

DATS

Allotments News Letter

As the end of the growing year approaches, I felt it was time to review the past year and give you all some information about the year to come.

Firstly, what a difficult year it has been with the arrival of the Covid Virus in March and all the restrictions that this has brought and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

But what a superb lifeline the allotments have been for everyone. They have helped both in physical and mental wellbeing, also enabling us to get out into the fresh air and meet up with others for a chat, keeping socially distanced at all times of course. Camaraderie and friendship have really blossomed this year with people stopping for a chat as they pass and helping each other out in many ways.

Although the middle of the summer was one of the hottest on record, unfortunately due to the restrictions we weren't able to hold our usual BBQ's and due to the continued rules, we won't be able to hold our Christmas Social or New years Meal. There have still been some good friendships formed nevertheless and new allotment holders welcomed to our community.

Now for a few housekeeping facts.

Although we haven't been able to have the usual social activities this year and it may seem that you haven't got as much for your membership as usual, unfortunately the committee has concluded that we won't be able to make a reduction in subs for the coming year. The good news however is that they won't go up either. They will remain at £13.00 per plot or £20.00 if you have the quarterly Allotment magazine. The main reason is that we have some fixed costs which are unavoidable.

Affiliation to the National Allotment society, and the magazines, together with the cost of the Public Liability Insurance and building Insurance for the Pea Pod comes to an approximate total of £432 per year. The membership fees in total raise approx. £430. As you can see, we just break even. We also hold a balance of approx. £460 which is a buffer against any additional unforeseen expenses.

The benefits of membership remain very good value for money and the main ones are:

- Free Public Liability Insurance (5 million) which the Parish Council insist upon.
- Associate membership of NSALG (National Association of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners)
- Cheap seed scheme via Kings Seeds (If you haven't got your catalogue ask a committee member.)
- Cheap onion sets and potato tubers
- Use of the generator to power electric tools on your allotment.
- Use of the Pea Pod toilet facilities and when lockdown restrictions finish use of the Pea Pod.
- A quality quarterly magazine for allotment gardening.
- Liaison with the Parish Council to get the best help from them that we can. Which this year has seen the provision of waste trucks to clear unwanted weeds and other compostable material. A boon now the bulk refuse collection has finished.

And as usual the help, friendship and advice from other allotment holders.

Although the subs are not due for payment until March 2021, we would like to change the method of collection. Would members be willing to pay by Standing Order, BACS transfer or Cheque as we would prefer not to handle cash at the present time, although we will however still take cash if the other methods of payment are not appropriate for your individual needs. So please fill in the questionnaire attached to this news letter or complete the form on the web site.

We would also like suggestions for next years growing competition, something to get us all involved.

Also, would you like to see a formal seed swap arranged for the spring?

Now a request, to anyone leaving spare seedlings or plants on the table in the open shed for people to take, please can you leave a note of the variety if possible. It does help to know what it is you are planting and not end up with a surprise. I would add that when plants are left, they are very much appreciated, so thank you to all who do.

Can I also thank David Winder for trimming the hedge against the Bowls Club we are very grateful for your hard work.

We will have a few maintenance jobs to be done in the spring and would be grateful for any help we can get. Details of the work to be done will be published in the spring.

Your committee wishes you all the very best for the remainder of this year and hope you all stay safe. Lets all hope that 2021 is better in every way than this year.

Mike Hawksworth

Chairman DATS