

St John's Allotment Association

Spring 2023 Newsletter



The committee met last week for the first time since July. A lot of plans made for the year ahead. One thing that was apparent from the meeting was that a vast amount of work is being done by very few people. We have said in the past that this is not sustainable, and now is the time to change things. The expectation is that all members will do something for the benefit of the Association.

We have two 'Situations Vacant'

Health and Safety Officer (Committee Member) Nick Sumners has resigned from this post as he cannot get to committee meetings. Nick has given excellent advice over the years as well doing vast amounts of work on the site. We are very grateful to Nick for his considerable hard work. We need a person with some experience of health and safety at work issues, and who is aware of the risks inherent in allotment gardening. We have developed a health and safety policy over many years, and review our risk assessments annually.

Site Manager (Committee Member). This work is currently carried out by Ruth and Arthur in addition to their other duties and is a discrete role for someone who can take an active part in the management of the Association. You will need to keep your eyes open for problems on the site, such as security, rubbish, trespassers, theft, trees needing attention as well as organising skip hire, hedge trimming and ditch cleaning and repairs to the driveway and cart roads.

If you can help with this work, please speak to any committee member, or email us at gypsyane.allotments@gmail.com.

Committee Members are

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bob Shanks - Plot 104 | Arthur Belgrove - Plot 34 | Chris Jordan - Plot 37 |
| Terry Cripps - Plot 146 | Toni Hickman - Plot 109 | Peter Spencer - Plot 85 |
| Jurgita Liutkeviciute - Plot 8 | Ken Chennells - Plot 13 | Ruth Harris - Plot 60 |

Shed

The shed will open on 19 February and then every Sunday morning until early September. The opening hours are 10.30 – 12 noon until Whitsun, and then 10.30 – 11.15. We are beginning to work well with our new supplier. Unfortunately prices in horticulture have gone through the roof and we cannot publish an annual price list as in the past, as prices will change in year. We will price individual items in the shed. If you need stuff out of opening hours Ruth or Arthur will open up for you. You can pay for items by bank transfer as long as you sign the 'Slate' book.

Peat is fast disappearing from horticultural products, but its replacements leave something to be desired. Please let us know if you have used peat-free products in the past and how you have got on.

We try to get hold of farmyard manure for you to buy, but regrettably do not have a regular source of supply.

Rents

Unfortunately we have decided to increase the annual rent by 10%, an increase of £3. Rent of a single plot will now be £33, plus the £2 membership fee. This year's rents will be:

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|-----------|----------------------------|--------|
| ½ Plot | £16.50 +£2 membership fee | £18.50 |
| 1 plot | £33.00 + £2 membership fee | £35.00 |
| 1 ½ plots | £49.50 + £2 membership fee | £51.50 |
| 2 Plots | £66.00 + £2 membership fee | £68.00 |

Rents are due on 25 March and Arthur will be in touch regarding payment arrangements nearer the due date. No need to pay just yet.

The reasons for the increase:

- We will be spending £750 this year on removing asbestos from the site. We still haven't got rid of it all
- We need to remove dead elms and other overhanging trees from the hedges which are becoming dangerous. We need to clip the hedge on track 5 so that an ambulance can gain access in an emergency.
- Skips cost £276 each. We think we may need 4 this year.
- We had a higher than expected water bill at the end of 2022. We were expecting about £250 and the bill was £788.
- We face uncertain times with the development of the school site. We need a good cash reserve in case we need to secure our boundaries and/or contest the developer's plans.

Skips

We hope to hire a skip at Easter. Will let you know the arrangements for filling them. This will be done under supervision so that no space is wasted. As you will have read above, they cost a lot of money.

Plots

There is a lot of demand for plots. We have 20 people on our waiting list.

Kings Seeds

The on-line ordering system works well. Please let me know if you need access. There is an on-line catalogue, but paper ones will still be available.

Plot Inspections

Will be on Sunday 24 April and Sunday 26 June. These are carried out by rank-and-file members of the Association. Please make sure that your plot number is clearly visible on your plot.

By the April date, we expect to see plots mostly dug or ground prepared and planting and sowing to have begun. By the June date we expect to see plots fully dug/prepared 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.

The Gate

We now have a 'No Entry' sign to deter those taking an evening stroll and the like. Do we leave the gate open as it has been for some months, or do we try to keep it closed to deter trespassers? Come along to the AGM and let us know your views on this.

AGM

Our AGM is at the Sports and Social Club, Upper Rosemary Hill, at 7.30pm on Monday 24 April. We try to keep the formal business to a minimum, as this is an opportunity for us all to meet up and hear your views about the future of the Association. Papers for the meeting will be sent out nearer the date.

Website

Keep up to date with our news on our website stjohnsallotments.co.uk

Gypsy Lane

Please keep you 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.

Flower Show

This was a lovely event held at a new venue, the Methodist Church Hall. It is a shame that more members did not turn up. It costs a lot to hire the hall – our previous venue was free, but they can no longer accommodate us. Please try to support us this year – the date is the first Saturday in September.

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 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

18.02 2022