

Wivenhoe Allotment and Gardens Association



Autumn 2018 Newsletter



A letter from your Chairman – Peter Hill

All of the allotment holders will have received a letter from Wivenhoe Town Council (WTC) to say their rent charges are going up by 25% next October and will continue to rise after then. Are you happy with this increase as the Council say they have only heard from 5 of you?

The WAGA committee knew nothing about this rent increase. No justification for this increase was given in the letter. I am told that the Council has to subsidise the running costs of the allotments and that is the reason for this big increase.

All I know at the present time is that in cash terms, from figures published on the WTC website, rents received exceed money spent by the Council. I also know that WAGA, and in particular, Margaret Medler does a lot of running around doing things that the Council would otherwise have to do. I hope the Council has taken into consideration all this work that WAGA already does for the Council and the work we were proposing to take on for them.

The WTC Office Manager has promised me a breakdown of the figures in due course. The Council has in principle proposed a meeting with us which I hope will happen fairly soon in order to restore a collaborative way of working with them which used to be the case. The Council has proposed to adopt the Colchester Borough Council (CBC) Tenancy Agreement. Apart from the fact that CBC do not appear to offer any discount for people over pensionable age, it does not include any of the local rules which have previously been agreed between WAGA and the Council. I hope we can have a productive meeting with them.

The WAGA committee has achieved the implementation of many improvements on the allotment site including the composting area and improved water supply to more allotments. There can't be many allotments in the Borough which have their own toilet, grass cutting equipment for plot holders to use and the Trading Hut to provide essential supplies at discounted prices. This is all done by volunteers of course and members should be grateful that we have these volunteers. They all do a good job in my opinion. Volunteers are never easy to come by.

One of those volunteers is Brian Reed, who is part of the Dynamic Duo of Brian and Ron. Ron, as many of you know, is 'hors combat' at the moment and we all wish him well. So Brian is working hard although getting a helping hand from people as Chris Faucheux and Margaret to keep the compost area tidy. Please do take notice of what he has written elsewhere in this newsletter.

As a garden member myself, I am conscious that much of what we write about, and do, concerns the Allotments. Of course, the Trading Hut is there for garden members to use too. The Annual Show is for all members and I hope you all take full advantage of it. The Committee did consider running an outing this year, but we really ran out of time to organise it. Is this something you would be interested in supporting and also any suggestions for places to visit? **Peter Hill, Chairman, WAGA telephone: 823073 email: peter@toadhall2.co.uk**

“Gone Fishing”

The John Stewart 'Gone Fishing' Memorial trophy will be presented at our AGM next February. This trophy will be presented annually in memory of John Stewart who sadly passed away earlier this year. The trophy has been made by three people: Ron Williams; our Mayor, Cllr Bob Needham (President of WAGA this year) and Duncan Boon. This year the trophy will be awarded to the WAGA member who has transformed their allotment or garden (not due to the employment of Garden Designers), but individually or with the support of friends. We have two entries already. Get in touch with me if you think you qualify

At the AGM, we will choose another subject for next year's competition. Alan Thomas, whose idea this was to have a trophy in John's memory proposed this award should be for something unusual or even quirky that might have appealed to John's sense of humour. So, thinking caps on everybody and let's have your ideas.

The 2018 Wivenhoe Show

Planning for the Bigger and Better 2018 Show started early in the year. Jan Sheldon had reviewed the Schedule of Entries and Ron worked with his son-in-law, Adam, on revising it. Angela had already the Hall booked, and the tables too, and judges all lined up. Alan and Sue had begun thinking about what they would be offering in the WAGA Café, including lunch for the judges. Ron, Jan and I spent time to get financial support towards the cost of the Show. Jan made sure that the trophies were returned and ready to be awarded at the Show as well as dealing with all of the entries in the days before the Show. Margaret very efficiently got on with the task of running the Grand Draw, with considerable help from Angela, Alan and Sue in getting some really good prizes. Margaret also organised the newsletter and distribution of it well before the date of the Show. Brian volunteered to be Head Steward this year, his first time in this role, but with the support of former Head Steward, David Darlington. Caroline liaised with the WI and Quay Quilters about displaying items in the Show. Chrissy made sure it was all publicised on our website. Ron worked hard to get stuff to sell on the WAGA Market Stall outside the Wm Loveless Hall and I made sure there was plenty of publicity for the Show.

We had help from lots of people on the day of the Show and too many to name here.

Jez Gladwin, our hard-working Treasurer and organiser of the Adults and Children's Tombola, reported that the Show made a profit this year of £300. Thank you everybody who bought Grand Draw tickets and who came on the day.

I think the result of all this planning and effort was a successful outcome. Entries and visitors exceeded 2017 numbers. I think we achieved our objective of having a Bigger and Better Show in 2018.

Can we do it again in 2019? This will rather depend on you all. Jan Sheldon, having been Show Registrar for 5 years would like a break so that she too can enter the Show. Alan and Sue may not be here next September and so we need a volunteer to run the WAGA Café. Please call me if you could help. Next year's Show will be on Saturday 7th September.

Here are just three pictures from the 2018 Show. Lots more on our website.



Suttons Seeds and much more – Angela Daisley

As a member of WAGA you are able to purchase Sutton seeds and much more at a hugely discounted rate. There is 50% off packet seeds and 15% discount off all other products. An order form and catalogue can be found in the Trading Hut or you can order by post, phone or online. All you have to do is come into the Trading Hut and obtain the Unique Order Code which is just for WAGA members to get the discount. Sutton seeds will also need to know your email address, so that they are able to update you on the progress of your order and also send you newsletters and emails. Payment will be taken at the time the order is placed. Orders will be dispatched direct to the address given. Standard carriage charges will apply as detailed in the catalogue. Website of Sutton Seeds - www.suttons.co.uk Enjoy browsing, such fun in the dark winter evenings, planning for spring, and the dawn of the new growing season!

Dates for your 2019 Diaries

55th Wivenhoe Show - Saturday 7 September at the William Loveless Hall.

WAGA AGM - Sunday 3 February at 11.00am at Wivenhoe Cricket Club. Please come and support your Association.

Remember the Trading Hut does not open in December but opens again on Sunday 6 January 2019 10:00am to 12noon for subscription renewals (£6 or £3.50 with age concession), payment of pre-ordered seed potatoes, and other sales.

Wivenhoe Allotments Report – Brian Reed

Water Supply: All taps were removed on Monday 8th October 2018, blank plugs installed, and water turned off at the mains. Taps and water will be re-installed in early April 2019.

Water Tanks: The new tank between the Trading and Mower Huts is now full and is free for anybody to use. The new tank next to the Dry-Store is also full and available for use, the brownish colour is what has washed off the new roof and guttering, so nothing sinister there.

Huts: Two old huts have been dismantled over the summer period, both past their "sell-by-date" and have or will be burnt in due course. The third "green" hut was dismantled and has now been sold.

Telegraph Pole: The Trading Hut extension cannot proceed until a decision has been made on the removal of this pole which provides electricity access to the Trading Hut.

August Bank-Holiday skip: A large pile of burnable and compostable waste collected in the recycling area whilst the Dry Store was still in construction and prior to the arrival of the skip over the August Bank holiday.



About 70% of this pile and about 60% of the wooden material was burnt before the skip arrived, thanks Margaret for your help. The remainder was decanted into the large skip by a small working party, before any general allotment use. This clear-up left the compost area fairly tidy and we therefore opened the "Dry-Store".



Dry-Store: To date, this has been working well and two further bonfires have been held to dispose of all burnable items, except the wood which is used as kindling to start and keep the fire/s burning etc. Thanks to Chris Fauchoux for his help on these two occasions. There is now a need for a further bonfire as the Dry-Store is nearly full, again, and in less than two weeks! One comment, whilst the facility is generally being used well there is still **too much earth being left on roots, particularly sunflowers and sweetcorn.**

Compost Bins: My records show that these take about one year to compost down properly. Bins 1 & 2 are full and covered; Bins 3 & 5 have now reached their capacity and will be closed soon. Bin 4 still has small amount of compost remaining in it that is available for collection. If that remaining compost is not collected, then Bin 4 will shortly open as a new compost collection bin. The Griddle has been moved in front of Bin 6, the long one, as this should be ready to open soon. **Unfortunately, in the last week, both Bins 3 & 5 have suffered from the wrong material being deposited, brambles and other woody material and a few overzealous people have lobbed their material over towards the back and beyond!** If there is not room in the bins for your compostable material, please return it to your plot and wait for a new bin is opened. **Patience please!!**

Potash: there are free bags of potash by Bin 2 for your collection and use on allotments or gardens.

Glass: Until 2 weeks ago, and since the Bank Holiday, no glass had been left on the site, however some did appear and has been black bagged. Fingers crossed it won't happen again! **Please take glass home.**

Metal: Metal from the allotments has now been collected. **This process is working well, thank you.**

Surplus "Produce" shelves (by the main entrance): These shelves were designed for depositing surplus produce grown on-site with a polite request to take home glass, metal and plastic etc. Unfortunately recently a pile of good and crushed, flower pots and plant trays were left with some metal strips. This pile was probably brought in by car/trailer because of the amount left. Please do not leave such items as surplus because others see it and copy, using this area to deposit their non-burnable rubbish rather than taking it home. Several bags have had to be removed in the last few weeks in an attempt to stop this habit. **Everyone please help to keep this area for produce only. Thank you.**

The Trading Hut Extension – Peter Hill

I think we all had visions of the extension to the Trading Hut being finished by now. As we are all painfully aware, progress has been very slow despite us having raised £1,750 to pay for it from grants (Wivenhoe Community Trust - £500; Locality Budget (Cllr Cyril Liddy and former Cllr Rosalind Scott) £235); Locality Budget (Cllr Mark Cory & Cllr Mike Newton's Mayor's Charity Fund) - £235; + £500 profit from the 2017 Show + £250 donations from members.

The very cold spring was the reason initially which had delayed the completion of the Dry Store. In the summer it was the news that Ron was diagnosed with a serious health problem.



Now the area has been cleared of its two sheds, it is evident that there is another problem and that is the electricity pole at the back of the bag store. It once carried the power supply into the Trading Hut. In fact, it still does despite the fact that the supply is now underground until it reaches the pole when the supply goes up the pole before reaching the Trading Hut.

Cllr Shaun Boughton has been very helpful and has been dealing with UK Power Networks to see if they could remove the pole and re-route the supply to the Hut. He now has their quote which is £1,800 including VAT. I am not sure we have much choice but to pay it but the Committee have yet to consider what we want to do. Alan Thomas thinks we might be able to do some of the manual work ourselves to reduce the cost a bit. If anyone has any other good ideas, please get in touch with Alan Thomas or me.

WAGA to Promote a *Vegetable Garden Share Scheme* – Peter Hill



The WAGA Committee are very conscious that there are a lot of people in Wivenhoe who want an allotment. It is good that there is this level of interest. In 2001, I have a report I wrote for the Council which mentions vacant plots! Right now, there are nearly 50 people on the Council's waiting list.

The Committee has considered what we could do to help these people and is proposing a ***Vegetable Garden Share*** scheme. We feel that there must be older residents in Wivenhoe with large gardens who are no longer able to manage them.

It must be very difficult to look out on something you have valued for a long time and watch it deteriorate, especially if it was your vegetable patch that you used to supply the kitchen with fresh produce.

If you are one of those people who has a vegetable garden that you would be willing to share with someone who might be able to take it on in return for a share of the produce, please do get in touch with me. We will then contact people on the waiting list to see if we can find someone who is keen to help. We don't like the idea of keen growers having to wait to try their hand at growing fresh produce. So please have a think about whether you would like another Wivenhoe resident to come and work your vegetable patch in return for a share of the produce.

WAGA Gardening Notes



Every month Sid Price, Peter Watkinson and Margaret Medler record a 15-minute session for Colne Radio entitled **WAGA Gardening Notes** which goes on the air every **Saturday morning at 11:00**. Our intrepid trio are now going to share with you some of the content of the sessions that will be going out in the next 4 months; you may wish to listen in for more detail?



November

- 🌿 **From the Plot:** with the change in the seasons come the leaves and if you have trees on your boundary now is the chance to collect and make leaf mould using a wire basket. It's also time to insulate pots where trees and bushes are in containers too large to bring under cover. Overwintering broad beans and maybe peas for an early crop but keep under cover and check regularly for pests.
- 🌿 **From the Garden:** with October one of the best months to plant out roses, fruit trees and bushes and hardy perennials. Make sure you complete planting out Spring bulbs.

December

- 🌿 **From the Plot:** time to earth up spring cabbages and winter brassicas to ensure they don't get blown over in strong winter winds. Remove yellowing leaves regularly to prevent fungal disease. Prune blackcurrants maintaining a balance between old and new wood.
- 🌿 **From the Garden:** get ready for Spring by digging over and preparing beds for the coming year. If the soil is not frozen or over sticky you can still plant out roses, fruit trees and hardy herbaceous.

January

- 🌿 **From the Plot:** complete winter digging and avoid walking on any prepared ground. Ground cover also warms the soil ready for spring sowing. If seed potatoes have been delivered then start chitting in a light cool but frost-free place and in two or three weeks you will have shoots.
- 🌿 **From the Garden:** moss is a big problem on lawns particular given that many lawns are still recovering from last year's drought. Treat with lawn sand about a tablespoon per square yard. You can always repeat the treatment.

February

- 🌿 **From the Plot:** start to sow early growers such as peas, winter lettuce, early carrots on a window sill or in a propagator or heated greenhouse. As soil needs to be at least 7°C for germination and then a good retaining temperature for growth, don't plant more than you can manage to keep warm.
- 🌿 **From the Garden:** complete deadheading and cutting back of spire, Jasminum nudiflorum and hibiscus and last year's flowering perennials – chrysanthemums, sedum, etc. Pruning back of roses, buddleia and hydrangea are best left to March.

New to an Allotment? – What to do between November and April – Margaret Medler

Don't sit at home: A trip to the allotments at any time can be beneficial for you and your allotment. There are many of us who visit all year round only not going when the weather is really too bad to make a visit to the allotments enjoyable. We all love a chat with our hot drink and what could be better on a cold crisp day?

Careful with jobs that involve the soil: Do jobs that mean you don't have to stand on the soil as it spoils the structure. If you have to, use a plank or other means of spreading your weight. It also might be frosted so that stops any weeding although some weeds are hardy. Cover all ground not being used for overwintering crops.

Look after your tools: this is the time to clean, sharpen and oil your tools and why not clean out the shed and make any repairs that you didn't have time for in the main growing season. Everything will then be in good condition for the spring. Wash those pots and don't forget cloches that could do with a spruce up.

Try growing something new: Take a trip to the Trading Hut, look through seed catalogues or online and see if you can find something you haven't grown before or a new variety of an old favourite. **Good allotmenting.**



**Message from all the WAGA Committee
Wishing you all a wonderful festive time this Christmas, good
gardening and allotmenting in 2019.**

