



Pride of the Borough, Oadby & Wigston

EMiB Gold Award 2019

Monthly Newsletter October 2020

Good day to all the Pride of the Borough members out there and of course welcome to anyone who may be reading this monthly newsletter for the first time.

As I look back to last March, which seems like ages ago when this Covid-19 issue really hit us badly I did not think that we would still be having to cope with the total uncertainty of this pandemic and some of the political nonsense we get on a daily basis.

I have to believe that somewhere down the line there will be a relief from our current conditions, into lockdown then back out and then back in again but with new rules this time. My own opinion is that until a vaccine is available and given to the population then it is what it is. Covid will be with us for ever and just like flu and other world-wide diseases that may not have affected us here in the UK.

The scientists will find a vaccination (not a cure) and we will be able to go along on our merry way being a little more careful and aware of what is around us.

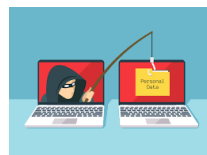
In the meantime, we really need to follow both the government and local council guidelines to keep us all safe. There are still so many of us just ignoring the rules and there is no one generation to blame it's everyone.

I have included a link to the OWBC website and in particular John Boyce's letter as of 9th October which gives you an update on what's happening in the Borough. I recommend you bookmark this page and check it out regularly.

[Enforcement - Open Letter From The Leader of The Council](#)

Once again, I really want you to keep your digital guard up. There are so many scammers out there who are cashing in with your money on the current situation. I work in the what is now known as the digital environment which means I have to use a computer a lot in my daily work, and the big new discipline out there is Cyber-Security. I used to think that could only be found in Star Wars and Startrek.

My company is really big on cyber-security and they regularly send out "dodgy" emails to employees just to see how alert we are. These dodgy emails are called "phishing"



Phishing is: the fraudulent practice of sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.

Unfortunately, not being on my best that day I opened the email and bang the trumpets, whistles and goodness knows what else goes off on the computer. Luckily the impact for me was that apart from being a trifle embarrassed everyone around me, even outside the social distance bubble, knew what I had done. Now have to go on a cybersecurity course. The point here is I lost a bit of creditability for anyone else with an external scammer it could be that Joe Bloggs is having a Caribbean holiday being paid for by your pension.

Local Businesses

As for our regular local businesses and despite my optimism last month I am now hearing that FASHION chain **Edinburgh Woolen Mill**, which owns Peacocks and Jaeger, is close to collapse, with 24,000 jobs in the balance. The company has lodged a notice of intention to appoint administrators to look for potential buyers to shore up the struggling business. If they do close down in our Borough that would mean we would lose EWM, Ponden Mills and Peacocks who are located in Bell Street and of course two of our Participating Businesses. Of course, there has been no official announcement that the facilities in Bell Street are in danger of closing but nevertheless it would be good to try to support them. I get a lot of my Xmas gifts between those three shops.



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09 October 2020

Now onto the Pride of the Borough business news for this month, things you should be looking at in your garden and a project for a winter hanging basket.

Membership Numbers

At the time of writing our 2020 membership has crept up to **1028** members, which is a small but encouraging sign.

Unfortunately, all the outlets where you can pick up a membership card are currently closed, and we continue to be unable to access postal applications at this time.

New Instructions for 'Getting a Card' during Covid 19 restrictions

Anyone wishing to purchase a new card should in the first place email our secretary at secretary@potb.org.uk or via our 'Contact' page on this site.

The Elected Officers of PotB

Chairman: Simon Lucas

Treasurer: Sarah Dickinson

Secretary: Mike Connelly

contact details can be found at the foot of this page.

Participating Businesses October 2020



At the end of September, our records show 53 Local businesses offering 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 locations are as follows:

Oadby: 25 businesses

Wigston: 23 businesses

South Wigston: 5 businesses

For the full listing of the participating businesses click on link [Business Offers](#)

3rd Saturday Monthly Working Parties (MWP):

In line with government advice all MWP activities, maintenance of town centre planters and projects that we had in cooperation with Oadby & Wigston Council for the near future have been suspended.

The September MWP activity was cancelled due to the unavailability of enough volunteers and a Team Leader.

However on Saturday 26th September 8 POTB members joined 18 Oadby Rotary members to take part in a litter pick throughout Oadby as part of the Rotary-led, Plastic Free Oadby campaign.

Mindful of the current Covid restrictions we worked in 6 groups and set out from Ellis Park, Parklands, Uplands Park, Adkinsons, Highcroft Avenue shops and Rosemead Drive shops. We collected 31 bags of litter which included many discarded masks and gloves. The group based at Rosemead Dr shops sorted their litter into categories and as you can see from the photo a great deal of it was plastic bottles!



The PotB October event scheduled to take place on Saturday 17th October 2020 was originally set to be bulb planting in Uplands Park. This has now been changed to a litter-picking event, location yet to be decided. The original Bulb planting event has been moved to 21st November 2020. There can be no more than six attendees so if you are interested contact the PotB chairman at chairman@potb.org.uk for further details and booking

For other events and announcements go to the Pride of the Borough website

[PotB Monthly Events - Click Here](#)



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Pride of the Borough Floral Community Spirit Competition 2020

For all those residents that took part in the 2020 Pride of the Borough Floral Community Spirit Competition please be advised that the competition is now over. PotB would like to thank you for your ongoing interest and enthusiasm this year and certificates of achievements will be posted out during the next month.



Jobs for October

Here's a few ideas for what you could be doing in your garden this month...

Pamper your houseplants

Houseplants need a little extra care as the winter approaches. With reducing amounts of light, plants prepare for winter dormancy and growth will slow. Plants need to rest over winter, and this allows them to burst into vigorous, new growth in the spring.

- Most houseplants will need a temperature above 10°C without large temperature fluctuations, so keep them away from draughts and artificial heat sources such as radiators.
- Reduce watering to the point where the compost dries out before watering again to prevent rot.

- Move plants to a sunny windowsill or conservatory to give them the maximum amount of light and make sure that their leaves are clean as dust will reduce the amount of light getting to the plant. At night, move plants away from the window and into the room as curtains can trap cold air around the plant.

- Keep an eye out for pests as your warm home provides the perfect environment for them and they'll thrive if you don't keep on top of them.

- Reduce watering and stand on trays of gravel to increase humidity. Ensure they are not placed in the way of cold draughts and dead head regularly. Remove dead, dying or diseased leaves as soon as you spot them.

Feed the birds

This time of year, our garden visitors need all the energy that they can get to help them get through the colder months to come. You can help by putting out bird feeders and a supply of fresh water.

In the greenhouse - Wrap up warm

Insulate your greenhouse to keep plants snug over winter. Use a roll of special greenhouse bubble wrapping, cut into pieces and then held in place with plastic clips that fit into the grooves between the glazing bars.

Beds and borders

- The stems of many perennials can be left to add interest to the garden over winter, but others will be past their best. Cut back phlox, alchemilla and anemone to near ground level. Hesperis, aconitum and dictamnus should be reduced to 6in tall clumps.
- Keep an eye out for annual weeds. Winter may be approaching, but they will still grow if weather is mild.



- Perk up patches of dry soil in the garden by digging in plenty of leaf mould to improve its ability to retain water.
- Safeguard agapanthus and crinum by piling a loose covering of autumn leaves over the crowns of plants to insulate them from frost and cold.
- Most seed heads can be left on perennials to add interest over winter but cut back those that have faded or collapsed due to wind and rain.
- Now's the best time to plant tulips, in a sunny spot, at a depth between two and three times their size. A layer of horticultural grit in the bottom of each hole will prevent rotting.

Trees and shrubs

- Now the leaves have almost completely fallen from many deciduous trees, check branches for coral spot, a fungal disease that can be recognised by its raised orange spots. Prevent it spreading by removing infected growth with secateurs and either burning or binning the debris.
- Protect newly planted hedges in exposed gardens by surrounding them with windbreak material attached to tree stakes. Remove protection when plants are established next spring.
- If you have an exposed garden protect wall shrubs that are not fully hardy, such as callistemon, campsis and clematis, with sheets of horticultural fleece if frost is forecast.
- Use twine to tie in splayed-out branches of upright conifers to prevent snow from breaking or damaging them.

Plant bare root

- Now's the time to plant bare-rooted roses, trees and shrubs. Plants are entering their winter dormancy and can be planted now and left to establish over the winter before bursting into life again next spring.

- Dig a hole that's wide enough for the roots to be spread out and ensure that it's at the right depth by placing a cane across the hole – it should line up with the soil mark on the stem.

In the kitchen garden

- Regularly check stored apples and pears, removing any that are rotting.
- Check stored potatoes for blight. Consign any that are soft, rotting or discoloured to the dustbin to prevent the fungal disease spreading to healthy spuds.
- Pigeons can make a mess of cabbages, sprouts, kale and other brassica crops. Protect them by covering with a sheet of plastic mesh held in place by bamboo canes.
- Force chicory to make tender, blanched heads (chicons) for winter salads. Buy plants in pots and cut back growth to leave short stubs. Put a bucket over the top, block out light with stones and put in a frost-free place, such as a garage or shed. In several weeks, tender white chicons will have formed. Cut at the base and repeat.
- Cut down canes of autumn fruiting raspberries to ground level.
- Shore up spring cabbages by drawing up soil around them to steady the developing heads against wind rock.
- Prune newly planted blackcurrant bushes by reducing all shoots to one bud from the base of plants.
- For an extra early crop of peas next year, sow seeds now in mild areas. Varieties such as 'Meteor' or 'Feltham First' should be spaced 7.5cm apart in the bottom of 22cm wide, 5cm deep flat-bottomed trench. Protect sowings over winter and early spring by covering with cloches.



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- Sow seeds of 'Aquadulce', 'The Sutton' or 'Aquadulce Claudia' broad beans on sheltered, well-drained sites for picking in late spring and early summer. Plant seeds 5cm deep, 22cm apart, in rows.

Gardening under cover

- Give houseplants extra care over winter. Reduce watering and stand on trays of gravel to increase humidity. Ensure they are not placed in the way of cold draughts and dead head regularly. Remove dead, dying or diseased leaves as soon as you spot them.

Tender plants

- Protect exotic plants from frost. Wedge a handful of straw in the crown of tree ferns and protect the roots of trees and shrubs growing in containers by wrapping a sheet of hessian or bubble wrap around the pot.

Don't forget...

- Next month if you're celebrating Bonfire Night check piles of wood now for any hibernating hedgehogs.
- Wallflowers, daisies, myosotis and other recently planted spring bedding may have been loosened by wind. Ensure they are secure by firming them into the soil with your fingers.
- Disconnect your hosepipe and place it in a shed or garage to prevent water freezing and splitting the tube.
- Pot up rooted cuttings of pelargoniums, fuchsias and other tender perennials taken in the summer.
- Excessive moisture can rot alpines, so protect groups of plants by making a shelter from two columns of bricks with a sheet of clear rigid plastic or plastic stretched over the top.

- Wash slippery surfaces. Algae, moss and other grime can easily be removed by scrubbing with water and a few drops of specialist cleaner, such as Jeyes Fluid Path, Patio and Drive Cleaner. If you have a large area to tackle, pick up a pressure washer from a machinery hire store.

- Make the most of dry spells by painting fences, sheds, arches and wooden garden furniture with preservative.

- Cover the compost heap with a piece of old carpet or cardboard to maintain temperatures suitable for the rotting down the material inside.

- Clean up your mower before putting it away for the winter. Put it on its side and remove caked on grass and mud with a stiff brush, washing off any really stubborn bits with soap and water.

For more expert gardening advice on what to do in August in your garden go to (use CTRL key + click):

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

<https://www.cherry-lane.co.uk/blog/jobs-for-october/>

Now our monthly **Weather Watch**. There is a significant drop in temperatures now, with the chance of frosts more likely on clear nights. But October can have warm, sunny days too. A still frosty start to a bright, sunny day definitely increases the intensity of the autumn leaf colour in deciduous trees.

High Winds. The number of gales tends to increase now that we are well into autumn. A pity, because high winds blow the leaves off the trees, spoiling the beautiful autumn displays. Gales are now most likely in western coastal areas and can occur 3-4 days in the month. So we can expect similar in the Borough maybe two to three days later.

Decreased Sunshine. The amount of direct sunshine is now on the decrease but there can still be some fine days in October. The northern Highlands of Scotland often compare favourably with parts of Central England.



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More Rainfall. October invariably brings more rain for all parts of the country. From around the 11th through all the way to the end of the month

Snow on High Ground. The chances of snow on the higher ground can be expected to start this month.

For more from the weather specialist Accuweather [Click Here](#)

Monthly Topics of Interest

The Plastic Free Garden

I received a mailshot the other day from "Garden Organic" a registered charity working for the Henry Doubleday Research Association, who actively bring together thousands of people who share a common belief that organic growing is essential for a healthy and sustainable world. This month the award winning journalist Sally Nex had an article called "My Plastic Free Gardening Pledge" where she gives us some good advice on plastic free gardening.

I'm sure we've all watched the David Attenborough programmes on the amount of plastic that makes its way to the sea and have been horrified by what he presented us. However, that plastic did not start in the sea it started onshore and indeed some of it in our back gardens. Just have a wee peek into your garden and see how much plastic you have collected over the years and more to the point how much of it has now broken down to the point where you can't reuse it, no matter how good your original intentions were.

Just going into your garden maybe your gate is plastic, then you'll probably see pots, trays, horticultural fleeces and bottles of fertiliser, polythene cloches, bubble wrap greenhouse insulation, plastic greenhouses. It's amazing. Now look at your local council recycling instructions where you will probably find no recycling of ANY black plastic, no recycling of any colour plant pots, that point I didn't realise, and virtually very little recycling of any of the plastic that you use in your garden on an annual basis. Another point that Sally Nex cited that caught by eye was that we all know that the seas

and oceans are polluted and sea life itself is dying because of it but did you realise that earthworms are now losing weight because of plastic pollution in our soils. So, what to do???

Here are seven of Sally's pledges to try and stop this curse of the plastic that has gripped our planet:

1. ***Allow no new plastic into the Garden.*** Now that sounds easy but probably the most difficult to achieve. Everything in the garden these days seems to involve plastic, from multipurpose compost to plug plants delivered in plastic blister packs all the way to plant labelling products. However, all is not lost there are some companies out there that do supply plug plants etc in paper or biodegradable pots that will come in a cardboard sleeve. Alternatively, you can buy kits that will enable to make your own pots. It is difficult but not impossible.
2. ***Use the plastic you already have, just limit its use.*** Every gardener has a plastic pot stash toppling over in the shed, greenhouse or in the cupboards in the utility rooms. Statistics reveal that British gardeners get through 500 million new plastic pots per year and most are never recycled. But recycling or reusing the plastic pots isn't always the answer. Most Plastics can only be recycled two or three times so eventually it breaks down and ends up in landfill anyway. An alternative approach here could be to see if you can find a local garden centre who may collect your plastic pots so they can reuse.
3. ***Grow in paper and cardboard.*** If you are able to achieve point 2 above your own plastic pot stash will dwindle so at this point be strong and make the switch to non-plastic alternatives. Clay, (second hand to avoid the carbon emissions of new clay) and lightweight Vipots, made of rice hulls work well for large containers. However, a lot of gardeners grow only vegetables so need



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trays or smaller pots and low grade (thus non-recyclable) plastic module.

Knock wooden seed trays up from scrap pallets, or buy from on-line auction sites, and make newspaper pots for direct sowing and pricking out seedlings. Saved toilet roll inners

are great for larger seeds like beans. I also pot on into home-made cardboard pots, buried with the plant in the garden.

4. **Make your own potting mixes.** Second only to the pot stash is the avalanche of plastic compost sacks that tumbles out of the shed when I open the door. Admittedly they are useful for carrying the green waste to the tip but how often do you tip out the waste then bring the empty bag back home again. Leave the bag at the tip. Now with regards to the potting mix it's not difficult to make it a home. Mix three parts home made garden compost, one part sharp sand and one part leaf mould, coir or well-rotted woodchip, plus two handfuls of seaweed meal per wheelbarrow load, then you're ready to start planting. You'll probably also find that your mix does not contain mushrooms or last year's tomatoes or potato plants.

5. **Buy plants bare-root or raise your own.** Like most gardeners I'm easily seduced by new plants, another mint for my collection or a new pepper or unusual vegetable plant. Yes, but will you eat it, well I don't know but it looks good. Well that's fine but every new plant you buy comes with the obligatory plastic pot. Instead, if you can buy bare-root plants – dug straight from the field and sold without pots. Now many of these plants are only available September to March but that's the best time for planting as it gives the plant time to settle and it will grow much quicker. Another way is to keep your eye on friends and family growth and see if they will allow you to make new plants from those in their

garden. Divide a congested clump, take cuttings or root strawberry runners.

6. **When you replace plastic, find a non-plastic alternative.** Much of the plastic in your garden has been designed to last a long time. However, you also need to look after such things as watering cans, water butts, plastic tools, fruit cage netting to list a few. That way you will prevent them from breaking down under the UV light and you can keep them out of landfill for years. However, everything breaks down eventually. So whenever you need to replace a plastic item in the garden, look for a non-plastic alternative. They are a little more expensive but will have a longer life. For instance, a second-hand galvanised cattle trough makes an excellent water butt: net fruit with fine gauge (16mm) galvanised wire mesh: and buy wooden tools with stainless steel blades and metal watering cans, ideally second-hand from your local architectural salvage yard.
7. **And if you just can't, do things differently?** Sometimes although not very often there isn't an alternative to plastic. If this ends up being the case, you may need to look at the way that you garden. Instead of protecting your new potatoes against frost with fleece (woven polypropylene) for example, just wait a few more weeks till its warmer before planting. Then wrap the tender plants individually with hessian and newspaper on cold nights (remove in the morning) rather than insulating and heating an entire greenhouse. Use a watering can instead of plastic hose.

So, folks that's just a few ideas on how to DE plasticise your garden. I am sure that there are many more ideas out there so why not write in and let me know and I can share with the OWBC community.



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Out and About in the Borough

Since we are continuing in the “lockdown situation” required by the government our Out and About reporter still remains grounded.

Notice of Monthly Meeting for November 2020:

The next scheduled meeting will be on **Monday 9th November 2020 at 5.00pm**. Once again due to government restrictions it is unlikely that this will be a face to face meeting and will be conducted via the ZOOM platform. Connectivity details will be advised nearer to the time. Again, please check on the Events calendar for confirmation nearer the time.

To see complete calendar for 2020, see ([use CTRL key + click](#)) [Events](#)

All members - meaning those who have a 2020 membership card are welcome to attend the meeting and are entitled and encouraged to submit motions for discussion.

Call for Volunteers and Articles:

Pride of the Borough is an organisation run by volunteers for residents of the Borough of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. We are always on the lookout for additional people who can spare some time to assist us in the running of the organisation in various categories. If you have some spare time and would like to become a team member helping to keep PotB running, we would be pleased to hear from you.

Additionally, anyone out there who may have an interesting article, recipe, event notice or even a gardening problem etc. that you think that PotB would be interested in publishing and that such item fits in with the PotB philosophy please do not hesitate to send us for our consideration.



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