

Fairfield Garden Allotment Association

Committee members and contacts:-

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Reminders

Lock: PLEASE, PLEASE, ensure that when you replace the lock to the gate, it is facing the right way and the numbers are clearly visible. Finding the lock the wrong way round makes real problems for some allotment holders.

Weeds: If only we could eat them, how do they grow so fast?! The trouble is, when they set seeds it affects the surrounding plots. Please try to keep your plot reasonably weed free, or let the committee know if you need some help.

Ideas

We have had a suggestion that it would be a nice idea to place a bench somewhere in the shed area, where unwanted crops, plants or seedlings can be left for other allotment holders to help themselves. Please feel free to leave comments via our email address if you have any suggestions or ideas about this, or any other matters.

We have been considering bulk buying of certain products, eg compost, manure, fleece and netting, as well as seeds. Does anyone feel this is a good idea, or perhaps our small size doesn't warrant bulk buying - please leave comments by email. If you don't have access to email then phone one of the committee members with your ideas /suggestions.

Vandalism

As I'm sure you are aware, some of the allotments were vandalised back in the early summer. The police were informed, and so were The Electricity Board, as they own the sub-station next to the sheds. We assume the vandal climbed in over the fence that surrounds the sub-station. The Electricity Board have said that they will replace this chain mesh with a fence similar to that which surrounds the rest of the site sometime soon.

**FAIRFIELDS GARDEN
ALLOTMENTS**

newsletter

October 2010/03

Well, this is my first attempt at any sort of newsletter, lets hope it's not my last! We are going to try to do this quarterly, and would really love to hear your news. Have you had some amazing successes, or grown something really unusual? If you would like to share stories with other allotment holders please feel free to get in touch. Contact details at back of newsletter.

It's been a busy year on our allotments since we took over our plots with great excitement last November. We had a few weeks of gardening weather during which some people managed to get started, then the big freeze! Ground frozen solid and heavy snow for several weeks. The Allotment Association had to cancel a planned work day, which was re-scheduled for March in the hope that the thaw would have begun. The weather did eventually warm up, only to become very hot and dry!! Despite these early difficulties I think we can all agree that our allotments have looked amazing this year. All the hard work has paid off, I love to stand at the top of the steps and look at what has been achieved in a few short months across everyone's plots, it is truly mind boggling!! Well done everyone!! - LM

Hungerford In Bloom

The Judges for the above competition were very impressed with our site, and wanted to pass on their congratulations to everyone. They were amazed that we had achieved so much, in such a short space of time. They judged the best plot on Fairfields Garden Allotments to be plot 23, Helen Armstrong, and she now proudly displays the certificate she received on her fridge, well done Helen!!

Water Butts

You've no doubt noticed out reproducing waterbutts have now been connected and are full! Thank you to Clive for getting the plastic drums, and Tony for connecting them to the downpipe. We are also hoping to get old wheelie bins from the council to use as water containers. It would be good to recycle as much as possible, cheaper and more environmentally friendly than buying in new. Can anyone get more containers, or help with collecting the bins from Veolia in Thacham?

Fairfield Garden Allotment Association

Committee News:

It's been a steep learning curve for those of us who volunteered to be on the committee, but it has had its rewards!

We meet once a month, usually the first Thursday, and welcome anyone who would like to join us. We very much feel that we are representing the allotment holders, and any feedback, suggestions or ideas can be emailed to our address. Or we can be contacted by phone, or even collared on our allotments (see contact details). We put the minutes to each meeting on the allotment noticeboard for all to read.

We started last November not really knowing where to start, but armed with advice from the council we managed to draft a constitution, appoint and vote positions on the committee and open a bank account. We were advised which tasks Sovereign wanted carried out, and thought of a few ourselves, then were told we had no money! There followed a few months of applying for grants, some of which were refused, but the AONB kindly gave us some money towards waterbutts and the new fence. We also successfully did our own fund raising.

Then Marsh Lane Allotments came back into existence and HAHA was resurrected. We are currently working out how we can function alongside HAHA in a meaningful capacity.

The council have now agreed that the rent collected from the allotment holders will go back to the Allotment Association, minus a bit for sundries such as insurance, and can be spent by us on our site maintenance and improvements. As we do not anticipate vast expenditure on Fairfields, and have enjoyed the few fundraising events we have organised, this will mean that we will hopefully not require any more grants.

As well as looking after their own plots, Fairfields Garden Allotment Association committee members have had a busy year. Firstly, Vivienne has had a baby boy, Alexander! There have been two work days, one to sort out the paths, steps and gutters on the laundry block, another to remove the old fence ready for its replacement. There was a plant sale and a hugely enjoyable BBQ, both of these events were very successful and managed to raise a lot of money which can now be put to good use on the allotment site. I'm sure everyone who came to these events had a great time, I know we enjoyed meeting a lot of new people. Thank you very much to everyone who has helped. We are planning more fund raising and social events, and work days. Keep watching the noticeboard!

- *The Committee*

Paths: Please could you ensure that the concrete paths surrounding your plots are kept clear from clutter, overhanging plants, and soil, as these can make the paths hazardous and slippery. Thank you.

Notices: We have been told that the garden centre has been selling packets of seed very cheaply - perhaps a good time to stock up?

Forthcoming events

Remember, remember, the 5th of November!! This year bonfire night is on a Friday. We will have been on our allotments for 1 year, and we have a big heap of rubbish that Bob is busting to burn!!

So, Friday 5th November we are having a bonfire party, there will be sparklers, judging of the best carved pumpkins, or any other vegetables, pumpkin soup and hot dogs and of course a bonfire. Watch the noticeboard for more details

Site Steward

Bob Pullin is the steward for Fairfield Garden allotments. He lives next to the site and is very well placed to see if there are any problems, indeed his being on hand was invaluable when the site was vandalised. He called the police, alerted the affected allotment holders and liaised with Sovereign to get the security light fixed. He is also the man to talk to if you want a shed. He has a wealth of gardening knowledge and is happy to give advice if needed. Bob is a stickler for keeping the plots tidy and weed free, and the paths clear and free from hazards, so you may find him having a chat with you if you seem to be cultivating more weeds than vegetables - be warned!!

Recipes

Have you had any really good ways for dealing with a glut of vegetables? I have a lovely recipe for marrows, it is truly delicious. If you have any recipes you would like to share, please email them to our address.

Marrow Cream

1.8kg peeled, seeded and cubed marrow

1.6kg granulated sugar

225g butter

6 lemons

Steam the marrow until tender, and leave to drain over night. Mash to smooth puree, and put in a preserving pan with the butter, sugar and the juice and grated rind of the lemons. Heat gently, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved. Boil for 20 mins, still stirring. Pot in sterile jars. Makes about 6 x 16oz jars.

This tastes like lemon curd, and keeps for ages.