



# Flitwick Gardeners' Association

Issue 129

Summer 2026

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August - Annual Show  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October - Autumn Show  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November - FGA Quiz

# Flitwick Gardeners' Association

We are an association run by members, for members. Our aim is to promote gardening in Flitwick and the surrounding villages.

We have a members' shop, The Seed Box, where we stock a wide range of useful items including seeds, tools, compost, pots and chemicals at very competitive prices. We also have a library and a small range of loan equipment.

We run shows, organise an annual quiz and run the occasional trip to visit a garden. We're always pleased to welcome new members and always looking for help in running the Association and activities. We'd love to hear from you – just a few hours here and there would make all the difference.

## How to find us

The Seed Box is situated behind the new Red Kite Meadows care home that is beside Flitwick Leisure Centre with access via Red Kite Road, off Steppingley Road. If you're unsure, see the map at <https://www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk/fgaopen.htm>

What3words:

///octopus.downhill.sprayer –Seedbox location

///butlers.signs.again – Steppingley Road access to Seedbox via Red Kite Road

New phone number: **07592 996139**

## Seed box Opening Hours

Saturday	2.00 pm to 4.00 pm Feb to Nov (closed on Show days)
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## Telephone

Outside of these hours you can always leave a message for us on the answering machine on **07592 996139**.

## Email addresses

General enquiries etc.	<a href="mailto:enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>
Magazine	<a href="mailto:newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">newsletter@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>
Show info and entries	<a href="mailto:fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk">fgashow@flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>

## Website / Facebook address

Facebook Group	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/flitwickgardeners">https://www.facebook.com/groups/flitwickgardeners</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk">www.flitwickgardeners.co.uk</a>

## Executive Committee

Ian Holman	Chairman, Magazine Editor and Show Committee
Colin Stennett	Secretary and Show Secretary
Daniel Doyle	Trading Coordinator
Leonie Coverley	Treasurer
J-P Carter	Deputy Chairman and Show Committee
Siân Jones	Deputy Secretary
Laurie Arnold	Seeds and Deputy Trading Coordinator
Francis Prior	Membership Secretary, Deputy Treasurer
Ann Lutley	Publicity Officer
Sue Titchener	Seed Box Rota Coordinator

## Other committee members (not mentioned above)

Kath Stennett	Show Committee
Sue Foster	Show Committee
Francis Phillips	Website

## Honorary Life Members

Linda Pitts, Syd Pye, Maryan Pateman, J-P Carter, Anne Godden, Colin & Kath Stennett, Laurie Arnold

## Chit Chat from the Chair

According to the internet, the average date of the last spring frost in our area is mid- to late-April and is getting earlier due to the warming climate. Hence May's late frosts were an unpleasant surprise to many (although the BBC weather forecast did give warning to others that took notice). I'd optimistically left earthing up my second early potatoes for 'another day' and had recently planted out courgettes, marrows and pumpkins – so sadly found beds of withered plants on my next visit to my allotment.

However, I hope you were able to take a break from watering duties to enjoy the recent dry and unseasonably warm weather. Like last year, we've had another dry spring that's been a challenge for gardeners and water companies. Another reminder of the benefits of mulching to help lock in water in the soil and reduce evaporation. Though, as Colin mentions in his report, our members still put on an amazing display at the Spring Show!

During one of the hottest days last month, we had a very enjoyable afternoon going round the Maulden open gardens day (as well as enjoying the excellent homemade cakes for afternoon tea). It was a wonderful opportunity to visit a diverse range of gardens, big and small, new and long-established, and to chat with passionate gardeners. You can't help but come home with planting ideas for your own garden, so do keep an eye out for other local open garden events.

It was also sad to see the awful damage being wrought on Box plants by the invasive Box tree caterpillar, which features in the RHS's top 10 plant pests list. The days of this garden plant are likely numbered in the UK – as the climate warms and more new pests and diseases enter the UK, which other common plants may be similarly threatened?

As you all know, access to the Seedbox is now from Steppingley Road via Red Kite Road. Hopefully this (and new banners on the fence and Seedbox) will make finding us easier and help to attract more members. At some point, the private parking restrictions around the Care Home will be enforced. So, if you can't find room in the Seedbox car park area (although there usually is), please either park at the top of the allotments or in the Leisure Centre car park.

Happy Gardening, and see you on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August at the Annual Show!  
Ian Holman (FGA Chairman)

## **2026 Spring Show Report**

When the judge walked into the hall, he looked amazed, He said that with most of the large daffodils virtually finished flowering and the recent rain, hail and high winds he thought he'd be in for a quiet time. What faced him was the highest number of exhibits we've ever had at a Spring show and entries in every single class. The hall was filled with daffodils, tulips, spring flowers and shrubs. There were also some very tempting sausage rolls and cheesecakes in the cookery classes. I got the judge a coffee and a promise of some cake once he'd finished judging, which he managed to do with 2 minutes to spare before people came to look around the hall and see how their exhibits had done.

Like everyone else that looked around the hall after judging he thoroughly enjoyed the homemade cake that he chose and promised to be back to judge the entries at our Autumn show.

My thanks to everyone that entered items for the show and to all those people that helped in making the show such a success. Let's hope that things turn out well for our Annual and Autumn shows so that we can give even more judges a difficult time.

Colin Stennett  
Show Secretary

## **2026 Annual Show photography classes**

The classes for the 2026 Annual Show on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August are:

103 Distance	104 Speed
105 Height	106 Time

The children's photography class is a 'Close Up' photograph.

As always, the class title is a broad theme in which your photographic imagination can run wild!

## **Do you have the occasional hour to spare?**

The FGA is dependent on our members volunteering their help. If you've got some time and interest, please consider:

- Helping during our Saturday opening at the Seedbox – those that do generally help around two or three times a quarter so it's not a huge time commitment but is vital to sustaining the FGA
- Promoting the FGA locally on Facebook or other social media, especially now that access is more straight-forward
- Keeping an eye on a stock area in the Seedbox, helping to keep your shelves stocked and advising Dan on re-ordering;
- Helping with Seedbox maintenance
- Or anything else you think you could help us with.....

If you can, have a word with any of the helpers down at the Seedbox or email us on [enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@flitwickgardeners.co.uk)

## **TRADING Update June 2026**

I would like to thank all of our Volunteers for helping to keep the Seedbox running and for carrying the big amounts of compost to vehicles for our members.

I am happy to see everyone has been taking advantage of the compost offers and great prices we offer. We have seen a steady demand for compost and own pack items and please don't forget to collect a fertiliser sheet when you're next in as it details what fertiliser will help with which flower and fruits.

Kings Seeds have really gone down well with our members and I appreciate you all joining us with them, please keep in mind anything you don't find on the shelf can be sourced if you get in contact.

I know it's short and sweet and I wish you all every potting success, if you haven't already got those seeds in the ground.

Dan Doyle (Trading Secretary)

## **2026 FGA AGM**

This year 22 members turned up for the AGM, with a further 5 members sending their apologies for not being able to attend.

Ian Holman, chairman, thanked everyone for coming and proceeded to thank all those that had helped with the association over the past year in various capacities. He was pleased to see that there had been a reduction in wastage of seed potatoes and onions compared with previous years. There had also been 3 successful shows, and a quiz held during the year. He also said that membership remained fairly static and everyone should try and encourage people to join the association. It was pleasing that building work is now complete – so access to the seed box is no longer a muddy challenge for anyone.

Leonie Coverley, Treasurer, talked through some of the items in the end of year accounts which showed a profit of £2,700 compared to the previous year's deficit of £5,000. This was primarily due to lower restocking costs of the seed box plus reductions in the cost of insurance and telephone charges. So far 2026 sales are similar to 2025 but there were higher costs for the purchase of stock for the seed box.

The membership report shows that we currently have 232 members, slightly down on the same period last year, with 58 2025 members who have yet to renew for 2026.

All existing FGA Officers and Committee members were willing to stand for another year. These appointments were accepted by all those present.

Following on from an item at the AGM last year, the committee are planning to advertise in local magazines now that the building work is complete and access to the seed box is easier. It was also mentioned to members that we will need to repair and / or replace the fencing and gates at the front of the compound. Some of the posts have rotted and the gates have broken off their hinges.

Colin Stennett  
Secretary

## Tips for showing at the FGA Summer Show – August 22<sup>nd</sup>

It will soon be time for our Annual Show. You should have received the Show Schedule together with this magazine to help you plan what to enter in the many vegetable, flower, fruit, cooking, arts and crafts, and photography classes. If you've never entered before, you can pick up a **free booklet** from the Seed box of tips we have put together for displaying entries in all our shows, which include:

- If class details state a maximum or minimum size, then you must ensure that **all** of the exhibits in your entry conform.
- If you are asked to leave some foliage, do not forget.
- When showing more than one specimen they should be as uniform as possible. This also applies to the “any other vegetable” class.
- When showing tomatoes leave a little stalk attached.
- When showing beans leave a little hook of stalk on each and should be as straight as possible.
- If you are showing jams or pickles etc. ensure that there is no brand name visible on the jar or lid that you use.
- To show shallots stand on a plate in a little sand (provided at the Show). Onions can be shown stood on rings cut from toilet rolls or similar.
- Trim the roots of leeks, onions and shallots and make sure they are dry (particularly around the top)
- Regardless of length, carrots with a rounded tip are ‘stump rooted’ whilst ‘pointed’ carrots taper to a point.
- After digging potatoes put into water so that dirt can be wiped off without damaging the skins.
- Vegetables should be clean but take care not to damage them.
- Apples should be shown with stalks downwards and not polished.

If you have any questions, then do ask at the Seedbox or **just bring your potential exhibits along to the show where a committee member will always be happy to advise you**. We look forward to seeing you there

The Show Committee