



# Gnosall Allotments and Gardens Association Newsletter



Issue 52

April 2024

## NEWS UPDATE

We are now very much open for business with record sales of products in the shed and members renewing their membership.

We have to report that Ian Smith has had to step down as treasurer, but he remains on the committee. In his place, we are pleased to welcome Chris Middleton, who joined the committee last Autumn, as our new treasurer.

## COMMITTEE PROFILE

Chris Middleton - Treasurer. A Stafford lad, I attended Stafford Grammar School followed by what is now Staffordshire University studying Business Studies.

Following a 4 year engagement with the Army in the Infantry which I thoroughly enjoyed, I then met my wife-to-be Janet so the Army came second !!!

Many years in the IT industry with Staffs Police, Stafford Borough Council and Lotus (part of Fii Group Plc)- I then led a management buyout and ran a software and IT Support business.

For the last 11 years I have run a large convenience store in Stoke which I trust will be sold this month.

I have for many years grown runner beans in a garden plot and as retirement was approaching I applied to Gnosall PC for an allotment several years ago and eventually was offered a half plot.

I have really enjoyed working at my allotment last year and am looking forward to the year ahead.

I have met a great crowd of fellow allotment holders and I am enjoying a role on the GAGA committee.

## 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 13th July
- Saturday 14th December

## VISIT TO RHS BRIDGEWATER

One benefit of being an RHS Affiliated Garden Society is that we have free admission to one RHS Garden each year for up to 55 members (and partners). We are starting to plan a visit to Bridgewater gardens near Salford, probably in mid July.

We can also provide an RHS discount card so that any two members can visit one of the RHS gardens (Bridgewater, Hyde Hall, Wisley, Harlow Carr or Rosemoor) for half price- contact Bob Colman for more details or to borrow the card.

Other benefits include reduced admission charges to RHS shows (Malvern, Tatton Park etc)

## UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH GNOSALL PARISH COUNCIL

We are holding regular monthly meetings with the Parish Council to discuss allotment issues. Currently this includes asking for updates on improvements to road access both up to and inside the allotments, progress on re-letting unlet allotments including those which are affected by flooding. We will also raise concerns about the fallen tree on the approach road which appears to be held up by only a telephone wire and also a possible blockage of the brook.

## SHED OPENING

We are now opening every Sunday morning from 10 till 12 noon during the growing season. You can now "spend" one of your vouchers each time you visit the shed and save a £1 off your purchases.

There will be a special "Open Day" and **PLANT SWAP event on Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup>**. You are invited to bring along your spare plants to swap with those from other members. If you don't have plants to swap, there will be some plants available to buy (while stocks last).

## NEW PRODUCTS

We are now stocking Sequestrene in the shed—but what is it used for-----

Iron deficiency results in pale yellow leaves, poor growth and flowering, and is the main reason why rhododendrons, heathers and other “lime haters” cannot be grown well on some soils. Sequestrene Plant Tonic supplies the necessary iron in a form that plants can use to correct the deficiency. It can be used at any time but preferably in early Spring by dissolving sachet in water and applying liquid to the roots.

## MEMBERSHIP

Garden members are reminded that your membership needs to be renewed so that you can continue to receive the benefits of being a GAGA member. 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). You can renew your membership at the shed on Sunday morning or by contacting Liz Gardner or Jane Smith email—[fjs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:fjs@hotmail.co.uk)

Allotment holders have their subscription already included in their Allotment fees.

## WHAT TO DO IN APRIL & MAY

This is the busiest time of year, specially in the vegetable garden planting seeds, potatoes and other plants. although planting this year will be late because of the wet spring.

Earth up potatoes as soon as the shoots are above ground.

Sow vegetables such as carrots, parsnips beetroot etc as soon as the ground is warm enough (when you see weed seedlings start to emerge.)

It is important to tackle weeds early, so keep hoeing between plants and rows of seedlings. Source bedding plants and start to plant up hanging baskets.

There is still a chance of frost so protect tender plants and do not plant out summer plants too soon.

## PEAT\_FREE COMPOST

Please be aware that peat-free composts (such as the ROCKET GRO which we are selling) are not ideally suitable for seed raising. This is

stated clearly on the bag, but most of us ignore such notices and assume that all composts are ok for planting seeds. (This warning probably applies also to many pea-based composts). General purpose composts contain NPK fertilizers in too high a concentration and may stunt root development of the very young seedlings. It is better to use a specific seed compost or coir starting blocks.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson	Jane Smith
Secretary	Liz Gardner
Treasurer	Chris Middleton....51A
Vice Chair	Bob Colman..... J
Phone	01785 823955
Email	<a href="mailto:bob.colman@btinternet.com">bob.colman@btinternet.com</a>
Shed stock control	Bob Colman
Shed rota	Carol Roberts
Other committee members	
Ian Smith	..... Q
Phil Barnes	..... 55
Craig Atkins	..... G
Tony Pickford	..... N
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)

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

Equipment available:

Electric lawn scarifying rake

Lawn feed spreader

Petrol Rotavator

Long-arm hedge clipping attachment

Lawn mower

## 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.