

# Somersham and District Allotment and Smallholding Association May 2018 Newsletter



*I hope you have all managed to make a good start with your planting despite the contrasting weather so far this month! There's some important information in this month's newsletter so I hope you find it useful - Vicky*

## SGM

The Special General Meeting was held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May in the Victory Hall. I would like to thank everybody who turned up to vote, it was a very quick meeting but one that we needed to have. The result is that the members present voted unanimously to **not audit** the accounts for the financial years 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. This will now be voted upon at every AGM for subsequent years. If you have any questions about this result please let me, or another committee member, know.

## GDPR

As you may be aware, there is a new EU law that will come into effect on 25 May 2018 and it will introduce new requirements for how organisations process personal data – this is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Even though our association is a small, not for profit club, we are still required to adhere to these new requirements and it is in all our interests as the purpose is to protect members' privacy.

The purpose of our retaining your details is so that you can benefit fully from your membership and we can keep track of who is renting each plot. As part of our membership of the National Society of

Allotments and Leisure Gardeners we are required to pass them a list of current members each year, but they are bound by the same regulations and your information is not at risk.

You should be aware that your contact details are stored securely and they are only accessible by the Secretary. You do not need to take any action if you are happy for us to continue to retain your e-mail and contact details. However, please let me know if you have any questions about how your data is stored, or your details need updating. If you cease to be a member of the Allotment Association your personal information is deleted as soon your tenancy is terminated.

## Plot Husbandry

The Committee would like to remind you all that you should not be using your plot to store waste of any kind, particularly hardcore and trade waste. Not only does this look untidy, it is not the intended use for the land and repeat offences could put your tenancy at risk.

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## In the Apiary – Paul Edmondson

April was a complete washout, too wet and too cold. The final tally for Winter was two hives lost, both at Chapel Fields, although both the hives at the Farm came through winter fairly strong. Some of the beekeepers I know lost all their hives, but most are reporting heavy losses. Pollen is very important for the bees at this time of year. Pollen is mixed with nectar and fermented, this is known as Bee bread and is fed to the young. If there is a lack of pollen reserves in the hive the egg laying will shut down, and bee numbers will decrease until the hive can no longer function. Bees from other hives take advantage of this and rob the weakened hive of all its resources, it is then only a matter of time until the hive succumbs. Even though there was pollen around, the bees need a dry day above 10°C to collect it.

By now I am usually getting calls to collect swarms, as I provide this service for Cambridgeshire Beekeepers Association, but at the moment they have taken no calls. I have a swarm trap in my garden in Colne which is receiving a lot of attention from scout bees at the moment, so I am hoping that a swarm moves in in the next few days to help replenish my losses. I am sure that with the recent good weather the swarm season will start soon. With that in mind, I have started to inspect my bees weekly and one of my main criteria for those inspections is to pick-up the first signs of my bees wanting to swarm. Swarming is the natural reproduction cycle for a hive where half of the bees go off with the existing queen to find a new home and the bees that are left raise a new queen. If I catch the swarm cycle early enough I can split the hive in half to simulate a swarm and most of the time this will satisfy the bees swarm instinct. But with bees nothing is predictable, sometimes they get swarm fever and they will swarm anyway.



## Livestock Monitoring

The Committee will shortly be introducing a new role for a Livestock Officer for the site. It is envisaged that the Officer will monitor all livestock kept on the site for welfare and compliance issues. There have previously been concerns raised about some livestock that were not being fed and watered daily and the Committee feels that this is something we need to keep a close eye on. If you are interested in this role please do let me know.

## Don't forget:

- **Gardeners' World Live** – 14-17 June – Save 20% on tickets using code NAS1 at [www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com](http://www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com)
- Please keep **dogs on leads at all times** and clear up any messes.
- **Do we have your up to date contact details?** – if you have received this newsletter via post but have an e-mail address please contact me.
- **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.
- We still have stock of 70L bags of Mother Earth **compost** available for you to purchase at £4.50 a bag.