



MRALGA

Winter news

A new year's message from our Chair

Volunteers are needed NOW

Over the last 15 years volunteers have transformed this site not only to be a vibrant allotment site, but into a successful local community that Bedford can be proud of.

Our thanks go out to you all. However, we are always asking for new volunteers to come forward to help us with just an hour or two to spare. So please do come and see me in the shop, where I am most Thursday and Saturday mornings.

This is a large site and needs good volunteers to keep the site organised, so thank you in anticipation of your help. On behalf of the Trustee team, we wish you and your family another happy gardening new year.

Maria - Chair Person

The tale of the Laxton boy and memories of a dear departed friend



January and February is the time for pruning apple and pear fruit trees. Did you know that a very famous Bedford boy was a certain Thomas Laxton – a name given to some famous British apple trees? He even worked with great Victorian Charles Darwin with his life-times work the world famous 'Origin of the Species.'

Thomas bred many varieties of apples and pears, soft fruit and even roses. Many of his varieties are still with us today; a fine legacy to his skilful work.

During the 1960's, the apple Orchards where sold on to Bedford College and Putnoe. As a great reminder to his work and achievements, our own orchard still contains some of the Laxton apple trees.

Finally and on a rather sad note for this site, the funeral of the late tenant Mr Ram took place on the 11th January and his funeral cortege passed his plots as a final farewell. This was a very poignant moment for us all who knew him and his long association with Mile Road. He is remembered as a stalwart of allotment gardening and is not forgotten.

David Osborn – Vice Chairman.

The New Year weather

Please be mindful of storms and periods of high winds. Take every effort to secure sheds and greenhouses. You need to keep property safe so items don't blow onto neighbour's plots. Secure all stacks. Continue to harvest or collect rain water from buildings. Water and its site maintenance on site is one of our challenging costs.

A brief history of Mile Road Allotments



The Mile Road site was opened in the 1940s and quickly became a success. Later on however, it was placed on a buildings submissions list in 2008. Tenants organised a petition and volunteers came forward to organise a formal allotment body and committee.

We progressed to devolved management in 2010. The hut was refurbished and an allotment shop opened on limited resources and more recently have added to our site facilities. To build a good community spirit, we began to organise events. This included our Annual Produce Show, Plant Sale, Quiz Nights and Christmas events. We planned on-site talks and visits to Show Gardens. As we had many different families, we decided to include Daffodil competitions, Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Pumpkin Carving and a visit by Santa at Christmas time.

In 2012 we became a Limited Company and in 2014 registered as a charity. Fund raising is very important and from our hard work in assisted fund raising, we now have a Woowo waterless toilet, new hut doors, a first-aid defibrillator, ramps for the disabled and an electric pallet truck to move heavy stock around.

Our poly-tunnel and the association greenhouses are for plant production. As we are a charity, we like to help other charities and have pleasure in supporting the TIBBS Dementia Foundation.

Hello and welcome – two new Trustees

My name is **Nigel James**. I was a volunteer during 2023 and am an events committee member. I now fulfil the role of Minutes Secretary. I will work alongside General Secretary Alhaj Yasmin. If you can think of any useful ways to improve things, please get back to either myself or Yasmin or another volunteer or trustee. We always welcome good practical ideas.

Greetings everyone! My name is **Alhaj Yasmin**, better known as Yasmin. I am the General Secretary and will work along side our other secretary Nigel. I am a trainee teacher with an educational background in mental health. I speak many different languages such as Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi and am learning Polish and Russian. I am very friendly and easy-going, so do come and say hello to me if you see me. Please to help.

Bonfires 2024 & MRALGA 2024

Bonfires are now restricted to 8 months in the year. **No fires are permitted June, July, August and September.** This restriction coincides with periods of high fire risk. Our local neighbours are now advised about the dates from our **What's On MRALGA 2024**. Get your copy from the hut if you don't have one and watch our site notice boards for forthcoming event updates.



Bedford Christmas tree Festival

For the past two years we have been part of the Bedford Christmas tree Festival at St Paul's Church. The festival raises money for Bedford hospital. In 2023 it raised over £23,000.00. Tenant Amanda Brookes, committee member of Bedford Hospital Charity and Friends kindly donated a real tree for us to decorate.

Trees are also decorated by community groups and schools. Last year the theme was Kings and Queens. We decorated our tree with knitted royal fruit and vegetables. We did not win this time, but in taking part it is all about branching out the message to everyone in Bedford and ringing out bells of "growing your own food".

Soon we will know this year theme. If you would like to help please let me know by phone, email or when you see me around.

Carol Andrew MRALGA Treasurer. treasurer@mralga.org