

# Fairfield Allotments Newsletter 16 –



## January 2008

### Theft

Between Christmas and the New Year 19 sheds were broken into across the allotments. Padlocks (of the strongest sort) were bolt-cropped (if that's the word) and other doors and lockers were forced open. Several strimmers were stolen along with the brand new allotment mower. The items stolen were new and relatively expensive items; no interest in hand tools etc. (unless of course you know different) the cost of damage collectively with new padlocks, hasps, time etc was obviously considerable. I think the advice has to be not to store re-saleable kit at the site. If you do find your shed has been broken into please report it to the police to add another crime number to the incident. The Scene of Crime Officer did come to the allotments and look at least 6 of the sheds but were unable to find anything useful.

### AGM

The AGM this year will be at ...

**The Sun Hotel & Bar**

Time: 7.30 pm

Day: **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February**

### RENTS

As you will see from the attached rent request we are proposing a £2 increase in the rents this year. However this increase is the minimum we could propose. Last year was a very expensive year we had to eat into our reserve to buy the new mower and pay for the skip which had been requested by many. Despite donations this obviously used a lot of our limited funds. If we were to try and gather enough money to put our reserve back to where it was and buy a replacement for the stolen mower we would have had to raise the rents by more than £5. The committee did not feel this was reasonable so have restricted the proposed increase to £2 on a full plot and £1 on a half. However we are putting out a big plea: If you can afford to make a donation toward the cost of the replacement mower please add this to your rent. (You'll see a box for donations on the rent form). If you are unable to afford this please can you help contribute to fund raising events as they happen

during the year. Particularly by growing and donating crops and plants for our stall at Fairfield Association Sunday in July. Volunteers to help on that day would also be gratefully appreciated please contact me nearer the time.



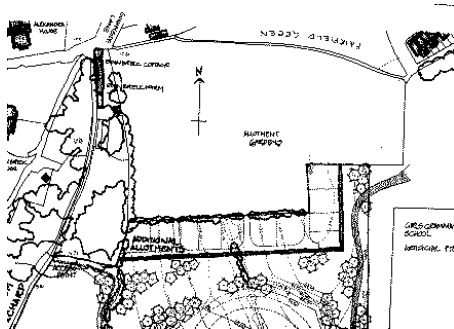
### Free Shed

Our thanks go to the Storey Gallery who have donated a (virtually) brand new shed to the allotments (6' x 8') it was used only once as an alternative festive Grotto! (It is missing a door...so along with assembling it you'll need to be able to make or get someone to make a door for it). If you want to be put into a draw for the shed please tick the box on your rent form and return in at or before the AGM (with your rent). If the lucky winner wants to make a contribution to allotment funds that would again be gratefully received, but not compulsory.

**Not many people know this:-**

#### Origins of Allotments -

Allotments derive from the enclosure legislation of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the word 'allotment' originates from land being allotted to an individual under an enclosure award. The most important of the Acts was the General Inclosure Act 1845 which required that provision should be made for the landless poor in the form of 'field gardens' limited to a quarter of an acre. At this time, allotments were largely confined to rural areas although during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, parcels of land in urban areas began to be used as allotments and the value of such plots for the urban working class was starting to be recognised. The spread of urban allotments was intensified by the growth of high-density housing, often without gardens.



### Extension to the Allotments

Our allotment's waiting list has hit an astonishing 70. The committee and those people waiting would be very pleased if those not fully using their plots either gave them up to the list or really got to grips with them this season. Plans are progressing well for the extension which

enough to reduce the waiting list to 50. It is touch and go whether we can get funding applications together to make this happen in time for a full season this year, but we will continue to try. Anyone with expertise to offer in helping this happen should get in touch with anyone on the committee as soon as possible

### Potato Day - this year is

once again being held by Lancaster Seedsavers at the Friends meeting house on Meeting House Lane Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February 12 noon until 4pm – Over 30 varieties of organic, Heritage and unusual seed potatoes will be on sale by tuber, so you can pick and mix There is a community cafe and children's activities on the day



**The Fairfield Cookbook  
on Sale for the first time  
at the AGM on Thursday  
14<sup>th</sup> February**

If you are reading this online then Follow this link for

### Seasonal tips For February

What you sow outdoors will depend on local conditions. If suitable you can sow your broad beans in February along with early peas such as Feltham First and Meteor for a May / June harvest.

Conventional advice is to sow parsnips now but I believe their reputation for poor germination is due to being placed in cold wet soil and I have had much better germination by sowing in March.

Jerusalem artichokes and shallots can be planted now, although shallots will benefit from covering with a cloche.

#### Under Cover

If you have a greenhouse, you can get an early crop of lettuce, rocket and radish away in there. You can utilise cloches outdoors but success will be more dependent on the weather.

Time to sow your summer cabbages such as Greyhound and Primo, as well as turnips and spinach.

Onions from seed should be started now. They need about 15 degrees to get them going so you may be best using the windowsill in a cool room to start them off.

With a heated propagator or using windowsills you can start off aubergine and peppers. Once again, I have found better results by waiting until March, which I put down to day length but many people feel this is the right time. (these tips are thanks to John Harrison

<http://www.allotment.org.uk/index.php>)

#### Interesting websites

<http://www.gardenersworld.com>  
<http://www.self-sufficient.co.uk/Allotment-Gardening.htm>

**Winter Poem** "Tonight the wind gnaws with teeth of glass  
The jackdaw shivers in caged branches of iron

The stars have talons  
There is hunger in the mouth of vole and badger  
Silver agonies of breath in the nostril of the fox  
Ice on the rabbit's paw  
Tonight has no moon, no food for the pilgrim  
The fruit tree is bare, the rose bush a thorn  
And the ground is bitter with stones..." by Laurie Lee

#### Your committee is :

**Acting Chair:** Caroline Eames **Secretary:**

John Lambert, 6 Carr House Lane,  
Lancaster LA1 15W Tel: Tel. 01524  
849371 john@jlambert.f9.co.uk

**Treasurer:** George Burnett, 94  
Westbourne Road, Lancaster LA1 5JX  
Tel. 01524 62585

Gillian Allen, Jon Barry, John Weedy & Sid Duncan

#### Committee people needed

If any member does feel like helping out on the committee, or just coming to the meetings, you will be welcome.

Committee meetings are held at

#### The Sun Hotel & Bar on Thursdays (about every 2 months)

Planned meetings are as follows:  
27.03.08, 01.05.08, 10.07.08, 03.09.08  
08.01.09, 05.02.09 **AGM**

(If you have received this newsletter by email make sure you click on all the coloured headlines and notes. They will link you to other interesting web sites. If you have a paper copy but use email please let us know your email address for future newsletters)

#### Reminder

Don't forget to fit guttering round sheds and greenhouses to fill water butts and conserve water. If you have got barrels you are not going to use, let John L have them and he can find them a good home.

E E C C E S U S L T S N U E F U N U O N N N G O O  
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#### WORD SEARCH FOR WINTER

Parsnip, potato, greyhound, frost, Brussels, spinach,  
rhubarb, iron, solstice, onions, currants, fleece,  
greenhouse, composting, digging, Jerusalem,  
conservation

## NOTICES

**Manure** delivered by trailer load. Phone Stuart Taylor 01524 67446 (**please check ground conditions on delivery day**)  
**Did you know that there is a Local Food Action Plan?** This plan was compiled by the Food Forum in 2007 and can be downloaded from the Council's website:

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat=762>

Did you know that there is a Local Food Action Plan? This plan was compiled by the Food Forum in 2007 and can be downloaded from the Council's website:

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat=762> The plan includes promoting local food growing, in households as well as on allotments. A group is meeting regularly to promote and deliver the plan, and will be submitting a bid to the Big Lottery for some of the £50 million 'Local Food' fund launched recently. If you would like to contribute to these meetings please contact Simon Gershon tel. 542742 or email [simon@51ashfield.me.uk](mailto:simon@51ashfield.me.uk)

A date for your diary: Bank Holiday weekend 24-26th May will be a Local Food Festival. The main event will be on Monday 26th: A celebration of local food at the Platform, Morecambe. Full details will be available soon at [www.eatlocal.org.uk](http://www.eatlocal.org.uk) or contact Simon Gershon the organiser on 542742

#### Articles or comments for publication in the next Newsletter. Send to

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We're on the Web!  
<http://www.fairfield-allotments.co.uk>