



Ashbourne Allotment Association Limited

NEWSLETTER

2026
May



Rhubarb season always seems to arrive with a jolt, one minute the crowns are asleep, the next they're throwing up bright pink stalks begging to be used. If you've already baked the crumbles and filled the freezer, a homemade rhubarb and ginger cordial is a brilliant way to capture that sharp, spring brightness in a bottle. It's simple, keeps well in the fridge, and turns even the plainest glass of sparkling water into something that tastes like the start of the growing year.

Steps

Combine the chopped rhubarb, sliced ginger, lemon zest and water in a large pan.

Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 20–25 minutes until the rhubarb has completely softened.

Strain through a fine sieve or muslin, letting the liquid drip through without pressing (to keep it clear).

Return the strained liquid to the pan, add the sugar and lemon juice, and heat gently until the sugar dissolves.

Bring to a brief boil for 1–2 minutes, then remove from the heat.

Pour into sterilised bottles and seal. Store in the fridge and use within 3–4 weeks, or freeze for longer keeping.

1 kg rhubarb, chopped
150–200 g fresh ginger,
sliced (adjust to taste)
750 g caster sugar
1 lemon, zest and juice
750 ml water



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We've welcomed 17 new members between April 2025 and March 2026. People left their plots for a whole mix of reasons – moving house, poor health, bereavement, being too busy, and in a few cases eviction. Turnover is part of allotment life, and it's been encouraging to see so many new faces taking plots on and getting stuck in. Only one of the seven new tenants this year came through an eviction, which shows how well most plots are being looked after.



WEBSITE

It has been suggested that the current AAA website is a little passive and would benefit from more member involvement and fresh ideas.

Suggestions for what you'd like to see online are very welcome.

SKIP

This year's skip (2–7 April) cost £576 and was filled quickly. It proved worthwhile again and the committee is happy to repeat it annually if members agree.

COMMUNITY DAY

Our Community Day on 12 July 2025 was a real highlight. More than 20 members turned out to help tackle the jobs that had been delayed by weather and workload. The community shed was painted, compost bays tidied, the car park refreshed and a general site clean-up completed. The atmosphere was brilliant and the amount achieved saved the committee many hours of work.

TV STARS!

Two of our plot holders have appeared on BBC programmes this year. Maggie and Mon were interviewed on their plot for *Gardeners' World*, and Carolyn supported filming for a Countryfile feature on the National Forest. It's been lovely to see our allotment community represented so positively.

TRAVELLER UPDATE

A notice has been posted outside the cemetery regarding a temporary two-year planning application for four caravans and six vehicles. We will keep members informed of any developments.

AAA SHOP UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who supported the shop this year.

Sales totalled £1,774 across 118 individual orders.

New products included pre-packed onion sets, bagged farmhouse manure and Permatex Ultra Ground Cover.

A new cash register has also been installed.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Risk assessments were last completed in August 2025 and all actions have been addressed. These now run annually, with the next due in July/August. New safety signage has also been installed. Members are encouraged to raise any concerns with the committee.



FINANCIAL

New gate

The committee has committed £2,500 to replace the ageing timber gate with a secure galvanised steel gate and side panels. Installation details will follow.

Perimeter fencing

Of the 194 perimeter posts, 69 have rotted – around 36%. We've purchased 80 Dura2 posts with a 20-year warranty and now need to arrange installation. Volunteers with the right skills would be very welcome, otherwise a contractor will be appointed.

Mower service & pathways

The sit-on mower was serviced this year at Brass Monkeys in Ashbourne for £225. Members are reminded to keep pathways clear of stones, posts and debris to avoid blade damage

VERMIN CONTROL

Our Pestex vermin control contract was renewed in April 2025 on a quarterly basis. Other major costs include site insurance, water rates, accountancy fees and rat box maintenance. These rising costs are part of the reason why, at the 2025 AGM, the committee increased the plot rental to £50.

AGM

15th July

The AGM will be held at the Royal Oak, Mayfield Road, on Wednesday, July 15th at 7.30pm. Please come along - it's your chance to have a say in future plans.

GENERAL UPDATES

Waste disposal reminder

We've had reports of weeds being tipped behind the Severn Trent border fence. This isn't permitted and anyone found doing so will receive a written warning.

Wildlife cameras

Some members may not know that wildlife cameras are positioned around the site to support security.

Nature area trial

We're trialling leaving the raised bank next to Watery Lane unmown as a small space for nature. Members' thoughts on this approach are invited.

Waiting list

There are 14 currently on the waiting list.