

COMAS Quarterly Report

Open Meeting, Saturday 18th January 2020,
14:00hrs, Brunswick Church

The 'quiet' season

Welcome to a review of the Society since the AGM of Tuesday 15th October 2019. Although this quarter occurs mostly 'out of season', a lot has happened.

Firstly, we have two green sheds at Hartfield Close. The Portacabin has been painted thanks to a donation by Mears and the artistry of some Committee members, and we have acquired a small storage shed, thanks to a grant from the University Construction Community Fund. We will soon have a third enclosed space once the polytunnel, moved from Elizabeth Yarwood Court, is prepared and erected over the next month. It will have shelving and plotholders are encouraged to make use of it this Spring for sowing in seed beds and thinning out. We are also grateful to S4B for the salvaged paving flags and wooden planks recently acquired.

Committee members have been working with a lecturer from the University of Manchester and Electricity Northwest to work out the best way to electrify Hartfield Close allotments. Not only will it allow us to make full use of the Portacabin and any mains power tools, but it will also allow COMAS to open its doors to some community events.

Thanks to networking at *Growing Manchester* workshops, we have acquired a substantial amount of 40litre compost bags and anticipate the arrival of a composting loo.

S4B have been helpful in turning over the plots of former plotholders which had weeds and covering them with sheeting to prevent further weed growth. They also weeded the borders and replenished the tree bark weed prevention.

The composting heaps have changed. Last year's compost has been moved to the central bay and we ask plotholders not to place any further organic waste there while it degrades further – ready for use on the plots in a few months' time. Use the end bay for new deposits, or the coloured bins.

At Elizabeth Yarwood Court, the raspberries bushes have been trimmed and all remaining beans removed.

The Committee and the Council have now come to an understanding at Cray Walk. COMAS will take care of the triangular area of land to the rear of the diagonal tarmac path (excluding Rhoda's 'plantation'), whilst the Council will maintain the triangular grassed area next to Hanworth Close. We are allowed, however, to plant Spring bulbs either side of the tarmac fence and so over 100 croci have been set in the corners and daffodils will be planted shortly.

Finances

Financially, the Society has spent some money as the following summary shows:

COMAS Accounts October 2019 to January 2020						
Date	Ref	Payee	Narrative	Income	Expense	Balance
Tue, 1 Oct 2019	Brought forward					£ 2,987.83
Thu, 3 Oct 2019		Elbecgard	Shed for tools		£ 295.88	£ 2,691.95
Tue, 22 Oct 2019		Merseybank Estate	Donation for compost		£ 50.00	£ 2,641.95
Mon, 28 Oct 2019		ESPARES	Parts for strimmer		£ 15.95	£ 2,626.00
Thu, 5 Dec 2019	Soil= ALLT 13		Cash paid to GF for soil	£ 5.00		£ 2,631.00
Wed, 8 Jan 2020		Dobies	Seeds and potatoes		£ 53.76	£ 2,577.24

Events and other groups

COMAS had a presence at the Winter Fair of Medlock Primary School in December *with some plants and information. The Chair joined in the annual networking event with *Growing Manchester* at Parrs Wood Environment Centre. A representative was present at the AGM of the voluntary umbrella group, Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisation.*

COMAS promoted itself at the November Brunswick Bonanza held at Brunswick Church, offering advice about local groups and services. Two representatives met with Manchester Metropolitan University to offer students volunteering opportunities at COMAS.¹

The near future

We will continue to have weekly gardening sessions, now on Saturdays, to tidy up the raised beds ready at EYC for next Spring. Any resident in Brunswick is welcome to come and claim one to grow their own produce in the last season before the site is demolished.

There has been a delay in the handing over of the water bill payment responsibility to COMAS, but we expect this to be completed in the next few weeks.

We hope to welcome some fauna to Hartfield Close with a hedgehog door leading to the floral landscaped area of the adjacent car park.

¹ Error of omission. Text in orange added after the Open Meeting.