

Wash Common Allotment Society

July Newsletter - Simon Kirby, Plot 24, Society Chair1

Welcome

It's nine months since twenty of us stood in the car park to create the society so it's a good time to deliver a newsletter, don't you think.

It might be showery at the moment but I'm sure we're all grateful we're not having the deluge we got last year. If you're new to site this year then welcome, I hope you're enjoying your allotmenting at Wash Common; if it's not your first year then obviously you *are* enjoying your allotmenting!

The Society

First off, it costs nothing to join, so basically if you want to think of yourself as a member you're in.

The society hasn't been particularly visible on site this year, but don't worry, there are plans for a site bar-b-que later in the year when the sweetcorn's ripened. I've been pretty busy behind the scenes though, mostly with the council. My twin aims in starting the society were to have an organisation to build up the social side of the site, and to win all of us allotmenters a say in how the site is managed. I'll be honest with you; there's some pretty stern opposition to the idea of tenants having a voice, but I've also found some support and currently the news here is good.

Growing in the Community Working Group

The council unanimously supported my suggestion for a joint tenant-council working group to look at the allotment management best-practice guide *Growing in the Community*. This is great because amongst other ideas it recommends that site associations be supported, and that tenants be consulted on the rules, and be delegated responsibility for creating the site facilities they want, a communal hut and toilet being specifically encouraged.

Get Involved

I've probably done about as much as I can on my own now. The Working Group is quite an achievement, but it's only a start. Now's probably a good time to ask you all where you want this to go, and more importantly, ask some of you to become actively involved.

There's a questionnaire overleaf and it would be really helpful if you'd complete it and drop it in at my home - 4 Stuart Road.

Shed Week

And lastly, did you see in the Newbury Weekly News that my shed came second in the Nation Shed of the Year competition? If you haven't already I hope some time you'll come and have tea and cake to celebrate.

Questionnaire

The society's been going nine months now and having established a joint tenant-council working group to look at the Local Government Association allotment management best-practice guide Growing in the Community it seems like a good time to gauge some opinion. Please pop your completed questionnaires in my letter box – 4 Stuart Road. Many thanks, Simon.

You and Your Plot

- A) Do you mostly walk, cycle or drive to the allotments?
- B) How long have you had your plot?
- C) How big is your plot?
- D) What would be your ideal plot size?
- E) Would you prefer a plot on a site closer to your home?
- F) Would you describe yourself as an organic gardener?
- G) Do you have a compost heap?
- H) Do you apply manure?

Facilities

- A) Would you like a site toilet?
- B) Would you like a communal site hut for tea and sundries?
- C) Are the water butts convenient for you?
- D) Would you like to see the site drainage improved?
- E) Would you like to be consulted about the facilities you'd like on site?
- F) Would you like the society to have a capital budget so we could decide for ourselves what facilities we wanted?

Society

- A) Do you support the aims of the society?
- B) Would you join the society if it cost something like £5/year?
- C) Would you come to a site bar-b-que?
- D) If the society had a management committee would you get involved?
- E) Would you get involved in a tenant-council allotments working group?

Management

- A) Are you familiar with the site rules?
- B) Are you generally happy with the site rules?
- C) Are you generally happy how the rules are enforced?
- D) Would you like to be consulted on changes to the rules?
- E) Do you regularly clear your ditch and trim your hedge?
- F) Do you always lock the gate on your way in and out of site?
- G) Is the wildlife and site biodiversity important to you?

Notes and Comments

Please add any notes and comments here: