

## Chichester Organic Gardening Society

### Newsletter 86 April 2022

#### Notes from the Committee

After the cold winds of early April, it feels like Spring is back again, as I sit by the window in the sun writing this. The sapling planted in the verge outside our house last November and nurtured by residents during the dry spells is bursting into leaf, and the spring flowers are making a wonderful show everywhere.

The busy time in our allotments and gardens is now in full swing, as is that tricky period of decision-making as the weather improves but frost and gales cannot yet be ruled out. Our tomato seedlings sheltered in the conservatory have outgrown their pots but is it safe to put the repotted ones in an unheated greenhouse? That was the subject of our breakfast-time conversation this morning. You are probably having similar ones.

Let's hope for a good growing season, but whatever happens, do not forget to make time to put down your trowel and sit and relax in the garden whenever the weather allows and hope it provides some balm from the dreadful troubles of the world.

#### Meetings Spring 2022

**31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 – Members Evening.** Only 8 members attended but a pleasant and convivial evening was had by all. As well as sampling (in a safe manner) each other's jams and chutneys from 2021, the discussion ranged from the best time to plant tomato seeds (consensus was the beginning of March in a sheltered environment like a greenhouse or under a cloche) to the perennial topic of organic deterrents for slugs and snails. Gina produced an organic slug spray based on peppermint, which apparently slugs hate. It is safe to use around animal and children and for wildlife and seems to be quite effective. For further information, visit [www.cooperandgracie.com](http://www.cooperandgracie.com).

Stephanie and Alan brought photos of the verges in Whyke Road and the variety of wild flowers including orchids that sprang up there when the grass was just allowed to grow. WSCC now has a cutting regime for selected verges which see only one cut a year. Hopefully this will help with biodiversity and support pollinators. For more information contact: [active.communities@westsussex.gov.uk/WSHighways/communityverges](mailto:active.communities@westsussex.gov.uk/WSHighways/communityverges).

**28<sup>th</sup> February** - the talk by Transition Chichester's Ed Bowring was cancelled a short notice as the speaker tested positive for covid. We hope to reschedule this talk for 2023.

**28<sup>th</sup> March - Nik Knight**, Chairman and County Bat Recorder for Hampshire gave a fascinating talk entitled **Bat; Superheroes of the Night'**. There is no space here for to even begin to summarise all we learnt about these tiny, elusive and much-maligned creatures, who can live up to 22 years and fly as speeds of over 30kph. Nik explained that it is becoming much easier to track bat habitats and lifestyles (and therefore protect them better) due to 2 pieces of modern technology. Bat noises can now be amplified on to phones in a way that is audible to the human ear. We listened to some and were amazed at how various they are. Some resemble squeaks, as you might expect, but others are more like clicks or rattles! Even more amazingly, high-quality military-grade thermal imaging cameras can capture bats in flight or coming out of their crevices to hunt at sundown in a way that was never possible before. We all laughed at the image of a nervous bat reluctant to come out of its hiding place being pushed out by the impatient ones behind like someone making their first parachute jump. There are over 20 species native to this part of the world but several of them are

endangered. And spare a thought for the Greater Mouse-eared Bat, of which only one lone male is known to exist now in this part of the South.

### **Future Meetings 2022**

**25<sup>th</sup> April - a talk by Melanie Oxley on ‘Gardening in a Climate Crisis’** also had to be postponed. She’s actually been taken into hospital at very short notice. Liz and Penelope will offer a quiz and a discussion evening to anyone who comes along after all and we hope to reschedule Melanie’s talk next year, when, hopefully, she’ll be better.

**6<sup>th</sup> June - Spring Fling.** A chance for a shared meal and a plants and seed swop.

**26<sup>th</sup> September** – a talk by **David Standing, former head gardener at Gilbert White’s Garden in Selbourne.** After his retirement, David continues to research the history of the garden and 18<sup>th</sup> Century plants.

**31<sup>st</sup> October – AGM and Harvest Supper**

**28<sup>th</sup> November – Maggie Haynes from Tuppenny Barn** will talk on the development of the charity and the Outside Living Classroom. A lot has happened since our last visit as a society.

**Summer Visits** – we hope to arrange some to members’ gardens. Please contact a member of the Committee if you wish to volunteer yours or have a suggestion.

### **Tree in Memory of David Scott**

We have at last received the go-ahead from the New Park Community Centre to plant a tree in their grounds in memory of our late treasurer, David Scott. It will be a native tree and we’re thinking of a crab apple, good for flowers, fruit, and the birds. The matter will be discussed at the next Committee meeting in April and plans definitely put in train in time of the tree-planting season this Autumn.

### **Last Words – more about Bats**

In the early days of the first lockdown, my daughter told me how sorry she felt for bats, who were being blamed for transmitting the virus when all they had done was to be bats and had not asked to be eaten. Bats have often had a bad press but contrary to popular myth, they do not: get in your hair; suck your blood (they would rather avoid you); damage property by gnawing electrical cables like rodents; and research has shown that rabies-carrying bats are quite rare.

*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 (01243 790026; [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