

# **WALGA Chairman's report 2014 for the annual Parish Meeting**

WALGA completed its 2013 programme (since our last report) with its usual annual events: Open Gardens in June with cream teas attracted many visitors from both within and outside the village and the Produce Show in September attracted a number of new entrants. The apple pressing day was windy and cold but a valiant little team pressed juice all afternoon – though the Pumpkin Party aspect of that afternoon got little support compared with the processions of the two previous years. We finished the year with our AGM in November and Christmas flower arranging late that month.

The second 'talk' of 2013 was a tour of Katie's Garden – we were delightfully hosted and walking around the greenhouses was most interesting. WALGA also took part in the village's second 'Energy and Community' day in April – a popular talk was by Tony Callaghan, the inventor of the Hotbin, one of the composting systems made available by one of WALGA's sub-groups, the Community Composting.

For 2014 we decided not to run a programme of talks ourselves, but rather to recommend that keen gardeners in the village take advantage of the excellent programmes run locally for many years by Bucklesham Garden Club, Kirton Gardeners club and the Woodbridge Horticultural Society. So our programme is the annual events referred to above – alas we have just agreed to cancel Open Gardens for this year: too many of those we thought would be able to be open have suffered flood or wind damage. We will be concentrating our efforts on the Produce Show and hope to attract entrants from Newbourne and Hemley as well.

The three projects under WALGA's auspices continue to progress well.

The Scattered Orchard planted a further dozen trees this winter / spring and checked the sixty that were planted in the jubilee year; some of them had to be replaced. Marina O'Connell of the Apricot Centre ran another very popular morning of pruning instruction and Mariah Ballam ran a grafting skill-share in the afternoon: this was an extremely successful day, attracting interested people from the village and more widely. We continue to be grateful to STOG (the Suffolk Traditional Orchards Group) for helping with low cost trees and grafting material.

The Community Fruit Pressing Equipment was extremely well used in 2013: several Waldringfield residents used it for days at a time, and we understand there are some good home brews still bubbling. Among the outside users Transition Woodbridge processed several hundred pounds of donated apples into juice which was then passed on to food banks etc. We feel optimistic that 2014 will be equally successful as we already have several bookings.

Waldringfield Community Composting has signed off two of its grants – those from the Big Lottery Fund and from the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths. Its primary focus is to reinforce or re-establish knowledge, confidence and ownership of home-composting: we have continued slowly to survey the composting habits of every household in some detail – many have always coped with all green waste on site, and now 24 households have hotbins (some serving more than one household) which deal easily with food waste, and a smaller number of households use wormeries or bokashi to partly deal with this. A small group of us paid a visit to the Materials Recycling Facility at Great Blakenham to see what happens to the contents of our blue bins.

With these projects firmly established, five years of organised activity behind us and the requisite number of people registering with the Parish Council as desiring allotments we are now looking actively for a site. Such progress as we have made so far indicates that this is not going to be easy!

Betsy Reid.  
Chairman.  
April 2014

