

# Newsletter Spring 2019

Guildford Allotments Society  
PO Box 1081  
Guildford  
GU1 9HU



## GAS AGM

**Wednesday 12 June**

**7 for 7.30pm**

**Park Barn Centre**

**Park Barn Drive, GU2 8EN**

(Additional parking is available in the Kings Manor School Car Park)

You will have received formal notice of the AGM with this newsletter. Please note the deadline for submitting items for the agenda, in writing, is 24 May. It is important that you attend to confirm the new Cooperative and the new committee. This will be the first committee to be elected under the new Cooperative.

### GAS Committee

Committee positions showing current post holders and their status (Committee members are elected for 3 years) are as follows:

**Acting Chairman:** Philippa Wright \*

**Acting Secretary:** Jeanette Collings \*

**Treasurer:** Andy Simmonds \*\*

**Assistant Treasurer:** Kim Harriott

**Waiting List Manager:** Becki Taylor

**Inspection Officer (Co-opted):** Mike Hassel \*

**Equipment Co-ordinator:** Les Daubney

**Warden Representative:** John Steer

**Newsletter Editor:** Jean Wickens

**Website Management:** Vacant

**Security & Police Liaison:** Vacant

**Publicity:** Vacant

Committee members marked (\*) were coopted last year and need to be formally elected. The terms of office of those marked (\*\*) end this year and are willing to stand for a further term.

The committee needs nominations for new committee members as we are currently unable to cover all the functions of running GAS. If you aren't certain about taking on a specific post and what is involved you are very welcome to come along to a committee meeting or have a chat with our acting chairman Philippa Wright.

### GAS Incorporation

As outlined at last year's AGM, the process of incorporation is sponsored by the National Allotment Society (NAS). They have been working with the Financial Conduct Society (FCA) since mid-2018 on a set of approved Model Rules which will make our incorporation inexpensive and relatively quick. Those Model Rules are still not approved by the FCA and we can't incorporate the Co-operative Society until they have been. Our application for Co-operative status is ready to go pending any amendment that might be required under the new Model Rules.

Once this part is completed the Constitution and Rules of GAS will be amended in line with the Co-operative status and an amended lease with GBC will be agreed.

We anticipate that we will be able to finalise all this in time for the AGM on 12 June 2019, to which all members are invited and we hope as many of you will attend but we have to be alert to the fact that it may not be in which case an Extraordinary General Meeting will have to be called later in the year.

***Philippa Wright and Robert Cooper***

## Alastair Watson writes...

Having retired after 10 years with GAS I feel fully equipped to irritate new people so I am getting more involved with the National Allotment Society and also Guildford in Bloom.

### National Allotment Society

You may have heard about a new member's benefit of free insurance cover. Basically this is an insurance paid for by NAS and available to members (all GAS members are NAS members). It provides personal liability cover up to £20,000 in the event that a person is injured by your action. For example: if the head comes off your hoe and hits someone else then this is not covered under GAS insurance. The liability is yours. This insurance covers that kind of personal liability and other contingencies.....for FREE!!!

So what's the catch? You have to supply your details to the insurance company providing the cover. So GAS needs your instruction to provide this. The Committee will work out the procedure for this and let you know.

At the moment there is no Regional Organisation for the South East (covering Surrey, Sussex & Kent) I am trying to help find volunteers to fill roles to build this. In the meantime I have been asked to organise two events at RHS Wisley. The first is 30 May - 2 June and the second is 16 - 20 October. I would plan to be there throughout for both sessions but I really need some help perhaps on a half day basis. The first event is themed "plot-to-plate" and the second is "taste of Autumn". So people and ideas are needed - the only benefit is entry to Wisley!!

### Guildford in Bloom

GAS has already changed the whole profile of Guildford in Bloom by your support of the allotments section. We need your entries for this year to keep allotments up to the 100+ level. If you have entered before you know it's a bit of fun, costs you nothing and the prize giving is a good night out. Some folks even get competitive!!

This year I would like a little bit more. The total entries for Front Gardens was 13 (allotments 107!!). The rules say only 1 entry per address but your allotment is one address and the front garden of your house is another address (Captain

Blackadder I have a cunning plan). So the GIB Committee has agreed with the suggestion that we can enter both our allotment and our front garden/ container garden.

So, if you have a nice front garden why not help out by entering both categories? You see the largest collection of active gardeners in the town in one organisation is probably GAS.

We are also looking at "living roofs" on a couple of our security containers and I have started a rabbit running on "guerillah" gardening. Should be mayhem!!

My contact details are: [boatbitz@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:boatbitz@hotmail.co.uk) or

you could call in at Larch Avenue and ask where the retired geriatric is lurking....

**Alastair Watson**

## NAS Photography Competition

If there are any keen photographers out there, each year Shield Total Insurance and the National Allotment Society run a photography competition. Last year (2018) they featured allotment sheds, this year they are asking plot-holders to take pictures and tell us about their use of recycled and re-purposed materials on the plot. More details to be announced soon, information under 'news, events and campaigns at:

[www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)



Instructions to allotmenters in the arcane mysteries of potato planting Photo Alastair Watson



# Guildford in Bloom

## Guildford in Bloom 2018

Last year GAS had over 100 entries and 17 achieved the Gold Award:

Les and Sheila Hind, gold award winners, were judged **Best in the Allotment Category** for the second year running - **Congratulations**



Les & Sheila Hind's allotment at Burpham  
Photo Guildford in Bloom

## Congratulations to all our Gold Award Winners!

Colin Barette	(Aldershot Road)
Brian Benton	(Aldershot Road)
St Joseph's School	(Aldershot Road)
Colin Alderman	(Burpham)
Mike & Carol Flarry	(Burpham)
Keith & Lucy Johnson	(Burpham)
Adrian & Geoff Phipps	(Burpham)
David & Janet Robbins	(Burpham)
Peter & Janice Sedgwick	(Burpham)
John Wild	(Burpham)
Tom & Heather Hall	(Dagley Lane)
Kim Harriott	(Larch Avenue)
John Steer	(Larch Avenue)
Marion & Arthur Kinge	(Merrow Street)
Alex Colbert	(Merrow Street)
Tom Smart	(Merrow Street)

## Get Involved - Guildford in Bloom 2019 Competition Now Open

As our gardens and allotments show signs of springing back into life we are delighted to announce that this year's Guildford in Bloom competition is now open for entries.

Use our online form to apply: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/22493/Guildford-in-Bloom-apply>

***(NB GAS members can enter via our block booking system - please speak to your site warden before 10 June)***

The competition is free to enter for borough residents, schools, community groups and businesses who love gardening and want to help make Guildford and surrounding villages an even more beautiful place to live, work and visit.

The competition has nine categories to choose from:

1. Best Front Garden
2. Best Allotment & Vegetable/Kitchen Gardens
3. Best Garden for Wildlife
4. Best Site for Nature Conservation
5. Best Pub in Bloom
6. Best Container Garden
7. Best Neighbourhood Project
8. Student Garden Showcase
9. School Gardening Competition (launched earlier in the year)

Our theme, if you choose to theme, celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the first Moon Landing. The best themed garden, allotment, project or container will win the Dorothy Walden Award. You can choose to theme, or not to theme.

To enter, pick your category, use our new on line form to register and start preparing your garden,

allotment or containers for judging – it is that simple!

If you have a friend, neighbour, family member or local pub with a beautiful garden, you are welcome to nominate them.

For more information about the competition, dates, events and our wonderful sponsors, see [www.guildford.gov.uk/guildfordinbloom](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/guildfordinbloom).

Wishing you a very happy Spring and Summer from all on the Guildford in Bloom Committee.

**Lysandra McCulloch**  
**GBC, Guildford in Bloom Organiser**

**NB**

Judging will take place between 1 -19 July.

As Alastair has noted in his article, this year you can enter both your allotment and your front garden/container garden as they are at different addresses.

The judging criteria for allotments was detailed in full in last year’s GAS Spring newsletter and is also available on the Guildford in Bloom website.

**Allotment Shop - Reminder**

Some of you may not be aware of the Allotment shop at the Bellfields site. This has been run since 1971 by Wally Young, initially for the Stoke and District Horticultural Society (who run the ‘Aggie’ Club), and latterly for GAS. At the end of last year Peter took over (although you will often still see Wally there if you visit the shop)

The shop is open every Sunday morning 10 -12 between mid-February and the end of October. The shop sells a wide range to meet your gardening and allotment needs - seed potatoes, onion sets, seeds, fertilisers, compost, bamboo canes etc etc etc. The prices compare very favourably with Garden Centres and DIY supermarkets.

**Please support the Allotment Shop as it is a resource we don’t want to lose.**

The shop is on the Bellfields Allotment site, at the end of Bellfields Road, GU1 1QG.

**News from your allotment sites**

Your committee are always pleased to hear about social and community events held on our allotment sites. Here are a selection of pictures from events held last summer and autumn:

**Burpham Competitions**



Photos Mike Flarry

Burpham Site held 2 competitions during the summer, one for tallest sunflower and the other for largest pumpkin. We had 23 entries and despite the awful growing conditions had some good entries. The summer heat and desert conditions were not conducive to growing tall sunflowers, most of them reached around 1.6 to 1.8 metres, but the clear winner was Andy Penson who managed a skyscraping 2.35 metres.

The pumpkin contest was hotly contested with some magnificent specimens, but the winning pumpkin was grown by Site Warden Brian Benton. His pumpkin measured 2.04 metres around the waist and 1.70 metres over the top. We managed to rig up an old butchers scale and declared it to be 56 kilos. Brian is keeping his record breaking growing methods and fertiliser a close secret for next year.

The three largest pumpkins and a couple of others were donated to Challengers, the Childrens Charity based at Stoke Park who

raised money with a guess the weight of the pumpkin competition, and had great fun carving lanterns and getting messy with them.



Another of the pumpkins ended up at Go Ape at Alice Holt. They ran a pumpkin carving competition using the pumpkin for all their publicity. They also ran a raffle in which the winner won the giant pumpkin. All in all, Go Ape raised £147 and sent a huge thank you for helping them raise this wonderful amount!

The seeds used were Thomson and Morgan Atlantic Giant, which is a descendant of the world champion heaviest pumpkin. Maybe next year with a little more rain we may grow one heavier than Brians !!

**Mike Flarry**

**Warning re lock gate work - Burpham Site**

From March to October – contractors will be replacing Bowers Lock Weir gates. This will mean HGV's of various sizes including a very large 100 ton crane will be traversing Bowers lane from the compound A3 end to the bridge and onto the Ramp to Clay Lane.

We have been asked to ENSURE ALL ALLOTMENT USERS USE THE CAR PARKS PROVIDED AT ALL TIMES between March and October This will ensure that the HGV vehicles don't get stuck along its length or are prevented from entry or exit of Bowers Lane and turning in the Hammerhead, as would occur if current parking practices are continued. As they say forewarned is forearmed.

**Winter bonfire at Farnham Road**

As ever there was a great turnout for our annual community bonfire. The weather was just perfect - not cold and no wind. Lots of food and drink shared amongst the allotment folk. And of course the must have at all bonfires at this time of year - a GUY!!!! Unfortunately as you can see

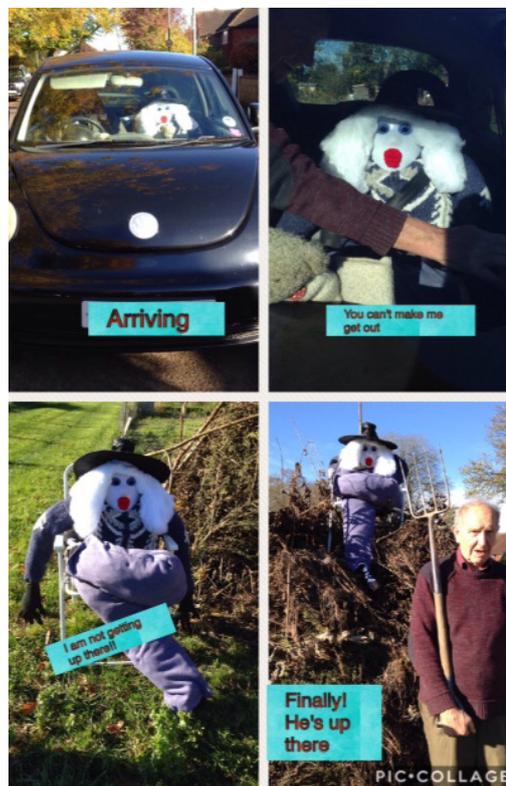


Photo Jeanette Collings

in the photos, Frank took some persuading to get on top of that fire - but Bernie was determined after all the hard work Margaret put in to make Frank - he was jolly well going up to sit proudly at the top to await the lighting ceremony. He burnt beautifully!!!

**Jeanette Collings**

**Larch Avenue Barbecue**

Well what a lovely day, 3rd November turned out to be, with the sun shining nicely for us. The tenants started arriving early at midday eager to help out and get the barbecue rolling, although 3 o'clock was the planned start time. The barbecue finally got under way with Nicola Scussel and Mark Daubney barbecuing the various selection of meats.





Photos Leon Steward

Everybody was happy socialising with one another and getting together, newcomers included which was good to see. Liquid refreshments were supplied, beer and a selection of wines which was well received by all.

As the light fell, we put 2 double tripod lights onto the roof of the container shed and with the aid of our generator we had light as well to carry on into the evening. We held a raffle to finish of the day, a tin of Cadbury chocolates, a tin of Shortbread biscuits and a selection of wines all donated by tenants.

The evening finished at around 7-30 pm with everybody having had a good day out. A big "Thank You" to Les for all his efforts and having a very happy, well managed site.

**John Steer**

## **Chateau Larch**

Plot 2 at Larch Avenue has now been planted with a selection of red and white grapevines inspired by Alistair Watson and our warden Les Daubney. 13 vines have already been planted with a selection of others to follow, once the grapes have been harvested and processed into wine, it is the intention to give it out to tenants back on site.

It's amazing what can be achieved on an allotment site with people having the right attitude and approach.

**John Steer**

## **Are you holding a social event on your allotment this year?**

Send your photos with details to the editor for the next newsletter.

## **Maintaining Your Allotment**

### **Bonfires**

A reminder to you all that on site bonfires are only permitted between 1 and 10 November. Anyone who has a bonfire on their plot outside of this period will receive an immediate eviction notice. So be warned!

In exceptional circumstances e.g. plot or site clearance we may be able to get permission from GBC to hold bonfires outside of this period.

Please also note that you should never burn aerosol cans on your bonfires and the use of petrol to light bonfires is strictly forbidden.

### **Plot Inspections**

It is anticipated that plot inspections will be carried out on all sites at the end of May/early June. This will also provide an opportunity to update the GAS plot records i.e. seeing where there are sheds, greenhouses, polytunnels, fruit trees, beehives in addition to checking the condition of your plots.

If your plot does not reach the required standards you will receive an initial warning letter telling you that your plot is not up to standard. However if you have been experiencing problems in maintaining your plot e.g. because of illness, please let your site warden know so that a warning letter is not issued.

### **Structures on Plots**

A reminder that there are specific rules for putting fruit trees, greenhouses, sheds and beehives on your plot and you must obtain permission from the Committee in advance before putting these on your plot.

### **Carpets**

Another reminder that you are not allowed to use carpets on your plots as a weed suppressant. Carpet breaks down into fibrous strands which can be extremely difficult if not impossible to remove (I can confirm this from experience). If you have used carpet, do not be surprised if your site warden asks you to remove it. Please use a weed suppressant which can be easily removed eg black plastic.

## **Chippings and Manure**

We are sometimes offered suitable sources of chippings and manure. Your wardens will have details of these. Please note you will often need to collect these.

Be very careful in accessing sources of manure yourselves as they can be contaminated with chemicals which may affect your plants.

## **Rats on Allotments**

We have recently had concerns expressed about rats on allotments. Not only can they damage your produce they can also spread diseases. Here are a few guidelines to discourage them from your plot.

### **Remove places where rats may live - harbourage**

Remove old debris, rubbish, timber, equipment etc (good practice not just for rats).

Ensure that any structures like sheds are on something like paving slabs to prevent rodents from burrowing underneath.

### **Removal of food sources**

Harvest fruit and vegetables promptly.

Don't leave discarded fruit and vegetables on the ground to rot – put them in the compost bin.

Never put meat, dairy, bones, bread, cooked foods etc in your compost bin. These will attract rats.

Do not bring kitchen waste from home to put on your allotment compost bin or heap.

Turn the contents of compost bins regularly – this will disturb any rats in residence.

Regularly kick your compost bin so that it is not a peaceful place (for rats) to sleep.

Use compost bins with solid sides and lids with a wire mesh lining in the base. Rats can squeeze through gaps of 15mm and have powerful teeth – consider using galvanised light welded mesh 13mm x 13mm. They can also jump a considerable distance.

Place your compost bin away from sheds, hedges or overgrown fences as rats will be discouraged by the lack of cover.

If your compost is rat-infested it can still be used

but not on fruit (eg strawberries) or vegetables (eg radishes) which are in contact with the compost and are going to be eaten raw.

Do not feed birds or other animals on your plot.

Store seeds, bulbs etc in rodent proof containers eg metal containers.

Remove any water sources.

## **Good housekeeping on your plot**

Keep your plot tidy.

Thoroughly wash (and peel if necessary) any food you harvest from your plot.

Any fruit or vegetables with signs of rat damage should not be eaten. Rats will often take a bite or two from each piece of fruit or vegetable meaning that the whole lot is wasted.

Rats carry the risk of disease including Weil's, Salmonella and Leptospirosis and they urinate everywhere.

If you have a rat infestation, wear disposable gloves when dealing with the problem as the bacterium in rats urine can infect you through cuts and abrasions or by ingestion.

Check sheds etc regularly for signs of rats living underneath them.

## **Control of rats**

It is better to try and make the allotment environment unfriendly for rats rather than trying to trap or poison them which may harm other wildlife. Remember killing rodents provides only short term control. If the environment is still offering them food and shelter others will move in to take the place of those killed.

Please remember it is a criminal offence to cause unnecessary harm to any animal. You could be fined or imprisoned if you kill other animals by putting down poison or traps.

Apparently rats do not like peppermint oil – one suggestion is to soak cotton wool balls in peppermint oil and leave them where you suspect the rats are. Similarly they don't like catnip - so put plants around the allotment. Let me know if you have any success with these.

*Advice found in information supplied by RHS, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Pest control Services, Norwich City Council and Reepham Town Council*

**Jean Wickens**

## Help Needed - Boxgrove Primary School

The school are setting up an 'allotment' plot and have asked if any allotmenters would be interested in helping. Please contact Philippa Wright for details

## Share Smallholding work offer

I have owned a smallholding, off the A246 in East Clandon for about 10 years and I have planted a lot of trees, fruit trees and flowers. I am finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the pruning, weeding, grass cutting etc. Hiring in help has been unsuccessful

I am looking for someone (or possibly 2 people) to share the work (approximately 10 - 12 hours a week) in return for a share of the produce. Currently, I grow cut-and-come-again salad, peas, broad beans, a wide range of soft and tree fruit as well as a range of flowers for cutting.

I operate a no-dig system so there is not much hard physical work and all the tools and inputs would be provided by me. I do not have any animals/birds/bees on the plot at the moment but that would be OK, except horses and pigs.

If anyone is interested, or knows someone who might be, they can call me on 07979005798  
**Richard Duncan**

Email richard28duncan7@gmail.com

**NB** Richard Duncan has a supply of hazel bean poles approx 7 feet long or more and 2-3 inches in diameter at the base and more or less straight. These are from sustainable hazel coppices. If any members would be interested in purchasing them for 50p each, contact as above.

## Sutton Green Garden Centre

Please ask your warden for a card giving you 10% off at this centre which is off the Woking Road at GU4 7QA

## Garden Clippings

No room this newsletter - back in the next edition....

## Who to contact at GAS

Your site notice boards\*\* have details of your warden's email and contact details; please contact them initially with any queries you have.

If you need to contact the committee, details are as follows for queries relating to:

Tenancy matters and general enquiries:

**secretary@guildfordallotments.org.uk**

Invoices

**billing@guildfordallotments.org.uk**

Waiting list:

**waitinglist@guildfordallotments.org.uk**

Security

**security@guildfordallotments.org.uk**

More serious matters:

**chairman@guildfordallotments.org.uk**

There is also a lot of information on the website:  
**www.guildfordallotments.org.uk**

Please do not copy your emails to everyone on the committee; and remember we are all volunteers and are unlikely to be able to respond to you immediately.

**When you contact the committee please give your full name, plot number and site name.**

Many of the contact details given in the newsletter and above, use email addresses, however we know that some of you don't have access to email. Please contact us at:

Guildford Allotments Society  
PO Box 1081  
Guildford, GU1 9HU

\*\* NB The committee is currently investigating a supply of new noticeboards which are more robust and weatherproof than the current ones.

## Next newsletter

The next newsletter will be available late summer. Please send any contributions, articles, letters, gardening tips, comments etc to the editor – Jean Wickens - by early July

**jeanpwickens@gmail.com**