



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

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EDITORIAL

The coincidence, in 1995, of a letter from Trevor Cox and the occasion of the Classic FM's Gardeners' Forum recording that we arranged, resulted in the agreement, at that year's A.G.M. that the association would adapt plots on its three main sites for the use of physically handicapped gardeners. Subsequently, having obtained the approval of our landlords, Fareham Borough Council, the committee commissioned, at no cost, the production of a detailed plan, an artistic impression of the finished scheme and obtained a quotation for the work. Armed with this information, we then approached the Charities Board of the Lotteries Commission with a view to obtaining a grant for this project and having received a favourable response, your Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary spent a considerable time first deciphering and then completing the 30 page application form which was returned in time for consideration under the fifth of the Charities Board grant programmes, which had the theme *Improving people's living environment*.

The decisions on all the applications were sent out simultaneously to all organisations on the 25th March. Part of our letter read *"I am sorry to tell you that the Board is unable to make a grant for the project you submitted. This is not a reflection on the merits of your project but simply your organisation is not one which falls within the very strict eligibility criteria which the Board must by law follow. ... However, in the hope that they will be of some assistance to you I enclose some guidance notes ..."*. We had already been given these notes as part of the application pack. The crucial requirements seemed to the Officers to be :

- *be independently established for charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes*
- *have a set of rules defining its aims, objectives and operational procedures*
- *have a bank account, in the name of the organisation, which requires at least two signatures on each cheque*
- *Benevolent or philanthropic groups are those which are specifically well-intentioned or exist for the good of humankind. They have purposes which are essentially charitable in character and have the essential attributes of charity, including a spirit of altruism and a dedication to purposes of public support. They must also be free of anything essentially contrary to charity, including — the possibility of self interest, or private benefit — purposes which are political or doctrinaire*
- *your constitution describes the purposes of your organisation and how it is managed*

What is the problem with our rules? In order to find out we contacted the M.P. for Fareham, Sir Peter Lloyd, who wrote to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt. Hon. Chris Smith. The letter the Minister sent to Sir Peter was forwarded to us and simply confirmed that the Lottery Board did not consider provision of allotments for handicapped gardeners to be "charitable, benevolent or philanthropic under the law governing such matters". The Minister did, however, generously include details of where we could obtain advice on constitutions and charity law, together with a list of publications for possible alternative funding sources. We intend to follow these up and hope to report the situation to members at the A.G.M.

It is difficult to reconcile this decision with some of the reported awards that have been made by the Lotteries Board and it has made your committee more determined than ever to provide this facility, which as far as they are able to ascertain, would be the first such publicly available facility in Hampshire. The provision of allotments for handicapped gardeners would be a fitting legacy for the next century.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Another year gone, another year of successes and failures. This year my potatoes were blighted (as were those of many other tenants) so I will have to sort through those in storage at frequent intervals to prevent total loss. Where did it come from? My reference books tell me it's because of the wet season. It often occurs on potatoes grown from self-saved stock and was the cause of the great Irish famine in the 1840's.

Another of my failures has been trying to get rid of seedling nettles that are overrunning my plot. Their arrival coincided with a good "deal" I got in shredded horse manure from a stable for

thoroughbreds. Pulling, hoeing and spraying have all failed to clear them. One of our Jim Lett Hut "experts" told me that a nettle leaf is covered in a fine fuzz which stops the spray droplets from getting on to the surface of the leaf. Yesterday I added a couple of squirts of detergent to the spray to act as a wetting agent. If it doesn't work, I will at least have clean nettles to pull up.

My biggest success this year has been with beans, both broad and runner. They obviously like the wet season. What I want now is two months of hot sun to ripen my grapes and I can forget my failures.

THE JIM LETT HUT

OPEN SUNDAY 10:00 - 12:00 noon

Autumn onion sets now in.

Winter broad beans now available-70p/lb.

Still some bags of the cheapest shredded bark available.

ALLOTMENTS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

A committee of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Department published a report early this summer on the future of allotments. In contrast to the beliefs of the Lottery Charities Board, this government report was unequivocal in its support for allotments as an essential part of public health provision, especially for the over-50's. The M.P.'s also called for a halt to the loss of allotment sites.

The most striking element of the report

was that they found that allotment gardening is increasingly popular. The traditional image of the allotment holder (male 50+ and northern) was changing. Many younger people were now becoming involved, impelled largely by concerns about food safety.

When asked why they rented an allotment, 75% indicated that they wanted organic fresh food. Other reasons given included the benefits of exercise and fresh air. B.J.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will take place this year on **Wednesday, December 2nd in the Victory Hall, Warsash**. Full details will be delivered to members later, but if anyone wishes to introduce resolutions for the meeting, please remember that they must be received by the Honorary Secretary by Saturday 15th November, complete with the signatures of the Proposer and Seconder. The same conditions apply to proposals of members to serve on the Committee.

ASSOCIATION RULES

The Committee have produced a revised version of the Association Rules. All changes agreed at Annual General Meetings have been included without amendment. You will find a copy of the revised rules with this Newsletter. If any one wishes to propose changes to the rules, please submit them, with the names of proposer and seconder to the Honorary Secretary by the 1st November, so that they can be discussed in Committee.

RENTS FOR 1998/1999

It is two years since the last rent rise occurred. At its July meeting the Committee decided to raise the rents by 10p per rod. It is hoped, as in the past, that we will not have to change them for another two years. Again, we are offering a rebate to tenants who pay their rents before the end of October so that Site Managers are spared the considerable trouble, time and expense of chasing up those tenants who fail to comply with their Tenancy Agreements. The prices indicated include the 50p association membership fee, which has remained unchanged since its introduction in 1977! This membership fee is mandatory for all tenants so that anyone can use the Trading Hut without it being classed as a retail premises and thus having rates levied.

RENTS FOR 1998/1999

No. of rods	Full price (£)	Price before end Oct (£)
2.5	5.75	4.75
5	10.00	9.00
7	13.40	12.40
7.5	14.25	13.25
8	15.10	14.10
10	19.50	17.50
12	22.45	20.45
15	28.00	26.00
18	33.10	31.10
20	36.50	34.50
25	45.00	43.00
30	53.50	51.50
40	70.50	68.50
45	79.00	77.00

FRESH VEGETABLES ALL SUMMER

I am sure you have all found how much tastier the early pickings are from any crop; after a few weeks the taste deteriorates and finally the crops are inedible. Over the 16 years that I have been working an allotment, I have developed a system of successive sowing to produce as many of these tasty early pickings as possible.

There are always things to learn on the allotment, every season is different with such a great difference in the weather from year-to-year. So things may work well one year and not the next. Rather than have a fixed time between sowings, I go on the size of the seedling from the previous sowing to determine the sowing time. A wide range of crops can be treated in this way: runner and French beans, beetroot, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots; in fact almost any vegetable that is not grown in bulk and stored.

Sow the runners and French beans in a standard seed tray at twelve seeds to a tray. Sow only one tray and when the true leaves start growing (about 3-5 weeks), sow another dozen seeds. I make five such sowings starting in early April and the last one in

early July. This year we were eating beans in June and my last sowing will give me fresh beans into October.

The brassicas and lettuce are also sown in seed trays, this time with fifteen seeds per tray. When the second set of leaves is starting to show (ignore the seed leaves) sow the next tray. Again, as you eat your first pickings, new plants are growing to take their place. Lettuce are re-sown when the previous sowing is around 1½ in (4 cm) high.

Root crops such as carrots and beetroot are sown in short rows, about 2 ft (60 cm) long. When they get to about 1 in (2½ cm) — carrots a little under — sow another short row. As with the beans, brassicas and root crops can still be sown well into July.

Don't let the seedlings get too large in the tray or the root systems will be damaged during transplanting. Transplant the crops into well prepared and fertilized or manured ground. Take a hole out with a trowel and fill it with water which washes saturated soil back into the hole. After soaking the seedlings in the tray, set them in the mud and cover the roots with soil.

Bill Jacob

LATEST ON OUR LEASE

As mentioned in a previous Newsletter, our lease is due for renewal next year (1st April 1999). The Officers have not had from members any suggestions or topics that might be the subject of negotiation in the extension or replacement of this lease. This is the single most important matter that will influence the future of the

Association and should be of concern to all.

However, at Fareham's request, the Officers have been asked if they would agree on behalf of the Association to a one year extension, on the same terms, until 31st March 2000. Their reason for this request was that the Council, and in particular the Leisure Services Department, is undergoing a

considerable reorganisation and that they do not know who will be handling the negotiations for Fareham. As this will extend the *status quo* for a further year, and after consultations with our colleagues in Fareham and Portchester, the Officers have agreed to this extension. But we would still welcome an input from you on these matters.

SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES, HAIR, UP YOUR NOSE, IN THE SCHOOL, ...

It is as sure as God made little green apples, that after weeks of wind and rain the first fine day brings out the bonfire fiends. Now I don't mind them, but when the smoke begins to fill the house up, and the smell gets everywhere, it becomes maddening. Also when the wind blows towards where I'm working on the allotment, I wish them anywhere but there with me.

There is an art in getting a good bonny going, and I've got it. So I'm going to pass it on to whomsoever it concerns so that hopefully it will stop our Chairman from having to rush up to the Sarisbury site yet again after an irate householder has telephoned a complaint to the Council. It is a pity that the person did not come out to settle the matter on the spot, but there we are (we're not ogres are we?).

Now, first dig a trench, about 3 ft long 1 ft deep and a foot wide, and over this place any pieces of iron, mesh or anything that doesn't burn. On top of this put as much dry wood, stalks or leaves or whatever doesn't rot quickly. Collect everything you want to burn which is green, damp or whatever and have this alongside, then light the fire. When burning nicely, put all the other stuff on. It will smoke a bit, but then cover it over with earth !! Easy ain't it? A couple of bits of iron pipe stuck in here will allow air into it and it can also be controlled by filling in the ends of the trench.

Hey presto, everyone is happy. It will burn for a week, ash can be cleared and saved for root crops and when you get as experienced at it as me you can bake your spuds in the hot ashes. So come on folks, have a go even to the extent of having one bonny between two and cutting down the smoke even more.

One final word. a successful prosecution by the Council for creating a statutory nuisance could result in a fine of up to £3000. Think on.

F.C.W

My apologies for paraphrasing your original title Fred, but the last time our Chairman was called out to Sarisbury, there was a full scale turn out of the emergency services. The smoke from a bonfire on one of your neighbouring plots had been blown into the school kitchens and triggered their fire alarms. These, because of the need for immediate action in such an installation, are automatically relayed to the emergency services. Our Chairman earned his honorarium for successfully negotiating through this agitated episode. Your encouragement of good practice is timely: we seem to have more complaints about bonfires at Sarisbury than from all of the other sites together.—Ed.

ALLOTMENT COMPETITION

- Congratulations to Ruth Woodford (Sarisbury) for winning a Highly Commended Certificate in this year's competition. In the opinion of the Honorary Chairman and Secretary her plot deserved a higher award. Our commiseration to the unsuccessful finalist, Gordon Knapp from Warsash.

MISCELLANEA

- This is the last opportunity to amend your Tenancy Agreements. Please contact your Site Manager or the Honorary Secretary if you wish to change to a dual tenancy.