

GROWING TOGETHER

The Self-Sufficiency Group

May 2023

Newsletter



GROWING TOGETHER Self-Sufficiency group exists to enable and encourage its members to practice self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and maintain a "sustainable life style" in a fast changing worldwide environment

View this newsletter at:-

www.ehss.org.uk

Indoor meetings are held at 19.30 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the:-

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Our MAY Meeting will be: -

WEDNESDAY 10th at 7.30pm

Nick Dobbs, FRIENDSHIP DEVELOPMENT MANAGER for the Countryside Regeneration Trust. This was postponed from March

theCRT.co.uk



Entry fees:

After much useful debate at the AGM, it has been decided to increase the entrance fee at meetings to **£2** for members and **£4** for visitors to cover the cost rises from renting the hall and the speakers. However, it has also been decided to allow a member to bring a new to EHSS "**first time guest**" at the members fee of £2. We hope you are all happy with that as we feel it is a good compromise which may encourage our members to introduce possible new people to our group.

For new members: the hall is open to us from 7.30pm and the talks start at 8.00pm, with a duration of approximate 1 hour. Members pay £2 on the door and visitors pay £4. All are welcome!! Free Tea and Coffee are usually available from 9.00pm.

As I am still the lucky person who arranges the talks, here are some of the talks and visits we may expect.

May Nick Dobbs from the Countryside Regeneration Trust

June Please note: Ellie and Andy Kinnear's beautiful rose garden *or possibly a fish farming business. Tbc.*

July a visit to the Community Garden run by Kate Green, in Petworth

August Imbrams Farm

September tba

October, ecologist Matt Phelps from the Knepp Rewilding project.

November Alan Williams from the RHS talking about the history of allotments

December Christmas Party... which I shall not be arranging!

April Talk

Kate Green brought us right up to date about the Petworth Community Garden. More than ever the garden and its volunteers are helping people in the community who struggle with mental and physical health to find fun work and friendship there. Some can take a qualification and go on to get jobs in horticulture. The need has grown for the food they provide as well. With produce going to the local food bank on a regular basis. People who go to Petworth tend to see the lovely old buildings and the independent high end shops, but the divide between very well off and very poor is there and extreme. There is one supermarket, a small CO-OP, whose prices are higher than another CO-OP a few miles away! Wow betide you if you don't have a car there.

The garden has wonderful raised beds and wide wheelchair friendly paths for easy access for everyone. The now famous composting loo designed by my late brother in law Phil Taylor is a marvel to behold!

A Men's Shed project is very well attended and loved. A space to drink tea and make and mend things just like men always had at the end of the garden back in my childhood. Now possibly converted into a nice summerhouse or gone completely...

Kate talked about how she is trying to stand back a bit as she felt that things fell apart if she wasn't able to be in charge, and it was time to spread the load... sounded a bit familiar.

We will be going there in July, so I hope to see you there.

The Lambing day that I was unable to attend as Ziggy the whippet belonging to some friends was on his way to stay for a few days was, I am told, really lovely and enjoyed by 17 members. Ellie and Andy showed everyone round the farm and dished

up CAKE! They were so welcoming and generous and those who have spoken to me said how much they enjoyed it.



I do hope this will not be the last year of talks and outings, as I would really like to go there next year!

Big thank you to Frances for organizing this.



Dru's News

....is looking as busy as ever. Yesterday the sun shone and it was warm. With a rush of blood to the head I potted on all my little geraniums (Apple Blossom this year) and along with the ones who have survived my ministrations, or lack of them, put the out by the summerhouse. Taking them in at night at present, but it really felt like a step forward. The two tomato plants are in their hanging baskets, out during the day and in at night. Seeds sown include Cosmos, some are up and some not, Ammi Magus, no sign, rocket... yes, echinachia, no sign. Morning Glory in today. Dahlias are in pots and some are shooting. Canna lily, no sign, Ginger lily, no sign. Clematis, (I have 9) all but one going full tilt. Freckles isn't. Shame.

Lots of plants are bursting out which is lovely and there is still time for the others.. still surprised at the hardy fuchsias though...

Now, my tulips!! I bought 3 new ones last autumn from Sarah Raven and they are fantastic! A real joy to behold.

As you probably already know, I don't grow food.. just about manage rocket and lettuce and tomatoes... still, I like simple ingredients.

Had friends with 6 month old baby to tea, set up in the garden today... it rained, but lots of cake was consumed. Its May 1st tomorrow, so cold and wet I suppose. My mood is very dependent on weather, so HAPPY yesterday and just ok today...

Friends are booking their holidays and asking if we can have the dogs... said yes and realise got two at one time twice. That will be interesting.

I went looking for the perfect summer dress when I went to Chichester on Tuesday. I wanted Midi length, elbow/ long sleeves, and not low cut or deep V. Also in a nice pattern / colour. Lots of dresses had some of these elements, usually only one or two, everywhere... found one on Thursday in a charity shop. 1. right size. 2. Longish sleeves. 3 high V neck, 4 Midi length, 5. Lovely green with random flowers. And the best part? £6.99. Job done.

I have helped a friend move from her house and garden to an apartment, second floor, no garden. she sold off a lot of stuff, some of which I bought. Gtech hedge clippers on long pole which turns to enable the cutting of a highish hedge; a leaf blower, lots of fun and difficult to get the hang of where to blow the leaves so they don't end up doubling back! And a Karcher pressure washer. I have used

that at my place of work last week, clearing the concrete paths which were left in a rather muddy state after new decking had been installed during the recent period of RAIN! I think I may be laying new turf there if the grass seed they threw down before leaving don't take. It was harder work than I expected, and as dirty as I did expect. So looking forward to having another go this week! That's my favourite type of out door "playing"!

Woke up this morning to sunshine! Yippee I thought, a lovely morning for the first of May... did it last? NO... clouds being pushed along by a strong north wind. Plants overnight in summer house now out having a shiver.

The Compost Bin

Look thro diary for May work

Repair Café comes up trumps: the blade of my garden spade had been snapped off by a strong but over-keen garden helper, so I thought I would put the new Repair Café in South Harting to the test. One of the team called Barney offered to help and I collected it a couple of weeks ago – beautifully welded back together, all at no cost including a welcome cup of coffee, well worth the voluntary donation in their box. I am wondering whether to push my luck next time by giving them the pickaxe which was similarly snapped in half by the same over-keen helper. The Repair Café meets on the third Saturday of each month at 10am, along the small road beside South Harting church (there's a sign on the corner).

Now that shrubs are growing again, the full cost of this winter's hard frosts is beginning to show. For instance, we have lost a trusty Hebe that's served us well for ten years; thanks to the extreme frost it's completely dead. Many others have lost their outer branches and leaves and needed a thorough pruning to encourage the lower buds to take over. Will the dahlias have survived those conditions? – we shall soon know

My spade, before and after repair -





No wonder the outdoor-sown seeds have been taking so long to germinate this year – the soil temperature as I write this at the end of April is the same as was recorded in my diary for 15th February!

Thank goodness for my little (two-tray size) propagator in which I start off my tender and half-hardy seedlings. My Mini Munch cucumber seeds were up and growing well up in just 3 days; most others germinate in a week or so. In these days of high fuel costs I wondered what this little wonder of a heater is consuming, so I did a test with my Smart Meter. It tells me that uses £1 worth every 24 hours. I think I can justify that for a few weeks, as part of the cost of my hobby! Smart meters are at their best when tracking down which items may be consuming more than you might think – watching the dial as you turn things on and off (after allowing for the slight lag).

Best seed compost: I have been trialling the Fertile Fibre seed and potting compost that jumped straight into the No.1 position in the latest Which? magazine test results. It's expensive but the 60L bags are larger than most. Delivery is free. One large bag costs a hefty £24 but if you buy 2 the price drops to £19, and even lower in greater quantity. It's the smoothest, nicest to use peat-free compost, suitable for even the tiniest seeds like Lobelia (for which other peat-free brands are less than ideal). Germination is rapid and I won't be buying anything else in future, especially when putting in a joint order with a friend. The makers claim it's also suitable for potting, which I will also be testing in the near future.

They loved the lambs:



Our visit to the lambing day at Orchard Park Farm, Lurgashall on 8th April was a great success, especially for the youngsters (in this case my grand-daughter Ella) who loved the opportunity to have a good cuddle! I particularly enjoyed the guided tour of the farm with its magnificent old outbuildings, which had been dismantled from other locations in the area and patiently rebuilt by the farmer, Andy Kinnear. It certainly justified the somewhat long-winded diversion to get there, due to the fire that had closed the road through Midhurst.

On Coronation Day, the fifteen or so residents of our little hamlet just off the A272 will be assembling on our jointly-owned triangle of grass (which must be the world's smallest village green!) to raise a glass or two to our new king; it's lovely when events such as this (and last year's Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen) can serve to bring communities together. I remember so clearly the day when baby Charles was born. I was listening to the popular comedy programme "Much Binding in the Marsh" on the Light Programme just before the news broadcast when the official announcement from the Palace was due to be revealed. Any leaks before then were strictly banned. As all members of the programme sang their usual signature tune at the end, Richard Murdoch's unmistakable voice was clearly heard as he slipped in the words "Good Ol' Charlie!".

Surplus seeds or seedlings? If you have half-empty seed packets that you don't want to keep for another year, or surplus seedlings that need pricking out and are too good to throw away, why not bring them all along to this month's meeting (which incidentally sounds very interesting) and arrange them on the table at the back of the hall? As you prefer, you can either put a low price on them, offer them free to a good home, or even maybe on a one-for-one swap basis.

~ Alec.

NEW TALK ORGANISER NEEDED

This really will be the last year I am going to do this job. I will be retiring from this role from November 2023 onwards.

Please someone, take it on. I feel dreadful about leaving you in the lurch, which is why I have gone on doing it so long... BUT the time has come for someone new.

From personal experience: It really has to be one person in charge: this really isn't a job for a committee!!!

By all means ring for a friendly chat if you are possibly willing to take on this group role.

No talks... no group maybe...

~ Dru

Would anyone like crockpots? If so, please contact Phoebe Newman on 01428 723585. She lives in Liphook. You will need to collect as she does not have transport.

Discount Tickets For RHS Wisley

Our group's affiliation to the RHS gives us a card to share which will let up to 2 of us purchase tickets with a 30% discount. At £16.50 non gift aid entrance that's a total saving of £9.90. So saving 2/3rds of your £15 EHSS membership fee for 2023! Contact Andy Tate – our treasurer to arrange.

This membership card entitles us to discount at any RHS garden. So if you are off on holiday in the UK, look and see if there is an RHS garden near your destination.