

# St John's Allotment Association

## February 2022 Newsletter



It was tempting fate to call this the 'Spring Newsletter', but winter may yet have something bad to throw at us. It was too depressing to call it the 'Winter Newsletter', so I decided to stay in the present, and hope that spring is just round the corner. I am sure that, like me, you are all really keen to make a start to the growing season after what seems like a very long hibernation.

### **First of all we have the bad news....**

We regret that it is necessary to increase the rent by £5 per plot. A full plot will cost £30, and half a plot £15. This is still very cheap compared with most allotment sites. The reasons for the increases are:

- Higher than expected costs of the repairs to the driveway last year
- £1,000+ spent on tree safety and preservation last year
- The need to establish a good cash reserve ahead of the development of the school site
- The real possibility of having to remove more asbestos from the site. This can only be done by a licensed contractor and is very expensive
- We now have a realistic figure for our annual water consumption - £775, which works out at about £5 for a full plot
- The high cost of maintaining the site – trimming the hedge, cleaning the ditch, mowing the cartroads, clearing away rubbish in skips and filling in potholes.

This was not an easy decision. All our income goes into the Association coffers and is spent for the benefit of the Association. Rent renewals with instructions on how to pay will be sent out around the end of February with facility to pay online or directly at the shop.

### **There is even more bad news.**

Our main supplier of goods to the shed is closing down the business. They are a small local business, and the big suppliers are not too interested in small outfits like allotment associations. Particularly they don't want to bring their big lorries down Gypsy Lane, where overhanging branches and the like might rip the lorry curtains.

Right now, we are stocking up as much as we can – the sheds are bulging – and we are investigating other suppliers.

Prices in the shed have rocketed. You will notice big increases in price and reductions in quantity. There are likely to be more increases during the season.

Peat will be banned from horticultural products in 2023 and the substitutes will be expensive. Humax as you know it will no longer be available after we have sold our existing stock.

We cannot get hold of any manure to sell. Because the price of fertiliser has gone through the roof farmers are using all themselves.

### **Better News**

The shed will re-open 27 February. Get your peat products while you can.

The seed potatoes have now arrived. The seed scheme went well last year.

We have a lot of new members, who seem to be very keen. New members may like to have a copy of the Seed Scheme catalogue which gives a lot of information about growing crops. Get this at the shed when it is open on Sundays after 27 February.

There are still 19 people on the waiting list. If your plot is getting too much, think about going down to half a plot. A lot less work, plus the companionship of a new neighbour.

### **Good News**

We have two members mowing the cartroads, replacing James who has left the area.

We are having two skips at Easter, one on car park 2 and the other on car park 4. Please take as much rubbish as you can home with you. The skips are only for larger items. Please load them carefully. It costs £240 to hire each skip, so don't waste any space.

### **Plot Inspections**

Will be on Sunday 24 April and Sunday 26 June. These are carried out by rank-and-file members of the Association.

By the April date, we expect to see plots mostly dug and planting and sowing to have begun  
By the June date we expect to see plots fully dug and mostly planted out.  
On both dates we expect to see weeds under control and no rubbish lying around.

### **Security**

Don't keep valuable stuff on your allotment. Take it home. Don't leave tools in the open as thieves may use them to open sheds or vandalise crops. We cannot keep thieves out.

### **To think about .....**

#### **The Gate**

We are going to replace the gate post and install a 'No Entry' sign to deter those taking an evening stroll and the like. The gate was left open to avoid infection from the gates surfaces. This is not now thought to be quite such a big problem. Do we try and get everyone to close the gate again? If so, it is likely to be an uphill struggle.

### **AGM**

We are having a face-to-face AGM at the Sports and Social Club at 7.30pm on 4 April. The room is large and airy so should be quite safe. Come along, have a drink, meet your neighbours and remember what a night out is all about!

### **Plots 111 and 120**

In view of the poor productivity and drainage of these plots we are thinking about converting them into a nature reserve with a considered case presented to the AGM.

### **Website**

Keep up to date with our news on our website [stjohnsallotments.co.uk](http://stjohnsallotments.co.uk)

### **Gypsy Lane**

Please keep your speed down to the 10 mph speed limit. We are in frequent touch with the football club about this, so that their visitors do likewise. If you drive slowly the surface of the road is preserved. Maintenance is hard work and costly.

### **Bonfires**

Please try to avoid having a bonfire and take your uncompostable waste home to your green bin or the tip. Only have a bonfire when absolutely necessary and ensure that the smoke does not drift over towards the football pitch, where there may be a match or practice, and people eating and drinking on their patio. The smoke must not cause a nuisance to your neighbours, so it is best to avoid lighting up at weekends when there are a lot of people on site. In these days of global warming and greenhouse gas emissions having a bonfire is increasingly anti-social.

Ruth Harris

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