

fairfield allotments

newsletter 28 Winter 2013/14

2013 REVIEW

After a few years of difficult growing conditions we had almost ideal weather last summer. Most members produced heavy crops of vegetables and flowers many said that they felt really encouraged. Most of the plots looked very well managed and productive, and it was a joy to see people making the homeward journey with buckets, baskets and wheelbarrows full of fresh vegetables. This success was reflected in the result for the Surplus Produce Sale which was held in August and raised a magnificent £650.64. So well done and many thanks to all who contributed produce and helped with the organisation. Our special thanks go to Gillian Allen and Ruth Mackenzie who took on overall responsibility for the event and worked very hard to make it such a success.



BACS PAYMENTS

If possible we would like payments to be made using BACS. However we have noticed that there have been fewer donations added to the sum due when BACS payments have been made. Please be aware that **donations are always very much appreciated** and can simply be added to the BACS sum transferred.

Individual rent requests will be sent shortly. But if you wish to pay, the BACS should be completed with the following information:

Reference: **Your Name & Plot**
Account Number: 41562393
Sort Code: 09-06-66

AGM

Thursday, 6th February 2014 at 7.30pm

**The Borough,
Dalton Square**

All are welcome

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2014

We are approaching the end of this financial year in quite a strong financial position but part of the apparent health is due to the fact that some expensive projects have had to be delayed. The new fence could not be done last year because of the prolonged nesting season for birds, and the provision of new water tanks has been put back to 2014. The Committee reviewed the rents for 2014 and after much discussion it was decided to add just £1 to each size of plot. So the new rents for 2014 will be:

Full plot: £48.00
(Discount if applicable £5.00)*

Half plot: £24.50
(Discount if applicable £2.50)*

Quarter plot: £14.00
(Discount if applicable £1.50)*

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

DIARY DATES 2014

Two major events are planned for 2014:

Fairfield Fun Day will be on the 5th July and, as always, willing volunteers to help on the day and of course donations of fruit, flowers, plants and vegetable will be very gratefully received. Following the success of the Surplus Produce Sale last August we have managed to purchase our own smart event shelters identical to the ones which we borrowed for the 2013 Surplus Produce Sale. So we plan to use these for the Fairfield Fun Day instead of the marquee of previous years.

The Surplus Produce Sale will be on Bank Holiday Saturday, 23 August. More details will be available later but please put this date in your diary. Volunteers on the day will be very welcome, and of course the success of the event will be dependent on receiving contributions of produce from as many members as possible. Last year many visitors told us that they had been attracted into the sale by the smart appearance of the borrowed event shelters. So we are now hoping that we can achieve a repeat performance in 2014 with our own new shelters.

BREAK – INS

Regrettably intruders are still entering our area and making a nuisance of themselves. Most of the intruders are teenagers intent on drinking and smoking, but even so they cause a certain amount of damage, especially in forcing their way into our sheds. Whilst the damage may seem trivial, we are all asked to report every incident to the Community Support Officers because all reports are logged and sorted by CSO Kath who has been a wonderful support in organising patrols every time complaints have reached a significant level. One loyal allotment holder has voluntarily made a point of walking round the allotments at night in order to discourage our 'visitors.'

LOCKS AND KEYS

Our locks and keys are becoming worn and will have to be replaced in the near future. At present some people are having great difficulty in opening and closing the gates. This will be a major expense because we will have to purchase not only multiple keys but also a large stock of identical padlocks to allow for wear and tear and a few losses over the next few years.

PROTECTING OUR TRACKS AND PATHS

Everybody is asked not to bring vehicles in when the ground is wet. Even though some parts of our tracks have been strengthened with plastic webbing, the whole area is still very vulnerable to damage from tyres. We are hoping to extend the reinforced areas in the future as and when funds permit, but even so restraint will be needed in wet weather. The Committee is very concerned that a just few people are disregarding this request because continued damage would mean that the locks on the vehicle gates would have to be changed so that vehicles would be allowed in only by prior arrangement.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please ensure that all tools etc. are kept well clear of the communal pathways where they could be a trip hazard. In similar vein please do not leave stones on pathways because they damage our mower. Children must be supervised at all times and dogs must be kept on a leads. Water butts should always be covered to prevent potential accidents.

WATER

Last year the committee replaced two of the old plastic tubs with two pairs of galvanised tubs. However these have not proved to be totally satisfactory and the plan is now to link the pairs so that they will both fill from the mains water supply. We are also looking at the possibility getting larger capacity tanks to replace the existing ones. However all water drawn from these tanks is metered by United Utilities and charged to all of us. So please make every effort to collect as much rainwater as possible on your own plot. The committee is currently looking into the possibility of subsidising storage tanks in order to encourage rainwater collection. Finally, please remember that all tanks should be covered in order to prevent accidents, especially where there are children.

MANURE

Over the last few months we have been fortunate to receive periodic deliveries of manure. The manure has been quickly collected by members wielding buckets and wheelbarrows with some people even turning out on Christmas Day and Boxing Day to secure their share. The first consignment was tested by John Weedy, one of our members, but it has not proved practical to test every batch since because the deliveries are irregular and unpredictable. We are expecting more deliveries in 2014 and members will be informed. Unfortunately it is impossible to give people much, if any, advance notice; the delivery on Christmas Eve arrived only minutes after the skip company informed Manjeet Lamba that they had a load on board.

Please would everybody take note of the fact that all future consignments will not be tested for toxins etc., and so it may be advisable for members to do their own tests before spreading the manure on their plots.

Flora Nature Reserve Talks Programme of Events Spring 2014

The Fairfield Association have organised a number of talks related to the FLORA nature reserve. They thought some of members may be interested to attend.

February 13th 7:30 – 8:30 pm The Storey

Dr. Fred Ayres, Chairman, Lancaster Bee-keepers
Does the Honey Bee Have a Future?

March 6th 7:30 – 8:30 pm The Storey

Mike Derbyshire, Local Historian
Local History Research

Saturday March 8th 2 pm Fairfield Orchard, Sunnyside Lane Entrance

Tarja Wilson, Environmental Projects Officer,
Lancashire County Council
Hedgerows and Hedgerow Trees, their Wildlife
and Landscape Value

March 27th 7:30 – 8:30 pm The Storey

Dr. Chris Workman
Organisms and Ecology of FLORA and FAUNA

COMMITTEE AND CONTACTS

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, Val
Burnett, Ian Fraser, Ruth Mackenzie, John Weedy

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 dates for meetings next season:
15.03.14 (Site), 08.05.14, 10.07.14, 13.09.14
(Site), 08.01.15, 12.02.15 (AGM).