

Gamston with West Drayton and Eaton Parish Council

May 2014

Dear Parishioner,

MOSQUITOES!!

Thanks in part to the action taken by village residents, mosquitoes have not been as big a problem in recent years as they were in 2004 when, in some areas of our villages, it was virtually impossible to go out in the evenings without being bitten.

We need to continue with efforts to reduce the number of mosquitoes and this means stopping them from breeding. This leaflet includes measures that we can take to interfere with the breeding cycle, measures that will be much more effective in controlling numbers if everyone takes them.

This leaflet also includes measures you can take to prevent being bitten and ways of treating bites if you are unfortunate enough to have been bitten.

I would like to thank you all for following this advice in the past and to thank you in advance for doing so this coming summer.

Yours sincerely

Tim Blagg

Chairman, Gamston, West Drayton and Eaton Parish Council

Action you can take to reduce the number of mosquitoes

The only effective way to reduce the number of mosquitoes is to interrupt the breeding cycle and the key to any kind of success is consistency – if your family successfully eradicates mosquito breeding in your garden but your neighbours do nothing then the problem is not solved.

In order to breed the one thing that mosquitoes need above all else is water. They can breed in water butts, garden ponds and any water left standing for a few days. Just a cupful of water is enough to allow hundreds of mosquitoes to develop. To reduce the numbers of mosquitoes, we need to prevent them from breeding and we can do this by removing all stagnant water:

- If you are collecting rainwater, use a close-fitting lid to prevent mosquitoes entering and laying eggs in the water. Make sure that all gaps are sealed between the lid and the pipe discharging into it.
- Keep gutters and flat roofs clear of debris to prevent the collection of water.
- Change the water in birdbaths and saucers under potted plants at least once a week.
- Drain water trapped in folds of plastic or canvas tarpaulins (used to cover garden furniture). Arrange the tarpaulin so that water drains off.
- Turn over dustbin lids, buckets, wheelbarrows, paddling pools and other containers that collect and hold water when not in use.
- Properly dispose of any used tyres around your property to stop water from collecting.
- You can also add fish such as goldfish or carp to ornamental ponds. They will eat mosquito eggs and larvae.

Measures to stop you being bitten

To reduce the risk of being bitten the Health Protection Agency recommends the following measures:

- Consider using insect repellent on exposed skin particularly when outdoors. Mosiguard, Autan or other sprays that contain DEET (over 30% diethyltoluamide – do not use over 50% DEET on children) are available. Follow the directions for use.
- Consider keeping your arms and legs covered at dusk. Wear long sleeves, long trousers and socks.
- Consider keeping windows and doors shut from dusk to dawn where possible to avoid mosquitoes entering your house.
- Mosquito coils (a slow burning mixture of repellent and insecticide) can be burned either when sitting outside after sunset, or in bedrooms at night.

What you can do to treat insect bites

The Health Protection Agency recommends the following advice for treating mosquito bites:

- Try not to scratch the bite.
- Mosquito bites do not usually require any treatment. If the itching is severe, your local pharmacist can give advice on a range of products that may ease the itching.
- On rare occasions a bite may become infected. If the area around the bite becomes very red, sore, swollen and is spreading consult your GP.