fossil fuel for transport and energy production! The special ecosystems peat it is farmed from, once depleted can never be replaced, areas opened up risk damage from wildfires as moisture disappears, wildlife habitat is destroyed and the bog dies.

## IS PEAT FREE ANY GOOD?

Because the ban has been discussed for many years, manufacturers have researched all kinds of peat free

alternatives, the most effective to date being wood fibre & Coco Coir husk. However these are woody elements that dry out quickly which is why many users have a distrust for it!

#### THE ANSWER?

#### Rocket Gro Fruit and Vegetable compost

whose Key benefits are:-

100% renewable and sustainable material that's totally peat free!

Better water retention

Soil Association certified Organic  
no chemical residues from pesticides and  
fertilisers!

Vegan friendly - does not contain any animal  
derived manures!

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual general meeting was held on October 19th at the Royal Oak. The existing committee agreed to stand again, and Kayleigh Newman and Chris Middleton also agreed to join the committee. The AGM was followed by an illustrated presentation about the Royal Horticultural Society gardens and the benefits we, as a society, and individual members get from being Affiliate Members of the RHS.

#### SHED INFORMATION

We are expecting deliveries from our wholesaler soon to restock the shed. As with so many items in the last year, their prices have increased significantly on many of the products we stock. We do not aim to make a profit on shed sales, we will keep prices unchanged wherever possible. But be aware that prices are likely to increase as we replenish our stocks.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Garden members are reminded that your membership needs to be renewed at the beginning of April. This year the cost of membership has been REDUCED to £3 per year (including two £1 vouchers which can be redeemed towards shed purchases, but only on two different days).

Allotment holders have their subscription included in their Allotment fees.

#### SEEDS AND POTATOES

By now members should have received the seed orders and Potato and onion/shallots ordered in the Autumn. Apologies for the slight delay in getting potatoes, which was due to a delay in

shipping them from Scotland because of cold weather in the area.

#### WHAT TO DO IN MARCH

Prune roses, wisteria and clematis.

Prepare soil for planting vegetables as soon as it is dry enough.

Plant seeds of tomatoes, and other early vegetables in greenhouse or on a windowsill.

Chit early potatoes.

Plant onion sets and shallots as soon as soil is workable.

If the weather is dry and not frosty, cut the lawn (but not too short)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Jane Smith

Secretary Liz Gardner

Treasurer Ian Smith ..... Q

Vice Chair Bob Colman..... J

Phone 01785 823955

Email bob.colman@btinternet.com

Shed stock control Bob Colman

Shed rota Carol Roberts

Other committee members

Phil Barnes..... 55

Craig Atkins ..... 54A

Tony Pickford..... N

Chris Middleton

Ann Kelly

Kayleigh Newman

#### EQUIPMENT FOR HIRE

We have a range of equipment for home gardeners and allotment holders to borrow free of charge (you just have to pay for fuel where applicable)

We have recently been given a small hand mower to add to the list of equipment on loan.

If you need more information about how and why you would use any of this equipment, talk to any committee member.

#### APPEAL TO MEMBERS

We are looking for more members to help in the shed when it re-opens next season.

Can you help on a Sunday morning from 10 till 12?

If so, please contact Carol.