Poverest Allotments

November's Newsletter

Ноемврѝйски бюлетин - 11月通讯 - Novemberi hírlevél - Lapkričio naujienlaiškis - Listopadowy biuletyn - Buletinul informativ din noiembrie - Ноябрьский информационный бюллетень - නොවැම්බර් මාසයේ පුවත් ලිපිය - Boletín de noviembre - Kasım Bülteni - Листопадовий інформаційний бюлетень

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

Chairman's thoughts

Many moons ago, I heard my Uncle Pat mention to my Dad that he had “put the allotment to bed”. As an impressionable young lad, it set my mind racing. I had been to his allotment numerous times; a wonderland of homemade sheds, timber greenhouses with whitewashed glass and ordered vegetable beds with various brassicas all laid out in rows that I could only achieve on my plot with a laser level and drone technology. It truly was a wondrous site.

I say “was” because he died in 2022 at the ripe old age of 92 and the allotment went back to Burnley Council to be re-let to someone else, marking the end of 70-odd years of being in the family, having been created from scratch by my grandad in the 1940s.

Anyway, I had no idea what putting the allotment to bed meant until years later when I volunteered to help him clear about five tonnes of horse manure that had been dumped on double yellow lines by the allotment gates. We cleared it in a few hours, with Uncle Pat – a champion wrestler from the west of Ireland – doing most of the hard yards while I moaned about getting cramp in my hands. To Uncle Pat, putting the allotment to bed involved clearing the vegetables that had gone past their best, double digging (a practice that is now frowned upon, but that’s another story) and applying a thick (and I mean THICK) mulch of manure on the beds. This happened

every year. I kid you not, you have never seen such beautiful soil in which to plant your seedlings.

But that wasn't the end of the story. At the end of the process, in went the onions, garlic, winter cabbage and a whole host of other stuff that I can't remember. And as I am writing this, I'm trying to reconcile "putting the allotment to bed" with my preconceived idea that it means the allotment going into some sort of deep slumber over the winter and doing nothing for months. That is far from the truth. For Uncle Pat, it meant marking the end of the summer growing season, getting on with the winter growing season and preparing the ground for spring.

It kind of makes sense when you really think about it. When you take yourself to bed, you don't have an empty bed, you have a bed with a living, breathing, growing person in it. That's how it should be on an allotment.

So, folks, put your allotment to bed this autumn, check in on a regular basis to make sure the duvet hasn't slipped off and the occupant hasn't wet the mattress, so to speak. And then marvel as your plot continues to provide over the winter months.

Rob

Security update

Joan and I recently met with the local Met Police Engagement Team following reports of produce thefts on site. The meeting was arranged to discuss practical steps we can all take to help protect our plots and support each other as a community. The police provided some useful guidance, which you can read here.

Key points:

1. **Theft from allotment plots is a crime.**
   Taking produce or property from another plot is no different from theft from a home or vehicle. Any incidents will be reported to the Police, and, where identified you will get a criminal record and victims can press charges - plus we will terminate your tenancy immediately and advise other local allotment sites.

2. **Please report thefts promptly.**
   If you discover that something has been stolen, report it to the Met Police straight away via 101 or online here. Please also let us know so we can keep records and identify any patterns or trends.
3. **If you witness a theft in progress, do not intervene.**
   If it is safe to do so, take a photo and call **999**. Please share any information with us so we can support the police investigation and take any necessary action.

Looking out for each other

The best deterrent is a vigilant and supportive community. Wildlife cameras can help catch thieves so please buy one and use it if you have been victim before, but the most effective protection comes from plot holders keeping an eye out for one another, sharing information, and reporting concerns promptly.

Following the recent incidents, we carried out a number of patrols around the site daily. We asked for volunteers but as nobody came forward we will pause patrols until the new season.

The Met Police Engagement Team will be joining us at our Christmas Drinks on 13 December and will also attend a security event at the start of the new season (date to be confirmed). Please come along if you have any questions or suggestions.

Together we can help keep our allotments welcoming, secure and enjoyable for everyone.

Bob & Joan

Fruit tree pruning season is coming!

As discussed at our AGM, fruit trees on your plot are your responsibility. Trees should be maintained at a suitable height to make harvesting easier and to avoid excessive shading of your neighbouring plots.

We understand that many trees have been established for years, and we're not expecting anyone to drastically reduce or remove them overnight. Trees need to be managed carefully and, in many cases, any height reduction is

best carried out gradually over several seasons.

As part of our plot maintenance winter site inspections, we'll identify trees that may need attention. We will contact those plot holders and work with them to agree a realistic plan for ongoing management to start in December this year depending on species of tree.

We had hoped to arrange a fruit tree care workshop earlier this year, but unfortunately the provider was unable to visit due to the challenging summer weather. We're pleased to say they have recently been back in touch, and we're currently waiting for available dates.

The session will provide practical advice on pruning and tree management, as well as information on paid for professional support for anyone who would like additional help. We hope as many of you as possible will attend, as it should be valuable for both new and experienced plot holders.

End of Season scrumptiousness!

It was lovely to see everyone that came along to our end of season get together - celebrating and enjoying food from around the world! Truly lovely food so a big thank you to all those who brought such delightful grub!

We’re planning to restore and rejuvenate our boundary hedges to support wildlife

Currently our allotments boundary is made up of native and non-native trees and shrubs. We’re fortunate to have some people in our allotment community with the right skills to help us remove the invasive non-native species and replace them with suitable native ones.

To kick start our project we have obtained a grant from the Woodland Trust for our first 30 hedge trees.

Hedgerows are a distinctive feature of the British Countryside, with Bronze Age hedge systems still seen in parts of Devon. From the 1500’s landowners used hedgerows as boundaries to enclose a significant amount of previously Common Land, although, this practice peaked towards the late 18th Century. Sadly 118,000 miles of hedgerows (almost half) were removed from the middle of the last century because of grants aimed at increasing agricultural efficiencies. Many of the remaining hedgerows have been neglected, over trimmed and affected by agricultural chemicals. All of which has resulted in a catastrophic decline of our native wildlife.

Hedgerows are vital to many declining species that rely on them to survive. More than 125 UK priority species are closely associated with hedgerows. Such as birds, dormice, bats, crested newts, rare bumble bees and moths. Fortunately, in 2006 hedgerows were listed as a habitat of principal for biodiversity conservation.

Hedgerows are also important because they capture eroding soil, can help flood alleviations and regulate air and water quality by intercepting pollutants. They also help with security.

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 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:
Plot clearance, drain and gulley clearance, machines cleaned and drained

Event Diary 2026
December: Sunday 13th, 3pm to 5pm:
Christmas drinks, mince pies and cake

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