

**Reading Food Growing Network
AGM Sunday 21st February 2021
Committee report for 2020**

What we did during 2020:

Our activities were severely curtailed throughout most of the year by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 AGM held at RISC on Sunday 16th February. Amanda Couch gave an overview of the MERL Commons projects overview and Dave Richards gave a talk on “Growing climate friendly food”.

Ran seed swap. There was a great start to the year running the seed swap at the AGM and on Saturday 7th March at Reading Farmers’ Market with many seeds going out and even more coming in.

With COVID-19 and the various levels of lockdown, the seed swap went postal with orders being received via Twitter, Facebook, the RFGN website and email. As well as seeds going out seeds came in as donations, and we also received requests on how to share seedlings and young veg plants. Many had been grown for sharing or selling at events, such as Bean Pole Day, that had been cancelled. Some of these were shared amongst other Reading food growers but many were distributed to community gardens and Lavender Place where they were grown on and contributed to the Veg4Reading project.

We carried on sending out seeds throughout 2020 and now the 2021 seed swap season has started. The seed swap kit is available to borrow for other events. The current list of seeds available is at: <https://www.readingfoodgrowingnetwork.org.uk/SeedSwap.cfm>.

Final Straw screening scheduled for 18th March 2020 was cancelled due to the deteriorating situation with the pandemic. We are now looking at an online screening.

Continued to work closely with Food4Families, supporting their Veg4Reading project which saw lots of extra fruit and vegetables grown in the community gardens and allotments and delivered to organisations in Reading which provide food parcels and cook meals for people in need. Please see: <https://www.food4families.org.uk/Veg4Reading.cfm>

We also continued to help with Reading Town Meal, which was a virtual event in 2020. We organised and ran the online workshops and also helped to source and deliver vegetables to people joining in with the cook-along meal.

RFGN coordinates the local network for Good to Grow (formerly known as The Big Dig). This year (2021) they will be having a weekend of action from Friday 23rd to Monday 26th April. This is a great event for allotments and community gardens to get involved with. More details at: <https://www.goodtogrowuk.org/>

Continued our member benefits schemes: as members of RFGN we are entitled to discounts at Suttons Seeds (40% off seeds and 10% off other items from their catalogue). RFGN is also a group member of Garden Organic, giving us a 10% discount on everything in their catalogue, and this year we are also going to join their Heritage Seed Library.

We're also members of Social Farms & Gardens <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/> who have been very helpful with advice and support through the pandemic.

Informed and connected people via our website, mailing list and social media.

