

# Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



## Winter Newsletter 2021 Hot from the Hut!

### Committee Members

| Name                   |   | Plot      |
|------------------------|---|-----------|
| Julian Ayres           | Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)             | 67A & 67B |
| Ellen Bradbury         | Committee Member                                  | 9         |
| David Brinklow         | Site Secretary and Treasurer                      | 14        |
| Nigel Collinson        | Secretary   | 66        |
| Gayle Enion-Farrington | Chair and Publicity Officer                       | 34, 35    |
| Moira Grainger         | Committee Member                                  | 93a       |
| George Hughes          | Committee Member                                  | 108       |
| Amy Johnson            | Committee Member                                  | 63b       |
| Jean Pulleyn           | Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)             | 81        |
| Lisa Tindale           | Committee Member                                  | 59b       |
| Lisa Maunder-Wood      | Committee Member                                  | 95        |
| Lorraine Wood          | Shop Manager                                      | 64        |
| Dave Wood              | Shop Manager                                      | 64        |
| Mark Farrington        | Website Administrator (not part of the committee) | 35        |

### Update from Gayle, Chairperson

For various personal and work related reasons, we are anticipating a number of vacancies becoming available at our AGM in 2022. Please speak to another of our current committee members if you would like to join our wonderful team. You can also volunteer and help with one off projects without even being a member of the team. This year we have had the wonderful help of Erich Kadow, designing information signs for our site. Soon, one will be on display at our entrance and community orchard and other will be following in 2022.



### **SUNDAY MORNING REFRESHMENTS AT HEMPLAND HAVEN REMINDER**

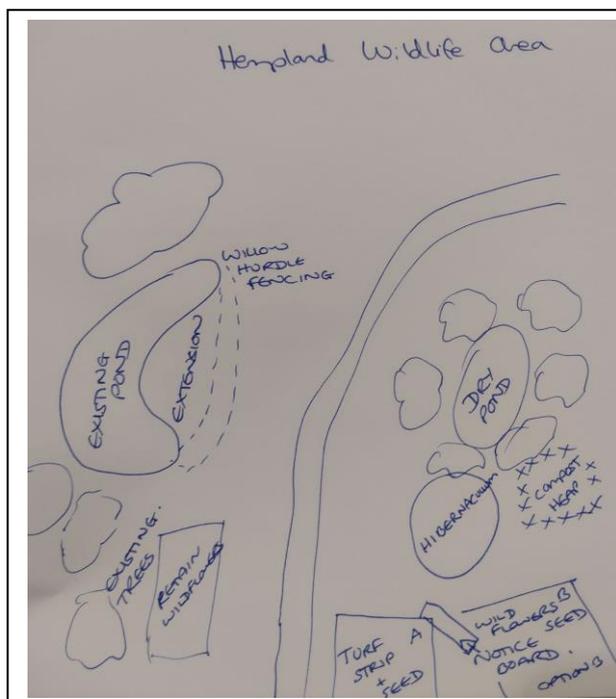
We are on the hunt for volunteers to commit to a rota and provide the hands on serving of refreshments on a Sunday morning and although Pam who has regularly provided 2 and 3 cakes is willing to continue with this, we need offers of additional cake baking to manage the demand once we do re-commence. We will begin a campaign to put the above in place and hopefully look at a brand new season from February 2022 (in line with the Allotment shop re-opening), when we look forward to welcoming everyone back. If you wish to volunteer to be part of our Sunday mornings, please speak to Moira Grainger, Jean Pulleyn or Lisa Maunder-Wood to add your details to our rota. In the meantime, please remember that if you are an association member and have an Allotment gate key (available from the shop or Nigel) there is nothing stopping you taking a flask/drink and organising your own small gathering so that you can catch up with friends and family. You could even have a BBQ! Throughout lockdown, the committee and the Community payback team have worked hard to get the community area ready for you to use and enjoy. Please note the spray painted bees on the paving slabs. These are to remind all users (who are not tenants of the raised beds) to remain on the community side of the site and not to step over the bees, into the raised beds area.

## FROGLIFE UPDATE

Darren Starkey TOAD Project Manager and his team from Froglife worked with us over the summer and delivered a number of workshops and family fun days, that were a huge success. Their work is now focussing on improving our wildlife area. The following will be taking place in the next 2 months:

Extend the existing pond to create a shallow sloped margin. Remove most of the Flag Iris. Create a willow hurdle barrier to help keep dogs and children out of the pond.

Strip turf from a section of the wildflower area, retaining the better areas closer to the pond. Use the stripped turf to help construct a hibernaculum between the path and the Associations compost area.



Darren is looking to engage with a team of volunteers from a local company to do most of the heavy works but it would be great to get plot holders and local children involved in some aspects. Perhaps seeding the wildflower area and creating the hurdle fence. If you would like to get involved please speak to Gayle (Chairperson) or David B (Site Secretary) to get more details.

We were also given a grant for City of York Council during the summer to help improve the wildlife area before work took place. We mainly focussed on removing unwanted waste dumped by the public and allotment tenants who should not be doing this. We are using the remainder of the grant on security initiatives.

## SKIPS

Please be advised that there will be no more skips provided this year, as the association has already spent £1000 having waste removed from the site. If you do have a significant amount for landfill and you are unable to take it yourself to the Waste Depot at James Street, then please contact David Brinklow (email only [davidbrinklow@yahoo.com](mailto:davidbrinklow@yahoo.com)) so that he can discuss a 'man with a van' option (through YACIO) to collect it directly from the front of your plot. **DO NOT PUT WASTE ON OUR WILDLIFE AREA OR ANYWHERE ELSE ON THE SITE.** It is your responsibility to dispose of it responsibly.



### *Plot usage ... "food" for thought?*

A few weeks ago just before we were due to go away for a couple of week's holiday I had a stroll around part of our site, always a pleasurable experience. As we are all aware there is massive pressure on the allotment system in general in the UK. Our site at Hempland is no exception as waiting lists have grown over recent years, fuelled by both Brexit & Covid & the media talk of "shortages".

Anyway my thoughts headed in a slightly different direction to put plots into another perspective. Although all our plots are let just what percentage of all the plots on Hempland are in full production? In other words a plot is obviously 100% but what percentage of that do plot holders actually utilise? I have no idea but on my walk I asked three different plot holders the question & their answers were 85%, 75% & 70% so a big variation in peoples thoughts. I feel it would be a good national survey to undertake!

I hasten to add I include myself in these thoughts, & my cultivation on reflection could be as low as 60% on parts of my plot. My plots are very "busy" & indeed weedy in places, some of the plot produces 3 crops a year but being honest some parts have produced nothing for two or three years! This lead me to the school report thought "**must do better**".

So this obviously begs the question "how to do better"? We must encourage everybody to use the whole of their plots or half plots to obtain full value for money for their rent. Firstly if you have a full plot & feel you can no longer cope with it please contact our letting secretary David Brinklow to discuss it with him. There is absolutely no problem in reducing to renting half a plot if you feel this would help.

There are unfortunately some plots that have not been cultivated at all & these are being dealt with separately. However if you fall into the same sphere as myself where only bits are not fully cultivated with meaningful crops what are we going to do about it ... here are some ideas: -

You may choose to clear areas of all weeds & unrequired plants & debris, whatever it might be. Once areas are cleared what to plant? An area of perennial plants which will produce crops for several years with minimum effort such as Rhubarb Crowns, Cardoons, Jerusalem Artichokes, Globe Artichokes, Asparagus, Perennial Kale (Debutans), Garlic Chives, Strawberries or Gooseberries to name but a few.

The choice is obviously yours, it's your plot so grow more of what you like whether it be peas or parsnips, lettuce or leeks, salsify or spinach, carrots or cauliflowers, antirrhinums or asters just use the space to the full. You will feel the benefit from the extra exercise & the extra produce for you and family & friends. And remember if you have any excess you can always donate to Lorraine to sell in our shop or on our plant & produce stall.

#### **A few "Did you Knows" from different sources**

Approximately 215 thousand tonnes of fresh produce is grown on British allotments every year. I wonder how much Hempland plotters contribute to this. Also referring to the "Plot Usage" article I wonder how much more we could contribute with full production.

A survey carried out in 2018 showed that only 28% of adults in the UK then were eating their 5 portions of fruit & vegetables a day. If that survey was to be re-run today what would the effect of Covid have had on the percentage outcome? Would it have gone up with people trying to improve their health to help "defend" catching Covid. Or would it have gone the other way because people now have less disposable income as prices have risen - an interesting question.

We are all painfully aware of the strains on our allotment system. Since the early 1950s according to the publication "The Conservation" 65% of allotment land has been "lost" Their analysis also highlights the vast inequality of where lost allotments have been most prevalent. The most deprived

communities around the country have been eight times more likely to have lost allotment land than more affluent areas!!!

October is now traditionally the main month for harvesting pumpkins & squashes. A walk around our site in October will reveal many plots with them ready to be harvested, some for Halloween, but much better for soups, stews, roasted, chutneys, pickles & pies, all very tasty. But "did you know" that China is the top country when it comes to producing Pumpkins with a staggering 8.1 million tonnes having been grown in 2018, that's a lot of pumpkin pie!!!

### ***Too much compost material?***

During September, October & November you could well have a lot of compostable material for your bins.

With all your harvests & your contributions from home as well you could possibly have too much material to compost: does this really happen? If so an "old fashioned" way of dealing with any excess (my dad used to do this) was to plan where your Runner Beans were to be planted next year. He would dig out two trenches where the beans were going to go. The trenches would be two spits deep then the bottom would be loosened with a fork & then a layer of cardboard or newspaper would be laid in the bottom of the trench & given a good watering.

Over the following weeks weeds, crop residue, spent bedding plants, some manure (chicken manure was used that we had available), vegetable tops & the like were added to the trenches. Eventually once the trenches were three quarters full the soil would be returned forming a mound marked with a cane at either end.

Over the winter months the material in the trench would decompose & the worms & soil life would move in & do their magic. Come planting time for the beans you have a great water retentive, nutrient rich bed to plant or sow into, simple. You could use the same system using square pits for marrows, pumpkins or squashes. It could be worth a try or with a "no dig" system put some plain cardboard down, pile on your compostable material & top off with some manure. Then put a sheet over for the winter & see how you get on.

Another alternative is to add more compost bins to your plot as you can never have too much compost. I would suggest a minimum of three bins per plot. You don't make your own compost, shame on you; make it your number one allotment goal for 2022.

### **KINGS SEEDS MEMBERS CATALOGUE STILL AVAILABLE via Nigel on Plot66**

One of the big advantages of becoming a member of Hempland Lane Allotment Association (& there are several) is that you get access to the Kings Seed Members Catalogue. The range of seeds and sundries is excellent & at very competitive prices as those who have placed orders in recent years will verify. The system is simple:-

With each catalogue there will be a member's order form for you to complete with your choice of items. Please note each individual order you must add £1.30 for individual postage & packing. Once you have carefully completed your form with all the relevant details can you please return it to Nigel. Can you also return the Catalogue so that it can be used by other members? You can pay with cash but a Cheque payable to "Hempland Lane Allotment Association" is still preferable.

Catalogues are available from now & the deadline for orders to be received is Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November. All seed orders & potato orders are despatched directly to Nigel who will then deliver them to you in November & December usually. It was later last year because of the restraints of the Covid situation. Most items in the Sundries & Fruit Sections of the catalogue will be despatched directly to your home address.

If you any questions see Nigel at the allotments or contact him via 07917844235 or email [nigelthegardener@hotmail.com](mailto:nigelthegardener@hotmail.com)

Nigel Plot66

## **The best laid plans: plot planning and other vain hopes**

A year on and I have gained more confidence with my plot. We know each other better, even if we are not always the best of friends. This spring, therefore, I decided to make a plan for the coming season, working out what I was going to plant and where. If nothing else, planning would edge off winter frustration, and stop me rashly planting seeds prematurely, dooming them to a cold and early death.

I drew a wobbly approximation of my plot, recognisable only to me. And as it turned out, not always to me either. I read the relevant sections of my RHS Allotment Handbook until I understood the basic principles of crop rotation. What the book didn't explain, sadly, are all the ways in which planning is undermined, and indeed derailed entirely...

1. How did I end up with leeks and onions growing over half the plot? It certainly wasn't my intention. Brassicas seem to have inserted themselves into most of the other half. Looking back, the same happened in reverse the year before, so where I am to find space for the alliums and brassicas this year, if they shouldn't go in the same ground for three years? For a moment I find myself seriously considering moving the shed.
2. Having planned to plant parsnips in bed 2, why, when I go down with the seeds, do I decide to scatter them on bed 4 instead? I found two ideal spots for the sweet pea frame, only to actually put it up somewhere else entirely.
3. The lure of the plant stall. I ended up with 24 lettuces this year, all ready at the same time and rather in excess of the salad needs of a very small household. Lettuce soup, anyone?
4. The plot is getting smaller. In year 1 I thought I would never fill it. Now I'm reading up on intercropping, and I automatically reduce planting distances, throwing in an extra handful of fish, blood and bone as an apology to the plants and in the hope of compensating for it. I have also dug up paths, forgetting that it gets wet in autumn, and that in dry spells I'll be lugging watering cans further, round the now circuitous routes.
5. Random seed buying. Again, due to the lure of the allotment shop. Sunday morning inevitably means browsing and that leads to finding space for asparagus peas (previously unheard of, still less in The Plan).
6. The inability to get rid of surplus seedlings when I don't really have room for them all because I'm so thrilled that the seeds have actually germinated. I also plant more seeds when I think the first lot have failed, only to find that they haven't.

What have I learnt from this? Mainly that growing things doesn't always fall neatly into a plan. I might just as well enjoy planting what I fancy, where I fancy, and with luck some crop will fail due to plague, pest or an obliging nature just when I most need its bed for something else.

Regarding plague and failure, can I end by recommending Cocktail Crush tomatoes for growing outdoors? The seeds came from Kings. I've had two years of blight with other varieties - this year, I had lovely plentiful unblighted tomatoes. Either I've been uncharacteristically lucky or they really are blight resistant. I will certainly add them to next year's plan.

Alison England Plot 49A

## All about Robins

Have you ever wondered what type of bird starts the dawn chorus and continues singing to the very end? Well It's the hard-working little robin.

I recently finished a book that shows us the wonder of connecting with the natural world - in particular its birds - and the constant joy of the sights and sounds of the birds that surround us.

We're lucky to see so many different types of birds on our allotments, and one of the most regular visitors to our plots is the humble robin.

It likes to eat seeds, nuts, suet, fruit, insects and weeds and is usually found near freshly dug soil seeking out a juicy worm.

No other bird will ever get as close up to you as a robin will. They'll even eat out of your hand if you offer them something tasty enough - as fearless as they are inquisitive!

Their song has a kind of metallic trill to it, rather plaintive, though interestingly they are one of the few birds to sing all year round.

Both sexes (who look the same) sing in winter, which makes it easy to pick out at that time of year. Robins can have up to four broods a year and will nest almost anywhere - although they have one of the shortest lifespans of all the songbirds at just thirteen months.

And as for migration - most stay on these shores but a small amount head south to winter on the Continent.

So when autumn turns to winter and the north winds doth blow, let's hear it for our classic red-breasted friend heralding the start of the festive season, both in our allotments and gardens and standing proud on our Christmas cards - filling us with joy on those cold, short days.

Further information on robins and 11 other birds can be read in "12 Birds To Save Your Life" by Charlie Corbett

Lisa Tindale  
Plot 59b



### **Our next Annual General Meeting**

We are pleased to announce that the next AGM is booked for Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022 7.30pm start at Burnholme Club. Hope you can be there. Free Bring and share Buffet and cash bar and hot drinks available. Please let a member of the committee know, if you wish to bring anything for the cold buffet (not obligatory), more to avoid duplication. Agenda items to Nigel plot 66 or [nigelthegardener@hotmail.com](mailto:nigelthegardener@hotmail.com) by 30th January 2022.

### **YOUR SHOP NEEDS YOU**

Can you spare 3 hours on a Sunday morning? Do you want to get to know your fellow allotmentees? Volunteers wanted to run the allotment shop once a month. The shop runs from the end of Plot 64. If you are interested just see me at the allotment AGM in Feb 22 or just pop down to Plot 64 when the season starts.

Lorraine Wood, Allotment Shop Manager

If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to [gayle.farrington@btinternet.com](mailto:gayle.farrington@btinternet.com).