

THE DROOPER



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www.lansdowneallotmentassociation.co.uk

The newsletter of the Lansdowne Allotment Association

@rugbyallotments

Room at the Top!

There has been lots of activity on site over the past couple of months and I am delighted to report that all of the RBC work has now been carried out, with a couple of water troughs being installed this month.

All of the plots have been ploughed and the committee are pulling together a short list of equipment to be purchased over the coming month so that we can keep on top of maintenance. Obviously, we already have our first grant in the bank and are currently working on another couple to make further purchases.

The car park on East has been cleared and levelled and free manure deliveries have started.

It has now been a full year since we were installed as the steering group, and subsequently the committee, and we are delighted with everything that has been achieved in the successful completion of the process. There are still some sites in Rugby not resolved and I'm sure a lot of uncertainty as to their future viability still exists.

We have also been talking with the people at the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and they are very supportive in our efforts to get included in that - negotiations are still ongoing. We have also developed contact with the Mid-Shires Orchard Group and the National Heritage Orchard Scheme about our Warwickshire Drooper plum trees and are getting great support from a number of local wildlife groups who are very enthused by what we have done and are continuing to do.

We have also been approached by a large community group facilitator who is very keen to work with us as we expand the activity of the allotments to community groups in the local area.

All this activity and these projects obviously take both time and resources and could really benefit from more people getting involved, so we are actively seeking people to join the committee to

specifically look after some of these initiatives.

Committee Positions Available

To work on some of the above we would welcome some new faces onto the committee. No experience is necessary, just enthusiasm and interest but if anyone comes from a sales, marketing or business background there are a number of specific projects that would benefit from some additional assistance.

There is also an immediate vacancy for the position of chair on the West side and overall chair of the committee, as I am standing down this month, having achieved the goal of the successful transition to self-managed association.

Given the level of communication required with all the assorted bodies the new chair will absolutely have to be IT literate as a prerequisite and would, ideally, have a business background as there will be negotiations still to come and an ability to discuss and reason is vital together with an ability to tender the grant submissions etc. The role is evolving - it will be less hands on moving forward, and more about overseeing the direction we wish to take the allotments in. The chair is also the public face of the association.

It would also be desirable for the chair to have a commitment to all the previously stated goals and an ability to demonstrate these effectively, both verbally and in written communications, as it will be important to continue the progress already made to secure the future of the site. Anyone interested in either chair or a committee position should submit an outline of their experience and interest in writing to our secretary at teresa_yates@talktalk.net by the 25th.

Finally, thank you for all your support over the past year. Good gardening.

Karl Hine

Chairman

Composting and the Compost Heap in Spring

by John Young (Master Composter)

During the Spring your compost heap will “wake up” with the increase in daily temperatures. It has been a little slow with all the late snow but with the night time temperatures now about 10 degrees, the signs are much improved and so there are jobs to do.

Those amongst you with square bins, that contain material that still needs to rot down more, should turn it from that bin into an empty one adjacent to it. The actual turning and mixing will help put air into the heap and help to warm it up and more of the little beasties (worms etc.) will start to work that bit harder. With the warmer summer months to follow, you could well have good compost to put on your plot by the Autumn.

At the same time you could well find that you have some well-rotted compost ready now to add to your plots this Spring.

For those of you with the conventional black bins it is now time to check via the inspection slot at the bottom whether you have some well-rotted

compost. It can be harvested by simply lifting the bin off its site. Placing close by and any material not ready put it back in the bin as a starter and the lovely black stuff can be harvested.

Whatever the system you have you can add activators such as a 10 cm layer of cut grass which is high in nitrogen as that will have started to grow and that can heat up your bin.



Moving compost from one bin to the next.

There are other good activators such as nettles (leaf and stem only) and comfrey and there is the lovely horse manure on site that will also do nicely also adding precious nutrients.

Mulching with compost in the Spring is good for warming the ground for your plants and keeping the weeds at bay.

Eastlands School

We have had every child from Eastlands School coming onto site in the past couple of weeks and planting a tree as a part of a native hedge around the new wildlife pond (420 free trees from the Woodland Trust).

It has been delightful to see their enthusiasm for this project. They will be coming back after the Easter break and sowing a wild flower meadow around the pond (free seed from RBC) and they will be popping back from time to time to monitor the hedge/plant growth and the development of the pond as well as running some



wildlife/science and eco projects.

It is lovely to be able to start to encourage the next generation of allotmenters and for us to be so active in the local community.

I would like to thank John, Sandy and Teresa for their help during a very hectic few hours!

Could You Help?

Does anyone have a pond liner that could be used in the new wildlife pond. If so, could you contact John on plot 9.

Also, Dave (plot 24) has kindly donated a Briggs and Stratton rotavator which needs a little engine work. If you have the knowledge and time to have a look could you speak with Rob (chair of East, plot 19). Thank you.