



December 2025

MAGA

MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWSLETTER

News From the Chair.

Looking back over the last 12 months is not always the best experience and I do question why we even bother!! The weather has not been that kind and I believe a lot of you have struggled to grow your veg although I agree some will always do better than others.

There are some headlines worth repeating to end this year.

- For the last few years IdVerde on behalf of LBM have provided services to the sites in the borough of Merton. This contract was terminated in mid year and LBM have resumed these services. MAGA is a self managed site and our status does not change.
- The boundary with David Lloyd was cleared by our Working Parties and 137 metres of new fencing has been installed.
- The upkeep of paths between plots is the responsibility of you the plot holder. You can use wood chips, but carpets and artificial grass are banned. The main pathways are cut 9 months of the year.
- Plot numbers - Despite several polite requests there are many plots still not numbered. At the AGM held in June 2025 a proposal to impose a fine of £20 was unanimously voted through and this will be actioned if your plot is not displaying a number by April 2026 i.e. the next date for the plot inspections.
- In case the emergency services are required to attend a plot, key safe boxes have been installed on the gates of the East and West side together with three mobile telephone numbers to ring to get access to the keys.
- Suttons seeds discount scheme is in place until 31st August 2026. Go online to www.suttons.co.uk and quote the code SUGS168P in the 'Offer Code' box.

A big thankyou to the Committee who have all agreed to continue until the next AGM In June 2026. Andy Preece (Secretary) Paul Brace (Treasurer) David Cotterill, Ruth Britten and Ivor Stocker (Chair)

Thank you all and on behalf of the Committee have a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

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

THE PRODUCE SHOW

The events we hold each year are always worth supporting and the Produce Show held in September was excellent. There were over a hundred entries and this made the selection of the winners even more difficult. This year the judges were our chairperson and a guest, Diane West, who has an allotment at Cottenham Park. Thank you Diane.

The winners in each class were given a voucher to exchange in the shop. Here is a selection of entries and winners. The Best in Show was selected by Diane (as an independent judge) and this was a floral arrangement by Philippa Tribler. Thank you to everyone of our volunteers who ensured this was a successful day followed by a social event which was well attended and went with a swing!!



PUMPKINFEST



As the clocks are turned back it is always a delight in our calendar to welcome Pumpkinfest. Hot dogs, burgers, mulled wine and soup (gluten free if you wished). Dunkin' apples and marshmallows for our younger guests. The event was well attended with over 70 people despite the weather forecast being rain, which fortuitously didn't happen! This really is a lovely social event and rewarding that those attending range from a babe in arms to OAP's. There were some magnificent carved pumpkins and I think it is safe to say everyone had a nice evening.



Our many thanks to Miranda Waller for organising this for the third year ably assisted by husband Martin and many volunteers, and thanks to those of you who came bearing food and drink.

Sunday 25th October 2026 is the date for your diary and I am delighted to tell you that Miranda and Martin will be organising. Thank you both a million times.



Plant Sale 9th May 2026 (provisional date)

The 2026 Plant Sale needs an organiser, are you that person? We have over 200 plot holders so who is going to step forward? You are not standing alone you will have the help of previous organisers such as Jane and Steph plus the committee.

On the day of the sale multiple people come forward to take on the tasks of laying out the tables, pricing and taking money

The Plant Sale is the only event in our calendar where we are raising money to help carry out tasks such as fencing and repairs to the roads.

You can help us if you could just sow a few extra seeds, such as runner and French beans and put them to one side for the 2026 sale. Trays, pots and compost are available from the shop which re-opens in February

Thinking Greener!

Looking at the vast amount of rubbish put out for collection on our site, I do feel we should all re-consider the ways we do things, to try to reduce our impact on the environment. The global issues can feel overwhelming and many people react by saying, “Oh, what can I do?” or claiming that the UK’s contribution to the global situation is so small it’s not worth doing anything. I would argue that we all need to try our hardest to reduce our impact on the environment.



As allotment holders, we are already making a contribution to the environment by reducing the food miles and energy used to produce some of our food. But, there is much more we can do – in particular, using compost bins and water butts to the full!

Compost



As allotment holders, it’s a constant battle to generate enough compost to keep the beds replenished each year, yet so many of you either don’t have a compost bin or don’t use it to its full capacity.

In case you don’t know, the ideal ratio of material in a compost bin is:

- One-third green waste (lawn clippings, kitchen vegetable waste including egg shells, dead flowers, allotment waste e.g. imperfect fruit or veg, post-harvest foliage)
- One-third brown waste (torn up paper/newspaper/plain cardboard/egg boxes)
- One-third organic material e.g. manure (I also top up with wood chip to bulk it up, as I never seem to have enough)

In about a year, you will be digging out gorgeous dark brown soil to top up your beds. As long as you don’t contaminate with cooked food, meat or fish, the compost should be sweet-smelling – don’t worry if you see a few mice! You’re not eating the compost!

If you have space for more than one bin, you can speed up decomposition by turning over the contents.

Water Butts

If you have a shed or greenhouse, you should be able to install at least a couple of water butts. This saves you time when you pop down for half an hour to water, and would help to reduce the water cost we are all sharing! Youtube has how-to videos which clearly show how to fit them and Wickes, etc. have all the bits.



General Waste

As you can see, there is no re-cycling on the allotment. Please take anything recyclable home with you (plastic bottles/takeaway cartons and cans) – you brought it down! It should be much easier to take it home empty!

Ideas for Outside the Allotment

As far as life outside the allotment is concerned, some years ago, I started looking at everything I do to see if it could be done more environmentally. Here are some of the things I now do as a matter of course:

Don't buy bottled water or takeaway drinks – carry a water bottle and install a filter on your kitchen tap!

Carry a fold-up shopping bag, and keep a couple in the car

Carry net or cloth bags for loose produce and choose that whenever possible - it's often cheaper, anyway, and you can select exactly what you want

Collect all soft plastic, wash it and take to any Co-op or other supermarket which accepts it – you'd be amazed what they will take, plastic bags of all types, cling film, pet food sachets, bubble wrap. Check out the list on the Co-op website.

Flatten out anything I'm putting in my bins, strip off plastic tape from cardboard boxes – think about the impact on landfill! (And bring plain card to compost on your plot)

Don't buy plastic bags – save any plastic bags supplied with Amazon and other products and use those instead. The only plastic bags to buy are recycling bags and they can go in the compost bin (although they will slow down the composting process)



Use the food waste collection service – your general waste won't smell anymore and it massively reduces the methane in landfill – and, yes, put a brick on top to deter the foxes!

Use a refill station to top up household cleaning products and reduce packaging – this is a bit of a chore, but if more of us started doing it, perhaps someone would start one up in Raynes Park!

Check out environmental alternatives to some of your regular purchases – some of these are now available instore, e.g. Wild.

Please try some of these yourselves – both our current waste bays are currently under threat. Do your best to reduce what you put in them.

Sue Tickner



BEES

having read
the eco article
about bees
he keenly with
consummate skill
laid out his garden
as a bee habitat
bee friendly way
to encourage them
to do their bit
for the environment
but
then her growing
masses of deadly
Venus Fly traps
rather wrecked
the project

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