

TRAP GROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017

Welcome to this spring's newsletter which contains essential dates for your diary, news on the new side access to the allotments as well as the latest on our car park and the less welcome news of thefts and vandalism and what we can do to prevent them. There's a useful reminder on what to do with your allotment's waste products and how to access shared machinery as well as information on what you can do to help on the allotment site.

Dates for your 2017 diary:

4 March 2017 will see the re-opening of **the allotment shop** at 11.00 until 12.00 on Saturdays and from 15.00 to 16.00 on Sundays (always, weather permitting). The shop offers a range of useful products at discount prices and is a particularly useful source of large and smelly items like bags of manure, bean poles and ground cover. You'll find a full list of what's on offer and what it costs, [here](#). Charlotte and Pink Fir Apple seed potatoes will also be on sale. Suggestions for other items the shop could stock are very welcome.

28 March 2017 is the date for this year's **Annual General Meeting** which will be held at the St Margaret's Institute (SMI). Come along from 7.30 for drinks and nibbles before the meeting starts at 8.00.

31 March 2017 is the deadline for paying **plot and membership fees** at discounted rate(s). See your recent email from the Treasurer for details.

1 May 2017 is when current **TGAA membership cards** expire. They are not compulsory but if you want to continue to benefit from discounts at Yarnton Nurseries and the Burford Garden Company, you'll need to get a new one from the shop or from secretary@trapgroundallotments.org.uk.

14 May 2017 is the slightly earlier-than-usual date for the **TGAA plant sale** which will happen at the SMI from 10.00 until 1.00. Please keep the plant sale in mind when wondering what to do with your surplus seedlings, cuttings and other plants - and also jams and preserves.

31 October 2017 is the deadline for submitting entries to the 2017 photo competition on the subject of 'decay'. More details are [here](#). It is also the date after which the **allotment shop** will be closed for the winter.

11 November 2017 is when the SMI is booked for the **harvest supper** when delicious food will be eaten and the results of this year's photo competition will be revealed.

The new side access to the allotments: 7 things you need to know ...

1 The new side access to the allotment site is in place but unfinished.

- 2** You can use the new bridge but you'll need to know the code to the combination lock on the temporary gate which is ??????
- 3** The bridge will have to close again for a few days when new fencing and gates arrive to finish off the lower end. So you'll have to go the slightly longer route down to Port Meadow during that time.
- 4** When all the work is complete, the gate at the bottom of the side bridge will have a proper lock on it like the one on the allotment gate on Port Meadow.
- 5** The path at the bottom of the new side ramp on to the allotments is very muddy and churned up. As soon as the weather allows, contractors will be coming in to level the paths (and possibly reinforce them) and put them back to grass.
- 6** The narrow path between the old pond and the new side ramp is narrow, muddy and perilous. Network Rail (NR) has promised us a fence to make the path useable so it's probably best to avoid using it until then.
- 7** There's no saying when it will all be done but we hope shortly once better spring weather arrives.

Good news ... about the TGAA car park

The car park down the side of the new ramp up to the railway foot bridge is very nearly complete bar a few finishing touches. It already has twelve useable car-parking spaces one of which will be used to house four bike racks. There is also a sign to make it clear that the car park is for the use of allotment members only.

Bad news ... about vandalism and theft and what's to be done about it

Last year saw an unusual spate of wanton and unpleasant damage to sheds and idiosyncratic theft of property. Our stock fence has made the site more secure but we have identified a few areas - including the new side access on to the allotments - which are vulnerable to intrusion and where people have climbed in. We will do what we can to improve this and make entry difficult such as planting prickly plants and the use of anti-climb paint. Please do not reveal the access codes to anyone who is not a trusted helper well known to you.

What to do with waste from the allotment

There are several ways of dealing with waste produced on the allotments. If it's compostable - such as weeds and other green waste - take it to the **communal compost**. If it's not compostable but can be burned, take it to the **communal bonfire**. Any rubble you dig up can go to the **rubble bank** (we use it to strengthen paths where they are rutted or soft) to the left of the communal compost shed. Anything else can be put in the **skip** by the allotment shop. However, on no account put asbestos or any other hazardous material in the skip as it is illegal. And please don't bring things from home to discard in our skip.

How to access shared equipment

This is just a reminder that we have shared equipment available for members' use, from long handled loppers for pruning, to strimmers, mowers and rotavators – more details [here](#). However, most of the equipment with motors is currently being serviced but should be back in the shared equipment shed by the end of March.

How you can help

- Volunteers are needed for the **mowing team** so if you can offer a week or two of mowing please get in touch with Tony at tony.Hollander@virgin.net.
- In case you cut **turves** from the edges of your plots, please use them to fill in any ruts or dips in nearby paths.
- If you know anyone willing to do a bit **of gardening for money**, drop a note to webmaster@trapgroundallotments.org.uk.
- If you have something to sell, give away or you are in need of something - surplus produce for making wine, for example - put a notice on the **allotment noticeboard** or go to the [TGAA Facebook page](#) if you are that way inclined.