

CM Parish Council meeting 2015

Cleobury Mortimer Horticultural Society

Two of the Society's objectives are of particular interest to the Parish Council:

1. to promote interest and knowledge of horticulture and gardening.

To further this objective, the Society holds an annual Cleobury in Bloom event, the format of which changes each year in order to stimulate and maintain the interest of local people in gardening and horticulture more broadly.

In 2014, for a second year, we ran a potato-growing competition for primary schools, nurseries and playgroups to help children understand how food is grown and the various factors that influence crop production, such as soil types, irrigation and the effects of weather. Four primary schools and seven pre-school settings entered: in March they were each given chitted tubers, potato sacks or pots and, thanks to Farlow Farm Nursery and Gallaghers, a bag of growing compost. The judges visiting in July During the planting and growing period, the children were asked to keep a log of their activities to show, for example: the key events; any problems with their crop and how they solved them; any advice they sought; how the weather influenced their crop; and their overall successes and failures - things all gardeners experience. The judges also looked at the logs and discussed them with the children who had taken part.

Despite all that the weather threw at them, they persevered and their efforts were judged by a professional judge and three members of the Horticultural Society in July who weighed the crop and examined the potatoes for size, quantity and quality. On Saturday 12 July, over fifty people turned up at the Methodist Hall in Cleobury Mortimer to find out who had won.

Abkats Day Nursery scooped the winner's prize in the pre-school setting category, showing that even very young babies and toddlers can start early to grow their own! Cleobury Nursery and Kinlet Family Playgroup were joint runners-up, Cleobury Playgroup was highly commended and Grassroots Playgroup and Rising 5s in Clee Hill was given a commendation. For the second year, Kinlet Church of England Primary School won the primary school category, followed by Stottesdon Church of England Primary School. The judges were amazed at the activities that the children had been involved in as part of the potato project -

reading, drawing, writing, photography, singing, science and using information technology to produce digital books to mention just a few! The quality of the potatoes was very high, too, and the yields were magnificent!

This year, we are moving on to pea growing! Again, we give special thanks to Farlow Farm Nursery for donating the compost to enable four primary schools and seven pre-schools settings to take part.

2. to promote increased awareness of the local environment and to seek to improve it.

The Society's members continue to plant and maintain the flower trough outside The Talbot Hotel. We also weed and tend the borders around the seventeen lime trees that gracefully stretch the length of the town. The trees are now pleached annually by a specialist company in a joint venture between Shropshire Council which, in 2015, paid half the cost, local residents who contributed £425 and Cleobury Mortimer Parish Council, which paid the balance. We hope you agree that the trees are looking fantastic after their pleaching in January this year and are already starting to produce new growth. You will see that the top and bottom sections are now being trained to join together to produce the solid framework that is the ultimate aim for such trees.

The Society continues to be very grateful to David Robinson, a well-known local farmer, who currently leases part of his land to us to accommodate a number of allotment plots. All of the plots are now taken but they occasionally come up for rent when people move on or their circumstances change. Look out for our advertising poster which we display when vacancies occur! The annual cost is £35 to include rent, water, insurance and membership of the Horticultural Society, considerably less than the costs associated with many other allotment sites across the country!

Flo Hadley

Chair - Cleobury Mortimer Horticultural Society