

AUGUST 2022

# MAGA



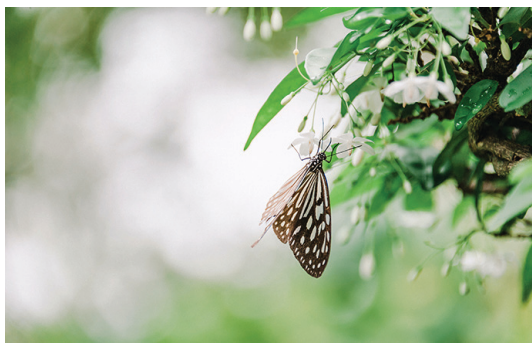
## MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWS

*Welcome* to the August MAGA Newsletter.

At this time of year we are all very busy on our plots and hopefully reaping the reward with lots of tasty fresh vegetables. This newsletter aims to keep you informed of activity on the sites.

The content this month is very varied and hopefully you will find at least one article of interest to you. If you want to contribute a news story, recipe, tips on gardening or just comment on the Newsletter please email me, Ivor (Chairman), on [ivorstocker@sky.com](mailto:ivorstocker@sky.com)

### MAGA ECOGROUP



#### Who and what is MAGA Ecogroup?

Before answering that question we need to understand the simple definition of ecology. Ecology is the relationship between living organisms including humans and their physical environment. Ecology seeks to understand the vital connections between plants and animals and the world around them

So what has ecology got to do with the allotments? A small group of tenants have come together as the Ecogroup with the objective of improving the so called Nature Reserve.....this is a plot on the West Side. At present this is fenced off as it requires some serious attention. The objective is to make the Nature Reserve a sanctuary for wildlife and an attractive area to visit and observe wildlife in its natural environment.

So what needs doing? First the site has to be made safe to work on which requires some clearance. The plans which are in the first stage include the installation of a pond which will be suitably fenced off for safety. Maybe build a bridge over the pond. Install creative attractive fencing in keeping with wildlife such as woven or wattle. Cut small peep holes at various levels into the fencing for observation posts. Maybe plant more willows to absorb the water....this is a wet area. Clear some of the current tall grassy area nearest the fencing to sow wildflower seeds. In the development stages access on the site will not be possible but this will be reviewed at a later date.



Clearly this is a huge undertaking but very worthwhile and will not only provide a safe environment for the wildlife but the preservation of the existing hedges and trees and the addition of the willows will absorb more carbon.

**So who is the Ecogroup? Alison, Sylvia, Henrik, Pippa, Judith and Ruth**

If you believe you can help please email [committee@maga.org.uk](mailto:committee@maga.org.uk)

---

MAGA Martin Way Allotment News is produced 2-3 times per year by Committee members and volunteers.

The MAGA committee accept no liability for any errors or views expressed in this publication.

The views of contributors do not necessarily match the views or policies of the MAGA committee.

To provide a submission for the next issue, please email [ivorstocker@sky.com](mailto:ivorstocker@sky.com)

Editor Ivor. Design: Renata Graphic Design • [hello@renata.design](mailto:hello@renata.design) • [www.renata.design](http://www.renata.design)

# JUBILEE Tea Party



The Jubilee Tea Party held on Saturday 4th June and organised by Philippa and Jane was a great success. Over 60 people came along and mingled in the crowd and it is fair to say the atmosphere was tremendous. Thanks to all who attended and many thanks to those people who helped set up and clear up at the end of the event.

## MAGA Annual PRODUCE SHOW 2022

The spirit of the Show is to 'show what we grow' where our members, their families and the local community join together for a celebration of the growing year.

For further information email:

**[committee@maga.org.uk](mailto:committee@maga.org.uk)**

### HOW TO ENTER

Your entries should be submitted to the Allotment Marquee on the following dates and times. Sunflowers and pumpkins can be judged on your plot but make sure you enter them at the marquee.

All entries are FREE

Friday 2nd September from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Saturday 3rd September from 8.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.



## The PUMPKIN FEST



On the 30th October there is the Pumpkin Fest being organised by Miranda....this is an opportunity to bring the family. If you have children, grandchildren, nephews or nieces why not get them to help carve a pumpkin and enter into the spirit of the event.

We are looking for volunteers to help with this event....we normally have a bonfire, hot drinks, soup, curry (you need something warm, it is October). If you have helped on previous occasions your experience will I'm sure be welcomed by Miranda. If you can help please email: [committee@maga.org.uk](mailto:committee@maga.org.uk)

You will have worked out by now that I want you, the tenants, to come and participate, but of course it is entirely your choice. I'm sure some of you will have ideas for events.....e.g. just getting a small group together for a tour such as Alison's walk identifying wildlife.

Don't be shy, please send an email to me at [ivorstocker@sky.com](mailto:ivorstocker@sky.com) *Thank you*





# Working for OUR COMMUNITY



This Saturday (9th July) dawned overcast, thank goodness, as 16 plot holders turned up to tackle some really heavy work around the site.

We have an exciting project west-side, along the David Lloyd boundary, where we are preparing the border to plant a conservation hedge later in the year. The hedge will be 50% hawthorn with the remainder a mix of 5 native plants from a range including blackthorn, crab apple, dog or sweet briar rose, dogwood, guelder rose, hazel. This type of hedging is ideal nesting habitat for small birds, with the thorns providing protection from larger birds.



We were able to create a new plot between two existing plots, incorporating a pond and shady centre with sunny areas front and back for planting. The plot looked beyond reclaim when we arrived, with bindweed and ivy choking everything, several dead trees and layers of carpet everywhere – absolutely unrecognisable after just 3 hours, with much of the cleared vegetation starting to rot down in the newly-created compost bin. Whoever takes this one on can count themselves lucky!



One of the plots on the east side was reported to have asbestos on it – probably the remnants of an old shed – our team set to work stripping out old carpets and a small amount of debris, so now here again we have a plot all ready to let to someone on our waiting list of 89.

The last job undertaken was to help someone whose plot has somewhat overwhelmed them: this was a perfect example of how important it is to tackle things before they are out of control! Despite our best efforts, the ground was just too hard to clear properly, so further work will be required. But at least now the plot holder can see what there is to tackle.

By the time the scorching sun appeared, the tea, coffee and brownies had arrived. It was time for a short break before we got back to work again. On the way out, some attempt was made to get the green waste bay under control: please, if you are taking stuff to the waste bays, take it out of the barrow and put it at the back of the bay! Don't just dump it at the front for the mythical "someone" to tackle!

Projects to be undertaken at September's Working Party include the next stage of the hedge planting.

If you are interested in getting involved, do email Sue: [sue\\_tickner@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sue_tickner@yahoo.co.uk) and put Saturday 10th September and 12th November in your diaries.

## The MARGIE MULDER AWARD

The Margie Mulder award for the most improved plot in the last 12 months has been awarded to Teresa Baczkiewicz and Tadeusz Dacewicz on the West Side plot 67.

This plot floods badly but by using wood chips, compost and earth the ground level has been raised and the crops this year are excellent.

*Congratulations to you both.*





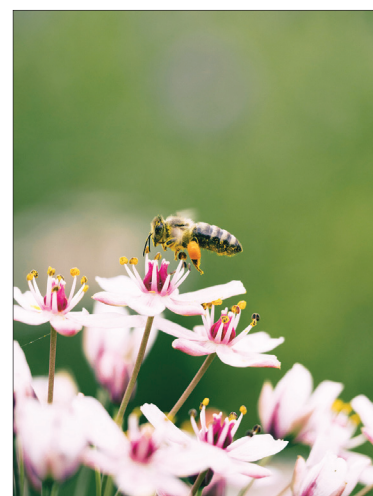
As I write this article it is late July and we have just had some extremely hot weather! Up to 40 degrees in some places in case anyone missed that....And of course it has been very very dry for weeks. How has this impacted our bees? Well, bees are able to maintain a very stable temperature within their hives in order to keep their brood safe and healthy. Brood means all stages of young, before they become adult bees. So we are talking about eggs (for 3 days), young uncapped larvae (for another 5 days) and then capped larvae (from egg to emerging adult bee takes a female worker bee 21 days). By "capped" we mean that the worker bees will make wax from their own wax glands under their abdomens and place it over the young larvae on day eight after the egg is laid.

Bees can maintain this stable temperature by using water within the hive to cool it down and by ventilation duties at the hive entrance. The latter method means the bees fan their wings at the entrance to increase air flow around the hive. It is always so interesting to watch the behaviour at the entrance of each hive before even opening it, as

I can see this fanning, and also spot various colours of pollen coming in on their pollen baskets (on their legs), I can watch out for robbing wasps who try to dart past the guard bees to steal honey, and also watch some bees communicating by exchange of information in "Bee" via their antenna. All totally fascinating!

The hot weather has majorly impacted this year's nectar flow. Usually there is a lull in the nectar flow in June and the main flow is in July. "Nectar flow" means the time when the majority of trees and flowers produce nectar which the bees will collect in their honey stomachs, take back to their hive, and off load to a receiving nursery bee who will seek out empty cells in which to deposit the nectar. These bees will also start the process of reducing the water content of the nectar to below 20% as otherwise the resultant honey might go mouldy over winter. Special enzymes from the bees will also be added to the nectar and all this combines to turn it into honey.

So this season we have all noticed that the main nectar flow was actually much earlier than normal, starting in June and almost finished by now. So we had to work hard not to be caught out! We needed to put on "honey supers" as the honey storage boxes are called, way earlier than normal, plus the flow has been huge, so many boxes have been needed. Very heavy work.



And soon begins the process of honey extraction. When I first started beekeeping this was very exciting however nowadays I tend to groan! Once started it is fine though. I need to hire an extractor from our association, clean up my kitchen, keep all cats out (easier said than done) clean all the equipment and use food grade buckets as honey is, of course, a food. However careful I am the spun out honey gets EVERYWHERE. Once the honey can be seen flowing through the various sieves and into the collecting buckets it starts to be exciting again, as each hive will have different tasting honey and I like to compare them and see which I prefer.

The added complication for me this year is that my van had it's catalytic converter stolen recently whilst parked at Morden Hall Park. So I am now on buses and foot.....not easy with all my bee gear on my back! So I've been hugely grateful to friends and neighbours who have rallied around to give me lifts when I need to bring back heavy honey boxes, simply not possible on the bus. So for those of you who have spotted me in a variety of cars, that is why!

Wishing you all a continuing good summer on your plots and as ever please feel free to come say hallo, ask bee questions and if you've never yet seen our Apiary do ask me to show you.

Alison



# PLANT SALE ...Thank you to all!



This year's plant sale was the greatest success ever and we sold approximately £2,711 worth of plants, raffle tickets etc. less admin and purchase of plants of £682 has given as a profit of around £2,029 which will be used to make improvements around the allotments. Ideas for this are welcome from the plot holders.

A big thank you to all those who donated plants and all the helpers which made the event a great success and in particular thank you to Jane who did all the organising.

We had such a huge donation of plants from plot holders - the biggest ever we believe and very much appreciated.

Finally a big thanks again to all who were involved in the plant sale.....the organisers, the donors of plants and raffle prizes and to all of those people who bought the plants. Heartfelt thanks.

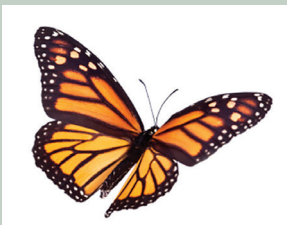
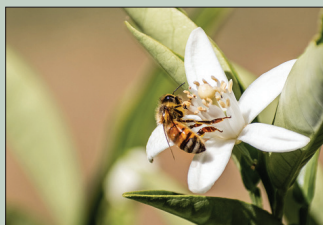


Best Wishes

*The Committee*

## MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT

Wildlife Walk on the Allotments  
Sunday 7th August 2022 at 9.30am



We would like to invite all those interested in a wildlife walk around the west side of the allotments on Sunday 7th August starting at 9.30am, meeting outside the allotments shop.

You might like to bring a pair of binoculars if you have them, but no worries if not.

We will look out for birds, butterflies and also what my solitary bees are doing in my insect hotel and whatever else we can spot.

Suitable also for children to attend. I spotted a marbled white butterfly the other day.

Looking forward to meeting all the wildlife enthusiasts.

Best Wishes

Alison Pelikan

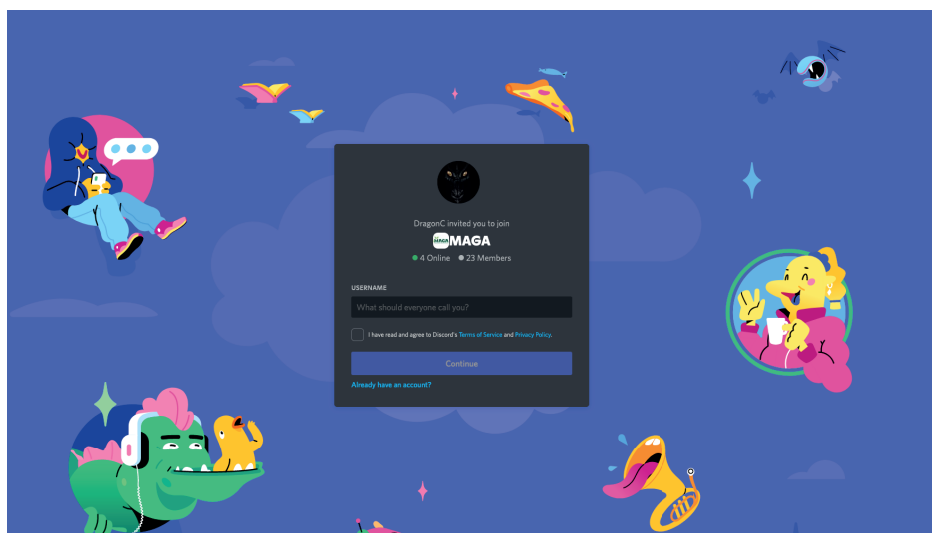
# It's GOOD to TALK

There have been suggestions about having a discussion forum on the website for us to be able to upload photos and chat about growing and helping the community.

Unfortunately our website is not capable of running such a system. Which is why we've turned to a free resource in the form of Discord.

Discord allows people to upload photos, and discuss whatever they need to. We've even used it to hold our Committee meetings via its video features. So why not have a look for yourself.

<https://maga.org.uk/p/resources/community-forum>



## BONES



when  
he dug up  
on his allotment  
bones  
a lot of bones  
human bones  
skulls, humerus  
ribs, femurs  
fibulas, tibia  
and others



he artistically  
decorated  
his shed  
into a  
tasteful  
ossuary  
a bone house  
and also  
made a  
wonderful  
completely  
outrageously  
bone scary  
scarecrow

*pmcmanus*  
S920

## COMPOST BINS



When you walk into the West Side you have to notice the bays on the left hand side provided for the disposal of green waste and 'other' materials. Are you surprised at how much green waste accumulates so quickly?

Much of the green waste could and should be rotted down in a compost bin on each site and recycled.

At the AGM held on Sunday 17th July 2022 there was a proposal to make recycling of green waste mandatory and that each plot must have a compost bin or be able to demonstrate that green matter is being recycled. Of course there is some green material that is not right to compost e.g. mares tail.

Please help the Committee by complying and let's reduce the huge volume of green waste. Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

The Committee will be sourcing pallets for building a compost bin but please be patient as this exercise takes time. If you have any building in your street and you see pallets laying around please ask the builder if the pallets are available.....a member of the Committee will arrange collection.

# AGM CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

In October 2021 I was approached by a Committee member and asked if I would take over the role of Chairperson. It is now July 2022 and I have volunteered to continue for a further 12 months so you have to assume it is not too bad a position.

Going forward I want to see us build a fair and inclusive culture.

I believe this is best achieved if we build a community spirit. For example the Jubilee Tea Party was a social event attended by all age groups and was a great success. I am keen to encourage more events .... I asked about a quiz but the response was lukewarm but I will not be put off and we now have a quiz master and we will put this idea on a slow burner. I thought about a book exchange but the shop is the only location and I'm not sure it will work. Maybe a coffee morning in the shop....but we need a volunteer(s) to organise.

Perhaps you can come up with ideas or maybe I am knocking on a locked door!!!

Another event is to walk round the plots under the guidance of Alison Pelikan and we are planning the second of these at the beginning of August.....if you have children I'm sure they will learn more about nature.

**The Ecogroup** are going to make a start on the area designated as the Nature Plot and I have heard about some of their ideas and sounds demanding but very interesting. For the record this is the only plot allocated to nature.

**The Work Party** on the 9th July started on the project to clear the boundary adjacent to David Lloyd Sports and Leisure. There is already a wire fence which will need some attention but it is intended to approach David Lloyd management on this subject. After clearance the proposal is to plant a natural hedge including blackthorn which will quite quickly provide protection for the birds and help reduce the carbon footprint. The planting will start in November.

I have been on West Side for many years and when I first arrived I planted the fruit trees that now form the community orchard....but until this year I didn't wander around the two sites ... So what do you find. In truth the majority of plots are in cultivation

Unfortunately there are too many plots where the tenant either has not enough time, or has lost interest, but for some reason doesn't want to give up and this is a group of people we the Committee need to meet and talk through to see how we can help. Maybe as simple as reducing the plot size. We do recognise that some of these people will be living on their own and or in a flat with no green area and the allotment is there only means of escape. I do believe gardening should be fun and not a burden. I also believe gardening helps with your health and mental well being.

We do have plots that have gone wild but these will not be an immediate priority.

And finally.....

I do want the Committee to revisit the tenancy agreement and introduce rules relating to a new tenant. I would like to think we could agree that 25% of the plot must be cleared/cultivated at the end of 3 months to show commitment .... maybe the rent can be deferred for 3 months

I will close by reminding everyone of the object of the Association:

**Promoting the creation of allotments and leisure gardens and encouraging their proper cultivation.**

Thank you