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Any enquiries,
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Chair's Message

Welcome to our first edition for 2024. The committee join me in wishing you a very **Happy New Year**. Although 2023 was challenging for a number of our members, we do hope that 2024 will be a positive one with plenty of opportunities to meet our fellow members for a chat and mutual support.

The first of the National Allotment Society SW branch talks for this year will be held online via Zoom on **Thursday 18th January at 7.30pm**. The speaker will be Mitch Perkins from Dorset Wildlife Trust who a number of you met at our BEAS Open Morning last year. I have seen her presentation, so I know that you would enjoy it.



The Chair at the AGM presenting the second prize in the Allotment competition to our secretary Dave Taylor.

Summary of the AGM

Disappointingly, only 26 members attended out of a membership of well over 300. Appreciating that business meetings may not seem very attractive, we keep the AGM brief in the hope that most people will understand the need to exercise their vote and absentees missed an important discussion on the proposal to add rules regarding "ponds". Among other things, the Secretary reported on the unusually high number of tenancy changes and the difficulty in contacting those on the waiting list.

The Treasurer stated that the society is in a sound financial position and the annual accounts were adopted. The auditors, TC Group, were reappointed for the current financial year.

The Finance Policy and the Health & Safety Policy (reviewed annually) were readopted, together with the IT Policy.

www.bournemoutheastallotmentsociety.co.uk
www.facebook.com/lingdaleplots

There was just one Resolution regarding rules to permit ponds and other contained water on the site. This resolution was an attempt to limit the size, location and construction of ponds intended to provide water for wildlife, whilst minimising any danger to site users. As the vote was so close and several members felt they did not know enough about the pros and cons of this, the Chair proposed returning to this matter with further information being provided and a wider range of responses being sought. It is important to understand that currently, whilst there are no rules relating to ponds, the committee is powerless to monitor the situation or prevent inappropriate ponds from being installed. We would urge our plot holders to take sensible precautions regarding ponds. The main issues raised were Health and Safety risks, especially to young children on the site and the risk of creating a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Looking to the future, the Chair announced that a **questionnaire** would be distributed in January covering the following topics:

- *The Shop* – including opening times and days, stock to be held and prices.
- *Communications* – including the best way to communicate with ALL our members.
- *Social Events* – including the sort of events members would find attractive and the timing of events. Currently, attendance is quite limited given our large membership, which is not the experience of other self-managed local societies.
- *Ponds and other contained water for wildlife* – please see above. Information regarding this issue will be circulated with the questionnaire.

Please take the time to complete this questionnaire when it arrives so that we can gain the opinions of the majority of you.

Finally, last year's committee members were re-elected together with Simon Kavanagh, a welcome addition to our number.

Please click below for a link to the website for the full minutes and the policies.

<https://www.bournemoutheastallotmentsociety.co.uk/policies.html>

A Word from the Secretary

A Happy New Year to all of our Members and Associate Members and a very warm welcome to everyone who has joined us since the last issue of our Quarterly Newsletter.

We had an extraordinary number of Tenancy Changes last year and we start 2024 with a number of vacant plots but a Waiting List of over 200 applicants. I have no doubt we will fill those empty plots soon although making contact with people on the Waiting List has proved 'challenging'. Some have changed their minds and no longer want a plot, others have requested a deferment for a year, some have found a plot with another Society, some have moved out of the area and no longer qualify for a plot with us but many are simply not replying to emails or telephone calls. Nevertheless we will keep trying and will soon be back to 100% occupancy.

I hope all of our new members enjoy their plots as the weather starts to improve and join in our many social events to get to know our established members. There is so much to learn about 'growing your own' and there is an enormous wealth of knowledge amongst our more experienced gardeners – don't be afraid to ask questions. That is the way we learn.

David Taylor, Secretary

Shop News

There is always little to report at this time of year. Although the shop is currently closed (because no-one wants to stand around in the cold waiting for customers who don't come!) we are still offering our "Click or Call & Collect" service.

If there is anything that you need then email BEAS.shopmanager@outlook.com or phone me on 07528 410775 to arrange a mutually convenient time to collect what you need.

We shall re-open around the end of January after the seed potatoes have arrived and been sorted. These will be kept in the shop this year, rather than being left on racks in the Community Area, as several people need to pay a slight balance for their order. This means that you will only be able to collect them when the shop is open. Speaking of which, please be aware that there will be a short questionnaire coming out soon including a few questions about members' use of the shop.

Please ensure that you complete this so that we have up-to-date information of what is best for everyone. There are also still a few seed orders to be collected.

If you didn't get round to ordering your seed potatoes in time, then please be aware that we shall have a few spare bags of Arran Pilot, Red Duke of York, Cara & Orla which we shall be splitting into smaller packs on a first come first served basis.

Don't forget that we also still need volunteers to help out in the shop. If you can be available for the odd shift, please let me know as above.

Thank you for your support over the past year and we look forward to a successful 2024.

Peter Clarke
BEAS Shop Manager

Social Events

During 2023, we had numerous social events including monthly 'Bacon Rolls' Sunday morning socials. Many thanks to Graham and Judy Reader for the cooking efforts!

Tuesday Contact coffee mornings also provided a social opportunity for many members.

Despite the weather, July 2023 saw our Annual Open Morning where we welcomed Dorset Wildlife Trust and RumSoaked for some live music! Made

possible by so many willing 'helpers' and donations to our fundraising.

With a Macmillan coffee morning and Christmas Social to end the year, we continue to provide valuable opportunities to socialise and be part of our allotment community.

As always, we welcome new ideas and opportunities to be part of the local community. You are most welcome to get involved, meet others and make new friends. We look forward to 2024!

Sunday Contact

Second Sunday in the month
starting in February from 10 am

Just drop into the Big Green Shed to have a social break and a chat with coffee, teas, hot choc, biscuits, cakes !



Members, associate members and former members all welcome.

Bacon Butties

***Sunday Socials continue on the last Sunday of the month from April to October
in the big green shed from 10 am
Take a break from digging for a bacon butty breakfast and a chat.***



WINTER ON THE PLOT

January

The usual things to do on your plot in January are mainly based in the warmth of your home!

If you have crops to harvest, continue harvesting and plan what you intend to grow this year. Buy your seeds.

You might manage to get a head start on some crops, like tomatoes, peppers, or chili peppers, if you have a warm, light place at home. Whether indoors or out, it is a good idea to keep some seeds back for succession planting, and to replace any failures. It also spreads the harvest out!

In warm dry weather, weed and prepare the plot for planting.

February

In warmer weather, it is hoped that planting of chitted (sprouted) potatoes, onions, garlic and parsnips can commence. If you haven't already planted them, broad beans can also be successfully grown.

This is usually a good time to renew the strawberry bed. Replace the plants with last years rooted runners in a new area in the plot. After 4/5 years plants lose their vigour.

Replace any failed seedlings.

March

The busiest planting time once the ground is warm enough; later crops will often catch up. Root veg, i.e. carrots, beetroot, swede, turnips, radishes can be planted directly into the ground.

Brassicas like cabbages, broccoli, sprouts, cauliflower, kale, and peas, squashes and sweetcorn might benefit from starting off in pots/seed trays in the warm.

For next winter, there are many crops that can survive the winter months—asparagus, broad beans, chard, kale, garlic, leeks, onions, parsnips, purple sprouting broccoli, rhubarb, rocket and sprouts.... and most herbs.



SITE REMINDERS

Water Tanks/Butts

The water tanks/butts are turned off during the winter months to protect the system from weather damage.

Please ensure that those on or near your plot are emptied and cleaned out of silt etc. so that you have pest free and uncontaminated water ready for your seedlings and plants in the spring.

Paths

In conjunction with your neighbours, a job that requires doing throughout the year is to provide and maintain a 2'(600mm) wide grass path between the plots- cut the grass and don't forget the edges!

The main paths/drives are cut for us all by volunteers, except for the 1'(300mm) next to the plots (so that your crops are not damaged) – that is your responsibility.

Wood Chippings

Please remember to return the BEAS wheelbarrow as soon as you have used it to transport wood chippings to your plot. Some of our members have gone to get wood chippings from the pile, only to find no barrows! Donations to the shop for the wood chippings are always welcome!

Vehicles On Site

Please do not bring vehicles on site when the paths/drives are soft/wet as this damages them. The site team are sorry that we have had to close them due to very heavy rutting and damage. We are aware this is an inconvenience to those wishing to have compost or sheds etc. delivered or remove rubbish to the tip.

It would be of great assistance if anyone having surplus turf could fill in the ruts as it will now take a lot of work to repair the damage and enable us to reopen once the ground has recovered and dried out.

Please do **NOT** put stones or ash in the ruts, as these will damage the grass mower, and extend the recovery time.

Straw for year round protection



Leeks are one crop that you can leave in the ground until you are ready to use them. They can be resistant to a certain amount of cold but if it gets too frosty, protection with straw can help to keep them going for a while. Root vegetables like parsnip will also survive frosty conditions.

You may still also have winter brassicas in the ground such as sprouts, kale, winter cabbages and cauliflower. Straw cover can help to preserve these to some extent, but it is advisable to harvest and store any remaining produce before any severe cold.

Apart from being a good protection from frost, straw is also useful to provide insulation for the ground and encourage warmth when planting out seedlings later in the spring. You can make holes in the layer of straw for your seedlings and the straw provides ground cover to keep weeds at bay around your plants.

When summer comes round, straw is beneficial to keep moisture in the soil during dry periods and, as it breaks down, it turns to mulch to improve the texture of our sandy soil, so a good investment of a little time and effort now can prove useful for the whole year!!



LEEK & MUSHROOM RISOTTO

If you still have leeks on your plot, here is a tasty winter recipe.

Ingredients

- 25g Butter
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 Leek thinly sliced
- 1 Garlic Clove
- 300g Risotto Rice
- 850ml Vegetable stock, hot!
- 250g Chestnut Mushrooms, sliced
- 50g Parmesan cheese, grated
- Serves 4

Method

1. Cook in microwave (cuts down stirring).
2. Put butter, oil, leek & garlic in large bowl, cover with clingfilm. Cook on high for 5 minutes.
3. Stir rice into leek mix, stir in the stock. Cook on high, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
4. Stir in mushrooms and cook on high for 6 minutes.
5. Stir in half the Parmesan, season to taste & leave to stand 5 minutes.
6. Sprinkle on the top the remaining Parmesan and serve - goes well with Salad.

Plot inspections will start again in February 2024

Don't forget – if you have difficulty working your plot through illness or other reasons, or if you are on holiday and someone else is looking after your plot, please let the Site Manager know at beas.sitemanager@outlook.com

TREES

With the exception of the plum family, please use these winter months to prune fruit trees whilst they're dormant. The maximum height should be 3m / 10ft, which allows for a large crop which can still be easily harvested, and minimises the amount of shade cast. If you have a fig tree on your plot, please note that they can grow large very quickly and need regular attention to keep them an acceptable size. Plums can be pruned in the summer.

If you have an older tree, it might have been planted closer to the edges of the plot than our rules now allow. If that's the case, please consider pruning lower to reduce the amount of shade cast onto neighbouring plots.

All trees should be pruned within the boundaries of your plot, and not overhang side paths, adjoining plots, or the main drive.

If you're using the winter months to plant new trees, please ensure they are dwarfing varieties, and planted at least 1.5m inside your plot boundary. Only fruit trees can be grown on our plots.

Pruning tips

- prune before new growth begins in the spring.
- in young trees, concentrate on establishing a strong stem and root system.
- in older trees, reduce the height of the leader (main stem) and encourage an open canopy. Remove overlapping, inward growing, diseased or damaged branches, and trim back the longer branches.
- mulch well afterwards, so the tree has plenty of water and nutrients in the spring, and will not have weeds to compete with.

For more detailed tips for different types of fruit trees,

www.rhs.org.uk is a good resource.

Pruning can revive the vigour of fruit trees, increase yield, and reduce disease by increasing ventilation.



Help around the site

As the Committee are volunteers who do other things as well, we are always looking for help around the site. The shop article contains the Manager's contact details to volunteer your help in there, but offers of other help should be sent to beas.sitemanager@outlook.com or you can text or ring Louisa on: 07855 117530. She will then be able to give your details to our Maintenance Manager or other appropriate committee member. If you have practical skills but are unable to help physically, it may be that we could use your expert advice.

Companion Planting

In addition to being beneficial for wildlife, companion planting has been found to encourage good growth. The combinations below have been found to be particularly worthwhile as they seem to attract pollinators but help deter pests. It is believed that the strong scent of some flowers or herbs may confuse pests and help to preserve your crops. Here are some common combinations to try:

- Tomatoes with marigold
- Brassicas with mint
- Carrots with onions or leeks
- Beans with marigold
- Brassicas with sage
- Courgettes and squash with nasturtium
- Strawberries with borage

Growing success in 2023

One of our potholders has kindly shared these pictures of magnificent veg grown on the plots this summer. We notice that there are some crops that generally require warmer climates such as kadu and aubergine.



Tips on growing aubergines:

Aubergines generally need a fairly long growing season and being a plant that originates from India they thrive on warmth, so it is best to start them off early. It is not too soon to get the seeds planted now, in January, if you can find a warm spot at home for them. About 21 degrees is a good temperature to encourage them to germinate. If you plant a couple of seeds per module you can thin them out to the most sturdy looking seedling once they get a few centimetres high.

With plenty of heat and light they will soon be big enough to transplant into pots. By May you should be able to put them into a greenhouse, or other protected place. Make sure to keep them well watered and when you see the fruit starting to grow, use a tomato feed every couple of weeks. It is a good idea to pinch out some shoots and keep a maximum of six fruits on each plant, so that they have a good chance to mature well and ripen.

If you notice any pests attacking the plants, a soapy water spray should deter them. From July through to September the aubergines should be ready to pick. They are very versatile and can be added to all sorts of dishes with other Mediterranean veg, like peppers and tomatoes or grilled or roasted.

Hope for Food

While you are planting seeds for summer veg, don't worry about planting too many seeds!!

If you have space to get them started, any extra plants are always welcome in the shop and if you end up with more produce than you can use, fellow allotmenteer Peter D regularly cooks for the local charity

***'Hope for food'** - excess fruit or veg is collected from the shop on a regular basis to support this endeavour.*

Also, in support of the same charity, Pat Rodgers is knitting hats which are on sale for just £5 at our coffee mornings and through our shop.

Recipe

Warming Swiss Chard Dal

Among the crops still surviving on your plot in winter you may have chard. It is fairly hardy to cold and will usually tolerate light frost. Here is a nourishing winter recipe. Thank you very much to Monisha on plot 14a for sharing this with us all.



Ingredients

- Half cup split red lentils (can substitute with green, brown or split yellow lentils).
- Chard - (as much or as little as you like) chopped, stalks and leafy bit separate.
- 1/2 medium Onion, chopped.
- Garlic - 3 cloves but you can make it as garlicky as you like, chopped.
- Ginger, a few juliennes (optional).
- Green chili, slit or pierced and deseeded if you want to reduce the heat.
- Oil or ghee (couple of tablespoons).
- Whole spices: 3/4 teaspoon cumin seeds, 5-6 peppercorns, 1 inch piece cinnamon stick, 2-3 cloves.
- Turmeric powder 1/2 teaspoon.
- A pinch of asafoetida if you have it.
- Garam masala, 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon.
- 1 Tomato, chopped (optional).
- Fresh coriander (garnish).
- Salt to taste.

Method

1. Boil the lentils until cooked, with some salt. Pre-soaking will help reduce cooking time. Wash lentils well before cooking.
2. While the lentils are cooking, heat the oil in a pan, then add whole spices - cinnamon stick, peppercorns and cloves first, then cumin seeds. The seeds should sputter, but not burn.
3. Add the green chili, then chopped onion, and fry until the onion is translucent.
4. Add chopped garlic, fry for 30 seconds without burning it.
5. Add turmeric powder and asafoetida at this point, mix well.
6. If using tomatoes, you can add them here and fry for a bit.
7. Add the chard stalks, stir fry for a few minutes.
8. Mix in the lentils.
9. Add the garam masala, chopped leafy parts of the chard and the julienned ginger if using.
10. Add salt to taste and water to get the desired consistency of dal. Feel free to add a pinch of sugar.
11. Garnish with coriander, serve with rice, or bread, or roti/ chapati/ naan etc., with some yogurt and pickle on the side, or enjoy on its own as a hearty soup.

Play around with the recipe, different lentils, spinach or other leafy greens instead of chard, add chopped carrot, add other powdered spices like coriander powder, chilli powder, simplify by omitting some of the ingredients, use nigella seeds instead of cumin - the possibilities are endless.

Allotment Cook Book

available in the shop or contact beas.shopmanager@outlook.com
£7 for members (RRP £8.95)

