

# **Alsager Gardens Association**

## **Newsletter 30 – Autumn 2021**

Web:- <http://www.alsagergardensassociation.org.uk>

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Dear Member                      **President's Address**

In my view it has been a very good year on my allotment, as all optimists say. But it has if we ignore the daffodils which did not pick up after transferring the previous year, and the tulips, poor, however the crocus and hyacinths were excellent covering the patch pretty well. I would encourage everyone to grow some flowers, they will cheer you up. Bulbs are ideal particularly spring bulbs as they are over with before you want the ground. It suits no-digging methods better than digging them up. In my case Purple sprouting broccoli and early potatoes followed the bulbs.

Later flowers are more difficult to fit in. I have for a long time grown penstemons from cuttings. I have sold them in aid of garden funds at shows organised by the Association. This year some spares were planted near the garden shed and they have been a success. There were hardy varieties Hidcote Pink, Marie de la Mere (blue) and a red variety Firebird in the forefront. Next year I hope to plant more penstemons plus whatever my wife throws out of our garden at home PLUS DONATIONS OF FLOWER PLANTS FROM FELLOW ALLOTMENT HOLDERS.

Other allotments grow flowers, in Alsager Coronation Avenue for instance always had a good show.

Now, let's go back to the allotment, vegetables this time. Although I should not have grown them I had a super crop of Desiree potatoes grown from last year's potatoes. Although I should have harvested them earlier, I had an excellent crop of Charlotte as big as I could have wanted but tasty as well. Sharps Express however were a waste of time. Poor growth, poor taste was my verdict.

Strawberries last year, not good, small fruit and not many of them. So I transplanted some healthy plants through Weed suppressant mat and fed them. They look good at the moment.  
See you on plot 3, Cedar Avenue.

**Derek Hough** – *President of the Gardens Association*

Dear Members,           **Ramblings from the chair winter 2021**

I hope this newsletter finds you well, after the lockdown and shielding of 2020, this year has been a little better but only just!  
We need to continue to follow government guidelines.

Since the last newsletter sadly, a number of our officers / site managers have left or retired. I would like to thank them for their service and the contribution they have made to our Association. We wish them well for the future.

Thank you to those volunteers who have stepped forward to help with the running of the Association and to help with tasks at the allotment sites. However, we still have roles to fill in particular we still need a treasurer, so if you have any book keeping or accountancy skills and would like to help please get in touch.

On our plot this year, we had a good crop of Arran Pilot potatoes and sweetcorn. We did really well with pumpkins and butternut

squashes. Some of our pumpkins were turned into Halloween lanterns. Next year we propose to grow a number of smaller squashes – including honeybear, sunshine and sweet dumpling.



*Example of our effort last year*

From 2022 we are proposing to send out the allotment rent invoices by email. This will reduce cost, resource and time, printing and delivering invoices. Please note we will still be delivering invoices to those members who do not currently have email addresses.

Rents are payable from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. Allotment rents this year are

Full Plot	£80
Half Plot	£40
Quarter Plot	£20
Raised Bed	£12

Membership will remain the same at £4

**Adrian Ford**      *Association Chairman*

# ***Do you wish the AGA to continue?***

I have personally been involved with the Alsager Gardens Association (AGA) from the 1970s when it moved from the old hut in Wesley Place to the new site on Cedar avenue. The monthly committee meetings were held in the upstairs room at the Lodge pub overlooking the court yard and always had attendance of 25 to 30 members. Many volunteers for jobs and help if needed.

Cedar Avenue site was half its present size, Talke Road I think only 4? Allotments, Coronation Avenue site and Percy James (Lawton Road) sites as now. The main concern was if we could purchase the hut building with the money reserves then, eventually done without a bank loan.

## **Present position**

The monthly meetings have for the last 20 months been Zoom meetings with normally less than 10 present. The meetings pre January 2020 were held at the guide hut in a room upstairs but again normal attendance less than 10.

The Association Secretary and the Allotment Site managers for Cedar Avenue and Coronation Avenue have tendered their resignations due to personal commitments.

The Chairman took on the job of Treasurer along side his current role as Chair after the past treasurer had tried to retire; after 3 years with no successor

The Annual Show this year (thanks for all those taking part and attending) was, I consider a success and a major achievement, this was due to :-

- a member who following a personal approach by one of the AGA officers was able to receive all show bookings.
- the help of others (non-AGA members) with the raffle and the refreshments
- The last show judges only in place 4 weeks before the show who were recruited from Macclesfield and Middlewich

The hut roster used to have 8 groups of 3 members meaning you only had to attend 4 times in the year. The last year (we only open March to end October) we were down to 4 groups so 8 requirements to do hut duty.

### **What is needed**

Members willing to consider and take on the vacancies from the AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> February. We now have a new Secretary – Clara Howell .

However we need a volunteer to take on the **Treasurer role**, In addition there is a vacancy for **Vice Chair** this position has not been filled for a number of years, the last secretary doing this if require.

The Association **President** is at present acting site manager at Cedar Avenue allotments with some assistance from members but a permanent appointment is needed. *The site management role has been split with Simon Robeson taking over on the other side of the fence. A permanent solution is required.*

A **Site Manager** on Coronation Avenue is required to ensure the site is maintained and the committee informed of site needs.

More members to offer to undertake Hut Duty on a Sunday morning

A member or members willing to take on the role of show secretary to plan the Annual Show to ensure it is able to run smoothly and jobs / tasks are allocated and staffed by volunteers.

Members willing to join the committee so that all members' views are considered, that jobs or help needed do not fall to a very few people. Future meetings may well be virtual by Zoom/Google or actual physical meetings the committee can decide following government guide lines.

At the age of 83 I continue to be Trading Secretary (i.e. making sure the hut has supplies and is open) and produce, with expert help ( I have a dyslexia problem) the Newsletter, Show schedule, Order seeds for members from Kings though the National Allotment Society NSLG and ensure they are paid for and delivered. I intend to continue but age is catching up, a member willing to start to take over at least some of the duties to ensure continuity is required.

I am concerned that without a great deal more help the Association can no longer function. There are many benefits from being a non-profit membership Association; we self manage our allotment sites on behalf of the Town Council. We currently get a 50% reduction in allotment rent cost by the Town Council, the majority of which is passed on to members after allowing for unused plots, insurance and other site costs etc. All our members are covered by our association insurance and we are able to draw on the support of the NSALG legal team if required. These benefits would be lost to plot holders if the Association cannot function.

Thanks for reading this Newsletter – any action is up to you!

These are my personal feelings and views I think should be brought to all members' attention and a personal appeal for them to act.

**David Spall** – *Trading Secretary*

## **Alsager in Bloom**

Alsager in Bloom works with other local organisations to improve the planting around Alsager, for the enjoyment of residents and wildlife. For the last two years, our usual entry to the **North West in Bloom** competition has been a casualty of the pandemic. We did eventually have a colourful show from the hanging baskets and containers in 2021, tended through the summer by the ANSA gardeners. We hope to enter the contest again in 2022.

During the various restrictions, we couldn't organise the usual working parties to prepare the ground for the pollinator flowers. The **pollinator patch in Milton Park** was sown and provided pollen and nectar for the bees, hoverflies etc through the summer. We also sold the packets of seeds to residents via "honesty boxes".

The **pollinator patch near the Medical Centre** was not sown this year, and succumbed to the rank weeds like thistles and docks. It will need some drastic preparation if we want to sow seeds there again. The central part of that area, among the trees, is not mown in the spring now, and produces a nice show of cowslips etc early in the year.

Two years ago, we sowed pollinator seeds in the strip along the fence at the back of the **Fairview car park**. This patch has had no attention since 2019, but many of the hardy annuals seed themselves and still appear every year, blooming abundantly. Echium, Calendula, Sweet Alyssum, Cornflowers, Toadflax – all thrive on neglect and poor soil.

The **Community Orchard** was planted nearly 4 years ago, and most of the apple trees are growing well. (This is where the path goes down from Leicester Avenue to the path along the stream.) Quite a lot of apples were produced last year. We have had help with the grass-cutting from voluntary group Care4ce, but will need a task force of volunteers to do some weeding and mulching in the next few months. We planted a good variety of apples - old varieties, modern varieties, local varieties - plus a few plums. **Alsager Women's Institute** planted two pear trees there in 2020 to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Alsager Urban Wildlife Initiative** hopes to improve planting in other parts of Alsager. We are developing plans to do more planting in Wood Park and Milton Park, concentrating on appropriate native and wildlife-friendly trees and perennials. We're also helping some of the primary schools improve their grounds for wildlife.

Finally, I'll mention the **Station Adopters**, volunteers who meet every Tuesday morning to prune and weed and plant and tend at the station. We have won several "Best-Kept Station in Cheshire" awards; they are all on display on the wall above the Crewe-bound platform. As well as floral displays, we grow some fruit, vegetables and herbs which are available for the public to pick. This work provides the opportunity to wear fluorescent pink Hi-vis vests and improve our train-spotting skills.

If you'd like to know any more about any of these projects, or to suggest further areas that could be adopted, please contact me at

[hilrobinson@hotmail.com](mailto:hilrobinson@hotmail.com).

Hilary Robinson. - *Membership*

## Planned Dates for your Diary Subject to Coronavirus Government Restrictions

<p><b>Alsager Gardens Association AGM</b>  <i>come along and hear what goes on behind  the scenes and how we have spent various  grants on improvements</i>  <b>ALL WELCOME</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday 16th February 2022</b>  <b>at the Loge Pub</b>  <b>commencing at 8 pm</b></p>
<p><b>Trading Hut</b>   <b>See opening hours and dates at the  bottom of page</b></p>	<p><b>Opens Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>  <i>Allotment Holders Rents due  Payable at the Trading Hut</i></p>
<p><b>Allotment Open Days</b>  <b>7 &amp; 8 May 2022</b>  <i>Please attend but also bring any spare plants  etc for sale</i></p>	<p><b>All sites will have a member to advise</b>  <i>The main event will be at Cedar Avenue site for  plant sales, refreshments etc</i></p>
<p><b>Snowdrop Walks – Rode Hall</b></p>	
<p><b>Spring Harrogate Flower Show</b></p>	
<p><b>Royal Cheshire County Show</b>  Cheshire Showground - Knutsford.</p>	
<p><b>RHS Flower Show - Tatton Park,</b></p>	<p>20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022</p>
<p><b>National Allotments Week</b></p>	<p>8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022</p>
<p><b>Southport Flower Show</b></p>	<p>18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022</p>
<p><b>Nantwich Show</b></p>	<p>No date available</p>
<p><b>Alsager Gardens Association Committee  Meetings, - Guide Hut, Cedar Ave., Alsager</b></p>	<p>8.00 pm Normally last Tuesday of the Month.  Confirmed on web site  <i>(Any member welcome to join us)</i></p>

Please reserve the date for the AGM – Planned for February 16<sup>th</sup>

**69<sup>th</sup> Annual Show Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2022**

### Trading Hut opening Hours

<b>Sunday Opening Hours</b>	6-3-22 to 15-5-22	10.00 – 12.00 noon
<i>(NB Note opening times)</i>	22-5-22 to 30-10-22	10.30 – 11.30 a.m.
<b>Wednesday Opening Hour</b>	20-4-22 to 20-7-22	7.00 – 8.00 pm



