

# DECEMBER 2021

# MAGA

## MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWS

### Chairman's Statement



The last few weeks have seen a major change in Committee membership. After five years of Chairing the Committee Jadzia Bruton resigned and the position has been filled by Ivor Stocker. Ivor has agreed to fill the post for an interim period i.e. until the Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday 16th October. At this time you the members can nominate candidates for the Committee, including Chairperson, and cast your votes.

Thanks to the Committee members for ensuring the day to day administration and the financial management of the Association continues to run smoothly. We would be struggling without the help of the volunteers who ensure the shop is open and staffed. In 2022 we expect to be able to re-introduce the plant sale, the produce show and the pumpkin festival. You will see mention in this Newsletter of these events and the names of the people who have volunteered to organise the event.

In this Newsletter we have detailed the names of the many who have volunteered to help in 2022 and the Committee is most grateful. There is always room for more volunteers so if it is just two hours in the shop on a Saturday morning it is very worthwhile. You may be prepared to grow plants for the sale in May 2022? The good news... you do not have to be a Committee member! But we do need some more Committee members at some stage in the future.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from the MAGA Committee.**



### Environment/Ecology Group



The Environment is important to all of us and a Group has been formed to look after the environment and ecology on our sites. This is a group of volunteers, headed by **Alison Pelikan**, who will research the sites and report back to the Committee.

This Group includes **Judith Breakell, Sylvie Avery, Ruth Britten and Pippa Lindsay**

So if you see a group of ladies wandering round with notebooks and cameras to hand, maybe even talking to trees, do speak to them and maybe welcome them onto your plot!!!

**More detail from Alison.**

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)

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# MANY HANDS MAKE *light* WORK



We have a good number of volunteers, but there is always room for more and it doesn't have to be an exacting, exhausting task!!! You will normally be with a like-minded group of people and will exchange ideas and hopefully have a laugh while helping carry out a necessary task.

Let's be clear you do not have to become a Committee member to be a volunteer... there is no long-term commitment. You could grow plants for the **plant sale in May**

organised by Jane. You could volunteer to join Sue on a Saturday morning for a couple of hours on a working party.



You could contact Miranda and help organise the Pumpkin Festival. Andrew and Shaun who are organising the Produce Show may need some help to set up tables etc. At least do consider volunteering for just a couple of hours in the year and more if you have the time and inclination. Thank you.



## DATES for your DIARY \*

(\*provisional and maybe subject to change through factors out of our control e.g. weather)



**Saturday 9th April**

Erect Marquee. organised by Andy Preece  
(+ working party/volunteers),  
weather permitting otherwise 16th April.



**Saturday 14th or 21st May**

Plant Sale - organised by Jane Nicanovich

**Saturday 18th June**

Working party/volunteers

**Saturday 13th August**

Working party/volunteers

**Saturday 3rd September**

Produce Show - preferred date by organiser, Andrew Fisher Tomlin

**Saturday 8th October**

Working party/volunteers

**Sunday 16th October**

AGM - proposed to suit treasurer/accounts for up to 30th September.

**Sunday 30th October**

Pumpkinfest - organised by Miranda Waller

**Saturday 12th November**

Dismantle Marquee - organised by Andy Preece (+ working party/volunteers)





# PRODUCE SHOW – September 2022

We're excited that the Produce Show will be back in September 2022 and are looking forward to putting together a fun event involved in entering. As well as the traditional competitions for the best fruit, vegetables and flowers, there will be an allotment competition and categories for your family to get involved in. The highlights will, we're sure will be the rudest and longest, and we've also got a pair of great judges lined up.

More information in the New Year so watch this space and start planning for your entry now!! Biggest marrow, longest runner bean, ugliest carrot and a beautiful bunch of flowers.

*Andrew and Shaun*



## DISPOSAL of GLASS



Occasionally there is glass to dispose of and you either take it home, drive to the local council recycling centre or place it in the waste bay at the allotment.

Putting glass in the waste bay is permitted but please ensure the safety of others, particularly the drivers who come to collect on behalf of ID Verde, by wrapping the glass in paper or plastic .

## COMPOST



At the Annual General Meeting held on 30th September 2021 it was agreed that all plots are to have a compost area/bin/pile to recycle green waste.

Pallets will be sourced and Henrik Tribler will be making compost bins which can be collected in the area near the shop.

# WINTER SEASON for our BEES



Winter preparations for honey bees starts early. The bees themselves will start to store pollen and nectar/honey ready for winter use from summer onwards, whenever there is a good nectar flow on. So we as beekeepers always make sure we leave plenty of stores of honey for them as this is their food to last them throughout winter and into early Spring. How much is enough? An average hive needs about 50 pounds of honey to last through winter. We can check how these stores are going by “hefting” each hive without opening it

(too cold now!) and by experience we get a feel of how much they have left. If we feel they are running low we can put on a block of fondant but this is generally only for emergencies.

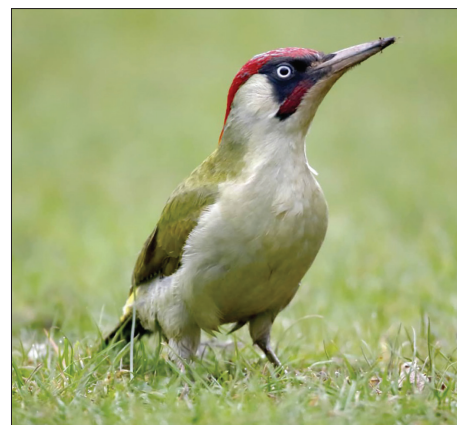
The bees also prepare themselves by getting the Queen to lay specially adapted winter bees. These bees have a higher percentage of something called “fat bodies” which allows these winter bees to survive better than their summer counterparts. However before you ask... no, we cannot actually see any difference between these bees! Or rather, only if one were to dissect a bee and examine it's inside workings, not something I enjoy doing at all!



The beekeepers need to do a couple of tasks for our hives in late Autumn. Firstly we need to put on mouseguards to narrow the hive entrances down so that no mouse can get into the hives. Otherwise a mouse can find itself a nice safe warm home for the winter and do lots of damage. Strangely the bees seem to leave them alone once inside.



The second task is to protect each hive from the Green Woodpecker, which we know we have on the allotments. We can do this by wrapping each hive with chicken wire or similar. I have seen Woodpecker damage at Morden Hall Park Apiary and the hive attacked had a large hole pecked into the side of the wood: that hive was lost due to this damage and exposure.



Finally, if you are thinking of next Spring and what to plant, do remember to pop in some pollinator friendly seeds or plants. I know many of you already do and this is great!

If anyone wants ideas of good things to plant I am always happy to pass on suggestions and also to point out helpful websites.

**Have a good winter! Best wishes, Alison**





# COMMITTEE MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS

## Committee Members

- Andy Preece (Secretary), Ruth Britten, Ivor Stocker (Chairman)
- Peter Flintoff (Treasurer), David Cotterill, Paul Brace (Treasurer elect)

## Volunteers

- Miranda Waller – Social events / Pumpkin Festival
- Andrew Fisher Tomlin / Shaun Cole – Produce Show 3rd September 2022
- Alison Pelikan – Environment/Ecology/Bees
- Andrew Jones – Help in the shop/rota
- Sue Tickner – Working parties – 4 per year
- Henrik Tribler – General help/carpentry/pallets for compost bins
- Simon & Jadzia Bruton – help as required
- Jane Nicanovich – Plant Sale
- Anne Starr – General help
- Margaret Rixon – Shop Manager
- Kay Prior – Shop Rota
- Janina Hockney – Toilet cleaning/maintenance
- Peter Briggs – General help/shop maintenance/decorating
- Lesley Hayward – General help, assisting new tenants with plot clearance, plot measurements and marking out
- Derek Savory – Shop maintenance/decorating / water meter readings and analysis / writing equipment instructions



## Good News! The PLANT SALE is back!

Saturday, 14 or 21 May 2022 (Date to be confirmed)

10.00 - 15.00

This is a marvellous opportunity to acquire locally produced plants whilst at the same time supporting our allotment. This is our main fundraiser for the year and is run totally on volunteer help and we need you to help make it a successful event. The money we earn goes towards the running of the allotment. Something we really need to encourage, plus growing your own vegetables, which taste so good and fresh - helps with those healthy eating options. So, put the date in your diary!



Plant something now for the Sale. Sow an extra packet of seeds. Can you take cuttings or divide plants as you tidy your plot/garden? Turn excess fruit and vegetables into jams or chutney.

### Below are some of the best sellers:

- Pot roses, trailing plants, geraniums, sunflowers, marigolds,
- Strawberry plants, rhubarb
- Cherry tomatoes, sweetcorn, cucumbers, courgettes, cauliflowers, leeks, aubergines, peppers, chilli peppers, cabbages, beans
- Herbs and fruit bushes



Home-made cakes, biscuits, brownies etc. for refreshments and sale will be offered in the shop and donations would be appreciated.

Trays of pots for sowing/planting are available should anyone need any, just let us know.

# SOIL BUILDING



Hello my name is Judith Breakell and I have been on plot 52 since 2015. In 2020 I found Utube and **Charles Dowding** and his **no-dig method**. How I wish I had found him before. I spent 5 years of back breaking digging. The plus is that I now have no carpets on my plot. In 2021, floods, and sick plants took me back to Utube to check on soil. I found 2 biologists. Dr Elaine Ingham (USA). And Dr Christine Jones (Australia).

The following is my knowledge and interpretation so far.  
(So much more! Wow!)

**Soil Building:** Consider the life above the soil and the life below the soil. Both need food, water and oxygen. Humans can influence soil building.

There are 2 pathways to build soil.

1. **The decomposition pathway.....eg. Compost in aerobic conditions to create soil life.**
2. **The liquid carbon pathway.....Plants and plant exudates build soil.**

I will concentrate on the second pathway which was totally new to me.

Green plants photosynthesise energy from the sun, to their roots. Their roots pass this energy to the soil life. Microbes feed on the food energy that the plant creates. This food is in the form of sugar and carbohydrates. The food is produced as exudates and are found close to the plant roots .

The microbes have to travel to eat the food from the roots and in exchange the plants feed from the excrement of the microbes. The microbes produce food in the form of minerals and other nutrients that the plant needs to thrive. Different microbes provide different minerals. There should be billions of microbes, maybe more, in healthy soil.

There are also fungal mycelium in healthy soil life. They feed off the plant and create sticky substances which hold the soil together around and near the roots. They are mycorrhizal filaments. These filaments can travel through the soil as they grow forward from their tips. They can create large webs of soil particles around the plants and beyond. These particles build new soil and store carbon.

These biologists therefore believe that green plants create soil life which creates soil.

They recommend:

- 1 Keep your soil green at all times with plants.
- 2 Use cover crops as winter feed for the soil.
- 3 Use a mixture of at least four plant families.
- 4 Do not dig and chop the soil as this will kill your soil life.
- 5 Do not use chemicals or pesticides for the same reason.
- 6 Do not compact the soil.
- 7 Keep your soil alive. Without life it is "dirt".

Catastrophic events kill plant life and soil life.  
For example: floods, fire, drought, and land slips.

I hope you found this interesting.

Happy gardening.



Judith Breakell



*Example of a no-dig gardening method*

## Thank you Peter

Peter Flintoff who has been the MAGA treasurer for so many years will be handing over the "books" in mid-December. Peter thank you so much for all of your help and guidance to the Association for so long. We are going to miss you but ..... a big welcome to Paul Brace who is stepping into your shoes !!! **Welcome Paul.**



## TENANCY Agreement

Are you the registered tenant?



Many of you have been a tenant for many years. By accident some of our tenants will be breaking the rules of the tenancy. It really is very easy to make this mistake.

For example the husband/wife/partner is the tenant but through ill health is unable to continue and the husband/wife/partner steps in.....the most obvious thing to do?... but the person is not a signatory on the agreement i.e. is not a joint tenant and according to the rules the agreement has been breached. Yes to you and me it makes little sense but that is the rule.

Going forward your Committee is proposing a three month Amnesty 1st December 2021 to 28th February 2022 when you have an opportunity to re-visit your tenancy agreement and make a change(s).

How do I know if I am breaking the rules? Simply if any person is working on your plot (relative/friend, unaccompanied by the named tenant), who is not named on the agreement....then you are in breach of the agreement.

Please take this opportunity to update the records.... it is easy and quick and there is no fee incurred (normally this would cost £25 admin fee but during the Amnesty the fee is waived). If you are in any doubt or can't find your copy of the agreement then please email: [committee@maga.org.uk](mailto:committee@maga.org.uk)



## SHEEP

for ages  
trying to  
get to sleep  
he counted them  
kept counting them  
but when  
at last he  
finally dozed off  
was soon so  
rudely awakened  
in his bedroom  
by all the  
baaing and bleating  
cacophonic bedlam  
and also by the  
irritating barking  
of the sheepdog  
and snoring of  
the drunken  
shepherdess

*pmcmanus*

*S850*

## ALLOTMENT NOTICE



Due to Covid

Social distance

Directives

and Government

legal requirements

the Management

Committee

Sadly gives notice



that all

eighteen inch paths

between allotments

must be increased

to twelve feet

forthwith



and apologises

for any

inconvenience

*pmcmanus*

*S857*

*Standard allotments are*

*now 5 rods which is about 125 m2*

*about 30x45 feet old measure*

## Liability Insurance

The Allotmenters Liability Insurance is now operative for those of you that applied. You are now covered under the Master policy held by the National Allotment Society. Details of the insurance available can be found at:

<https://www.nsalg.org.U.K./join-us/allotmenters-liability-insurance>