

FEBRUARY 2022

MAGA

MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWS



Notes from the Chairman



Taking over the Chairman's role is never easy and I am very grateful for the help and guidance I have received in the last three months from several people but I have to mention one person in particular.... Andy Preece, thank you Andy.

A 'new' Committee inevitably will see some things in a different light so do not be too surprised about what you see or hear. Some examples follows;

Your Committee has taken the view that it is good management to hold a reserve fund for any eventuality that occurs that had not been planned for i.e not an item in the budget. As a consequence the planned fencing project is on hold as funding will not be available for a while. Please read my words..... **on hold not abandoned.**

The CCTV installed has been registered with the Information Commissioner's Office(ICO)...this is a legal requirement

At the AGM held in September the members present voted to change the accounts year but this change is not feasible in the time. Please see a separate item in this Newsletter. Paul Brace, who has taken over as treasurer, has identified some change needed in the accounts including separating the shop trading figures from the monies paid by the tenants, (profits from the shop are not taxable). The software used for the accounts will be changed giving an annual saving of £650.

In the calendar of events the first item is Our Wildlife, a walk around the allotment on Sunday 27 February at 10.30 a.m (see page 7 for the details). The erecting of the marquee is on Saturday 9th April 2022 at 10.00 a.m. If you can help, we need at least 10 people, please contact Andy Preece. On Saturday 21st May 2022 there is the Plant Sale and Jane, who is the organiser, has sent a note round giving details and how you can help. No apologies for repeating the detail in this Newsletter.

Did you know there are around 300,000 allotments in this country and around 100,000 families on waiting lists!!! In Camden the average wait for an allotment is 17 years!!!!

Maintaining YOUR allotment site!

Sign up now for this year's Working Parties.

As you know, MAGA is a self-managed site. Plotolders, i.e. you and I, benefit from a much-reduced rental and considerably more independence from Merton in exchange for managing and maintaining the site ourselves. This means that every plotholder needs to play their part, which means offering their time for a few days per year. There are numerous ways you can do this: join the Committee; help out in the shop, Plant Sale, Produce Show or Pumpkinfest; manage the website; or join the Working Parties.

Working Parties were started 4 years' ago to undertake as much of the site maintenance as possible, avoiding the cost of hiring outside contractors. They erect marquees, clear paths and access roads, repair waste bays, mend fences and, sometimes, clear overgrown plots to facilitate letting. Whatever your capacity, there will be a job for you!

They are run four times a year on a Saturday, from 9.30am to 12.00 noon, with tea and brownies along the way. It's a really enjoyable way to meet fellow plotholders and to understand more about the way our allotments are run.

Working Party dates:

Saturday 9th April 9.30 - 12.00 noon
Saturday 18th June 9.30 - 12.00 noon
Saturday 13th August 9.30 - 12.00 noon
Saturday 8th October 9.30 - 12.00 noon

Please put these dates in your diary and email me now, copying MAGA, to let me know which ones you will join. Do call me on 0780 869 3648 if you want to know more.

Sue Tickner

sue_tickner@yahoo.co.uk and copy_committee@maga.org.uk



DATES for your DIARY

Sunday 27th February	Our Wildlife	10.30 a.m
Saturday 9th April	Erect the Marquee	10.00 a.m
Saturday 21st May	Plant Sale	10.00 - 15.00
Saturday 17th September	Produce Show	
Saturday 16th October	Pumpkinfest	
Saturday 12th November	Dismantle Marquee	10.00 a.m



PLANT SALE

Dear Plot Holders

We now have a date for this year's Plant Sale; **Saturday, 21 May 10am – 3pm**

This is the time of year when thoughts turn to sowing those tomatoes, chillies, aubergines and other vegetables and flowers, so if you are sowing seeds at the moment, please consider sowing some extra ones now for the Plant Sale or split some of your own perennials. A number of free packets of seeds can be provided for this purpose. They will be available on a first come first served basis.

The trays and accompanying pots, as well as the seeds, are available in the shop which is now open every Saturday and Sunday 10.30-12.30. We would ask you to please hand in the trays and plants on 20 May, each pot clearly labelled.

There will be Refreshments and Raffle Prizes. Could you donate any special prizes for the Raffle or bring something home-made such as cakes, biscuits etc. for the refreshments which will be served in the shop?

The Surrey Knife Sharpener will be coming along for the day, so if you have any tools or knives that need attention, he will be offering competitive rates to plot holders on the day.

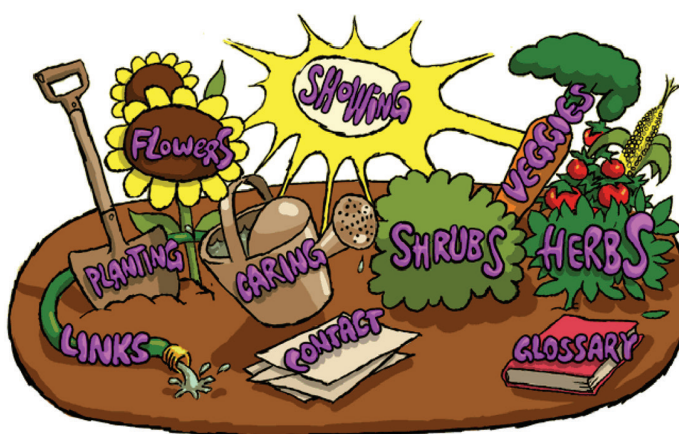
To give you an idea of what to grow, some of the best sellers are:

Perennials	Runner and French beans	
Geraniums	Tomatoes	
Trailing plants	Strawberries	
Sweet Peppers	Cabbage	
Peas	Cosmos	
Sweetcorn	Marigolds	Sunflowers
Broccoli	Pot roses	Lettuces
Kale	Herbs	Rhubarb
Leeks	Chillies	Fruit bushes

Please drop us an email for more information and to let us know what help you are offering. We need your help.

If anyone is able to promote the Plant Sale on the various media sites or have access to any local mailing lists, please advise.

Jane
On behalf of MAGA Committee
nicanovich@hotmail.com

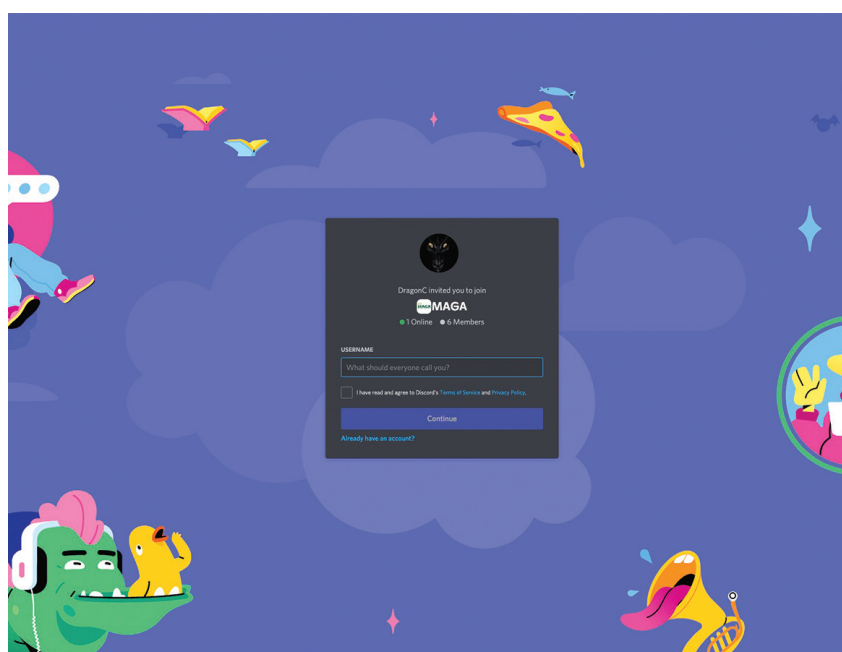


It's GOOD to TALK

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 it's video features.



So why not have a look for yourself. <https://maga.org.uk/p/resources/community-forum>

TENANCY Agreement

Your Committee has recently informed you of the importance of ensuring your tenancy agreement is accurate. To this end the fee of £25 normally charged for making any change to the agreement has been suspended until 28th February 2022.

Not surprisingly this subject has raised some queries which the Committee has addressed and several changes have been requested and actioned.

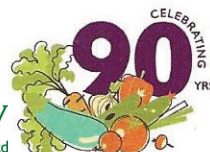
The article below appears in the magazine of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and addresses the subject and is well worth reading.

Chairman's comments



The National
Allotment Society

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd



The sun is out, and the rain has gone. Here in sunny Manchester things are getting back to normal. I have had two trips out to different allotment sites - far fewer than usual, but an indication of returning normality.

I received an interesting question from a new allotment chairman asking me for my view on assistants on allotments. There are hundreds of allotments worked with assistants, and I think this is a good thing, but it has its own difficulties. As I see them, these are: responsibility, obligation, and transition. There are probably more, but I feel these are the main difficulties.

RESPONSIBILITY

The general principle is that the named potholder is solely responsible for that plot; however, they can have assistants - family members, friends, or whomsoever they wish, but the assistant must be acceptable to the rest of the potholders and the committee. Usually it is a member, or members, of the potholder's immediate family and that they work the plot together. They come down to the plot with the potholder, and the potholder's presence gives them legitimacy. It would also be a good idea, in my opinion, that the committee are formally informed that this is the assistant. The assistant's behaviour is also the responsibility of the potholder.

Now, in exceptional circumstances, maybe the potholder is in hospital, on holiday or otherwise engaged somewhere else on a temporary basis; the assistant may step in, but the plot 'belongs' to the potholder, not the

assistant. This, of course, is a temporary arrangement; the potholder is expected to come back. As the potholder becomes older, maybe more help is required and then the assistant can have a greater presence on the plot than the previous potholder, but the original principle still holds. The plot belongs to and is registered to the original potholder.

OBLIGATION

The tenant needs to inform the committee that they are having health issues. Working the plot may become more difficult as the original potholder's health declines. The assistant may be doing more on the plot "just to keep it weeded for old Bill - till he's better." The committee need to find out if old Bill will be better. The committee should have informed the assistant that they have no rights to the plot. If this is not done, then the assistant may wrongly assume that they will inherit the plot.

TRANSITION

We are in a period of high waiting lists and low plot turnover. When, in the fullness of time, the original potholder cannot work the plot, and the tenancy is handed back or may have to be taken back, then the assistant is left out of the equation. The next name on the waiting list should be offered that plot.

This rule needs to be pointed out to both the tenant and the assistant.

If the assistant's name is on the waiting list and close to the top, within two places perhaps, and all the planets

are perfectly aligned, then perhaps the assistant could be offered that plot - but it cannot be inherited. Plots should not become a family concern, although this has happened in the past when there were few names on the waiting list, but, nowadays, with waiting lists longer than the number of tenancies available, it is very unlikely.

But as we all know, allotment popularity is cyclic. There are periods of high demand and then slowly the demand drops. I am not so sure that is going to happen soon. After all, many sites have had to split plots to satisfy a local rise in numbers on the waiting list. These smaller plots are more attractive to newer allotment holders, and we still have large waiting lists.

What we really need are councils and landowners releasing land for allotments; we even have major UK builders including allotments in their development plans. Local councils need to be encouraged to see allotments as assets to the local community, and not something they have to endure because of an Act of Parliament.

The National Allotment Policy on Plot Sharing can be found at: <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/NAS-109-Policy-Document-SHARING-AN-ALLOTMENT-GARDEN.pdf>

John Irwin

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MAGA SHOP



Don't forget that the MAGA Shop is now open again, from **10.30 to 12.30 every Saturday and Sunday**.

It stocks all sorts of gardening goodies, including composts, seeds, seed potatoes, shallot and onion sets, to name but a few, at great prices.

So do come along and support your allotment shop.

PLANTING for MARCH

We all have our favourite veg but here are some suggestions for sowing in March.

Broad beans, carrots, parsnips, beetroot, onions, lettuces, radish, peas, spinach, summer cabbage, broccoli, salad leaves, leeks, Swiss chard, Kohl rabi, turnip and summer cauliflower.



Accounts 2021/2022

At the AGM on 12 September 2021, there was a recommendation from the Committee that we change the year end of the Society from 31 March to 30 September and that the AGM would then follow mid October. The reason for that was to try and properly match expenditure against income and make the accounts more transparent.

This was not implemented and, on discussing this with our accountants, it has become apparent that this timing would not work as they require at least 2 months to prepare the accounts and carry out the work for their Accountant's Report. We have therefore reviewed the proposal and concluded that it is possible to retain the current year end and still match income and expenditure by correctly reflecting rents and other income in the period to which they relate. This will be done by carrying forward each year the proportion of rent, maintenance levy and water levy that relates to the period from April to September.

There will be a one off impact on the revenue disclosed in the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, however from 2023 the income disclosed will be the actual income in respect of each March year end.

This item will be on the AGM Agenda 2022

CHRYSANTHEMUM



Red chrysanthemums symbolize love and deep passion. Yellow chrysanthemums symbolize neglected love or sorrow. White chrysanthemums symbolize loyalty and honesty. Violet chrysanthemums symbolize a wish to get well.



Chrysanthemum



when he told his fellow allotment holders of his plan to advertise in Japan trips to his allotment at one hundred pounds per head including a conducted tour a cup of tea and a freshly grown chrysanthemum

they laughed at him

but later in the year with luxury coaches regularly laid on from Heathrow from Tokyo there was a definite change of mind change of humour and a little envy of his plots flourishing bank account.

pmcmanus
S895

THE LAND OF THE SHEDS

Patched up panels,
Old wood, peeling paint
Rough edges,
Sloping over, often wonky.
The patchwork pattern of allotments
Dotted with sheds.
The Land of the Sheds
Mostly old, although some new, with freshly smelling wood,
Some up-cycled and painted pink!
Home to seeds and pots, and hoes and spades.
Home to one that sits and drinks tea from the thermos flask,
That chats to the next allotment holder and has a laugh.
The Land of the Sheds.
Home to ideas made,
And seeds sown and watered,
Home to quiet times and freedom to be alone.
To biscuit crumbs and cobwebs,
To musty smells,
And tins of seeds, spades and forks.
A safe haven from the rain,
A little space to be.
The Land of the Sheds.
Each one unique,
Each one special in their own way,
The Shed.

By Helen Millbank



Our WILDLIFE

Do you know what wildlife we have on our allotments?? Would you like to join me on **Sunday 27th February** at **10.30 am** for an informal wander around the allotment site to see what we can find? I have recently seen groups of migrant **Redwing** (birds!) which only visit UK over winter, so these are quite special to see in our trees and on our plots. We also have **Long Tailed Tits**, **Chaffinches** and **Goldcrests** currently. And more of course....Also if we get a sunny day we might even see some butterflies and Bumble bees flying.

Of course, this being about the natural world, there are no guarantees! But please feel free to join me. IF you have binoculars do bring them along. But do come anyway if interested.

We will meet outside the Shop (West side) at 10.30 am then head off from there. Any queries do call me on **07946 759 551**. Alison

