

Fairfield Allotment Holders Association

Newsletter 5

Spring is sprung, the weeds is riz... and up at the plots, mad activity was seen to break out all over the place. What a keen lot we seem to be! Meanwhile, the organisation necessary to enable all this digging & sowing keeps trundling along.

The **AGM** in February must count as one of the most successful of recent years, with 25 attending & 5 apologies, out of a total of about 85 plot holders. For the record, your committee remains the same, i.e.

Gillian Allen (Chair), Jon Barry, George Burnett (Treasurer), Sid Duncan, Emma Grover, John Lambert (Secretary), Roy Stephenson, & John Weedy.

If you've got any points to make that you want the committee to discuss, tell one of the committee, and it will be considered at the next committee meeting. New committee members are also welcome, so please do come along if you have a little time to spare for the association. Contact details, for the committee and the newsletter remain:-

The Secretary, who is John Lambert, and he can be contacted at:

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-And the editor of this sheet is:

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Dates of upcoming **committee meetings** are (all at 7.30pm at the Farmers Arms):

June 7th August 2nd October 4th December 6th

Jan 10th 06

- and the next AGM is to be on February 7th 2006

While you've got your diaries out, the **Garden Competition** takes place on the weekend of **July 9th-10th** and at the same time, the committee is proposing to make a **site visit**, so will be available for you to consult then. **An earlier site visit** will also take place on **May 8th**, at 10.00am.

Don't close the diary until you've marked in the date of the **Fairfield Fun Day**, which will be on 2nd July. We're hoping to have a stall again, and maybe a raffle too.

The **Skip** proved very popular, with many of you taking advantage of it. It's clear this will need to be done again in the future, but it was an expensive operation, so it's unlikely to turn into an annual event, unless you *want* your subs to rise dramatically, year on year...

Talking of which, the Committee would like to say a heartfelt thank you for getting your monies to the Treasurer or Secretary so promptly - collection has been much easier this year and the committee is grateful. At the time of writing, virtually everyone has paid up, which takes a lot of stress out of the treasurer's life. For the one that hasn't, please do!

This issue of the newsletter will be sent out electronically to those with email addresses and on paper to those without. If you've received it on paper and use email please let John know for future issues. Equally if you know of anyone that has not received a copy and would like one, again let John know.

Welcome to all of the **new members** on the plots. If you're not already getting all the advice you need from the old hands and want access to some month by month advice you could try the magazine 'Kitchen Gardener', which is full of useful tips. Or for an internet based resource try www.keirg.freereserve.co.uk/diary/default.html (this is the website for an allotment holder in Leeds who somehow manages to make time to tend their plot and then keep an extensive website up to date...). The Henry Doubleday Research Association website is also quite useful. (www.hdra.org.uk)

On the whole, the **Journal of the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners** makes good bedtime reading - it puts *me* to sleep, anyway - but one article in the current edition made me sit up & take notice. It concerns a battle over allotment plots in Eastleigh, Hampshire, where the local council has decided to get rid of 3 sites, to make way for more housing. There's no planning permission to build, or ministerial consent for the disposal of the sites, yet plot holders are being encouraged to move off, & no new lettings are being allowed. Alternative sites are offered, but they're miles away, next to a motorway and permanently waterlogged. The fact that this can be done by a council worries me, because I see the possibility that a cash-strapped local council could always try to do the same with *our* plots too. Not that we need to contemplate a campaign of civil disobedience just yet, but it does show how important it is to show the council that we really value - & need- our plots. And there's no better way of doing that than by keeping them tidy & tilled all through the year, & not just when the weather's balmy. So I guess I'd better stop wittering on, and go & do *my* bit to make sure our council won't consider re-classifying our site...