

# THE DROOPER



**December 2019**

**[www.lansdowneallotmentassociation.co.uk](http://www.lansdowneallotmentassociation.co.uk)**

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*The Newsletter of the Lansdowne Allotment Association*

Welcome to the latest edition of 'The Drooper'

## **The Chairman's review of 2019**

What a different year Mother Nature served up. The spring was similar to previous years, cool and the soil slow to warm up in March. Nevertheless, there was April to sow and plant potatoes. 2018 was the driest year since 1976, whereas this year we had a good mix of rain and sunshine. This was good for growing and the runner beans seem to go on for ever!

With the introduction of regular plot monitoring this enabled the committee to appreciate how hard and productive the majority of plots were. It was with regret that some tenancy agreements were terminated. However, we have welcomed a number of new plot holders who hopefully will enjoy many years of productive growing.

## **The Onsite Shop**

I'm sure that we would all like to thank Pete for his hard work in the shop over the last 12 months. Lots of useful advice has been given and quality products and seeds have once again been sold at excellent prices.....compared to local retailers! The shop continues to open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday between 11:00 and 12:00.

We have been very fortunate with two plots achieving awards in the Rugby in Bloom competition. Congratulations to Brooke School, with special thanks to Carl Jones for his hard work and dedication to plot 94. Congratulations also to John and Sandy for coming first in the organic category. Please consider entering next year.

It has been a pleasure to meet all the plot holders who have participated in the regular work parties. These are held on the last Sunday of the month. These volunteers have been invaluable in maintaining our lovely site, so please join us even if you are only available for one Sunday morning in the year.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and I look forward to a productive 2020.

John Young

## **Plot Holders**

A warm welcome to all of our new members who have taken on plots over the last few months. It's nice to see that plots are being cared for, and produce that has been successfully grown. If any of you need any help, then just ask. Between all of our friendly members, there are MANY years of experience on site.

## Composting

### Autumn Compost

This is a good time of year to sort out your compost bins and hopefully harvest some well-rotted compost to cover parts of your plot. You do not need to dig it in, just spread it over the surface and let the worms drag it down. This mulch will suppress the weeds and add value to the soil for the next season. As a no dig person that is all I do and the tith in the spring is ideal for sowing and planting. If your compost is not ready and you have the possibility to turn the material, this will give it a new energy to heat it up before going into the over wintering period. When the weather is cooler the breakdown is that much slower.

Now is the time for harvesting waste material from your plot, e.g., the material you can't eat. In the main that goes into your compost bin. Now you appreciate why you harvest ready compost to make room for what you have. There will be some woody materials that you are not sure what to do with, for example raspberry canes. There are only so many row markers you want for next season. However we have found another use which is good for the plot wildlife. Make a narrow hedge about 30 cm wide as plot borders. Drive 2 posts 30cm apart and continue every 60 to 90 cm. You then just weave the canes, or any other similar material, and go to a height which you can walk over. This will become a haven for frogs, toads and many beetles and wildlife that are beneficial for our plots. You can see these in operation on plots 43b and 10. This came about from a visit to Margate cemetery and some vegetable gardens we have been fortunate to visit.

## Weather

The weather has been a very strange mix in the latter part of this year and many of us have not had the opportunity recently to get our plots 'winter ready'. If it hasn't been raining then the frost has reared its head and the ground has been too hard to work. Hopefully most of you will have

So, we wish you good composting which is free with just your own effort involved.

If any of you need any help, or advice, then please feel free to come and ask us.

Cheers, John.



your onions and garlic in the ground, and will be ready for shallots in a few weeks.

Now is the perfect time to think about planning for next year and buying any seeds that you may need. This can be done in any weather, with a good cuppa (or wine) and a biscuit...or two!!

## Work Parties

A very big thank you goes out to all of the members who have helped out at the Sunday work parties. With your help our communal areas remain tidy, which is beneficial to us all. Please consider attending next year to share the work load....and don't forget, there is cake for when the work is done.

Work parties will be held on the last Sunday of every month in 2020, with the exception of December.

## Dogs

Dogs are very welcome on site. However, if you do bring your dog down to the plot with you, could you please keep them on a lead at all times including to and from the plot and if necessary clean up after them.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and happy growing in 2020.

## AGM

The AGM will be on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at Hillmorton Railway Club. The agenda will include rent increases and constitutional changes, which are of interest to plot holders. Everyone is welcome to attend and it's a great opportunity to meet other plot holders and raise any queries you may have.

## And Finally....

The water on site has now been turned off until next year.

Also, if you haven't already, please join our Lansdowne Allotment page on Facebook. Lots of members share useful tips and pictures throughout the year.

All contributions of articles or topics that you would like to be published in the Drooper are welcome. Please email Gill, plot 75 via [lansdowneallotment@gmail.com](mailto:lansdowneallotment@gmail.com)

