

Countesthorpe Gardens & Allotments Society

Newsletter: Summer Edition

What a start to the season

What a start to the season! First we had so much rain we could all have grown rice. This restricted any late winter digging until it had stopped and the ground dry enough to continue. Well done those who managed to get the digging done earlier.

Next we are still in the grip of an awful pandemic that has curtailed peoples movements and socialising with the current lockdown rules. But it looks as though some sort of easing is occurring, though many of you no doubt were struggling to get plants for your plots. See below about our first plant sale. Though a few did decide to take advantage of the good, but cold weather of late March and do their social distancing, and exercise at the allotment. It was good to see a number of you up there. Hopefully you all managed to get your crops in.

There was a blessing in disguise with this good weather continuing through April and most of May with a lot of activity beginning to happen on plots. It was during this time that the illusive plot 17 was found, which

coined a couple of phrases like the 'Lost garden of Countesthorpe' and 'have we lost the plot'.

You will have noticed that various old wheelbarrows have been placed round the allotment to 'pretty up' the place, and make it look a little more inviting. Thanks to Gill for sourcing not only the barrows but also the plants. Thanks also go to one of our members, name unknown, who also added some plants to one of the barrows. It is little gestures like this that show that the society is an important part of some peoples lives. The community area has been cleared of grass between the slabs so that it looks more like a community area.



Your Committee Members

Chairman—Chris Davidson

Treasurer—Maggie Mason

Seeds Officer—Fiona Richmond

Allotments Officer—Gill Postlethwaite

Secretary—Dave Merrick

Attention

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Swap trolley

The swap trolley is there for you to swap any **serviceable** gardening implements, accessories or plants. It is on the edge of the Houghton's business land. Members need to be reminded that it is not a dumping ground for damaged **unserviceable** items that should have been skipped in the first place. It is certainly not a place to bring damaged or unwanted household items, as seems to have occurred recently. This is fly tipping and is against the law. It is also one of the conditions the rental agreement. There is a notice on the trolley that specifically states no plant pots, those with serviceable plants/veg excepted. Please use the trolley for what it is there for, swapping **serviceable** gardening implements, accessories or plants or the service will be withdrawn.

Bonfires & water

There comes a time when some of the rubbish on the plots is too much to be taken away home, or to the tip. This is usually when any soft fruit bushes and canes or fruit trees and hedges have been pruned or cut back. This rubbish is then

burnt. Please could all plot holders think before they have a bonfire as we have received complaints from some residents who back onto the allotment, including the cricket club. A sensible approach needs to be applied and only have a bonfire when there is North in the wind direction i.e. North, North East or North West. This will ensure that any smoke will be blown towards the fields and not back toward the village.

There is now a burning area at the bottom of the site, bordered by corrugated iron panels, this can be used by all plot holders to burn appropriate items. Again, this is not a dumping ground for plot waste, and **must** be burnt by whoever takes the rubbish down there. As mentioned above please make sure that the wind is in an appropriate direction.

On the subject of water, we realise that there has been a period of very good weather which may have necessitated more watering than normal. But please can we all make sure that when topping up your water butts you remember to turn the water off before leaving. There have been a couple of instances where plot holders have forgotten to switch off the water, and it was only the diligence of others that this was spotted and not too much was wasted.

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Trevor Houghton

It was with great sadness that we heard earlier this year the passing of Trevor Houghton who had been a long standing member of the society. In his later days he always liked to go up to the allotments and just sit and look around, always ready to have a chat with anyone up there.

His family have decided to continue with the plot in his memory which has also been kept going with the purchase of a bench, a brass plaque, and some box hedging as a remembrance of Trevor at his plot.

This was financed from donations kindly received from those who knew Trevor and also the kind gestures from members who gave materials and time to complete the base on which it stands. A huge thanks to all who helped in some way or other.



Rental items

The allotment society is now in receipt of 2 rotovators and 2 x 240v power generators for plot holders to use. The fee for renting any of these is £15 per half day. The generators are particularly useful for those plot holders with electrical tools.

Should you wish to borrow any of these items place contact Gill Postlethwaite the Allotments Officer at gillposs27@gmail.com or via the website email link or see her at plot 32.

Items for Sale

Should anyone have anything they wish to sell, whether tools, machinery, skills or time etc, please contact Gill, the allotments officer, who will advertise it on the notice boards as well as putting a notice in the newsletter and possibly on the website.

If you haven't looked at the website recently, or didn't even know we had one, there is a link at the bottom right hand corner for you to follow. It is worth looking at as it has been excellently 'refurbished' by David Millar, plot 50, who has volunteered to keep it up-to-date.

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Woodchip Mulch

Countesthorpe based tree surgeon Alex Howes, of SSAW Tree Services is able to supply woodchip as a mulch to any members who would like it. It can be used as a weed suppressant or as an alternative to slabs and grass as a path material. If this interests you please contact Alex emailing him at alexhowes@ssawtreeservices.co.uk or call 07754963108.

Plant sale

On 6 May a plant sale was held at the allotment. It looked like a summer fayre with the beautiful weather, a couple of tables and people buying veg plants kindly donated by various plot holders. With the current conditions of lockdown some people were struggling to get plants for their plots, especially those already grown from seed, as gardens centre were closed. The weather added to the enjoyment of the event, and a large number of allotmenters purchased readily needed plants to put in. Adam Clarke, from Clarkes farm, even stopped to purchase a number of tomato plants and with his tractor ticking over in the driveway, if you closed your eyes, it sounded a bit like a summer fayre with an ice-cream van.



Of course everyone kept to the social distancing rules. The total made for the society from the sale of the plants came to £94.55. Thanks to all who donated the plants, those who helped to make the event go ahead and all those who attended and bought the plants.

First Aid box

It was with some concern that we heard of an incident involving one of our plot holders who suffered an injury to such a degree that an ambulance had to be called to the site, and they spent some time in hospital under observation. Fortunately other plot holders were around to provide assistance and the appropriate course of action was taken. It became apparent that not many people at the allotment have any first aid equipment.

The decision was, therefore, taken to purchase a suitable First aid box and for it

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to be kept at the allotment with easy access for all who are in need of it. Should you have need of it, please inform Gill, the allotments officer, so that used items can be replaced. It has been sited at the notice board near Gill Postlethwaite's plot (32). The cost was initially funded from society funds, but Ian and Sarah Biddles/Buswell have very kindly and generously donated the money to cover cost of the First Aid box. A letter of thanks has been sent to them.

Could we all be more vigilant with others at the allotment, particularly with those plot holders who have plot towards the back and away from either of the tracks where their presence can go unnoticed.

The question was asked if anyone was known to be first aid trained. It transpires that a number of people have first aid training.

Those people are:

Fiona Richmond—Seeds officer – plot 20

Dave Merrick—Secretary—plot 17

David Millar—Web author—plot 50

Jenny Lee—plot 7

Food growing tour to Sri Lanka

Here is an opportunity to join a group of other allotmenters with the National Allotments Society on their 2nd food growing tour to Sri Lanka in November 2020.

During the tour you will find about their crops and growing practices of familiar crops that you may have already grown on your own plot, and there will be a lot to talk about.



Images from ekhohotels.com and srilankafind-



Other items on the agenda are visiting a fish market where the catch has been landed. Visits to research stations to see how developments have been made in growing coconuts and other vegetables. There will also be a visit to a commercial farm with hands harvesting and preparation of the crop. There will also be a safari to

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see elephant and other wild animals in the Yala National Park.

If this appeals to anyone why not give them a call for further details: 01536 266576.

Whether this will actually go ahead remains to be seen. But it has been included, from the national magazine, as something else to take your mind off the current situation and look forward to doing if you so wish.

Plot rent

In discussion with the treasurer on the current finances, and the fact that the finances are in a healthy state, it has been decided that the rent for each plot will stay at £35. The rent for the year 2020/2021, which would normally be due on 1 October 2020, will now be due on 1 September 2020. This is to move in line with the half year point of the financial year. Gill will therefore be sending out renewal invoices during the second week of August, with payment to be made by 30th September.

The rent can be paid a number of ways now. Either by cash or cheque to Gill, the allotments officer, or by bank BACS transfer. When using BACS plot transfer plot holders should ensure that they quote their plot number and surname as the reference.

This is to ensure that Gill knows exactly who has paid, and won't go chasing you for the rental amount again.



AGM 2020

There will be the Annual General Meeting on **Thursday 1st October 2020 at 7 p.m.** This will be held at the Countesthorpe Cricket Club. The current committee are only in place for a year and are subject to re-election on the night if they, and you, so wish. During the evening you, as society members, will be able to decide on either their re-election or choose who you wish to represent the society on the committee.

Also during the evening there will be the chairman's address, financial statement of the society as well as a round-up of what has occurred during the year. So please, come along, hear what has been going on and socialise with other society members. Hopefully the bar will be open by then for some light refreshments.

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Allotment Tips & Techniques

If you have any tips and time savers that you employ on your plot either, for growing any particular veg or plants or ways and techniques for managing your plot why not share this information with your other allotmenters.

Tips & techniques

1. When deciding to get rid of weeds through spraying a **glysophate** based product, avoid spraying young vigorous growing shoots in early season, as they will have the strength to grow back. Instead wait until just before flowering time before applying the knockout punch. The plant will be at its most vulnerable at this time.
2. If you are looking for a different method of growing veg then companion planting could be an alternative way. The image on the right hand side shows what veg can be grown together for a variety of benefits such as reduction of pest and enhancing the taste.
3. Add a teaspoon of Epsom salts to 4 cups of warm water and spray your plants. Repeat about 10 days later. This gives the plant a magnesium boost and works well for peppers and tomatoes. Failing that, if the bottom is falling out of your world you could

always drink it, and let the world fall out of your bottom. 😊



Image from Anglianhome on Pinterest

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