

February
2021



The Bridge Garden
Newsletter No 46

Signs of spring.....

Monday February 1st 2021.....

Now that we are into February, indeed today was a marked contrast to the weather from last Monday when we were battling the snow.....

There are some signs that spring is creeping ever closer with snowdrops providing some cheer as they peek through the ground giving us some early colour.....

Plus, there are lots of narcissus making lots of growth so again they will be providing us with even more colour in the coming weeks.....

Follow the progress over the month of February as we gear up to start seed sowing and planting work in The Bridge Garden.....

Snowdrops peeking through.....



Compost bays being organised.....

When you have a big garden area and you grow plenty there is always lots of compostable vegetation, now this is all well and good having lots of vegetation but to get the best use out of this vegetation you need to be very organised and to be in a position to be able to turn your compost heaps regularly so that all of the vegetation that you have rots down quicker enabling you to make your own compost which really is a priceless commodity. What we are currently doing is setting up some extra compost bays so that we can organise our composting work more effectively. Below you can see some of our compost bays.....



REMIN volcanic rock dust has been added to our compost heaps.....



As well as adding REMIN volcanic rock dust to our soil, we have also added some to our compost heaps..... This will assist in the composting process plus it will add to the quality of the compost plus it will encourage the worms into the heaps which will also help the composting process.....

Composting

Bridge gardening students growing areas.....

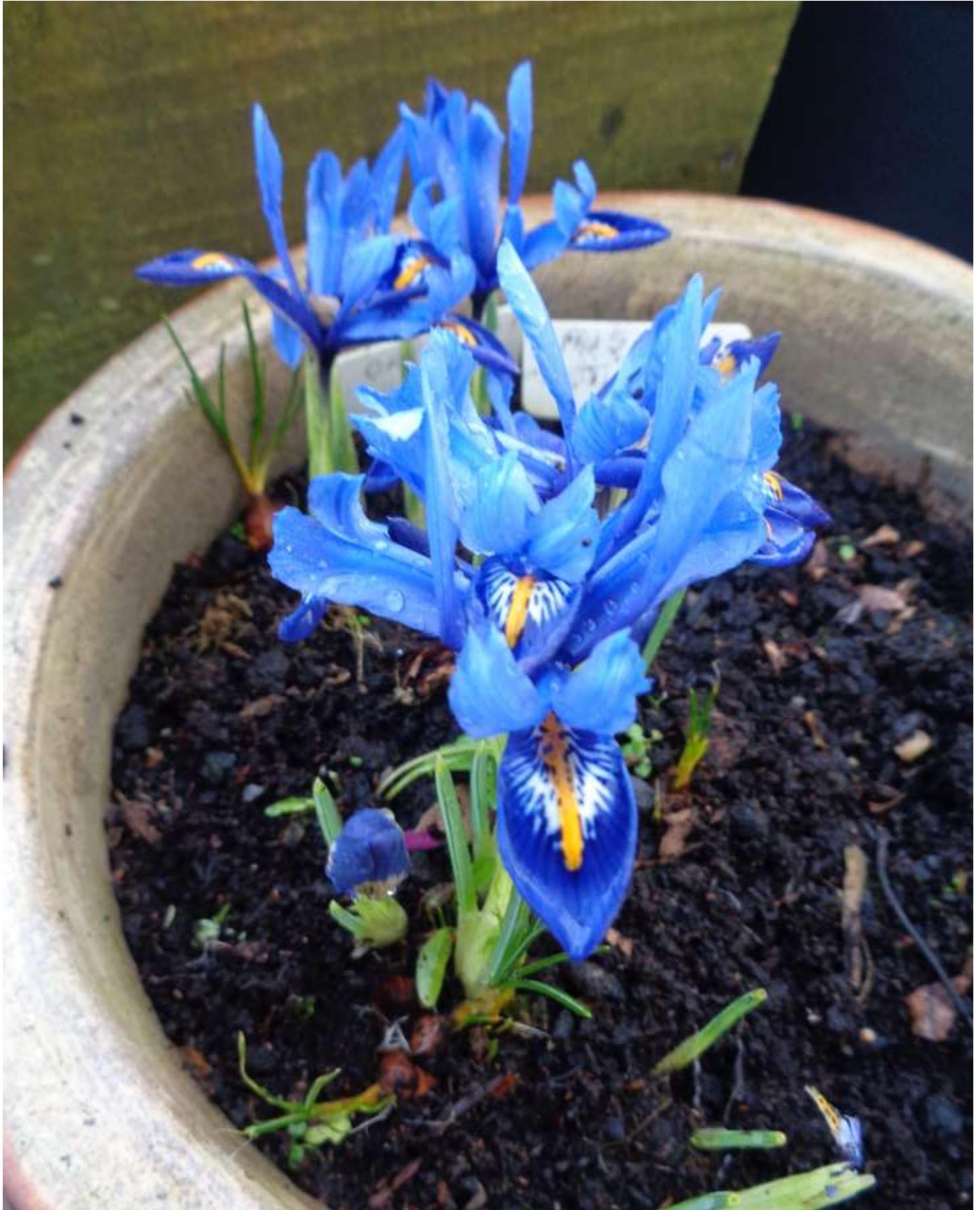
Monday February 1st 2021

With the country still under the grip of the third National Lockdown there is still plenty of work taking place in The Bridge Garden, not least the preparation of some of the students growing spaces in anticipation of a return to school hopefully next month [March], in some ways this will be almost perfect timing for seed sowing and planting work. Below you can see this preparation work.....



More winter colour.....

Although we are still in winter there are signs of some spring colour popping up in different areas of the garden, we have already mentioned the snowdrops but take a look at these stunning blue irises that are flowering in the garden.....
The detail in the flowers is absolutely amazing – the wonders of nature.....



Talking about colour.....

Take a look at the stunning colour that our copper beech trees are displaying in The Bridge Garden – again areas of nature that you can only marvel at.....
These trees are providing some different winter colour.....



Lots more signs of spring.....

Friday February 5th 2021.....

With spring just 43 days away there are really lots and lots of signs that spring is moving ever closer – take a look at the photographs below.....

Snowdrops.....



Tete – a - tete daffodils



Crocuses.....



Tulips too.....

Irises.....



Lots of spring colour to come.....

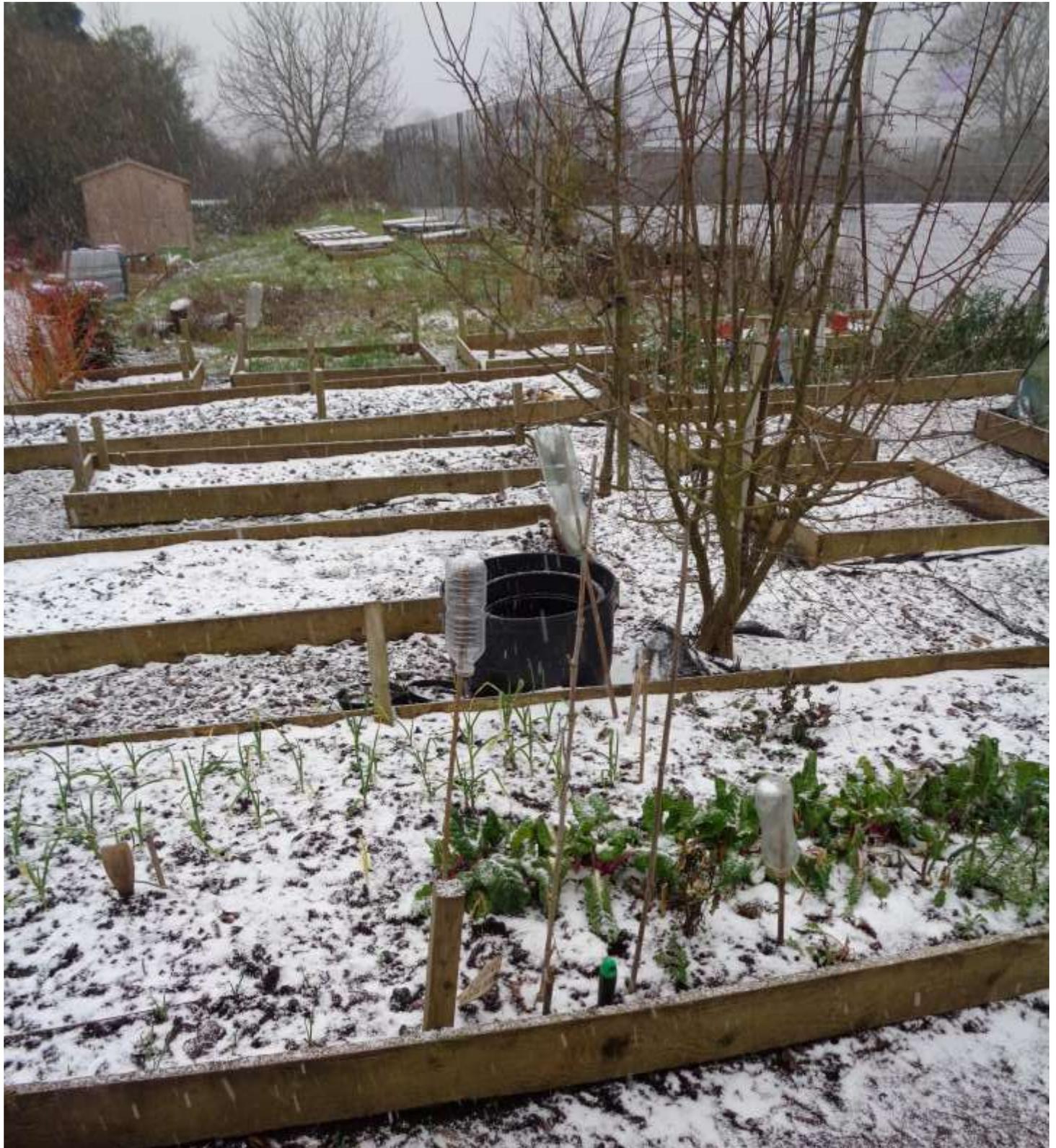
Snowy conditions have returned.....

Monday February 8th 2021.....

Although we keep mentioning and are most definitely able to see lots of different signs of spring, the snow has returned again coupled with some very low overnight temperatures forecast for the rest of this week.....

Although so far we have only received a thin dusting of snow, the very low air temperatures are the problem plus with very snow laden grey skies the light levels are not that great. But we keep pressing on with some garden jobs.....

Here you can see a view of the snow across the garden area.....



Snowy conditions.....

Below on the left you can see our Peppermint chard which really is a tough robust plant that is covered in a mixture of frost and snow and then on the right you can see our garlic bed again covered in snow.....



Compost heaps being turned.....

Today we have spent some time turning over and mixing up our compost heaps, we can see that the heaps are breaking down and rotting slowly which in turn will produce us some super charged material. Some heat is really needed to speed this process up – we are going to look at covering over the heaps.....



Worms are busy.....

After turning over our compost heaps we can see that the material is breaking down slowly, Also there are plenty of worms in the heap helping this process.....



Subway providing more assistance

The Subway funding provided by Mr Daljit Nahil is split between President Kennedy School and Parkgate Primary School so we have purchased not only the raspberry canes [Planted at Parkgate Primary] but also some compact growing apple trees called appletini – this is a variety that grows to 2 metres maximum but at the same time, it will in time produce a huge crop of small, almost golf ball size eating apples. Also, it produces lots of beautiful pink blossom which will be ideal for our oh so important pollinators in the spring. Below you can see the appletini trees that are ready for planting in The Bridge Garden.....



A really cold week.....

This whole week – week commencing February 8th has probably been the coldest week of temperatures since The Beast from the East in 2018. All through this week we have experienced below overnight and often long into the day zero degrees temperatures, indeed Thursday night it dipped to 5 degrees below zero.

Very cold indeed, looking at some of our plants – they have really felt it too.....

Below you can see our broad bean plants that have endured snow and very cold temperatures all week long.....



Garlic is growing through the frozen snow.....

Friday February 12th 2021.....

It is reckoned that garlic develops a stronger taste when it is exposed to a very prolonged spell of cold weather, so we will get the chance to put this theory to the test when we harvest our garlic crop in the early summer months.....

Below you can see the garlic growing through the frozen ground.....



Water butt drainpipe is frozen too.....

Here is a perfect example of how cold the temperatures have been with the water coming off the guttering drainpipe that leads into the water butt actually frozen!!



Brrrrr.....It's cold!!.....

Another very cold day with the layer of snow frozen over giving us ice everywhere.

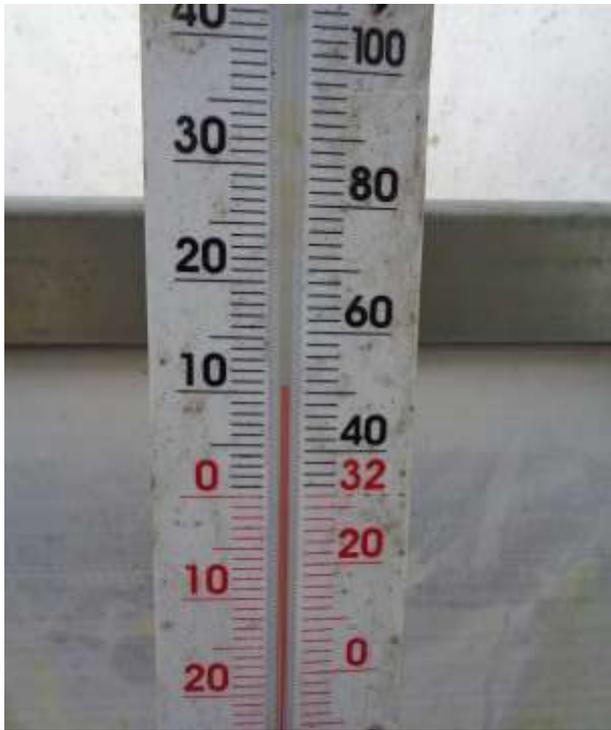


Weather is almost “tropical”

Monday February 15th 2021.....

The weather this morning in The Bridge Garden felt almost “tropical” after the extremely cold temperatures that we experienced last week. Indeed, you can see how cold the temperatures were by the depth of ice that is still covering our water butts and buckets that filled with snow and rain over the week.....

Warmer temperatures



Water butts still frozen!!



Fruit tree pruning taking place.....



There are always jobs to do in the garden, some jobs need to be done at specific times of the year – one such job is the fruit tree pruning that really needs to be done during the winter dormancy period.....

Here you can see one of our plum trees that does need pruning – basically you need to open up the spaces between the branches and you do not want branches crossing over each other. After pruning this tree quite harshly, the tree will grow back come the spring when it will have plenty more growing space.....

First daffodil to flower.....

We have snowdrops and crocuses in flower in different parts of the garden but we also have our first daffodil in flower. Still relatively early but a welcome sign...



Much milder weather this week.....

Thursday February 18th 2021.....

Compared to last week the weather is relatively mild with no frost or snow but we are faced with lots of wet soggy areas now as the snow has melted and the ice has thawed, indeed our water butts are almost at the point of overflowing.....

What it has shown with the milder weather is how resilient some plants are, if you look back to the really cold week of weather – week commencing February 8th, our broad bean plants took a real hammering weatherwise but look at them now as they have recovered really well and will we hope continue to grow through the next few months to give us an early crop of tasty broad beans.....



Broad Beans.....

Variety: Aquadulce Claudia.....

Another very tough crop.....

Below you can see another really tough crop that we have growing in The Bridge Garden, year after year our rhubarb crop comes back, no matter what weather gets thrown at it – back it comes. Looking at some of the rhubarb crowns we could look to force some of the crowns to produce an early crop of young “sweeter” stems – you can force rhubarb simple by covering over the crown in darkness so that the plant continues to search for the light so that it produces stems that are smaller rather than tough thick stems when the crowns are allowed to grow as normal without blocking their natural light. Here you can see the early growth.....



Agretti - New crop is growing.....

[Italian for “little sour ones] is basically a wild weed that grows in marshland..... It looks a lot like long thick green grass and as the Italian name suggests it is a bit tart tasting when eaten raw. Effectively it is a salty green heirloom herb that delivers a succulent texture and a pleasantly acidic tart taste when harvested fresh and young. Also, it is fascinating to see how it germinates and start to grow. We have our Agretti plants growing in the poly tunnel.....



Lots more colour appearing in the garden.....

Monday February 22nd 2021.....

Now that we are entering the last week of February, the weather at the beginning of this month seems a bit of a distant memory with the temperatures up into double figures rather than the minus numbers. But although we can enjoy the “warmer” temperatures we still need to exercise some caution with regards to seed sowing and any subsequent planting work.....

Just remember that the Beast from the East was in March so we are not getting carried away but we will enjoy the splendid colour that is appearing.....

Below you can see some beautiful snowdrops.....



Stunning colours.....

Here you can see some super crocuses that really provide some really welcome colour - it really is a treat to see some bright colour in The Bridge Garden.....



Colourful...
Crocuses

Subway continue to support our schools growing work



Schools growing work

Cold overnight but glorious daytime temperatures.....

Friday February 26th 2021.....

With February 2021 almost at an end, we are still in winter but despite the mercury going down to minus two overnight we have enjoyed a couple of days of relatively warm sunshine – certainly high double figure temperatures. Indeed, this welcome daytime warmth has most certainly accelerated the spring flowering bulbs in the garden areas.....

Here you can see some of the tete – a – tete daffodils that we have growing in The Bridge Garden. Really welcome colour.....



A cold frosty start.....

