 Gate **Cheshire Smallholders Winter 2017**

**Chairman’s Chat**

Winter is upon us and we have largely finalised the lecture series for 2017 – 2018 at Reaseheath, please drop by the website at [www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk](http://www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk) to see what we have planned for you.

Over the autumn we had speakers from Blackberry Alpacas, Janice Wood from Finnington Rare Breeds and most recently three representatives from Cheshire Police, giving us an insight into some of their rural initiatives.

Fingers crossed, whilst touching wood, despite the usual stories in the tabloids, winter has started on a mild note, provided the perfect foil to procrastinate over the autumn jobs that are finally petering out as we turn our thoughts to friends and families and the festive period. The raised beds in the garden will have to wait until spring and an early weather window to burn off the last of the increased waistline from the mince pie onslaught.

Your committee has been busy and following the AGM and two of our more recent members have offered to lend their support, Melanie Webb and Andy Walker. Thanks go to Andrew Davies for stepping up last year, despite a busy domestic life with a young child and we hope to welcome him back when other commitments abate. Unfortunately, I have to end on a sad note with the untimely loss of Lesley Gallagher this year, a CSA stalwart for many years. I am sure I speak for all of you when I send our love to Derek and remind him that he will be in our prayers this Christmas.

There is no lecture in December, but work will be continuing to plan the butchery course, that is all but finalised for January and the fencing course that is planned for March, with further details following in due course.

We look forward to seeing you at Reaseheath in the New Year and I would like to wish you a restful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

David Golding, Chairman

**Committee**

Lawrence Beard (Treasurer & Membership Secretary) 01625 572324

Arthur Green (President) 01270 841288

David Golding (Chairman & Web Editor) 01270 528790

Rosie Golding 01270 528790

Neil Holding 01928 789800

Kevin Holmes 01928 722365

Gill Lawson (Secretary)

Melanie Webb

If you would like to get involved in the committee and can spare an hour or so each month please contact David. No specialist skills are required, first and foremost we allocate tasks to people that they will enjoy doing.

**Upcoming CSA meetings**

A full listing of our monthly speakers and site visits has been updated on the website at [www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk](http://www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk).

Dates for the Winter / Spring are as follows:-

December 2017 – no meeting

29th January 2018 – Reaseheath

28th February 2018 – Reaseheath

20th March 2018 - Reaseheath

If you would like to suggest a lecture topic and / or speaker please contact us at info@cheshiresmallholders.org.uk . We are always interested in hearing from our members and finding out what interests them.

Reaseheath meetings doors open **7.30pm for 8pm** start, come early, and have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. Find us at: Room L3, The Leverhulme Centre, Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DF. The Leverhulme Centre is on the right (from the B5074 entrance) just before the car park barrier.

**Hen will I see you again?**

Each year the British Hen Welfare Trust save approximately 50,000 hens from slaughter and find them caring pet homes through their network of 32 regional pop-up centres, so the hens can enjoy a free range retirement.

Visit the website to sign up to receive regular news and updates.

Source : [www.bhwt.org.uk](http://www.bhwt.org.uk)

**Cheshire’s green and pleasant land**

The Women’s Institute is the largest voluntary organisation for women in the UK with 205,000 members in England, Wales and the Islands. Its concerns range from climate change to cooking, from crafts to community projects, from healthy eating to Fair-trade fortnights, from traditional values to new friendships.

With the Cheshire Federation of Women’s Institutes you could benefit from having your voice heard and make a real impact on local, national and international issues. The WI offer the opportunity to learn, develop and pass on new skills, to belong to something special, make friends, work as a team and have fun with events.

Source : [www.cheshirewi.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewi.org.uk)

**The growing business**

The RDPE Growth Programmes comprise grant funding for projects in England which create jobs and growth in the rural economy.

For what is available and how to apply: -

Source : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rdpe-growth-programme>

**Cheshire Police Alert**

Cheshire Police Alert is a community messaging system where you can sign up to receive information about what’s happening in your local area.

By registering you can subscribe to receive community information from Cheshire Police by e-mail, text messaging or voicemail to your landline.

Neighbourhood Policing Units are using the system to send out updates such as appeals for information and useful crime prevention advice.

You can reply to the messages you receive and provide feedback to your local policing team. The system also allows you to rate the quality and content of the message to help the police improve the service they provide.

Visit [www.cheshirepolicealert.co.uk](http://www.cheshirepolicealert.co.uk) and sign up for free today.

**I’m only plucking pheasants ‘til the pheasant plucker comes**

Wondering what to do with that brace of pheasants that you’ve been given? Here’s one idea:-

http://www.shootinguk.co.uk/recipes/pheasant/pheasant-sausagemeat-pie-42094

**Winter - active bumblebees**

Over the last dozen years or so, entomologists and naturalists have noted winter activity of **Bombus terrestris** (the Buff-tailed Bumblebee). Workers have been seen foraging at a wide range of winter-flowering plants and males have been reported flying in February. What is quite clear is that a small proportion of mated queens will establish nests in the Autumn and these can exploit the increasing amount of forage resources available throughout the winter in our gardens, parks and amenity areas.

The Bees Wasps & Ants Recording Society (BWARS) is working closely with Anglia Ruskin University to gather new data on this phenomenon, to add to the information garnered in the past so they can attempt to answer some further questions about winter activity.

Winter activity in bumblebees is a recent phenomenon in the UK; the behaviour was first recognised in the late 1990’s when worker bumblebees were observed in a number of sites in southern England foraging for pollen in the winter months of December and January.

Source : www.bwars.com to find out more about the project and the work of BWARS.

**Lamb Butchery Course**

We will be holding a one day lamb butchery course in January 2018. This will be an opportunity to find out how to produce the best cuts of meat and will be led by an excellent tutor we have used before, Karol Bailey. Karol is not only very knowledgeable but extremely entertaining, winning many awards over the years for her Holly Tree Farm Shop at Tabley.

The course will be held on a Saturday, date T.B.C. and the cost will be £50 for the day, but will be subsidised by £10 by CSA, and hence will cost £40 per participant. The course will be limited to a maximum of 8 people.

You will be able to use either your own half lamb, or there will be the opportunity to buy half a lamb (typically £35-£45 depending on current market prices) and the potential dates are Saturday 6th, 13th, 20th or 27th of January.

Not only will you gain skills that are sure to impress family and friends, you will have half a lamb for the freezer and a platform from which you can buy and butcher top quality meat, sourced from smallholders and farmers you trust in the future.

If you are interested in attending, then in the first instance please email

info@cheshiresmallholders.org.uk as soon as possible, clearing indicating which of the possible dates are suitable or unsuitable for you. Once the date is selected, a deposit of £10 will be required per person to secure the booking. (Note that this is not refundable if you do not turn up on the day).

Gill Lawson

**Little donkey, carry Mary**



I got in touch with the Donkey Sanctuary to let them know we would be interested in fostering a couple of donkeys and they send round a welfare officer to look at the facilities we could offer and suggest any improvements or alterations that would be required.

We then went on a series of three 1 day courses at their Buxton centre (they also have a centre at Manchester); these courses are mandatory to foster donkeys and are all free of charge.

After that, we got in touch with their head office in Devon and they put us on the waiting list and matched a pair of Donkeys to our experience - you always have a pair of Donkeys from them.

On a six monthly basis, the local area welfare officer visits and makes sure everything is ok and is always available on the telephone if there is a problem.

If anyone is interested and needs a bit of advice, feel free to call me – my number is above, or contact the Donkey Sanctuary direct at their head office in Devon, Slade House Farm, Sidmouth, Devon, EX10 ONU.

Telephone : 01395 578222.

Email : enquiries@thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk

Neil Holding

**Avian Influenza update**

From Defra website – 21st November 2017.

The UK is currently free from bird flu, but there is a constant risk the disease may arrive and all poultry keepers should review their bio security, sign up for disease alerts and register their birds with APHA. Keepers are reminded that they must report any unexplained deaths or sickness to their vet.

The H5N8 strain of bird flu is currently circulating in Europe, with recent cases in poultry and wild birds in Italy, wild birds in Germany and poultry in Bulgaria.

The current risk of incursion in the UK is medium for wild birds and low for poultry, although this depends on levels of biosecurity on individual premises. This is because the wild bird migration season is well under way, bringing birds from areas where we know bird flu is present to the UK for the winter.

Latest information available at :-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/avian-influenza-bird-flu-in-winter-2017-to-2018>

There is an option to sign up for alerts on this page.

**Kevin Holmes – Bowling Champion!**

At the end of November we held a skittles evening at the Bickerton Poacher attended by 14 of our members.

Despite some scoring chicanery and a few rules on the hoof that ensured team “B” made the final, (surprisingly, the author was in team B), Kevin was a worthy winner, saving his best shots for the final and just edging out Neil Holding.

http://www.bickertonpoacher.com/php/skittles.php

**Membership subscriptions**

Subscriptions were due for 2017 / 2018 on 1st September 2017 and they remain at £15 per annum, per household. Please send a cheque to Lawrence and he can take your name out of the window.

To make life easier, do consider paying by standing order, a form can be downloaded from the membership page on the website, [www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk](http://www.cheshiresmallholders.org.uk).

For further details, email members@cheshiresmallholders.org.uk or telephone Lawrence, your Treasurer and Membership Secretary, on 01625 572324.

**Laughter line**

A gentleman went to the doctor with a seedling growing out of his head. The doctor said “I’ve no idea what it is, come back next week.”

The next week a tree had grown, covered in cherry blossom. “I’m stuck, come back next week.” the doctor mused. On returning, the gentleman had developed a waterfall, a babbling brook and a small pond, all of them on top of his head.

“Ah ha! Now I know.” said the doctor, “You’ve got a beauty spot.”

**Coming up this month**

Father Christmas at the Farm, Tatton Park, Knutsford

**Please note, the elves have reported a shortage of socks. Chocolate and Prosecco supplies are holding up well, despite increased demand this year.**

www.tattonpark.org.uk

Always check with the organisers before making arrangements or travelling, shows are sometimes cancelled, often at the last minute!

**Charity Appeal**

There are an estimated 500 million smallholder farms in the world, supporting almost 2 billion people. Send a cow work hand in hand with families in Africa; poverty is more than just the day to day struggle of toiling on land that fails to produce. Many people believe that poverty has become part of their personality, and hold out little hope for change.

Send a cow provide livestock and training in natural organic farming practices alongside courses in gender equality, conflict resolution and more.

Send a cow has been CSA’s nominated Charity for many years and we raised a further £29 in the raffle at the October AGM. Derek Gallagher has very kindly donated a range of smallholder books from Lesley’s personal collection, which will be available for purchase at our forthcoming Reaseheath meetings, with all the proceeds going to Send a cow.

You can also donate via our Treasurer, Lawrence, or the Send a Cow website:

[www.sendacow.org](http://www.sendacow.org)

**Adverts**

**In lamb ewes -** 1st cross Southdown ewes, various ages, good mothers. For further information call Jackie on 01270 588927 or email coaton@lineone.net

**Pedigree registered Texel shearling tups for sale** - Signet recorded, in top decile / quartile for breed in the country. Heptavac / Orf vaccinated, Crovect treated and wormed. Prime condition.

Price on application, contact Diane or John Mifflin on 01782720572 or 07966979469. Any inspection welcome.

**Beulah yearlings (Chester area) -** Heptavac treated, open to offers, please contact Rob on 07958 647045.

**Chick brood box for sale -** Home made chick brood box. Sturdy, with heat lamp. Offers welcome, call Kevin for more details 07773780722.

**Mr Clip Shearing -** Small and large numbers catered for by "Mr Clip" himself, Cecil. Very experienced with both sheep and alpacas. Reasonable rates, based Knutsford. Call on 07779081925 or 07503 777585.

**Lincoln Longwool fleece for sale -** 12 - 15lb in weight, £20. Phone Angela on 07786 620076 for more details.

**Small bales of hay (2016)** - Lovely; weed free, home grown & barn stored. £3.50 a bale, Kingsley area, may be able to deliver. Contact Gill. 07933 767994.

**Logs for sale** - Barn dried and stored, small net bags, builders’ bags or trailer loads. Free local delivery also **Hay & straw** - In small bales or large round bales. Good quality and dry. Call Mike on 0771 476 8164 or Chris on 0787 102 4275. Helsby area.

**Rotovator wanted** - Ideally a Howard gem or similar. Please call Rosie on 07770 783980.

Members may advertise on the website and also in "The Gate", please email your advert to editor@cheshiresmallholders.org.uk

Please mention Cheshire Smallholders Association when replying to advertisements.