



# Welcome to our February Newsletter.

## Chairman's Corner

Welcome to 2024 and a hopefully a year of growing successes; but I am sure there will be trials and tribulations along the way with the weather too hot/cold/wet or visits from wildlife, or two legged unwelcome visitors by people who should not even be on the site. That's what makes every year different. It's tempting to start sowing seeds and get planting, but the ground temperature is still low for most seeds. In days of old if you wanted to test the soil temperature then you would plonk your bare bum on the soil and if it's too cold to sit on, then it's too cold to sow, not that I am encouraging anyone to do this!

We have found the Facebook pages for Brockhurst, Elson, Middlecroft and Rectory are very good at getting information to plot holders very quickly. If you know of someone who may want to be a Facebook administrator for Camden, Rowner and Leesland then please ask them to get in touch. Facebook pages should not be restricted to association members, but we would prefer it was a member who volunteers. And we also ask the page is "private" so that restricts access to site ploholders.

There is lots of information in the Newsletter that I trust you will find of interest together with our programme of events for the year ahead.

Kind regards to you all.  
Jim More – Chairman

## New Manor Way Allotments Update

We have some very exciting news the Planning Application to change the use of the field to an Allotment Site has been approved. Included in approval is that the site will be designated as a Statutory Allotment which will protect it from future development – this was enabled by Jim More, the Allotment Association Chairman. Now the Council can begin work to create the allotment site comprising 65, five rod plots. When the enabling works are complete (water pipes, access roads) then we can get the allotment store built – all in place by end of Feb 24. We shall see.

The Council has agreed the site to be renamed as **Coronation Allotments** (rather than Manor Way) and it is intended there will be a formal opening in the autumn.

## Growing in Gosport

The Growing in Gosport Class of 2024 have all had a spade in the ground and are raring to get sowing and growing. Not all of those who previously expressed an interest are joining us, so there are two mini-plots still available. If you know someone who wants to learn how to grow their own vegetables, then do ask them to get in touch to [enquiries@gosportallotments.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gosportallotments.co.uk) or through any of our allotment stores.

This year GIG will be working with the Gosport Food Network and Incredible Edible Projects to produce plants for use in community growing but also growing plants for the Association Plant Sale in May. So, when you buy a Community Lottery ticket this then provides financial support for GIG to support the Association and the wider community. And you are also in with a chance of winning £25,000 in the community lottery weekly draw. Please visit: - [www.gosportcommunitylottery.co.uk/support/growing-in-gosport](http://www.gosportcommunitylottery.co.uk/support/growing-in-gosport) and find our cause Growing in Gosport.

Many thanks for your support.

## Council Allotment Sites Update

The Association continues to work with the Council in seeking to get vacant plots let as soon as possible and our volunteers who do this have been applauded by the Council Allotment Stakeholder Group. I am sure members will have seen the progress in getting plots strimmed and cleared and then let soon afterwards. January and early February is a period of higher than normal plots being given up as plotholders decide not to pay their rent bill. And of course, some plots may have been not cultivated in the period before someone gives up. But we are now in a far better situation regarding plots being let for a long time. Site/Plot management has improved a lot, and we look forward to keeping that going.

The new Tenancy Agreement was issued with the rent invoices – it is important that you return the acceptance form to the Town Hall. If you don't, this will be followed up and continued refusal to accept the new rules may lead to termination of your Tenancy. The new Tenancy Agreement is important as it standardises everyone following the same rules because there were previously various versions of the Tenancy Agreement with some plotholders never having signed one. It is important too that we consider environmental considerations about the stuff we bring on to sites and they will be disposed of. The Rectory Tenancy Agreement is not at the same standard as GBC however will look at reviewing that going forward.

For information the waiting list for Council allotments was 385 at the end of December but as you will imagine the number of people waiting varies by each site capacity. What is apparent is that on the three big sites in the middle of the town (Brockhurst, Middlecroft, Camden) the waiting list is between 3 – 6 months. If you know someone waiting for a plot, then please ask them if they need to a different waiting list as this the time to get prepared for growing.

## Shed and Allotment Theft

Advice from PCSO Gemma Broster

Garden and allotment crime is now becoming more and more common. Tools such as lawn mowers, strimmers, hedge cutters, power tools and bikes are expensive items to replace and may incur the victim extra insurance premiums. This can also be an open invitation for thieves to use garden implements to break into their house or car.

I have always advised people to leave sheds on allotment sites insecure and not keep valuables in them (lawn mowers, strimmers, hedge cutters, power tools etc). I give this advice as I find people break into locked shed and then find nothing to take, so it is easier and more cost effective to leave unlocked and then no mindless damage is done. Locked sheds being broken into are not often heard or witnessed so we are not contacted at the time of the incident, unlike a shed in a garden.

You should always report a theft on an allotment site, no matter how big or small, as this helps the police build up a crime report.

Reports can either be done via 101 or online <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/> & I am always happy for my contact details to be placed anywhere inc social media.

## What's in the stores?

### Spring/ Summer Onions & Shallots

Will be available in the stores from late February to early March.

Onions – White Sturon, Stuttergart & Red Baron

Price: £1.80 Lb / £3.95 Kg

Shallots – Golden Gourmet & Red Sun  
£2Lb & £4.40Kg

### Potato Orders

The potato orders are now in the stores for collection, we also have lots of spare potatoes for sale, they are £1.70 per Kg, apart from specialist Albert Bartlett potatoes which are £4.20 per 2Kg bag.

### Bean Poles

Hazel pea sticks and bean poles will be in the stores mid-March.

## Updates & Reminders

### Membership Subscriptions

To continue to reap the benefits of being an Association Member, please make sure you renew your 2024 membership subscription before the end of February.

Yearly Membership costs £5 for a single Member or £6 for two.

### British Summer Time Begins

When the clocks go forward in spring each year, falling this year on **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March**, which means more daylight time to spend on your plot. **Happy Days!**



### Bonfires

The last date for bonfires is 31<sup>st</sup> March, please make sure that any burning you need to do is before this date.

Thank you.

### KINGS SEEDS

We have a lot of members seed orders still in the stores awaiting pick up, we're sure that you will need these as the new growing season is fast approaching! So, if you haven't already picked up your order, can we encourage you to pick it up as soon as possible please.

## Tips from the Potting Shed

Welcome to 2024. I am sure you're all eager to get started again down on the plot but with the soil either still waterlogged or cold and frozen it would be better to use the time to clear away old spent crops to the compost heap and make any repairs to frames and structures. Check for snails that have overwintered under any coverings, in watering can spouts, pots etc. where they can hide. Check tools are clean and sharp ready for use. Wheelbarrow tyres may need some air in them.

Beryl – Plot Holder at Elson



# Events, Trips & Talks

The Committee and I are pleased to announce the below programme of events, social trips and activities for 2024. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

I would like to draw your attention to the first talk and trips of 2024, the first being the 'Guest Speaker Event' on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February, when we have the very knowledgeable Jane Gleason, who will be giving a very interesting talk about making the most and best compost.

## RHS Gardens Wisley Trip – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April



The second event of the year is our trip to the very popular RHS Garden Wisley, our trip coincides with RHS Ornamental Flower Competition, and hopefully the major Cherry Blossom flowering. There is also an Orchid exhibition in the old building and main Orchid flowering time in the glasshouses. So, lots to do even if it rains!

The cost includes cream tea plus transport, which is only **£23.00 per person**. You can book your ticket at any of the Association's Allotment stores, the closing date is 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

## The Bosham Open Gardens Trip - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June

Bosham is a small, picturesque village on one of the small inlets of Chichester Harbour, Bosham is renowned for its ancient church, as well as its historic links with King Canute, King Harold and the Bayeux Tapestry.

This biennial event offers a rare opportunity to visit many private gardens in and around Bosham Village. Whatever your gardening interests, there is something of interest for everyone.

There will be bore information on this trip nearer the time.

I do hope that you will be able join us.

**Social Secretary – Maggie Duckett**

Date	Event Activity
Tuesday 6th February	Guest Speaker Event - Jane Gleason on 'Making the Most of Compost'
Saturday 6th April	Trip - To RHS Garden Wisley
Tuesday 7th May	Annual General Meeting - HEDCA Community Centre - 7pm
Sunday 19th May	Plant Sale - Brockhurst Allotment Store - 10am
Sunday 9th June	Trip - Bosham Gardens Open Day
Saturday 17th August	Summer Show - St Mary's Parish Centre, Alverstoke. 12.00 - 2.00pm
Saturday 7th September	Trip - Gilbert's Dahlia Nursery and Sir Harold Hillier Gardens
Saturday 28th September	Michaelmas Fayre Stand - Alverstoke Village
Saturday 28th October	Pumpkin and Produce Show - St Mary's Parish Centre, Alverstoke. 12.00 - 1.45pm
Tuesday 5th November	Guest Speaker Event - Alan Williams on 'From Plot to Plate'

Please look out for the information posters at the allotment sites for more details, these will be displayed approx four weeks before each event.