



Felixstowe ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Another year flying by, the crops are being gathered with more bumper harvests, especially the fruit, very much like last year. I'm of the belief that the unusually heavy rain early in the growing cycle has brought about the excess. Mind you, parsnips on my plot have been a disaster and the early carrots failed to germinate. The later carrots, in particular the autumn varieties, appear to be making up for the earlier failures, thank goodness. The stars for me this year have been the various varieties of tomatoes. The greenhouse Alicante and the outside 'Toddler' have been just perfect. Have a look at 'Toddler' below right.

The Allotment Association now has 331 members spread across the town. We have seen a good number each month for the Coffee and Cake Saturdays and by the time you have read this, our September picnic will have taken place. I must place



Mountain Magic Tomatoes - a fantastic crop

on record my continuing thanks to the Committee and also the members who involve themselves in our events and give up of their time so freely.

Cowpasture shop continues to be a focal point on most Saturday mornings with plenty of views and advice on hand should you wish to hear it. The Cloverleaf compost is a best seller and already members are looking ahead to the coming year with Kings seed catalogues now at the shop ready to collect.

The seed potatoes for next year have also been sourced

DOWN
TO
EARTH

with members now able to place their order ahead of the cut off date which is 30th September.



Our thanks to Felixstowe Town Council who funded more road repair materials for Cowpasture and to the FAA members who spread it across the site. The speed limit is 5mph, so please, observe it.

Might I also request that you be careful as you arrive at Cowpasture, turning sharply off Grove Road roundabout into the entrance, as it is dangerous, with vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists being hidden by



Issue No. 13



Desiree Potatoes - a good crop this year

the boundary hedge.

A bit of give and take with patience and consideration to others is not too much to ask for, or is it?

I look forward to the winter season of speakers at the OFCA building in Church Road, 7.30pm on the fourth Thursday of most winter months. Keep an eye out for the flyers and should you have any thoughts as to possible speakers do tell me.

The October speaker is a local horticulturist discussing 'wonky' vegetables.

Keep hoeing!

Neville

NORTH FELIXSTOWE GARDEN NEIGHBORHOOD

The Allotment Association, as a “stakeholder” has continued to attend meetings called by LDA, the project consultants.

We also attended the Open Evening at Brackenbury Sports Centre on 24th July to view drawings and plans prepared by the consultants. I did see on a plan, two new allotment sites, both small, one close to the new swimming pool, the other near to Eastward Ho. However, in conversation with Councillor Bevan there’s no clear idea as to ownership, ongoing stewardship or management. The devil is always in the detail which we have yet to see.

Additionally, the opposition to the development has grown over the summer months, plus the changes politically both locally and nationally. If you have any views on the development then like me, feel free to comment direct to LDA.

The next stakeholder meeting has now been arranged to take place on Wednesday 2nd October.

Neville

COWPASTURE ALLOTMENT SITE BOUNDARIES - AUGUST 2024

By way of update, the Association raised our concerns both to Felixstowe Town Council and more recently to the NFGN design team ‘LDA’ as regard that the allotment site has become more vulnerable since house building work has started.

The Association some years back, asked as part of the planning requirements, that Persimmon erect a boundary fence around the Cowpasture site. That request fell on deaf ears, and we now see phase two of the Trelawny

build underway and close to our north boundary hedge/ditch.

At the very first stakeholder meeting with LDA we requested better security around the Cowpasture site. Our concerns have been noted and minuted but the Persimmon build, thanks to a successful appeal is well ahead of the remaining part of the project and will be complete by 2025, unlike the rest of the development.

Thanks to Guy Pearse and Richard Burrows, who recently inspected the northern perimeter hedge/ditch overlooking the Trelawny build. Historically, this border hedge has grown into a mass of vegetation, including an open ditch now filled with all manner of allotment detritus, nettles, weeds and the like and many years back also included rain/spring water.

In the summer, given the vegetation, the boundary seems almost impenetrable. If members who farm up against this boundary can maintain security, then great. The Town Council have told us they cannot fund or erect a formal fence.

We have considered planting suitable prickly whips, but clearing enough land to see these whips safely grow, is in itself a mammoth task and just not feasible. The Woodland Trust can offer guidance and should individuals wish to beef up their current boundary, then we can collectively offer suitable plants. Piecemeal wood or metal structures must not be seen as the answer.horse

NEW MEMBERS

COWPASTURE

Ian Middleton

Simon Shorten

Eileen Goodwin

David and Jane Moon

RAILWAY HILL

Ingrid Doyle

FERRY ROAD

Stephen Hart

SOCIAL MEMBERS

Susan and Gregory Doman

HORSE MANURE

Two local sources for manure may help members plan for 2025.

Paul Smith at Levington can deliver in his pick up truck for a price. Paul is on **07985 785653**.

Liz Wicken at Trimley can deliver on her trailer for a modest cost, but you must assist in unloading! Liz is on **07760 39000**.

The Cowpasture shop sells chicken pellets which may further help.

However, the good news is that we have discovered that next year upon completion of phase two Persimmon will commence a planting programme along most (not all) of the northern boundary. We very much hope we can influence their planting in an effort to safeguard and improve the site security.

Additionally we have been advised that The Woodland Trust are to try to thicken up their boundary hedge/fence between us and The Grove/Abbey Wood. This hedgerow runs from the main vehicle gate right down to the large car park beside plot 96. However, this process will initially see the hedge reduced to 5 feet, but overtime it should thicken and help improve our border. Felixstowe Town Council are fully aware of this change, as they clip the allotment side of this hedgerow.

If members, especially those who cultivate up against this boundary wish for more information then please just ask.

Neville

EDIBLE FELIXSTOWE - A NEW COMMUNITY PROJECT

Edible Felixstowe CIC is a newly formed community group which aims to grow vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs all over our town. Anything produced in the beds and planters is accessible to anyone in the community to pick and use. With the backing of Felixstowe Town Council and East Suffolk Council we launched our project at the Love Green Felixstowe event on April 20th where the Mayor, planted lavender at the centre of the Christmas Tree circle near the Triangle. Our first project created a herb wheel in the area used for the Christmas tree which is left unused for the rest of the year; this has already produced lots of herbs which have been picked by many passers-by. We have also planted vegetables in the area on the corner of the library building on Crescent Road which are just starting to produce veg now.

The four blue planters at either end of the pedestrianised area of Hamilton Road have been very successful with edible nasturtiums and cornflowers along with tumbling tomatoes and strawberries also in the mix. We want Edible Felixstowe to apply to both people and wildlife and consequently we included edible pollinators in our scheme to encourage wildlife into the centre of town. We are delighted that some of our local businesses wanted to be

involved as well; Cuppa, The Grosvenor, Taba Naba and The Little Wine Bar were keen to have some new planters which we filled for them. They all have commented on the fact that they have become a talking point for prospective customers and are now big enough to be producing salad and edible flowers for both owners and customers

As well as the advantages of growing food and being outside, we have embarked on our first 'Grow, Cook, Eat' festival this summer with demos of how to make jam, pickles and jam jar gin, which has enabled local folk to benefit in so many ways from keeping food local and fresh. The festival will culminate on Sunday 29th September with an event in Great Eastern Square (11-3pm) championing locally grown produce and locally produced food. Among other attractions we hope to give out free food at this event to show people how tasty our produce is and we would love to hear from any allotment holder who may have a glut of squash, onions, courgettes or similar. It would be wonderful to see some allotment folk there on the day, as you all know the benefits of growing your own veg and we need to get the word out about the benefits of keeping it fresh and local!

If you would like to follow our progress join our facebook group: *edible felixstowe*, now with over 250 members, as well as our instagram page, alternatively our email address is *edible-felixstowe@gmail.com* if you would like more information or would like to be involved.

Kate White
Edible Felixstowe



EDIBLE FELIXSTOWE PRESENTS...

GROW, COOK, EAT FESTIVAL

If you eat, you're in!

Sunday September 29th 11am - 3pm

Championing local produce at Great Eastern Square (if wet on the back platform area)

This event will include:

- Free food from locally grown veg
- Local food & drink and green stalls
- Excess veg and seed swap (bring along your glut or spare seeds to donate swap)
- Activities including a treasure hunt trail
- Cooking competition - bring us your savoury or sweet items to be judged on the day! (bonus points for the number of locally grown ingredients included!)
- Smoothie bike - free pedal power smoothies if you can pedal fast enough
- Live music to keep you entertained

Keep up to date via our instagram page or join our facebook group
For more info or to book a stall: ediblefelixstowe@gmail.com

LEVELLING UP | FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL | EASTSUFFOLK COUNCIL

It's been a funny (in a curious, not Ha-Ha sort of way) year on the plot. I'm going to stretch both Truth and Reality to breaking point and blame the weather solely for this. 2024 really has been a bit of a white-knuckled rollercoaster, with a miserably wet and cold winter followed by an equally miserably wet and cold spring, after which came an occasionally hot-enough-to-fry-an-egg-on-the-shed-roof kind of summer. If we've been left with the daily agony of having to choose between thermal long-johns or the skimpiest of lime-green mankinis, imagine how confused our poor crops and pollinators have been!

I know a lot of fellow allotmenters are saying what a fantastic year it's been for strawberries.

Last year Chez Monty was moaning by around the second week of June at being forced-fed multiple punnets of freshly-picked fruit. And the courgettes were so prolific that neighbours were afraid to be seen outside in daylight, lest the merest blink of an eye was taken as consent to deposit another wheelbarrow load on their front doorstep.

Well, this year has been the complete opposite on Monty's plot. The strawberries were as scarce as an eleven bob note and the courgettes resembled a six-inch nail on a diet. It's strange how different crops cycle between feast and famine from one year to the next.

I planted a short row of summer-fruited raspberries last autumn. Unfortunately, I've no idea what variety they were as they were in a lucky-dip sale from a reputable grower. But they were Cheap, Oh So Cheap! I'd never contemplated growing summer fruited canes before, as compared to their autumn-fruited cousins they have a reputation for being needy, requiring a lot more attention, care and effort. However, being Cheap, Oh So Cheap, my reticence melted away and I decided to chance my arm. Well, the crop has been amazing, Chez Monty was almost relieved that the strawberries had a bad year as otherwise we'd have been borne away of a tsunami of early- and mid-summer soft fruit.

And hedging my bets, I also planted a new row of autumn-fruited raspberries, a recently-introduced variety called Autumn Treasure courtesy of our good

friends at Kings Seeds. Given that this is their first year, they're throwing off bucket-loads (ok, this is a slight exaggeration!) of superb large berries at the moment. Autumn Treasure isn't the most popular of raspberries but it has the distinct advantage that it's pretty much self-supporting, which on the windswept uplands of Cowpasture doesn't half make life easier!

The potatoes have been a conundrum, too. Last year most of the crop was covered in more scabs than a Nottinghamshire colliery, unquestionably edible but if as the saying goes, "we eat first with our eyes", then this was the equivalent of a date with the Elephant Man. So, this year I tried to select different varieties with a known resistance.

Caledonian Pearl was certainly productive and clean ... but if you enjoy feasting on boiled cardboard with all the flavour removed, this is just the spud for you. Lady Christl produced a much lower yield but was inducted into the Mrs Monty Hall of Fame for its flavour, quality and all-round cookability. The real stand-outs were, however my old friend Jazzy (huge crop, scab-free, great taste) and Orla, which I planted after it was recommended as a blight-resistant variety on BBC's *Beechgrove* (who'd have thought, with all that sunshine, blight would be a problem in Scoland?!). Confusingly, seed catalogues describe Orla as being either a salad, second early, early maincrop or maincrop (one catalogue even includes it twice, under different sections!) and even having grown it I'm not really sure. I do know, though, that I'll be planting it again next year, this and Jazzy really are exceptional spuds. My Java maincrop is, however, an unmitigated disaster. I've had a bad case of spraing - only in this variety, none of the others have been affected - and almost every potato has had to be chucked in the bag to take to the Council dump (sorry, 'recycling centre'). I'm not sure at the moment, having had this problem twice in the past two years, whether I'm going to grow maincrop spuds in 2025. Twice bitten, once shy!

Well, the nights are certainly staring to pull in now, so it's definitely time to reach for the new Kings Seeds catalogue (50% discount for all FAA members, too!) and plan what to plant next year.

Whatever the weather, enjoy your gardening!

MONTY SAYS
It's been a funny old year!

MEMBERSHIP FEES UPDATE

As we approach the end of the year, we want to inform you of an important update regarding your membership fees and request your help in updating our records.

Membership Fees:

Starting this year, membership fees will be due on January 1st, 2025, with a payment deadline of January 31st, 2025. Traditionally, memberships, potato orders, and King's seed orders were handled together in October. To streamline our processes, we are adjusting the payment schedule:

Memberships:

These will continue to run from January to December.

King's Seed Orders:

You can now order King's seeds directly

throughout the year using our allotment's discount code. If you do not have online access, a blue form and seed catalogue are available at Hut 39. You can hand the filled-in form to any of our Committee members, and they can place the order on your behalf, with payment due upon delivery.

Potato Orders:

These will be managed separately, and you should have already received details on how to place your order.

Additionally, we kindly ask that all members complete and submit the necessary forms to help us update our records. This will ensure we have accurate contact and allotment information for everyone.

You will receive the membership form via email in January.

*Claire Smith
FAA Membership Secretary*

OUR SUMMER PICNIC ON SUNDAY 1st SEPTEMBER 2024

