

Woburn Sands Allotments Newsletter

May/June 2009

2009 Annual General Meeting

Over 60 people attended the AGM held on 23rd April in the Memorial Hall.

The Chairman gave report of the activities of the year and a new Committee was elected for the coming year.

Ron Hale was elected as Chairman, Peter Toogood as Vice-Chair, Marie Baker as Secretary and Paul Hamer as Treasurer. Other members of the Committee are: John Bolas, Dave Cockerill, Dave Cox, Tony Gale and Peter Leadbeater. Alan Symon has returned to the Committee after two years absence.

There was a great deal of interest in standing for the Committee this year and the number has risen to 10 which is good news for the Society.

Membership News

We are very sorry to report the death of Mick Ward who had two plots on the middle track. Our sympathies are with his family.

We are pleased to welcome both new tenants and new members to the field: Mary Davies, Joanne Ellis, Sue Cooper, Malcolm Richards, Mary Lea, Kate Pressland, Paul Ramchandani, Julia Wilson and Trevor Templeman. We now have 16 tenants on the field, most with 5 pole plots.

The waiting list currently stands at 13.

Theft

During the evening of 6th May over 30 sheds were broken into on the field. It was obviously an organised gang who raided most of the sheds off the centre track. In all, we believe that there were at least 20 mowers, strimmers and rotavators stolen. It was a very clear night and the football was on TV. The last person left the field at 9.00pm. The thieves got in through the main Bow Brickhill Road entrance: they wrenched and wrecked the padlock. Padlocks to sheds were cut through and in some cases the shed doors were smashed. We understand that only 6 people have reported the theft.

The Committee discussed the situation at its meeting last week. Several ideas have been

suggested and advice is being sought from Crime Prevention.

At this time of year allotments are targets for thieves as we have seen from local news. We are concerned that the thieves will return and that nothing we are able to do will stop the really determined organised gang. The Police advice is that nothing of value should be left in sheds. (Many sheds that were broken into on this occasion had no power tools and so nothing was taken.)

If you do leave items and they are stolen then your insurance policy may cover you. One member who has made a successful claim made sure his insurance company were aware that we are privately owned allotments this evidently makes a difference with claims.

There will be more about security in the next newsletter. In the meantime the advice must be: Do not to leave valuable items in your shed.

Vermin

We have been troubled with vermin this year. In order to deal with the problem, vermin control will take place over several late evenings in the next few weeks. (Perhaps he might catch some thieves too!!)

Field Inspection

The first inspection of the year took place on 7th May and the next will be on 23rd July. The view of a number of long time plot holders is that the field is looking very good this year.

Plot Judging and Awards Evening

Plots will be judged on Friday 10th July by Maurice Rust the plant expert from Frosts. The judging is for the best three plots holders and for the best newcomer award (ie. new to the field within the last two years.)

On the following Friday we will hold the plot awards and have a social evening on the allotment field. If you came along last year, you will know it was the social event of the year! Everyone is welcome on 17th July at 7.00pm. It is a bring-and-share event which is held on the centre track of the field. If you are able to help out with gazebos, food, drink chairs, and tables we would be most grateful. Would you please contact Tina and Peter Toogood on 01908 645670 if you are willing to bring food / are able to provide chairs, gazebos etc etc.

Bonfire Ban

The bonfire ban came into force on 1st June. If we do have a wet summer, the Committee will meet to discuss whether or not to lift the ban.

Potatoes

Not long before he died Mick Ward was proudly showing off his potatoes. I had asked him if I could do a piece for the newsletter and had taken photos of his crop. His family are happy for the piece to appear as scheduled.

Mick planted his potatoes on 20th February, which, given the weather we had at the time was quite a risk. The company he worked for had been throwing out some Perspex sheets and he was allowed to take them. He built a tunnel about 24" wide, planted his potatoes and covered the top with thick polythene sheet. Every morning he uncovered the potatoes and every evening he was back to cover them. The photograph below was taken on 18th April and shows how well this technique worked. Unfortunately, Mick never got to eat the crop but at least his family is able to taste the fruits of his labours.



Shredder

Some members have expressed a wish to get together to hire a shredder in the Autumn. If you are interested in taking part in this would you please let Marie know on 585284. The expected cost is around £70 per day. This will be shared between those interested.

Pallets

There are piles of pallets at various points on the field. Please help yourself to these. There are more available, so they will be replaced as they are used.

Shepherd in training

A few weeks ago we had sheep trying a few tasty new shoots. A ewe and its' lamb managed to get through a hole in the fence and were munching away on various plots across the field. They were herded by new plot holder Malcolm Richards who took this photograph of them while we were waiting for the local farmer to collect. It was quite a sight to see the ewe being carried back to the field by the farmer followed by plot holder Colin Smith with the lamb.



Measuring Plots and Establishing Paths

Now that we have tenants it has become vital to measure the 5 pole plots as they are allocated. Over the nearly 90 years that the Allotment field has been in existence the original measurements have been adjusted by members as plots have been combined. Peter Toogood and Marie Baker have agreed to take on the task and, over the next year or so, will be measuring and re measuring all plots. New plot holders will be expected to ensure the markings are adhered to but some of the older plots are now so out of line that it will take years time to re-establish paths and original boundaries as plots are handed on.

To help with this we have had to specify which path belongs to the plot. So, if you stand with your back to Tidbury Close, the path on the right is yours.

Some paths are dog-leg shape and many have been cultivated out of existence. If you do have a path please make sure it is kept in good order and please do not block it or use it as a seating area.