



HARLOW HILL ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2022

For all Plot Holders and Associate Members

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter. We've had some glorious warm bright October days, and I doubt if the autumn leaves have ever been more colourful. Now everything is taking on the appearance of winter, short days, and darkness from late afternoon, leaves cascading from the trees and a soggy outdoors that won't dry out till March. But there's still time to sow some broad beans to harvest in late June next year. Hope you have all had a good gardening year, and can look back upon many successes as well as the disappointments. What a strange gardening year 2022 has been with a drought from April to the end of September. Crops that were not frequently watered either did very little or just perished. Those of tropical origin such as runner beans just loved it, provided they got plenty of water. Whatever the fate of our plants, the allotment site is a very sociable place, and the warm summer provided much to savour with endless opportunities for enjoyable chats with old friends and new friends.



Late summer on plot 31A with attractive blend of flowers and runner beans



Sunflowers enjoyed the hot summer

RENT RENEWAL NOTICE

As plot holders will know, a rent year lasts from 1st February to the following 31st January. The majority of plot holders now pay by bank transfer, for which I am most grateful as it eases my workload considerably. This also means that most rents are paid very quickly.

I am therefore going to send the rent renewal notice next year on 1st February rather than mid-January as we have done in the past – this will just make it easier from an accounting point of view. I will send an email in mid-January to all plot holders reminding them of this change.

Chris Dicken, HHAA Treasurer

SITE JUDGING – HARLOW HILL ALLOTMENTS COME THIRD

The site judging took place on 8th July. The judges were Rob Gooderidge from Ripon and Rob Snow from Knaresborough. The results were announced at the Allotment Show on 21st August and Harlow Hill allotments came third again, but this time we were only awarded “Silver-Gilt” rather than the “Gold” we achieved last year. Plot 37A was our top plot. Northern Outfall was the top site and also had top plot. There have been some concerns expressed by some sites this year about the lack of feedback and the lack of transparency in the marking. Therefore the Harrogate & District Allotment Federation is carrying out a review and will be putting in place a new system of marking in 2023. The plan is to publicise the new scheme at the AGM of the HDAF in January.

Angela Dicken

TREES ON PLOTS

A tree on a plot can cause problems, and this was discussed at the last committee meeting (October 13th). The tenancy agreement which each plot holder is required to sign states: "He/she shall not plant trees or shrubs which will impact adversely on the adjacent allotments."

There are several ways in which a tree can adversely affect an adjacent allotment: i) by shade preventing the sun reaching a neighbouring allotment for some of the day, ii) by the tree drawing moisture from a neighbouring allotment, iii) by overhanging branches on the path between the plots or even as far as the adjacent plot, iv) by the tree's roots spreading into an adjacent plot.



A brilliant year for fruit

If you have a tree/trees on your plot (usually apple, pear or plum), it means regularly lopping the branches and making sure they remain well within your plot; if this is consistent with good pruning so much the better. Trees can also overhang the allotment ride, and this is unacceptable.

Safety Warning!! - both for yourself and others who may use the paths. The remaining twigs (those which are still part of the tree) may be dangerously sharp after lopping. If they are eye height, it could cause a really serious injury. It nearly happened to me in my garden at home recently.

There is another tree problem, and one which is rarely considered when a tree is first planted. What if, after a few years when it has become well established, you decide you don't want it, and would like to use your plot for growing something else? Try getting it up! Easier said than done! JCB probably needed! Similarly, it creates a big problem for the next person who has your plot.

There is also an issue with the height of the tree on a plot. It makes sense not to have it higher than you can reach in order to cut it back. It also makes sense not to let it grow too high for getting the fruit from it

For those who want to plant a fruit tree on their plot, the committee recommends cordons and espaliers which avoid many of the problems just described. Or why not grow your fruit on a gooseberry bush?

GUNGE HO!

WHITE GUNGE GRABS THE GOURDS



Courgette plants, marrow plants and other gourds have been affected by a white powder covering all of the leaves. The evidence from my vegetable authority (Hessayon) suggests that the problem is "powdery mildew" which occurs "in a warm dry summer". Too late in the year to do anything about it now. However, the good news is that it hasn't much affected the fruit and yields have been quite good.

AND GREY GUNGE GETS THE BRASSICAS

I noticed this on my sprouts in late summer. They were doing well and looking healthy when I noticed this grey stuff all over the sprouts and some of the heads. Caterpillars are easily recognisable, but not this stuff. It didn't smell very nice either. I didn't know what to do but I found a half-used container of derris and puffed that all over them. It didn't make much difference, but didn't appear to do them any harm either. The brassicas of nearby plot holders also seemed to have been affected, though not as badly as mine.



I hacked off a large stalk of one of the sprout plants most badly affected and took it to the committee meeting on 13th October (raised it under Any Other Business!) where it was scrutinised with some bemusement. One of my committee colleagues said the same grey gunge was all over her sprouts too. On Angela's suggestion and initiative, a photo of the afflicted plant was sent to the National Allotment Society. They think the grey stuff is black fly larvae, and suggest try blasting it with soapy water then wipe off the larvae with your hands (wearing rubber gloves is advised).

Most of the sprouts beneath the gunge are quite well formed. I don't yet know if they are edible!

YORKSHIRE IN BLOOM



Angela Dicken, Jo Caswell & Mary Mann at the YiB Award Ceremony

Once again Harlow Hill was the allotment site on the judge's route for Yorkshire in Bloom judging on 20th July. We put up a display in the new gazebo with information about all the Harrogate allotment sites and the Allotment Show, and representatives of Pine Street Allotments together with various members of Harlow Hill talked to the judge.

Team Harrogate was awarded a Gold Award and category winner in the small cities category at the Yorkshire in Bloom Awards in Tadcaster on 6th October. Pam Grant, Team Harrogate Chair, has thanked everyone for their contribution to this excellent outcome.

Angela Dicken

PICNIC ON THE PLOT

Picnic on the Plot was on Saturday 6th August. About 20 people came along on a pleasant sunny day and we enjoyed a great spread (particularly Maureen's cream & jam scones) and good conversation.

Angela Dicken



HARROGATE ALLOTMENT SHOW



Held on Sunday 21st August in the Sun Pavilion at the Valley Gardens, this year's show was again an enjoyable event and considerable success with some very positive feedback from the judges on the standard of the exhibits. Our tombola stall raised £271. Many thanks go to Gerry Hansford and Rosemary Chapman for organising the prizes and to everyone who donated them, and many thanks too to Gerry, Rosemary, Sarah Stead, Carole Rowe, Jayne Rance and Jennie Parfitt for looking after the stall on the day. Angela Dicken won the Margolis Prize for the most points by an exhibitor from Harlow Hill and Bea Treetops won the Harlow Hill Children's Trophy.

Many thanks go to Jane Ayre for assembling our entry for the inter-site "Purple" competition. The competition was won by Ripon City Allotments.

The surplus produce from the Show was donated to Resurrection Bites, and £600 from the Show profits was donated to Woodlands Community Garden. The money will be used to produce an information board for the garden.

Angela Dicken

HDAF SITE COMPETITION 2023

The 2023 inter-site competition is "Simply Red". Each allotment site is challenged to produce an arrangement on this theme to include fruit, vegetables and flowers. This time we can use as many or as few varieties as we wish. The arrangement must fit into a 2ft x 2ft square. The arrangements will be displayed at the Allotment Show on 20th August 2023 and will be judged as part of the Show; there will be a trophy for the winning site.

Angela Dicken

ALLOTMENT SHOP

OPEN FOR LAST TIME THIS YEAR ON SATURDAY 12th NOVEMBER

We have continued to open the shop twice a month with the opportunity to order by email once a month. We have sold lots of bags of composted manure in recent weeks, so we should have some well-fed plots.

The shop will be open for the last time this year on **Saturday 12th November**. There will also be an opportunity to order by email on that day.

If you have any feedback on how the shop has run this year, whether it's in relation to the number of opening days, shop stock etc. please email me at dicken.angela@hotmail.co.uk before the end of the year. My thanks to everyone who has helped in the Allotment Shop this year (Paul Knight, Sean Flynn, Sarah Stead, Richard Wriglesworth, Sian Gamble and Chris Dicken) and also to those who helped with unloading the van when we had deliveries. If next year you could spare a morning to help in the Allotment Shop, please let me know.

Angela Dicken

ISSY'S BEEN BUSY

Congratulations to Isabelle Holmes (4B) for the most improved plot in 2022. The Roland Buckton Cup will be presented to Isabelle at our AGM in March 2023.

NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY

Our AGM will be held on the evening of **Thursday 23rd March 2023** at 7.30pm in the Green Hut. All plot holders and associate members very welcome. Make sure it's in your diary!

CHAIR STILL NEEDED

We still have no Chair and committee meetings have been chaired by committee members kindly offering to do it. However, a Chair is still needed. The main duties and responsibilities are

- to chair committee meetings and the AGM,
- attend the annual Harrogate & District Allotment Federation meeting (usually in January),
- attend the annual meeting in November with Harrogate Borough or whatever local authority arrangement replaces it from 2023,
- undertake policy review at end of the year,
- meet site judges and Yorkshire in Bloom judges (July),
- have an overview of the management of our site and take a leadership role.

WILDLIFE AREA: POND ENLARGED

The bird box and the bat box are both now hanging on the silver birch tree next to the pond. Some blue tits showed an interest in the bird box but didn't actually nest in it. The bat box is still uninhabited.

As part of the June work weekend much of the long grass was strimmed and collected, which considerably tidied up the wildlife area. Of course, this is now growing back.

During the spring we had a lot of frogspawn and then tadpoles in the pond. Unfortunately, because of the pond's shallowness and the dry spring the tadpoles didn't make it to being fully fledged frogs or toads. This is despite Trish and Steph rushing around with watering cans trying to keep a decent level of water in the pond. The pond also had too much vegetation growing into it. As a result we decided that the best thing was to enlarge the pond and put a fence round it for safety reasons. Work started a couple of weeks ago with a group of people removing the vegetation and then digging out a larger pond. As can be seen in the photo the pond has now been re-lined and rocks put round the edge of it. We're just waiting now for the rain to fill it up, and with the change in the weather it is filling up nicely. And the fence will be going round the pond very shortly.

Thanks to Michael Jacobs, Chris Dicken, Gerard Byrnes, Tricia Wilson and Steph Byrnes for their work on this project.

The Wildlife Area is at the bottom of the small allotment site close to the fence by the footpath. Feel welcome to go and have a look at it.

Steph Byrnes



New pond liner installed

MANY THANKS, PAUL

Paul Knight, our Site Manager, is standing down at the end of the year. He has done a terrific job over many years, and the well-run and carefully maintained site is a tribute to his efforts. So much of what we take for granted as everything runs smoothly we owe to Paul.

Paul attended his final committee meeting on 13th October. He was presented with a thank you gift and thanked for all his hard work over many years in maintaining our site. Paul thanked the committee for their support and friendship, and wished them all the best for the future. He said he will still be around and happy to help where he can. He also has a very attractive plot (31A).

The Site Manager's responsibilities have been split up into a number of separate jobs (which is also a tribute to how much Paul took on). Gez Byrnes has agreed to take over the management of many of the Site Maintenance tasks after the end of the year, and is already looking after the Water Supply, Andrea Stanley is looking after the padlocks, and Jane Ayre the marker posts. Paul will continue to coordinate the mowing of the rides on the lower half of the main site.

We still need someone to take responsibility for buying the petrol for the mowers – a small, but essential task. Offers very welcome.



Paul mending the gate near the allotment shop

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 3rd November	Deadline for getting your Kings Seed order to Steph Byrnes
Tuesday 24th January 2023 7.30pm (tbc)	HDAF AGM
Thursday 23rd March 2023 7.30pm	Harlow Hill Allotment Association AGM
Sunday 20th August 2023	HDAF 62 nd Annual Allotment Show

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

Articles, photos, letters or comments on existing articles are always very welcome.

Written content by editor unless otherwise stated

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