

**Chichester Organic Gardening Society**  
**Newsletter 89 April 2023**

**NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE**

In spite of the sunny Easter weekend, it has been slow to warm up this Spring. But with that has come the benefit that the spring flowers seem to have lasted an unusually long time. At the moment the hellebores are still flowering in our garden and will only give up when the weather turns milder. The tulip display is brilliant and long-lasting, at the same time that the forget-me-nots are coming out. It is such a pleasure to look at even if one cannot sit out comfortably for long. We are still hesitating about planting out tomatoes though. Here's wishing everyone a good growing season with a bit more rain than we had last year.

**REPORTS ON TALKS SPRING 2023**

**30<sup>th</sup> January** – an illustrated talk by **Brian Henham of the Manhood Wildlife Group**. Brian showed us photographs of the wildlife in his garden during the lockdowns. Being married to a keen photographer I am aware of just how much skill and patience is required for photographing creatures great and small, and these pictures, often of tiny insects, were truly impressive. Brian's in-depth study of life in a small area made him acutely aware of the effect climate change, especially earlier blooming of plants, was having on the food chain on which insects and birds depend. Moths are an example, having declined by 60 to 70% over the past 50 years.

**27<sup>th</sup> February** – a talk by **Transition Chichester's Mark Hobson on soil**. Mark runs a local small-holding and small orchard and reinforced what we have all learnt in recent years that maintaining a healthy soil structure is the key to sustainable growing and the only way forward if we are to maintain our planet. Members brought soil samples from their own gardens and allotments and tried to assess its health by testing the key parameters of colour, smell, presence of worms (obviously we couldn't actually see with the naked eye the microbes and fungi that we hoped were there) and ability to absorb water.

**27<sup>th</sup> March** – an illustrated talk by **Julia Sander of Transition Chichester on Running a Therapy Garden**. Julia recounted the fascinating story of how The Bishops Palace Garden, a derelict former vegetable garden overgrown with bindweed, was converted into a flourishing organic allotment growing a wide range of fruit and vegetables. Under the guidance of **Ed, a trained therapeutic horticulturalist** and a group of Transition volunteers, the revival of the garden has been combined with providing real gardening work and friendship for groups of vulnerable and lonely people in Chichester, which has been life-changing for some.

**SPRING AND AUTUMN 2023 UPCOMING**

**24<sup>th</sup> April** – **Spring Fling and Plant Swap**. This annual event has been brought forward this year in the hope that more young plants will be available for swapping. Please help to make it a success by bringing all your spares. There will also be the usual Bring and Share Supper, so bring some food to share and your own plates, cutlery and glasses.

**5<sup>th</sup> June** – **Picnic in the Bishops Gardens**. The usual Monday evening meeting has been replaced by the idea of a lunchtime picnic. If the weather is forecast is bad, it can easily be moved to a different date. It is hoped that some members who have not

managed to come in the evenings, will be able to attend. We'd love to see you!  
Stephanie will post more details nearer the time.

**25th September – Melanie Oxley on Climate Change.** This talk was cancelled in April 2022 due to Melanie's ill health, so we are glad to welcome her now she is better.

**30th October – AGM and Harvest Supper**

**27th November - Sarah Hughes, Strategic Wildlife Corridors Project Office for Chichester District Council** will give a talk on wildlife corridors and wildlife gardening. Sarah gave us a talk on Zoom during one of the lockdowns which those of us who logged in really enjoyed. Now is a second chance for those who missed it and for those who enjoyed the first one to hear it in person and updated!

## SUMMER VISITS

**Stephanie** will update members.

## OTHER MATTERS

**Saturday 20th May – Cookscroft Gardens, Earnley,** are holding an open day in aid of the Red Cross between 11am and 4pm, and are looking for volunteers to help taking ticket entry and serving refreshments. If anyone is interested in helping this worthwhile cause, they can sign using the weblink in Stephanie's email of **22nd March - March Reminder and Appeals for Help.** I tried to copy it into the newsletter but couldn't get it to work. Sorry!

**Change in Entrance Charge** – we are still struggling to cover meetings and other costs. Membership and attendance at meetings has not completely picked up after the pandemic and costs are tending to rise. Therefore we have decided to increase the entry fee at meetings to **£3 for members and £4 for visitors** with effect from **25th September.** There is no charge for the Spring Fling.

## LAST WORDS

We have a remarkably friendly blackbird in our garden. It follows us around while we are working, and the other day, when I shouted from the kitchen door that tea was ready and assumed I would scare it off, it came towards my voice instead. Maybe it recognised that 'tea' brought with it the likelihood of cake crumbs. I made sure it got some!

*Unless otherwise stated, Monday meetings take place at the Basil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St Pancras, Chichester, PO19 7LG.*

*Meetings start at 7.30pm; doors open at 7.15pm*

## Your Cogs Organisers are:

**Treasurer** – Liz Campling (01243 532910; [lizcamplinguk@hotmail.com](mailto:lizcamplinguk@hotmail.com))

**Secretary** – Penelope Johnstone (01243 771881; [penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:penelopejohnstone@yahoo.co.uk))

**Membership Secretary** – Stephanie Carn (01243 533393; [stephcarn@gmail.com](mailto:stephcarn@gmail.com))

**Website** – Tom Broughton ([tom@chicogs.org.uk](mailto:tom@chicogs.org.uk))

**Committee Members** – Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, plus:

Pat Alderton (01243 822615)                      Gina Scott (01243 778689)

Diana Morgan                                      [www.chicogs.org.uk](http://www.chicogs.org.uk)