

CHESTERGATE ALLOTMENTS BISLEY ANNUAL GET TOGETHER

17 August 2019

Apologies from lots of people including Alice, Caroline B, Ben, Peter, Jane and Kate Neighbour, Faye and Chris (Wedding!), Di, Simon and Susie...and some more....

Present: Lesley, Kate, Jenny, Sue, Hazel, Sheila, Caroline W, Gary, Liz, Nadine, and guests Phil, and Robert Bryant (Allotment Warden Eastcombe)

1. Nadine told us about **Stroud Valleys Project** work on the allotment (that used to be tenanted by the Ronans Trust). They hold group sessions and are planting a small-scale tree nursery of beeches grown from seed – all germinated – plus various shrubs and currant bushes. Group sessions included planting, weeding, and scything. We visited the SVP plot.
2. We visited the **compost loo** – nearly complete!
3. Sue asked for produce for the **Bisley Fete 24th August** – leave on the table
4. Sheila asked for entries for the **Bisley Flower show**
5. Jenny flagged the **Eastcombe Show** (watch the notice board for date)
6. The **Bee Project**: Hazel reported that she had now completed Bee care training and was setting up a hive in the very far corner of the allotments next to her chickens with a queen and brood from Keith Dickensen. This will be in 2020. The area will have a notice about the Bees. Everyone was enthusiastic.
7. Peter Benn had asked if he could keep ducks on his plot. Everyone agreed.

Discussion:

- Jenny & Lesley thought the tree nursery was good for the Parish that now has a proactive tree planting encouragement policy. How do we take this forward?
- Nadine was challenged to scythe the meadow between the allotments and community orchard...or perhaps a trial area!!
- We suggested that the compost loo could be decorated by local children with themes on the soil etc. Nadine thought there were several people who might be invited to open it and publicise it.
- Re compost loo publicity or not – Sheila cautious in case it might be abused. It has a lock with the allotment code.
- The compost loo is not quite finished ; Lesley will alert everyone when its ready for use. The pathway needs finishing then the loo will be wheel chair accessible.
- Kate thought a propagator / group polytunnel for starting off seeds /vulnerable plants would be helpful for a lot of allotment holders. This was supported. Lesley will explore.
- Discussion about snails, slugs and soil health: There is a decline in thrushes, none seen here. Nadine had seen blackbirds eating snails. Liz thought that mulching

continuously over some years without disturbing the soil had some effect on reducing slug numbers; possibly the encouragement of predators such as centipedes on slug eggs. Nadine felt it could be good to research this -perhaps Glos University, and the Wildlife Trust could be interested in helping identify creatures in the soil. She said glow worm larvae ate slugs but there no one had seen any on the allotments.

- Wildlife on the allotments was discussed. Liz observed there had been an increase in magpies; the edible hedgerow appeared to be supporting more farmland birds; there had been more butterflies, moths and many more orchids this year. There are still slow worms (despite an unwelcome increase in cats) and grass snakes on the allotments. Unfortunately, no one had seen the hedgehogs this year. The wildlife record book is in the allotment hut.
- Lesley flagged a visit to the natural Japanese form of farming without inputs in Wiltshire (Shumei).

Finally, we went on a tour of plots – SVP's, Kate's, Sue's and Caroline's.

Many thanks to everyone who brought cake!!

Lesley Greene

Allotment Warden

www.bisleyallotments.co.uk