



The Manor Fields Estate Limited

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November 2021 Garden newsletter

Dear Residents,

As you will know, Joanne Morris resigned to return to her native Yorkshire with effect from the end of June. An external gardening company suggested by a leaseholder was approached but declined to visit the estate with a view to providing a proposal. As with other external contractors contacted on previous occasions, their feedback was that the estate is better served by an internal model for reasons of cost effectiveness and quality of service. The Gardening committee then researched the job market, interviewed external candidates but were not satisfied with them at various levels. Stuart Kuhn, a member of the existing team, also applied. After much consideration among the gardening committee, and with board approval, Stuart has been appointed Garden Operations Manager with effect from 1 October 2021.

Stuart has worked here since October 2017 and took the initiative of leading the gardening team from 1 July after Jo's departure. We also commend our gardening staff for their team collaboration in working constructively together during this temporary phase.

Winter work

The winter on an estate such as ours does not present a fallow work period – quite the opposite. The spring and summer seasons present the usual challenges of new planting, weed growth, watering, mowing and similar. The autumn and winter months are the time for other garden maintenance, tree, bush and shrub pruning and the cutting back of large amounts of “background” growth in the rear areas, the woodland glen and the boundary areas. Ivy and other intrusive growth are a particular challenge.

The winter planting of the window boxes is starting imminently and the irrigation system into the boxes that was put in place earlier in the year has proved very successful.

Garden Volunteers

The new scheme, initiated earlier this year, has been successful and we are fortunate that 7 leaseholders are now working, in liaison with Stuart, to further improve the appearance of the Estate - and in such positive spirit. They have complemented the efforts of the existing team - those who have quietly laboured over many years and the allotment group. This brings the total number of leaseholders who make positive contributions to the attractiveness of our beautiful gardens to about 25.

The Gardens Committee has found that being given the opportunity to enhance the experience of living at Manor Fields through exercising their green fingers is something which many people welcome.

A 'bring your own' tea party, recently held in the Bunker, was attended by about 14 volunteers and 4 of the most faithful allotment customers. They and those not able to be present were thanked for everything they do.

New volunteers, especially those prepared to focus their attention on the areas immediately outside the Houses where they live, will always be welcome. If you would like to become involved, please contact Anthony Heaton-Armstrong, the volunteer scheme coordinator, by email at: anthonyha123@btinternet.com

The Pond

The pond remains one of the estate's most popular features and has happily sustained its eco health despite rather capricious changes in the weather: a short Indian Summer, intermittent but heavy showers and two cold snaps. It is now subsiding into its late autumn stupor. However, the water temperatures have mostly exceeded those of the surrounding air. For readers who like the technical data on water quality, the readings taken by Chris Holt last week are:

Temperature: Air = 9 degrees C.

Water = 10 degrees C.

Visibility/10 = 9 (very good)

pH 8.00 (slightly alkaline)

Ammonia 0.00 (very good)

Nitrites: 0.00 (very good)

Phosphates 0.25 (good)

Who are we?

The gardening committee members are Graham Houston, Valerie Ferguson, Mary Marggraf, Gráinne Coker, Anthony Heaton-Armstrong and Ann Uden, ably supported by Stuart Kuhn.

Bees and Manor Fields Honey



It's not been a great year for honeybees country wide but nevertheless the nucleus colony brought in spring by our local bee expert, Steve Derry, has built modestly. The constant spring rain meant little foraging resulting in limited spring honey.

The weather in the summer wasn't much better but the bees did lay down some honey and they welcomed the water dish placed nearby.

The jars of honey (12oz/340g) will shortly be available for sale at the Estate Office for £7.50.

We will only have a limited amount due to this year's weather, so to give everyone a chance of purchasing a jar, it will be limited to one per household – cash only please.