

PRIDE OF THE BOROUGH MEMBERS MONTHLY NEWS UPDATE MARCH 2019

Dear all

Now that the severe winds have passed and the sun continues to shine, I have got the patio chairs, or at least the cushions out of storage and managed to spend a couple of hours sitting out in the sunshine. I did spend a couple of days this month chasing patio furniture around the garden as the winds stormed through the garden. Mind you when the clouds appear or towards the end of the afternoon it still is a bit chilly. If this continues, I might even have to get the shorts on next week.

I ran out of available window sill space indoors last week, and since the wife refuses to let me have flowerpots in the bedroom, I had to move some pots into the greenhouse. I thought I would put a couple of the plants just outside on the garden wall, my efforts at hardening up the plants. Unfortunately, the plants were still too tender, and the cold nights and the small frosts killed them off. Lessons learned, being patient one of them.

Out and about in the Borough last weekend it was good to see how the spring weather has kicked in and the plant-life and in particular the trees are blooming in full glory. Some of the colours are quite amazing and a sight to behold. Sharing some of my snaps below I'm sure you will agree.



Far Left: beautiful Star Magnolia in Harcourt Road, Wigston.

Centre: Cherry Blossom in Glenbourne Drive, South Wigston

Right: Magnolia blossom on the tree and all over the A5199, Wigston

Now back to the Borough to have a look at the Pride of the Borough news for March and what's happening in April.

Membership Numbers

Membership numbers for February 2019 stand at **1200** at time of writing. This represents 100% of the total for 2018.

To date our records, show 813 renewed from last year and 387 brand new members. So, our thanks go to all the people who have spread the word on the benefits of Pride of the Borough.

The 2019 card remains available at a cost of £5. Anyone (not just residents of the Borough) can apply for the 2019 card by sending an application form to Brocks Hill Country Park & Centre, Washbrook Lane, Oadby Leicestershire LE2 5JJ or alternatively visiting

- Brocks Hill Country Park Café, Washbrook Lane, Oadby.
- OWBC Customer Service Centre in Bell Street, Wigston.
- Zephs Café, Trinity Methodist Church, Harborough Rd, Oadby, Leicester LE2 4LA
The Hospitality desk in Zephs Café is staffed from 10.00 – 3.30 Mon-Fri and 10.00 – 1.00 on Saturday.

Participating Businesses – February 2019

To date we have 54 businesses which offer discounts to Pride of the Borough members. If you know of a business which would like to be part of our scheme please let us know. The Participating Businesses are spread throughout the Borough:

Wistow 1 business
Oadby: 28 businesses
Wigston: 20 businesses
South Wigston: 5 businesses

New businesses joining us in March are all in Oadby and they are as follows:

- **Oadby Flooring:** 5% off carpets and beds
- **The Barber's Hub:** 25 New Street Free hot drink with any service.
- **Attic 38:** Ginn & Fizz+cocktails 20% off drinks.
(above Swatlands)

For complete listing please go to our website (Ctrl+click) [membership-card](#) to see the latest business offers. If you know of a business which would like to be part of our scheme please let us know.

3rd Saturday Monthly Working Parties (MWP):

On 16th March 2019 our Monthly Working Party, consisting of ten volunteers descended on Blaby Road Park, South Wigston on a very blustery day, to complete some tidying up of five flower beds at the front side of the park. Five people concentrated on weeding and general tilling in the flowerbeds and it now looks quite respectable once again.



The remaining five volunteers went out and about within Blaby Road Park and adjacent streets on the continual monthly effort of litter picking where they picked up and disposed of 15 bags of our communities' litter. I wonder if one day they may go out with their bags and litter pickers and come back with nothing..... I can dream can't I.

On a Sunday morning drive around the Borough I spotted a volunteer hard at it in the Ellis Park in Oadby on 24th March 2019.

Also on 24th March 2019 members of the congregation from St Pauls Church in Oadby had a litter picking event in the area around the church. They to picked up and disposed of 9 bags of litter. Well done guy's and hoping we can collaborate again on similar events in the future.



Moving onto April where the Monthly Working Party will be at Ellis Park, Oadby on the **20th April 2019**. Meeting at the Ellis Park car park at the usual time of 0930am. It's April so the weather may well be changeable so please ensure you are dressed for the occasion. Chairman is providing the tea and coffee as normal. Good chap he is.



Earlier in the month on **6th April 2019** Pride of the Borough will be hosting our litter picking event at Uplands Park in Oadby in support of the Great Britain Spring Clean campaign which has been underway from 22nd March and continues through until 23rd April 2019. It would be great to see a large turn out for this event. Litter picking equipment will be available for you to borrow so all you need to do is bring **YOU** and a friend or family.

The Pride of the Borough new Campaign entitled THINK LITTER which is a new initiative in trying to encourage or indeed educate residents of our Borough NOT TO DROP LITTER in the first place instead of the continuous process of picking litter up. The team visited Manor High School, Oadby this month and were very well received. As part of our collaboration with Manor High they are borrowing litter picking equipment for their support in the Great Britain Cleanup Event. Welcome on-board Manor High.

Volunteer Openings

Volunteer Required to Organise Delivery Rounds:

The position for volunteers to assist us in organizing delivery of the mail that we have to deliver throughout the year remains open. We have a large mail drop in the last week of April this year so we are still hoping to see some of our members volunteer to help. Anyone who may be interested can email or call us.

Volunteer Required for the position of Social Media Manager:

As our membership numbers grow and in an attempt to modernize our operations, we are very cognizant of the fact that in order to speed up our communications to existing members and attract new members and businesses we need to strengthen the digitalization of our communications. With this in mind we require someone who has an interest in Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram who would like to join our team and help us in this effort.

For both the openings above interested parties should contact us on:

Potb.oadbywigston@gmail.com or call to mob: 07874228491

Garden Tips for the month of April

Well the daffodils and crocuses are now beginning to pass and our attentions are starting to focus on the summer bulbs and bedding plants. But first have a look at the daffodils that Pride of the Borough volunteers planted in William Gunning Park, South Wigston.



Left: the daffodils that Pride of the Borough planted in 2017 blooming for their second year.



Right: the daffodils that we planted in October/November 2018.

My photography skills do not do full justice the efforts of the volunteers and to get a full appreciation of the plantings I recommend you visit the park.

By now I would imagine by now that your greenhouses and spare bedroom windowsills are packed with wee plant pots with seeds and seedlings in various stages of growth just awaiting to be put out into the big wide world of the garden. Just take care when moving young plants outside. The temperatures are still prone to dropping below zero which for periods of more than a couple of days may well kill tender plants off (like my courgettes).

However, we can talk a bit about potatoes, spuds, taters, or tatties depending where you come from. But what do we know about the good old potato and when and how to plant them?

Firstly, a little bit of history. The potato has been feeding the British population since its introduction to our shores in about the 16th century. The Incas had been growing potatoes in Peru since at least 5000BC. The Spanish conquistadors then brought the potato to Europe in around 1570 and of course we all know that Sir Walter Raleigh introduced them into his garden in Ireland in 1598. What we ate with our fish before that who knows.

So, I'm sure we are all familiar with the three types of potatoes, First Earlies, Second Earlies and then Maincrop. Now the stats:

First Early	Second Early	Maincrop
Plant: <i>March/April</i>	Plant: <i>April</i>	Plant: <i>April</i>
Spacing: <i>13cm deep, 30cm apart in rows 60cm apart</i>	Spacing: <i>13cm deep, 38cm apart in rows 75cm apart</i>	Spacing: <i>13cm deep, 38cm apart in rows 75cm apart</i>
Harvest: <i>Late May/July</i>	Harvest: <i>June thru September</i>	Harvest: <i>September thru November (the earlier the better)</i>
Eat: <i>Boiled with mint and seasoned to taste</i>	Eat: <i>Boiled or as potato salad</i>	Eat: <i>Baked,boiled,chipped,mashed,or roasted depending on variety</i>

You no doubt will have had your seed potatoes sitting in egg cartons 'chitting' for the past month or so and now guys it's time to get them trenches opened or the potato bins/sacks prepared and get planting. In open ground, potatoes will benefit from a sunny spot in well-drained soil – they will struggle in deep shade. Plant in ground that was manured for a previous crop and give it a good sprinkling of blood, fish and bonemeal. Wait until the weather is mild before actual planting. Try not to plant the tubers in frozen or boggy earth and only in prolonged dry spells will the potatoes need watering. As the shoots break through the surface, pul the earth up around them making a long ridge, so that just the very tips of the shoots are visible. This has two benefits firstly, it protects the shoots from any late frosts and secondly it keeps the developing tubers in the dark preventing them from turning green and becoming bitter and wait for it.... poisonous. When your earthing up reaches about 15 – 20cm you can stop and allow the potatoes themselves produce enough foilage to form a canopy over the growing area thus preventing weeds from establishing themselves.

We'll chat about harvesting later in the year.

Now what else is there to do? April is a month when you will be busy with sowing, potting up. But it is also a time of the year when insect pests become active. So, make quite sure that you are as active with your spraying and fumigating. Many jobs in the garden, like pruning roses, depend very much on locality. But wherever you live April will be a busy month. Also remember, especially if you have been somewhat less active throughout the winter and

you dive out into the garden spade and fork in hand and ready to move the garden shed or greenhouse you need to loosen up a little before you go lifting anything heavy. Also, if you are having to bend or kneel down a lot, remember to stand up regularly. Else like me you might need to call for assistance when you actually want to stand up. I had an All muscle malfunction whereby nothing was working..... Get the grandkids to call the wife for help.

<p>Bulbs Narcissi should have flower stems cut-off. Hand weed tulip beds. Sow lily seeds and complete the planting of lily bulbs. Lightly top dress gladioli at the end of the month.</p>	<p>Flowers for Cutting Sow seeds for ornamental gourds. Young shoots are just right for flower arrangements-but need special treatments</p>	<p>Fruit Spray to ensure pest and disease-free fruits. Cut back leaders of maiden plums. Start dis-budding established fan-trained peaches and nectarines. Pinch out any blossoms on new trees.</p>	<p>Greenhouse Increase the amounts of water given to plants, including cacti. Stop fuchsias and pot on begonias and gloxinias. Pot-up cyclamen seedlings. Sow seeds for tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes.</p>
<p>Hedges Prune flowering hedging shrubs. Hoe around newly planted shrubs. Keep a sharp look out for caterpillars</p>	<p>Herbaceous Plants Plant out Dahlia tubers. Sow Hardy annuals where they are to flower. Feed plants with liquid fertiliser. Weed, dig and mulch established borders.</p>	<p>House Plants Increase your stock of houseplants by propagation</p>	<p>Lawns Prepare the ground. Sow seed or lay turf for new lawns. Give established lawns their first feed of the year. Deal with moss and wormcasts.</p>
<p>Paths, Fences and Walls Lay new paths that will be decorative as well as functional</p>	<p>Patios, Balconies, Roof Gardens and window boxes All planting should be completed. Supports for climbing plants must be ready.</p>	<p>Rock Gardens Some of the easier grown plants can be divided. If you haven't done so, catalogue and label your plants. Seed of several rock plants can be sown.</p>	<p>Roses When pruning is complete, apply an organic fertiliser. Mulching with animal manure is best done this month to avoid breaking of young shoots that will have grown by May.</p>
<p>Shrubs, trees and climbers Trees and shrubs will appreciate mulching. Clematis plants ex pots can be planted out. Treat shrubs with systemic sprays to prevent aphids and red spider.</p>	<p>Vegetables Plant out broad beans and peas. Transplant brassicas. Get the tatties in. Seed sowing is among the months main jobs</p>	<p>Water Gardens Complete new pools. Springclean established pools. Build up fish to breeding condition. Place orders for new aquatic plants</p>	<p>Wildlife Parent birds are busy feeding their young so put out concentrated body-building foods. Watch out for cats stalking the nests.</p>

Reference: Marshall Cavendish; Gardeners Diary; ninth edition 1988

For other specialist advice/reading click on link below (Ctrl+click)

<https://www.thompson-morgan.com/what-to-do-in-the-garden-in-april>

My Caribbean Sailaround follows on next month

Notice of Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting will be on **Monday 8th April 2019 at 5.00pm at Brocks Hill Visitor Centre, Washbrook Lane Oadby**

All members - meaning those who have a 2019 membership card are welcome to attend the meeting and are entitled to submit motions for discussion.

Kind regards to all

Mike Connelly, secretary