Poverest Allotments

October's Newsletter

Октомврийският бюлетин - 十月份的简报 - Az októberi hírlevél - Spalio mėnesio naujienlaiškis - Październikowy biuletyn - Buletinul informativ din octombrie - Октябрьский информационный бюллетень - ඔක්තෝබර් මාසයේ පුවත් පත්‍රිකාව - Ekim ayı bülteni - Жовтневий інформаційний бюлетень

We hope this newsletter finds you well and a warm welcome to our new plot holders.

Chairman's chat

I am in a reflective mood right now. My garden seems to be a cat toilet, one of the hardy fuchsias in my border is dying a horrible death for some unfathomable reason and my wife has just turned on the central heating. I should be furious right now, but I'm not.

Unless you love droughts and overdosing on Vitamin D, this year's growing season has been a bit of a disaster. The near-constant watering of everything bar the lawn has been exhausting and has felt like life-support rather than simply helping the plants get through a tough spell. The result is that everything in my allotment polytunnel did well and everything else did not. If I could sum up my growing season it would be "most stuff had bolted by July".

There are always positives though. Allotment life has been challenging but enjoyable. I have chatty, happy, neighbours on the plots next to me and spending time watering, weeding, hoeing and (occasionally) cursing is never time wasted. Unlike farming, this is a hobby, not a living, and my life doesn't depend on it. So I will file away 2026 in the pile marked "Meh!" and start planning for 2027.

Talking of 2027, thanks to everyone who attended the AGM at the end of September. We recapped what has happened in the last year, explained

what our challenges are, and what our plans are for next year. It was a great community event, showcasing what is best about our allotment community. You can read the minutes by clicking here. To hell with the fruit and veg, it's the people who matter, and that is why 2027 will be a belter.

Rob

Security Update

We've been working on ways to respond to the recent thefts on site, and here's what's happening so far:

- **Police involvement:** Plot holder and Biodiversity Champion, Joan Vine has contacted the Met Police Engagement Team to report the incidents, and they will be visiting the site and hopefully attend an upcoming security event. We will be in touch again with dates and their findings/advice.
- **Padlock changes**: All padlock combinations will change on 1st November. **A separate email will be sent out with the front gate number.** Please make sure you know it as we will not be giving out the number any other way.
- **Back gate security**: The back gate seems to be our most vulnerable point. New signage has been added along with a CCTV camera. Access to the back gate will be restricted and will use a **different combination**. Anyone who needs this number will **need to apply and be added to a register.** To apply, please email poverestallotments@gmail.com **Anyone found using the back gate who is not on our register will have their tenancy terminated immediately.**
- **Security patrols**: We've been kindly donated some hi-viz jackets with our site name printed on them (thank you Stuart!). These will be used for short, paired "security patrols" around our site. **We really need volunteers though to make this work** — even one patrol a week helps. If you can take part, please email poverestallotments@gmail.com
- **Wildlife cameras**: If you have experienced a theft, we recommend purchasing a wildlife camera. These are relatively inexpensive and will probably be the main way the perpetrators are caught. Set them up inside greenhouses/polytunnels or anywhere theft has taken place previously. Basically, prepare for next season.

- **Community awareness**: Please keep talking to your neighbours on site and help spread the word. **Anyone found stealing or sharing gate combinations will have their tenancy terminated immediately.**

Together, we can make a difference. With everyone staying alert and supporting these measures, we hope to put a stop to the thefts and keep Poverest a safe, welcoming place for all plot holders.

Our water supply has now been turned off until April 2027, in line with our lease with the Council. **Our toilets are also now closed**. This gives us a valuable window to carry out winter refurbishment work, including improvements to our toilet facilities and water tanks on the lower road.

This year we used **879,000 litres of water** — an increase of 205,000 litres from last year — which highlights the importance of finding new ways to reduce our usage going forward. We'll be exploring practical steps to help us bring this figure down next season so watch this space!

Thames Water Community Grant - Application update

We've now submitted the £5,000 funding application for the Poverest Allotments rainwater-harvesting project. The proposal is for six free-standing collection roofs with guttering, feeding IBC tanks distributed across the site. The aim is to capture and store rainwater for shared use, reducing reliance on mains water and making better use of rainfall.

We'd like to engage our plot holders in building the system through a community task force, giving people the opportunity to contribute practical skills, learn new ones and take shared ownership of the project. Installation will be carried out through community work parties, with ongoing maintenance also supported by volunteers.

The application highlights our wider environmental and community work, including the Biodiversity Group, wildlife monitoring, bat boxes, Big Butterfly Count, Breathe London air-quality monitoring and our Community Dementia-Friendly registration. We also noted that our wider community reaches at least 500 people when family and friends are included.

This is an example of the visualisation we developed to show what the rainwater-harvesting stations could look like in practice. It helped us demonstrate how the roofs, guttering, IBC tanks and water collection system would work together.

Now we wait to hear the outcome — fingers crossed!

Ester & Natalia

The Ivy Bee

Solitary bees were mentioned by a couple of allotmenteers at the most recent work party. In particular the ivy bee, so we thought we would shine a spotlight on it this month.

Ivy bees were first recorded in Dorset in 2001. Active between late August to November they have now seen across the Southwest up to Norfolk.

Part of the plasterer bee family. The females of plasterer bees secrete a cellophane-like material to line their nest cells providing their eggs with protection from rain and other dangerous intruders such as fungi.

Ivy bees are considered gentle, as the males don't sting and the females will only do so if aggravated. Female Ivy bees gather pollen exclusively from ivy flowers to feed their developing larvae. They also rely on ivy nectar but will drink nectar from other flower sources, such as Ragwort when Ivy is scarce.

As we have quite a lot of ivy currently in flower within our allotment's perimeter hedges, we are lucky enough to have lots of ivy bees. The photos were taken on the allotment on 04 Oct 2026.

To find out about the life cycle of this fascinating pollinator **click here.**

End of season International food celebration

Mark your diaries! **Sunday 18th October, between 12pm and 2pm**, we will be having our infamous end of season get together which incorporates our International Food Celebration! It's a chance for us to chat about the season we've had while enjoying dishes from around the world that your bring along to share🙏

From plot to plate - no passport required

Roasted Mini Potatoes and Carrots with Italian Gremolata
This recipe is gloriously simple, yet the result looks impressive and—rather importantly—tastes delicious. You'll need small potatoes and carrots, but don't let size boss you around; larger vegetables can simply be cut into chunks. The proportions are wonderfully flexible too. For anyone who prefers a little structure before the vegetables stage a rebellion, try this:

- 500g baby potatoes—the little stars of the show
- 500g miniature carrots, equally keen for fame
- 2–3 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp garlic powder (optional, but garlic rarely hurts)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the gremolata—the zesty green hero:

- 1 large bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley (leaves only; the stalks may sit this one out)
- 1 whole lemon (zest and 1 tbsp juice)
- 2–3 garlic cloves, depending on your social plans
- 2 tbsp olive oil (optional, for a looser texture)
- A pinch of coarse sea salt

Optional cheesy plot twist:

- 80–100g crumbled feta cheese, because cheese knows how to make an entrance

Instructions – let the roasting commence:
First, persuade your oven to warm up to 190°C—it has one job. Give the potatoes and carrots a good scrub, but spare yourself the peeling drama. Toss them with olive oil, garlic powder, salt and pepper until every vegetable looks suitably dressed for dinner. Spread them on a baking sheet and roast for 25–35 minutes, until tender with gloriously golden edges.

Gremolata—while the vegetables get a tan:
While the vegetables roast, make the gremolata. Finely chop the parsley leaves, then combine them with the lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic, optional olive oil and salt. Mix everything well and enjoy the sudden impression that your kitchen has moved to Italy.

Plate and Serve—prepare for applause:
Transfer the piping-hot roasted vegetables to a serving platter. Scatter the fresh gremolata generously over the top—this is no time for shyness. If using feta, add the crumbled cheese now. Give everything a gentle toss; the remaining heat will wake up the garlic and citrus oils and make the kitchen smell outrageously good. Serve at once, accept compliments graciously and enjoy!

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From plot to Glass – Cheers to the Marigolds

Ah, marvellous marigolds! They brighten our plots, help keep pesky pests away from precious crops and generally behave like the garden's cheerful security team. Before the cold weather sends them into retirement, here's an unusual—and delightfully cheeky—way to put them to work.

Homemade French Marigold Faux Prosecco
This is a fizzy fermented lemonade infused with the flavour and colour of marigolds. If kept until Christmas, it may grow livelier and reach an alcohol content of around 4–7%—proof that even flowers can embrace the festive spirit. All you need is a 3-litre jar or pot, a simple list of ingredients and a few days (or months) of patient bubbling.

- 30–35 French marigold flower heads; darker varieties are preferred. Do not wash them, as the natural wild yeast on the petals is expected to help fermentation.
- 300g sugar
- 5 tbsp fresh lemon juice, or 1 tsp citric acid
- Approximately 2.5–2.7 litres of clean, cold, unboiled or filtered water; do not fill the jar to the top, unless your worktop fancies a floral bath.

Preparation—let the bubbling begin:
Wash the jar thoroughly; baking soda is recommended. Do not wash the flowers. Place the marigold flower heads in the bottom of the jar, then add the sugar and lemon juice or citric acid. Pour in the cold water, leaving enough room at the top for the mixture to bubble without making a bid for freedom. Stir well until the sugar have dissolved. Cover the jar with a plastic lid or clean cloth and leave it in a dark place at room temperature for 3–5 days. Open or stir the mixture once or twice each day. After 3–5 days, the drink—often called floral kvass or a light sparkling wine—should be ready. Chill it in the refrigerator before serving, because nobody asked for lukewarm flower fizz.

For stronger carbonation—handle the fizz with respect: Remove the flower heads and transfer the drink to sturdy plastic bottles, leaving about a quarter of each bottle empty. Gently squeeze out the excess air, then fasten the caps tightly. Store the bottles horizontally in a cool, dark place or in the refrigerator while carbonation develops. Check the pressure frequently and do not leave the bottles somewhere warm, as pressure can build and cause them to burst. Release a little gas when needed, and open each bottle slowly while keeping it tilted away from people and anything wearing its best clothes. It may be faux Prosecco, but the sparkle is very real!

Natalia

As always, please keep your speed down when driving on our site to protect the roads; please don't park blocking a road or in front of the wood chip and manure

bays; make sure you proudly display your plot number on your plot and the padlock numbers are facing up and mixed up when you leave. 🙏

Thank you for your continued support

Rob, Graham, Rachel, Arun, Ester, Natalia and Bob

Work Party Schedule 2026

During the week:

Plot Clearance and cut communal area grass and paths, cut/shred branches pile behind manure bay - contact **poverestallotments@gmail.com** to arrange times and machine/tool use.

November: Sunday 15th, 10am to 12pm:

Drain clearance, machines cleaned and drained

Event Diary 2026

October: Sunday 18th, 12pm-2pm:

End of Season/International food celebration

December: Sunday 13th, 3pm to 5pm:

Christmas drinks, mince pies and cake

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