

Fairfield Allotment Holders Association

Newsletter 12

AGM: The 66th **Annual General Meeting** of the Fairfield Allotment Holder's Association will be held at the Farmer's Arms Hotel, Penny Street, Lancaster on Tuesday 20th February 2007 at 7.30 pm. Please note that no smoking will be permitted to take place in the room in which we will meet.

All are welcome: please come and take part. Volunteers to join the committee are always welcome, even on a trial basis, and we could do with some new blood. The committee you elected last year is content to continue, but regular renewal of the committee keeps the team fresh & stops people getting tired in post and perhaps giving up earlier than they might. **We could particularly do with some more women** on the committee: many of the newer allotment holders are female, & that's not reflected in the committee enough as yet. You don't have to have an allotment for twenty years, or be a brilliant gardener, to serve on the committee! Currently we are: Gillian Allen, Jon Barry, George Burnett, Sid Duncan, John Lambert, Roy Stephenson, & John Weedy. George is **Treasurer**, John Lambert is **Secretary**, & I've been **Newsletter Editor & Chairman**, though John Weedy is willing to take on the newsletter. We could probably stand up to 2 more members without becoming too big a committee.

If you've a nomination to make for one of the principal posts, it can be done at the AGM but it's helpful to pass it on through the current secretary beforehand. The principal posts are Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. We could usefully divide up the Secretary's role to make it less burdensome. Come to the meeting and have your say, and make sure the committee is doing what you want.

If you don't feel like committee work or the regular commitment it involves, but you'd like to help out anyway, John Lambert, the Secretary, would like to hear from you. He wants to compile a list of volunteers for specific jobs. So, if you've experience of fund-raising, legal expertise, especially with leases, or just want to get muscular in working-parties, please talk to John (6 Carr House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1SW Tel: 01524 849371 email: john@jlambert.f9.co.uk)

The Agenda includes: the secretary's report for the year, the treasurer's financial report, and confirmation of rents and concessions for next year. The committee proposes to **increase rents** from this year's £36, and £18 for a half-plot to £38 and £19, with a quarter-plot at £10. Where else can you have so much fun for so little

cash? There are of course reasons for the proposed increase & John will tell us what they are at the AGM. Payment at the AGM, or as soon as possible thereafter, avoids the prospect of payment penalties or even losing your plot, and saves the treasurer a lot of unnecessary trouble, so bring your cheque book. Rents are due by 16th March & if you should be unusually forgetful, **penalties** may be enforced from 31st March.

There's also likely to be an update about the proposed **extension to the plots** & how this might affect our enormous waiting list. If anyone has any **good ideas** they'd like to try out - seed or plant swaps, maybe an association visit to Harlow Carr, or whatever, this is again the time to mention it. Mind you, don't expect someone else to lay it on for you- the idea is, we'll support you while *you* organise it!

The time when rents are due is the time people consider whether or not they're going to keep their plot on for another year. I hope we can all be realistic: it's good to ask oneself if we actually used our plots well last year, or whether we were blocking someone else from making more productive use of it. Perhaps it's time to consider whether to drop from a full to a half plot: I know when I did this, I was able to look after my half so much better. In fact I got just about as much produce out of it as I had out of the two halves I'd previously had, yet put in less work to do so. If you have issues around the amount of land you're cultivating, the first step in sorting this out is to talk to John Lambert or myself.

I know you're all wondering with bated breath about **the Cookbook** - where did it go? If you're like me, you probably spend long hours in the middle of the night pondering such questions... but fear not, it's not disappeared into the ether. It proved impossible to launch it in time for you to give it out as Christmas presents to all your friends, so the aim is now to launch it at the Fairfield Fun Day instead. So you could in fact still send in the odd extra recipe, if you've made anything else up with your winter veg since the last recipe appeal went round.

Did you get to hear the first of Lancaster's **Gardeners Question Time** programmes? If not, the second is on 18th Feb - I won't say John Lambert's question had the star billing - you'll have to listen yourselves to be the judge of that...

I've got just enough space to remind you how important it is to **keep the gates locked** - if you want, we'll rehearse the reasons for that at the AGM too, but I'm sure you all know what they are.

I've enjoyed being Newsletter Editor, but I don't enjoy, & it's not right for me to have, two allotment committee jobs, so this is where I sign off. I'd like to wish John Weedy good luck if you agree to him being the new Editor, & ask you to send him your contributions. Contact details in the next edition.

