

# BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Summer 2011



## New allotments under the hoe

The new allotments next to the Bridport Medical Centre are under cultivation. There are 43 plots which have now been let by the town council to residents on its waiting list.

The plots have become available since the town council took up a generous offer last year from local resident Amanda Streatfeild to lease the land for allotments.

In March the plots were marked out, fenced and rotavated by town council groundsmen, and the first tenants moved on to the site in April, just in time for the new growing season. Already the area has been transformed by sowing and planting, sheds, and lines of bean canes, and plot-holders are looking forward to their first harvests.

Mike and Sue Bomford, who are helping out their daughter on her allotment, said that there has been a lot of work to do clearing the ground first, and that lack of water has been a concern in the recent dry weather, but they already have a range of crops making good progress.

Town surveyor Daryl Chambers is pleased that it had been possible to let the plots in time for the growing season, and delighted that plot-

holders are showing such enthusiasm and turning the whole scheme into a productive reality. He said that he was obtaining costs from Wessex Water for a water supply for the allotments.

Allotments Society Chairman Colin Sparkes congratulated the town council on taking a positive approach to meeting the demand for new allotments.



*Mike and Sue Bomford working on one of the new allotments next to the Bridport Medical Centre*

**Date of the next Allotments Society Meeting: Thursday 2 June 2011, 7.00 pm,  
at the Palmers allotments, Gundry Lane. Meet outside Pam's in Priory Lane.**

# Come and show off your produce at the Food Festival

Most of you will be aware that Bridport holds an annual Food Festival to celebrate the wide variety and quality of locally produced fruit and vegetables.

Quite a few will also be aware that the Allotments Society has, in the past, had a stand showing the uninitiated how easy and rewarding it is to grow your own fruit and veg — even without a garden!

With the increasing awareness of the importance of reducing food miles, coupled with the dubious provenance of "fresh" supermarket produce - which is often weeks or even months old by the time you buy it thanks to modern chemical additives and preservation methods - it was decided at our last meeting to do our bit to encourage more people to grow their own. That way, they will not only get the benefit of some healthy exercise, but will know where, when and how the food on their plates was grown and which, if any, chemicals have been used in their production.

It has been decided that the easiest way to do this is by repeating the successful formula of 2009, by growing plants in pots, tubs, troughs, or anything else that comes to hand that is portable.

Ralph Probert has again "volunteered" to coordinate our efforts; he can be contacted on 01308 425532 or 07711052572, and is urgently seeking more exhibits. The usual stalwarts have already volunteered to bring a few things along, but most of us have a few spare plants that can be potted up and used to swell the demonstration. "Show quality" is definitely not a requirement (we do not adhere to EU rules here) nor do our plants have to be mature, merely alive and growing (reasonably) healthily.

So come on and do your bit for the Society; call Ralph and let him know what you can provide or just turn up on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June when we will be setting up the stand (on Asker Meadow) – transport can be arranged if necessary.

Thank you!

*Ralph Probert*

*The Allotments Society stand at the 2009 Bridport Food Festival*





*Following Ken Bishop's talk on Bees and article in the last Newsletter, Lynne Atkinson sent in this photo of a swarm spotted in Folly Mill Lane at Easter*

## The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners

At the last meeting of BADAS I promised an item on the NSALG.

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners produces a quarterly magazine. It has a membership made up of individuals or societies or local authorities. A "society" is an organisation or a group of plot-holders who are self-regulating, i.e. responsible for maintenance, improvements, security and rents, which they spend via a committee, on the interests of the plot-holders. The land is normally leased to the society, so some expenditure is involved.

The NSALG provides a seed scheme (with Kings Seeds) which provides seeds at half the normal retail price.

It can provide insurance, including public liability, for a site. The NSALG has a legal department which has proved its worth time and time again for societies who have allotments due to be sold off - this includes court cases, compensation and replacement sites.

At present NSALG is fighting our corner in Parliament in relation to Government plans to amend and rearrange the many laws relating

to allotments. Some of these go back to the 1800s.

The cost of membership is £20 for an individual or £2 per member for a society (min. £20).

With BADAS there are many problems to overcome if we decide to join. Firstly not all plot-holders are members, the Town Council would have to agree, remembering that not all allotments in the town are owned by them. Maintenance of boundaries could be another problem as most are dividing allotments from play areas etc.

Those on BTC land would pay £2 on top of rents and water bills. The scheme is really for individual sites not the half dozen in Bridport.

NSALG do not provide insurance to individual plots.

It would therefore probably not be suitable for BADAS to join as an organisation, although the seed scheme is of use to individual members and soon pays for the membership fee.

The Society's website is: [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk).

*Colin Sparkes, Chairman, BADAS*

## News from Bridport Town Council

### *Bridport's town surveyor, Daryl Chambers, reports:*

All 43 plots at the Medical Centre site have been let, and the potential for a water supply is being investigated with Wessex Water.

It had been hoped to let the new allotments at Priory Lane and Rivervale, but this will now be delayed until building works on the new housing developments have been completed.

At Skilling a new water trough has been introduced at the northern end, and a new noticeboard is shortly to be fitted at Flaxhayes.



*Skilling, March 2011, after work  
by town council on hedges—  
photo, Lynne Atkinson*

## Rainfall (*What rainfall? Ed.*)

I have kept rainfall records since 1993 and it is interesting to look back at the month of April. Generally it is a dry month with as little as 10 mm during the whole month the average being nearer 40 mm. The exceptions were 2007 (105), 2001 (84), 2000 (166), 1998 (106), but it is interesting to note that in March of each of these years there was little rainfall. When I look back at my gardening diary, it seems as though April was a time of dusty plots with plenty of watering needed.

This May seems to be similar with storms during the first week, and nothing for the rest of the month, (although I might be wrong as this is being written mid-month). Incidentally have you noticed that generally we have our only thunder storm of the year during the first week of May.

It is amazing how the plants grow with such dry ground but nature is unbeatable in the end.

*Colin Sparkes*

## Summer Meeting

Our "summer" meeting is Thursday 02 June, starting at 7.00 pm.

As usual, this will be a very brief formal meeting, following up any matters arising from previous meetings and an update from Colin, our Chairman.

We will then have a "walkabout" round some allotments. This year, we have chosen the site owned by Palmers Brewery at Priory Lane, and this will be followed by a look at the community allotments and orchard.

We will meet outside Pam's (at the junction of Priory Lane and Foundry Lane), instead of the usual venue. Let's hope for a sunny evening.

*Bob Driscoll*

**Sea Spring:** Richard Edwards has asked us to mention that Washingpool Farm Shop is selling seeds from Sea Spring, West Bexington. Their website is [www.seaspringseeds.co.uk](http://www.seaspringseeds.co.uk).

## Bridport and District Allotments Society

**Membership of the Bridport & District Allotments Society** costs £2 per annum. Our Membership Secretary/Treasurer Mandy Rathbone will be pleased to receive your subscriptions. Please contact Mandy on 01308-458005 or email [manwell52@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:manwell52@hotmail.co.uk).

**Receiving the newsletter by email:** If any member who currently receives the newsletter/minutes of meetings through the letterbox could receive them by email (and save us delivery cost/time), please contact Bob Driscoll—[drisc.juggs@talk21.com](mailto:drisc.juggs@talk21.com).

**Newsletter contributions welcome:** if you have any items you would like to see included in future issues of our Newsletter (which comes out quarterly) or if there are subjects you would like us to cover, please contact the Editor, Charles Wild, Flat 3, 91 Crock Lane, Bridport DT6 4DH; or email entries to [charleswild@btinternet.com](mailto:charleswild@btinternet.com). Contributions to the autumn edition (articles, news items and/or photographs) by **7 August 2011** please.