



Spring 2024 Newsletter

Association update:

Thank you to all the plot-holders who attended the AGM on Thursday the 29th of February.

The Spring working morning will be held on Saturday the 27th of April from 10am. Jobs will be carried out around the site as well as a general tidy up. There will be a fire for wood and a skip for rubbish from plots. Refreshments will be available afterwards for plot holders who help on the morning.

We have two Facebook pages:

1. Dorrington Road Allotment Association - Plot holders Only Group (a private group)
2. Dorrington Road Allotment Association (a public group)

Thank you to a previous plot-holder Neil Chatterjee for creating the website and to Chris Atkinson for supplying the information, we have a fabulous website for both plot-holders and members of the public to access. The website will be updated with information when applicable and the rules, constitution and previous newsletters as well as other information can be accessed on the website. The link is <https://dorringtonroadallotmentassociation.co.uk>

There is a waiting list of 68 interested people and a small selection of plots that are available to be let.

Seed swapping – just a reminder that there is a box in the BBQ area in the middle car park where you can swap any seed packets. We are looking to do a seedling/plant swap in May – more information to follow.

Committee update:

As plot-holders were aware from emails before the AGM that Paul Cambre was stepping down as chair and John Yarnall was stepping down as the membership officer. Daf Elias had stepped down the previous year and Marta Cattin had taken on the role of the maintenance officer. Two plot-holders were appointed as chair and membership officer at the AGM so the committee is now:

Chair – Gary Bradshaw
Treasurer – Chris Atkinson
Maintenance officer – Marta Cattin
Membership officer – Hilary Smith
Communication's officer – Jo Kershaw

The committee has a vacancy for the secretary's role. If any plot holder is interested then please speak to one of the committee members.

Plot-holder's corner:

Taking part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch – Sue Bradshaw

On a cold Saturday morning at the end of January myself and our teenage granddaughter ventured down to our plot to take part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, or in our case the Big Allotment Birdwatch. We only have a small backyard at home which is almost completely without any bird visitors, so this is our only chance to see anything worth recording. The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch monitors the health of the nation's bird populations and every year hundreds of thousands of people take part in what is an educational but enjoyable experience, whilst enabling a sense of reconnecting with nature.

Our plot is next to the far end of Dorrington woods so we have trees close by and a big hedge on the plot side of the metal fence, making this an ideal spot for a bird feeder pole to be placed close to the hedge. Since then, we have seen the usual collection of blue tits, great tits, coal tits and long-tailed tits, plus robins, blackbirds, wrens, and dunnocks (which used to be known as hedge sparrows). We are also lucky enough to have spotted nuthatches, bullfinches and even a woodpecker on our feeders. We have had to take precautions against rats and squirrels being able to climb the pole to the

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feeders by fitting it with a cone-shaped 'baffler' and have fitted the feeders with trays to prevent seed falling to the ground. So, every year it has become a custom for us to sit in our 'posh shed' at the top of the plot for an hour armed with a hot water bottle, a flask of tea, snacks, binoculars and bird book to record what we can see in the space of one hour.



The Working Party/ Playgroup – Gary Bradshaw

Anyone who ventured down to the allotments on Saturday mornings recently will have seen a group of people working, Laying the hedges along the boundary with Dorrington Woods. This is part of a tree management plan initiated by a group of Plot holder volunteers and agreed with the Committee.

We as a group refer to ourselves as the “Play Group” and have been helping maintain and develop the Communal areas on the site for the past few years. The group came together when a few of us realised that we had a common interest in caring for the Allotments and between us had a range of skills and experience that could be benefit the whole Community. We had discussions with the Committee at the time and agreed that we would work with them to assist with tasks which could enhance the site.

This has included planting and developing beds near the gate and the middle car park, both of which had previously been left as a tangle of brambles and Bindweed. Setting out a schedule of Tree management which includes coppicing the hazels on the site and the most ambitious project so far was the long-awaited hedge laying, which was made possible by the installation of fencing along the boundary with the Woods. This



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will enable the hedge to grow more densely and add to the security of the site. Areas where the hedging has been damaged irreparably will be replanted to create an effective barrier.

The central Car Park area has been planted with pollinator friendly perennials and low growing shrubs and hosts an Almond Tree which was planted by the family of our friend Elaine. Elaine had been in both the Playgroup and the Committee at various times she sadly died suddenly a couple of years ago. Because of her love for the allotments and her enthusiastic presence the family negotiated the planting of the tree in her memory.

While the Playgroup has a core of 4 or 5 plot holders, we always welcome others who might want to join in with the tasks in an informal way. We realise that people have lots of other commitments and interests and that regular commitment is not always possible. So, there is no obligation, we work on an informal basis and have an email list of people who want to be kept in the loop and help when they can. If there are jobs planned, we usually also send out a notice through the Dorrington Road Committee or on the Members Facebook page.

The hedge laying brought out a good number of extra volunteers who helped and gained some insight into the technique and were able to work together as a group.

So, thanks to all of you who have helped in the past, present ... and future.

Working party update:

On the 2nd of March, the Playgroup were busy laying the hedges along the Dorrington Woods boundary to act as another security measure along with the new fencing.

If you are interested in helping on the working party, then please contact Daf or Paul for more information.

Allotments tips:

April is a 'let's go for it!' month on the allotment but proceed with caution. Hopefully we will all be feeling the benefit of the lengthening days and warm sunshine but beware there is always a price to pay with the treat of hard, night frosts never far away. Hold back and wait a day or two rather take a risk. It isn't the loss of seedlings or young plants that causes the problems but the loss of your precious time that you will never get back that does the damage. The allotment will always catch up eventually and reward your patience with bumper harvest.

Things to Sow in April

- [Beetroot](#)
- [Peas](#)
- [Broad Beans](#)
- [Broccoli](#)
- [Brussels Sprouts](#)
- [Cabbage](#)
- [Cauliflower](#)
- [Kale](#)
- [Chard](#)
- [Kohl Rabi](#)
- [Leeks](#)
- [Spinach](#)
- [Rocket](#)
- [Lettuce](#)
- [Radish](#)

If March has been difficult and you've not managed to get much done, you're going to have a busy April. With onions you're really pushing it so if they're not planted make it one of the first jobs of the month. The weeds won't be slow and it's time to sharpen your hoe!! Happy growing everyone and let's hope it's a good growing session

Upcoming events:

- Spring working morning – 27th April 10.00am



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Get in touch:

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Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/dorringtonallotments/>
