

Somersham and District Allotment and Smallholding Association January 2018 Newsletter



Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had a lovely Christmas break and are raring to go on your allotments. Personally, I cannot wait for Spring and lighter, brighter days!

Vicky Moseley, Secretary

Site Security

I am sorry to have to start this year on a low note but, I am sure you will all have heard by now that there were some shed break-ins and thefts on the site over Christmas. Please can I remind you all to close and lock gates behind you, and to take anything valuable home with you at the end of the day. It is up to individual ploholders to report any crimes to the police as they will not accept reports from the committee.



We are also aware of some incidents of hare-coursing in the general vicinity of the allotments so keeping gates locked will also discourage any other criminal activities!

Update – an allotment holder has recently prevented the theft of a lawnmower from the site by confronting the thief. Please keep sheds locked, and take valuables home with you where possible.



Land Registry

I am pleased to finally be able to tell you that the voluntary first registration of the allotment site deeds has been completed by the Land Registry. This has been a long process from trying to locate the deeds in the first place, to massive back logs at the Land Registry itself. We would like to thank Eversheds Sutherland LLP in Cambridge for dealing with the matter for us on a pro-bono basis (my day job is Archivist for Eversheds Sutherland).

Winter Work Parties

We now have some dates for the winter site maintenance working parties. They will be taking place every other Sunday, depending on weather and volunteer availability. The first few dates are **28th January, 11th February** and **25th February**. We have a few projects planned including fencing, clearing footpaths and generally having a tidy up. If you would like to get involved please call Geoff on 07525 901735 to let him know you are coming, the more, the merrier!

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Chapel Fields Update – Roger Hinkins

This weekend we completed the fencing of Footpath 6 along the boundary of plot CFD. We cleared a lot of rubbish that we have sorted into heaps on CF44 and CFJ.

If anyone has any scrap metal on their Chapel Field plot please can you stack it neatly in the existing pile of scrap by the road between CF44 and CFJ as soon as possible.



If you have any asbestos on your plot which needs removing please stack this on the association's plot, CF14, for sorting and professional removal.

We will also be collecting up any bricks/hardcore. To this end, if you have any small amounts that you would like removed please leave it piled on the edge of your plot near the road as soon as possible. If you have large amounts please contact a committee member first.

Arrangements for King Street are to be confirmed and communicated shortly!

In the Apiary – Paul Edmondson



In January the bees start to turn their thoughts to spring, as the days start to get longer it triggers the bees into rearing the next generation to take advantage of the spring nectar flow. The worker bees that are currently in residence are winter bees, born in the autumn they live between 4 and 5 months, the rest of the year the workers live between 5 and 6 weeks. As these bees are coming to the end of their life they will need to be replaced, to achieve this the queen will start laying eggs and the workers will start to rear those eggs. The bees will have to keep the nest at around 35°C for the eggs and larvae to develop. This rearing process

requires energy in the form of Honey and this is the period that the bees are most at risk of starvation. As an insurance policy I put sugar on the hives as emergency feed, one of the hives has already started eating large amounts of sugar which is an indication that they are in trouble, I will have to keep a close eye on this hive over the next 2 months.

If you are thinking of planting some Bee friendly flowers, then Artichokes are one of the bees favourite flowers, along with lavender and dandelion. If you can, please cut your grass once the dandelion have gone to seed. It helps the bees gather a rich pollen and nectar source and the flowers look so pretty.

Don't forget:

- **Do we have your e-mail address?** – if you have received this newsletter via post but have an e-mail address please contact me.
- Alan Draper has a number of **glass demi-johns**. Please let me know if you would like any.
- All contributions to the newsletter are very welcome. If you have anything you would like to include in a future newsletter please let me know.