

fairfield allotments

newsletter 26 winter 2012/13

AGM

Thursday, 7th February 2013 at 7.30 pm
The Borough, Dalton Square
All are welcome

RENTS 2013

There has been no increase in rents for two years, and the Committee has decided to implement a small increase for 2013. This is because both the new fence adjoining Fauna and the replacement water tanks are both necessary expenditures but will inevitably considerably deplete our financial reserves. So a small increase will enable us to go forward on with other projects in future years. So the rents for 2013 will be:

Full plot: £47.00 (Discount if applicable: £5.00)*

Half plot: £23.50 (Discount if applicable £2.50)*

Quarter plot: £13.00 (Discount if applicable £1.50)*

*Discounts are available for members who are retired/unemployed/unwaged/in receipt any form of disability allowance. *We don't require proof – We trust you.*

Rents for 2013 should be paid by 7th March at the latest and should be delivered to George Burnett or John Lambert, both of whose addresses are printed at the end of this Newsletter.

WATER

Some of our water tanks are suffering from old age and need replacing. In the first instance the Committee has decided to order replacements for two of the tanks. These will be made of galvanised steel and should be very durable.

FUNDRAISING

We had two fundraising events in 2012. The Fairfield Fun Day took place in May. This was organised by The Fairfield Association, and fortunately the weather was good this year and we took a stall in the marquee. Our members provided fruit, vegetables, plants and flowers for sale raising £229.58 This total was a little down on last year but still a wonderful and a very worthwhile achievement considering that the unseasonable cold and wet weather meant that many of our normal crops and flowers were not yet ready. Many thanks to Jean for organising and coordinating our stand. Good luck to Jean with her move to the far east (Newcastle!). With Jean's departure we are going to need a new organiser for the Fun Day stall...any volunteers?

August Bank Holiday Saturday was the date of our Surplus Sale and members contributed fruit, vegetables, flowers, potted plants, jams, chutneys and home-made cakes and biscuits. Tea, coffee and soft drinks with cakes and were also available for our visitors, and this not only provided them with welcome refreshment but also encouraged them to stay longer and buy more of our surplus produce. The Surplus Sale raised an excellent £339.56

VEHICLES

Please be aware of the damage done to our tracks by vehicles when the ground is wet. Nobody should bring any vehicle on to the site in wet conditions. Unfortunately a minority of members still persist. The Committee would be reluctant to prevent access by changing the locks on the double gates at each end of our land, but if the damage continues this may be the only solution.

BREAK-INS AND VANDALISM

Unfortunately we have experienced an increase in the number of break-ins. These range from the theft of produce and tools to various forms of deliberate vandalism including some serious damage to sheds. All plot holders are asked to report every incident to the police regardless of how trivial it is. You should obtain an incident number and also inform John Lambert. As always, you are advised not to leave expensive tools and machinery on your plot.

TENANCIES AND WAITING LISTS

Firstly the positive news: the majority of plots have been well maintained, and those members whose plots border the footpath and cycle way will be aware of the admiration of many passers-by. Sadly however the Committee have had to bring more tenancies to an end than in any recent year. People have many reasons for being unable to keep up with the work such as health or time issues. Whatever the reason, if you are finding it difficult to cope with your plot please consider your position. You could downsize to a half or quarter plot or even give up your plot altogether. Bear in mind that the waiting list is now nearly 150, which means that applicants will have to wait approximately 10 years for a plot. Somebody will be grateful to take your place if you decide that you no longer require your plot.

DIARY DATES

1.AGM: Thursday, 7th February 2013 at 7.30 pm at The Borough. All are welcome.

2.SURPLUS PRODUCE SALE: Saturday, 24th August 2013. Volunteers willing to set up and run the stalls will be very welcome, and of course everybody is invited to contribute: fruit, vegetables, flowers, potted plants, home-made cakes, jams and chutneys.

2012 RETROSPECTIVE / 2013 PROSPECTIVE

2012 was a difficult year for plot holders. Low temperatures, high rainfall and low levels of light and sunshine made conditions unfavourable for many crops. Sadly these same conditions favoured slugs and other bugs, and so many of us found our young plants devastated.

Despite these problems members managed to produce amazing harvests and many were seen leaving the allotments with buckets, bags and wheelbarrows full of goodies. The produce continues through the winter months, and a gentle amble through the allotments reveals that many members are still enjoying winter vegetables. Leeks and brassicas abound as usual. Less obviously, now that their tops are dying down in the winter frosts, many members are digging parsnips and Swedes.

Our thoughts and plans turn now to 2013. Many plot holders have already placed their orders through the Seed Scheme, and others will purchase their seeds and plants elsewhere. Whatever the source plans are already being formulated, the first tomato seeds are sown and we are all looking forward to the coming season, though no doubt there will always be some kind of *gardeners' lament!*

NEW MEMBERS

May we extend a warm welcome to all new members. We hope that you will enjoy your plots and wish you every success. The Committee has discussed the fact that sometimes new members may appreciate a friendly contact. John Lambert already gives every new member guidance and a helpful introduction at the time of joining, but sometimes people could do with a little more help and advice once they have started digging. So the Committee has asked John Weedy and Ruth MacKenzie to take on the role of mentoring new plot holders. Additionally all members are asked to give a friendly welcome to all new faces, especially those who have become new neighbours.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, SITE VISITS AND CHILDREN

Future site visits by the Committee will be extended to include Health and Safety considerations. Members are asked to ensure that plots are kept free of hazards and to be vigilant. Any health and safety issues beyond the control of individual plot holders should be referred to John Lambert or to any member of the Committee.

A particular concern at the Committee meeting of 10th February 2013 was the **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**. Our rules do allow children on the site but only when they are constantly accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult. Members are reminded that they must not allow their children to run around the allotments unsupervised. The allotments are not a playground; unsupervised children are a danger to themselves and sometimes cause damage to the plots.

Please remember that gates must be locked whether your children are on or off the allotments. In the event of an accident the Association would be much more vulnerable to prosecution if we have not minimised the risks – **That means always locking the gates.**

COMMITTEE AND CONTACTS

AGM 7th February 2013, 7.30pm at The Borough – All welcome; we'd like to see as many as possible plot holders come along.

Your allotment committee is:

Chair: Manjeet Lamba

Secretary: John Lambert, 6 Carr House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1SW. Tel: 01524 849371.

Email: secretary@fairfield-allotments.co.uk

Treasurer: George Burnett, 8 South Road, Lancaster LA1 4XD. Tel: 01524 840715

Email: georgeburnett52@yahoo.co.uk

Members: Gillian Allen, Philip Atkinson, Ian Fraser, Ruth MacKenzie, John Weedy.

Many thanks to Val Burnett for the newsletter.

New members or observers are always wanted. If any member does feel like helping out on the Committee, or just coming to meetings, you will be most welcome.

Proposed committee dates for 2013/14: 16.03.13 (Site Visit/Inspection), 09.05.13, 11.07.13, 07.09.13 (Site Visit/Inspection), 09.01.14, 06.02.14 AGM

.....AND FINALLY:

A walking group from Brindle near Chorley were unable to use the normal rural footpaths because they have been so waterlogged. So in November they came to Lancaster for a walk through the less well known parts of Lancaster. These included the canal towpath from Penny Street to Aldcliffe, Fauna, the Millennium Orchard and the footpath alongside the Fairfield Allotments. There was great and genuine admiration and praise for how well our allotments are maintained – So congratulations to all!