

PRIDE OF THE BOROUGH

MEMBERS MONTHLY NEWS UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2019

Dear all

A lovely sunny welcome to all our Pride of the Borough readers and to anyone else who may be reading this newsletter today and although I am late a Happy St.Davids day to our welsh readers..

I was lucky to get out into the back garden and do a bit of 'suntan topping up' last week. Who would have thought 21°C so early in the year? But I'm not being too cocky and keeping my eye on the long-range forecast looking for when frost or snow is due. I've got my cloches and polytunnel at the ready. You never know it may pass us by this year.

As I mentioned last month, Spring which for me is the best time of the year. Last month I was chatting about snowdrops, daffodils and crocuses et al, but when out and about in Wigston at the weekend I noticed that the magnolia trees are well into the budding phase and I'm expecting to see the trees in full bloom by end of next week. The only thing about magnolia trees is that their blooming extravaganza is so short and before you know it its all over the garden and pavements.

Well the 1st March is the metrological first day of spring. However, the astronomical 1st day of spring or the real spring equinox is March 20th and as promised let me share a little of what it is all about.



The Spring Equinox, known as the Vernal Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere, is the day when the sun sits directly over the equator, so day and night all over the world are of equal length. In the Northern Hemisphere, it is the first day of spring. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is known as the Autumnal Equinox and signals the beginning of fall. The Spring Equinox falls anywhere from March 19th through March 21st.

History of the Spring Equinox

Originally, March 25th was set as the date of the Spring Equinox by Julius Caesar when he established the Julian calendar in about 45 B.C. However, because the year as set by the Julian calendar was about 365.25 days, there was a drift between the two equinoxes. For example, the Spring Equinox in 300 A.D happened on March 21st, but 1200 years later it had drifted to March 11th. Because of this drifting of the Julian calendar, Pope Gregory XIII decided to create a more modern calendar. One that adhered to the date of Easter, as set by the Council of Nicaea, or about March 21st. His solution was to create the Gregorian calendar. However, that calendar has also proved to be imperfect. The equinox oscillated by over 50 hours around its mean position. Which would cause Easter to fall on a date before the equinox. Fortunately, that was fixed by astronomers who omitted a number of days from the calendar so that the Spring Equinox would fall somewhere between March 19th and March 21st.

I've been a bad lad here because I forgot where I got this info so I cannot make a proper citation but thanks to the internet anyway.

At least one can loosely plan around the spring equinox unlike, dare I mention it, dare I, should I, well okay **Brexit** and still our leader and the massed assembly she calls a government continue to faff around. Will it be, won't it, shall we just forget it. I saw a BBC news clip the other night where she's chasing other EU leaders to Sharm al Sheik for what..... to get a game of pool. What can I say? Bet they beat her at that as well. I do hope she was on one of those £5 weekend breaks out of the Leicester Mercury and not from our tax monies.

However, Februarys travel man of the month must go to Kim Jong UN, the North Korean leader. 4000km on a train, what a journey.

It's being reported that it is hard keeping up with [Kim Jong Un](#). The [North Korean](#) leader arrived in Vietnam on the Tuesday after enduring an almost 70-hour train ride through southern China, but one of his aides seemed unprepared for the big red carpet arrival. Kim was captured on video disembarking his green-and-yellow armoured train on Tuesday at Dong Dang station along the China-Vietnam border and walking down a red carpet rolled out for his arrival for his second summit with President Trump. As Kim stops to talk to Vietnamese officials who came to greet him, an aide is seen frantically dashing after the leader and catching up just as handshakes were being exchanged. The aide, who was identified as Kim's interpreter, appeared flustered and worried after the arrival hiccup. Rumours are he was trying to tell Kim that the Americans have cancelled lunch so don't give anything away.

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

Membership Numbers

Membership numbers for February 2019 stand at **1040** at time of writing. This represents 85.17% of the total for 2018. We asked our 2018 members to tell their friends and family of the advantages of being a Pride of the Borough member and we think this is why we already have many more people buying the card this year. To date our records, show 772 renewed from last year and 250 brand new members. So, our thanks go to all the people who have spread the word.

The 2019 card 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 52 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:	23 businesses
Wigston:	23 businesses
South Wigston:	5 businesses

Updates from the local business community tell us that **Fonefix** on Bell Street, Wigston are no longer accepting our card. They have new owners who have not given permission to give a discount to our members. Perhaps they will do so soon and in Oadby **The Sports Lounge and Grill** will give 10% off food and drink excluding their happy hour time which is Mon-Thurs 5.00-7.00pm and Fri 3.00- 7.00pm

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.

Volunteer Required to Organise Delivery Rounds:

Further to our request last month for volunteers to assist us in organizing delivery of the mail that we have to deliver throughout the year we are still hoping to see some of our members volunteer to help. Anyone who may be interested can email or call us on

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

3rd Saturday Monthly Working Parties (MWP):

On 16th February 2019 our Monthly Working Party focused attention at Hill Way, Oadby, LE2 5YG where we joined a residents working morning. Tasks included general clearance/tidy up with pruning of shrubs and roses plus identifying plants no longer wanted that we can transplant to other areas in the Borough. We had 13 volunteers + neighbours attend this event.

Additionally, volunteers also ventured out to the Highcroft Avenue around The Croft Medical Centre in Oadby (next to Sainsburys petrol station) advised that one of the Doctors came to see them and thanked them for tidying up around the Practice centre, they collected 10 bags of rubbish mainly fast food containers from the nearby fish and chip shop and Dominos Pizza shop on Highcroft Avenue. The doctor was very sincere and really appreciated their efforts. We thought you might like to see what he has said about the Pride of the Borough on the medical centres website, see the link below.

<http://www.thecroftmedicalcentre.co.uk/news.aspx>

It is good to see that occasionally our volunteers do get noticed and thanks is duly given, although probably not enough. Well done to all at the February event.

On March 16th 2019, we will be back in South Wigston at Blaby Road Park primarily to do a bit of tidying up in the flower beds. For information regarding April's event refer to our website

https://www.prideofthe_borough.org/blog

Each month when this news update is transmitted, we normally have a few emails advising us of areas in the Borough which could be doing with our attention regarding litter picking. We welcome all advice and all such requests are tabled at our monthly meeting for consideration. However, it must be remembered that our Monthly Working Parties are volunteers who give up their precious weekends to assist in litter picking and to date we have limited numbers on a monthly basis.

However there are some areas regarding litter picking where PotB are unable to help. We get many complaints about the state of some of our traffic islands in the Borough and rightly so. One case in what locally is called the McDonalds Roundabout in Wigston attracts lots of discussion mainly in how ugly and messy it looks throughout the year. As many of you know this is what OWBC class a sponsored roundabout. This means that the roundabout is under the control of a management consultant and subsequently a business vendor. Unfortunately, PotB cannot work in these prescribed areas. Another constraint and as in the case of most traffic islands there is no pedestrian access to the island so our volunteers would have no safe entrance or egress to the island and as such could not work in a safe environment. Subsequently our insurance which covers the safety of our volunteers would not cover us in such circumstances.

However, your advice to what we term as litter hotspots is always welcomed.

Watch out next month for Pride of the Borough new Campaign entitled THINK LITTER. This 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. More to follow.

Garden Tips

The new season starts in earnest this month. Nature stirs into growth as the weather improves and the soil warms. Drifts of bright yellow Daffodils proclaim that spring is really here. Follow the expert tips below to get your garden into shape for the months ahead.

Beds and Borders

1. Hoe borders to remove weeds, applying a thick layer of mulch over the surface to lock in moisture and help keep weeds at bay. Mulch, such as garden compost or well-rotted manure, also helps to improve the soil and give plants a well-needed spring boost.
2. Feed borders with a general-purpose fertiliser, applied and lightly forked in as per the manufacturer's instructions. Don't forget to feed your hedges too.
3. Winter flowering Heathers that have started to fade can be lightly trimmed now with a pair of shears, to help keep them tidy and compact.
4. Prune summer flowering shrubs, such as Buddleia, Lavatera and hardy Fuchsias now to allow for fresh new growth bearing this year's flowers.
5. Deciduous grasses left uncut for their winter display should be cut back now to make way for striking fresh new foliage.
6. Continue to plant new hedges, trees and shrubs.

Vegetable Garden

If you haven't done so already, prepare vegetable beds for spring planting by removing weeds and forking plenty of garden compost or well-rotted manure. To help the soil to warm up quicker, consider covering prepared beds with sheets of black plastic. These will also help to keep the soil drier, for easier seed sowing.

As weather and soil conditions allow, plant shallots, onions, garlic and early potatoes. If space allows, consider planting an Asparagus bed. One of the most prized of all vegetables, once established they reward you with a spring bounty of delicious spears for many years to come. Keep an eye out for slugs. Apply nematodes to the surrounding soil as an effective organic control.

Greenhouse

Continue to prick out and pot on seedlings and cuttings. Pot up and grow on young plants of your chosen summer bedding plants ready to plant out when all risk of frost has past. Growing from the young plug plant stage is an economical way to raise good numbers of plants and is ideal for those who didn't get around to sowing seed in good time earlier in the season. Sow tender annuals in a heated propagator.

For further reading click on link below (Ctrl+click)

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

My Caribbean Silaround

My recent Caribbean trip in January this year was most enlightening, and I visited many different countries and areas of interest. On New Years day I was lucky to be in Barbados where one of our stop-off's was the orchid gardens just outside Bridgetown.

Now I have never had any success in keeping (let alone growing) orchids but this visit certainly opened my eyes. Let me share a few photos of what I was able to experience when I was there.



Just a few of the many photos we took at this location. If you ever are lucky enough to get to Barbados. I highly recommend a visit to the Orchid Gardens. Now I know what to do with the what I called straggly roots that appear from the orchid. Do not plant them in soil. They like the air.

Notice of Monthly Meeting:

The next meeting will be on **Monday 11th March 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