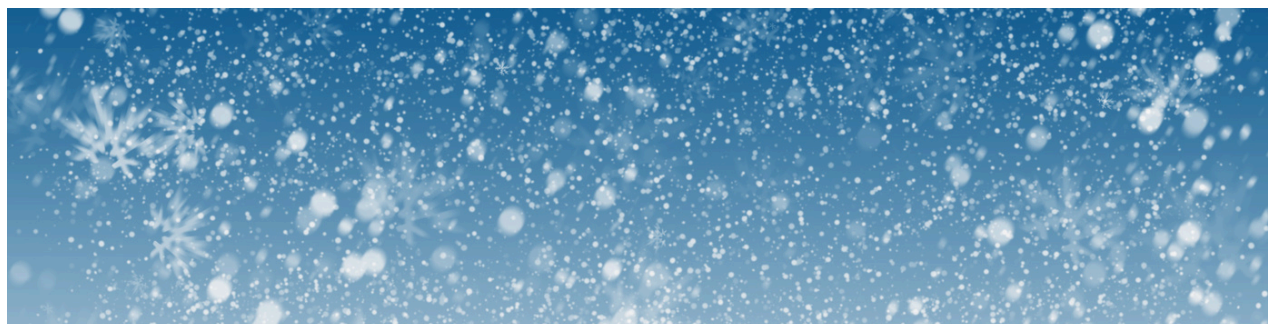


WSAA Newsletter



January 2025



Kicking Off 2025!

Happy New Year to all our members and friends!

As we welcome 2025, it's the perfect time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year while turning our attention to the opportunities ahead. 2024 was a fantastic year for our community, with plenty of milestones reached and memories made, but we're even more excited about what's to come.

In this month's issue, we'll share an update from the Community Plot, where plans for new projects and events are already taking shape. We're also including a reprint of essential winter jobs—a handy guide to keep your plots in top condition as we navigate these colder months. Plus, don't miss our Recipe of the Month, a delicious way to make the most of

seasonal produce and warm up after your gardening efforts.

The New Year is a chance to set fresh goals for your plots and perhaps take on a new challenge or two. Whether it's trying your hand at growing something new, lending a hand at a community workday, or simply enjoying the serenity of your space, there's so much to look forward to. Let's make 2025 a year to remember for our allotment community.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant and supportive group. We can't wait to see what we can achieve together in the months ahead. Here's to another year of growth, connection, and plenty of fresh produce!

Dates to remember:

AGM
Sat, 22 March

In this edition:

Community Plot
Update

Winter
Maintenance
Recap

Recipe of the
Month

The Committee

The Community Plot: Looking Back & Moving Forward

It's been another eventful year on the Community Plot. Highlights included training sessions for young asylum seekers, who learned valuable gardening skills, and de-stressing sessions in partnership with Barnet & Enfield Mind. These sessions ranged from peaceful Nature Drawing workshops to the thrill of harvesting our very first sweet potatoes!

This November, we had the pleasure of welcoming the 20th Finchley Cubs for a Nature Walk and Litter Pick along our paths. On Sunday, 24th November, the Cubs enthusiastically joined in, collecting two bags of litter—a marked improvement from their last visit. A big thank you to everyone who takes pride in keeping our site clean and beautiful. The Cubs had a wonderful time and are already looking forward to their return next year.

Another milestone this year was our collaboration with Barnet Public Health. We were commissioned to establish a new community garden and train aspiring community gardeners. Not only did this project further our mission of community engagement, but the funds raised from our efforts have been reinvested into the Community Plot.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have big plans, including the installation of new raised beds and hosting eco-artist events that promise to inspire creativity and sustainability. This year's plant sale was another success, thanks to the generosity of everyone who donated plants. While there are too many contributors to name individually, we'd like to extend special thanks to Joanna, Richard, Aiden, Marie, Sumith, Jayshree, and David for their invaluable help. Apologies if we've overlooked anyone—it's been a wonderfully busy year!

If you'd like to get involved, whether over the winter or in the coming year, we'd love to hear from you. Volunteering is a fantastic way to connect with the community and make a tangible difference.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year,
Brigid & Les





Rerun! Winter Maintenance Tips

Winter is still in full swing, so we're rerunning our essential winter maintenance tips to keep your plots in top shape. Stay ahead of the season with these helpful reminders!

Path Maintenance

Well-maintained paths not only look tidy but also ensure safety during wet and frosty weather.

Here's what you can do:

- **Meet specifications:** Ensure pathways are at least 50cm wide, level, accessible, and unobstructed for their full length. They are the joint responsibility of plotholders on either side. Additionally, the path *in front* of your plot should also be maintained.
- **Clear debris:** Remove fallen leaves, weeds, and mud from pathways to prevent them from becoming slippery.
- **Reinforce edges:** Fix or replace wooden or stone edging to keep paths well-defined and prevent encroachment from adjoining plots.
- **Trim overgrowth:** Keep plants from growing over the paths, cut back hedges, and trim branches of overhanging trees if you have them to ensure pathways remain clear and safe.

Always remember not to let path upkeep and maintenance encroach on your neighbours' plots.

Fruit Tree Pruning

Winter is the ideal time for pruning fruit trees and bushes, as most are dormant now.

- **Keep paths clear:** Prune back overhanging branches to maintain clear access along pathways and avoid obstructions.
- **Encourage healthy growth:** Remove dead, damaged, or diseased branches to promote a strong structure and better fruiting in the next season.
- **Shape and manage size:** Thin out dense areas and shape trees to allow light and air to circulate, reducing the risk of disease.

General Plot Tidying

- **Check supports:** Inspect and repair supports for climbing plants and replace any that are damaged.
- **Tidy borders:** Cut back perennial plants and remove dead foliage to keep beds neat.
- **Mulch and cover:** Add a layer of mulch to exposed soil or cover empty beds with tarpaulin or cloches to protect them from erosion and weeds.

Winter maintenance is all about preparation and care, ensuring that your allotment is in prime condition for the growing season ahead.



Recipe of the Month

Pumpkin Soup with White beans and Leeks

Warm up with this hearty pumpkin, leek, and white bean soup—a cozy blend of seasonal flavors that's perfect for chilly days. Packed with nutrients and bursting with flavor, it's a comforting bowl of goodness for winter evenings.

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cook Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter or olive oil
- 1 large leek, sliced in 1/4-inch half moons (1 1/2–2 cups)
- 2 celery stalks, chopped small
- 1 apple, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, finely chopped or 1 teaspoon dried
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (more or less to taste)
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper (black pepper works too)
- 2 cups kale, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup white wine (substitute 1-2 teaspoons champagne vinegar or apple cider vinegar)
- 3 cups veggie broth or chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups cannellini beans cooked or canned
- 1 1/2 cups fresh pumpkin purée or one 15 oz canned pumpkin (see notes)



**Link to recipe at the bottom of the email*

Method

1. Saute leeks and butter or olive oil in a medium stock pot, over medium heat, letting them wilt and soften about 5 minutes.
2. Add celery, apples, sage, salt and pepper. Saute 3-5 minutes more.
3. Add kale and white wine. Stir until kale begins to wilt about 2 minutes or so.
4. Add broth, white beans and pumpkin puree.
5. Bring to a low boil and then simmer for about 20 minutes.
6. Serve with crusty bread.

Do you have a recipe you'd like to share?

Email it to us! We might use it for our Recipe of the Month. We'd like to see a focus on seasonal produce that can be grown or foraged on the allotments.

Thank you for reading!
