



City of Ely Allotments Association

Spring 2017 Newsletter

www.elyallotments.com

View from the Chair

The date of the AGM is approaching which means that another Allotment Year is drawing to a close, and what a busy year it has been for the committee/site reps. This was the first year in my memory that we have had projects involving all five of our sites, and with regard to Bridge Fen and the construction of the Ely southern bypass the work will continue during 2017.

Early in 2016 we applied for funding through the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme, and were fortunate to receive £8000 for the installation of a piped water supply on three of our allotment sites. This work is now complete. All three sites require some further tidying up which is hoped to be done by arranging working parties of the respective plot holders, thus enhancing the community spirit already present on each site. The intended work on the Bridge Fen site which includes the provision of a new access road, car park and improvement of the central site road, was not in our original submission to Tesco. Fortunately we are able to apply again under the scheme in the hope of obtaining more funding to assist in the cost of this work.



The popularity of having an allotment has not decreased. Most of our sites are full with just a few vacant plots on the others. We have a waiting list which despite our best efforts to accommodate everybody still remains at about twelve people. The North Ely development is also getting under way which we have been told is a thirty year scheme. Within the planning of the houses there are areas of land designated for allotments. This means that as the City Council want the Association to manage these areas, we have been involved in the design and facilities required for the new allotments.

The Committee are as always looking to the future and with this in mind are keen to get younger plot holders involved in the Association. The position of being a site rep/committee member is not difficult but does require a bit of extra time, which I appreciate is at a premium when you have work and a family to consider. However, if you want to get more involved at a less committed level please have a word with your site rep. They will always welcome assistance in arranging and executing any communal tasks.

I wish you all well and hope that 2017 is another successful year for vegetable and fruit production on the allotments. Do not forget the AGM is at 7.30pm on Monday 20th March at Centre 'E' on Barton Road, adjacent to the car park. Please come along, it is your Association and your opinion matters.

Graham Bond

Chair, Ely Allotments Association



AGM

Annual General Meeting of the Association

Don't miss this important event!

**7.30 pm Monday 20 March at
Centre E (the Youth Centre),
Barton Road, Ely.**

This is your opportunity to have your say on running the Association, and to elect the officers and committee to do so on your behalf for the next year.

Your invitation to this meeting and the agenda are on the last page of this newsletter.

View from the City Council

Having been a councillor before the Allotment Association took over the running of the allotments on behalf of the City of Ely council, I have seen from a distance what an excellent success the association has made in maintaining a quality facility.

In 2015 I became the council representative on the allotment management committee, it was at this point I realised that success only comes from the work you put in. Very much like looking after an allotment you only get out what you put in, the management team works very hard to ensure that the allotments are run at a high standard which is very much appreciated by the City council and tenants.

It's my responsibility to report to full council on the activities of the Association. This year my reports have been lengthy which reflects the numerous site improvements the committee has made. I'm sure we all look forward to next year when we will see the access improvements to Bridge Fen via the southern bypass.

I would like to pass on my congratulations to the Allotment committee on behalf of the City of Ely council in recognition of the highly successful year and wish you all continued success for the future.

Cllr Richard Hobbs

City of Ely Council Allotment representative.

Secretary's Report

This AGM seems to have come around very quickly. It has now been ten years since I 'temporarily' took over as secretary. Each year has brought its own challenges and triumphs. This year has been particularly memorable. It started sadly with the sudden death of Nigel Clarke shortly after the last AGM and ended with the news that three allotment sites have now got piped water and Bridge Fen is well on the way to having a proper car park and a new entrance. The City Council will soon install a memorial bench to Nigel in Barton Square, for which the Association has made a contribution along with other voluntary organisations in Ely.

On the administration side we are now making much greater use of email, and have introduced the facility to pay rents by bank transfer. These technologies do assist the volunteers who run your association and it does really help if you follow all the guidance when using it with us e.g. quoting plot numbers and site names.

I am looking forward to another productive year on the allotments. There will of course be unavoidable upheavals connected with the bypass but I'm sure we will all benefit from it in future years.

Linda Adams

Secretary to the Ely Allotments Association

Awards Evening 2016

The 2016 annual awards evening for the Association was held on Wednesday 14 September. The Mayor of Ely (Cllr. Ian Lindsay) kindly made the presentations. As well as the usual awards and certificates, the 25th anniversary of the Association was marked by presentation of 'long service' certificates to eight current plot holders who were present when the Association was formed in 1991.



Olive and Colin Bowles from New Barns receive the A J Fenn trophy for Best Allotment



Peter Holden from Upherds Lane receives his 25 year 'Founding Father' certificate.

Bridge Fen site report by Linda Adams

Things have been very busy. Discussions were held about putting water on at Bridge Fen as has been done on other sites. Due to the impending work on the bypass and following soundings with several long term plot-holders it was decided that because of the type of soil we enjoy, piping water onto the site was not necessary.

The Committee organised the work that is being done to turn the area next to the road into a car park. The bypass construction will create a new site entrance coming in from the drive which will remove the visibility problem caused by vehicles parked in the layby. Although the entrance will be at the top of the drive, the drive itself and the hardstanding that will be created is not to be used for parking and no bridges can be placed across the dyke below the newly created entrance. There are plans to put a solid surface on the car park and hopefully also the central road.

Cambs CC recently voted against putting an underpass on the bypass which would have made access for those walking and cycling to the allotments easier. However we are assured that a crossing and a path will be available as far as the allotments. As soon as we get any definite news of what's happening we will inform everyone by email and on the notice board.

The bypass work will remove the hedge at the front of the site. Hopefully this and the disruption will encourage the rabbits and rats to find a home somewhere else. Please make sure that you turn your compost heaps to make the contents break down faster and stop them turning into rat hotels. If you have a large plastic compost bin with an open base put a piece of wire mesh underneath to stop rats getting inside it. If you still have problems and need some advice chat to Ken or email us on the address below.

Finally a couple of reminders. Bridge Fen soil is peat and will burn if you light a bonfire on bare ground. You probably won't see it but the fire will spread underground and is very difficult to put out. Bridge Fen is an open site and thefts occur. Ken has offered to engrave mark any tools which you keep on site but never leave anything you would be unhappy to lose. Don't bother locking your shed, thieves will cause more damage than the value of items you tried to protect. If you go onsite and find lots of shed doors open please let us know immediately so everyone can be told and sheds can be checked. If you see anyone acting suspiciously note the vehicle numbers and a description and pass them to the police. Also inform the secretary 07747312347 or email to:

cityofelyallotmentsassoc@gmail.com

New Barns site report by Peter Clarke

Firstly may I welcome all our new plot holders who have recently joined us. At the time of writing we have no vacant plots available which shows how popular allotments are in Ely.

The water installation work has now finished on the New Barns site. The water is connected, and has been switched on and the flow checked to each tank, then drained and shut off until later in the year. We hope to have a Water Tank Opening Party for all the New Barns plot holders in May.

When the weather improves we will also be planning some communal work to repair the paths by relaying the turf, sowing grass seed and tidying up what remains of the soil left from the pipe laying. We intend to arrange work days at weekends and are looking for volunteers to help. Some of the brambles by the east gate have also been removed, this area will be made good and reseeded.

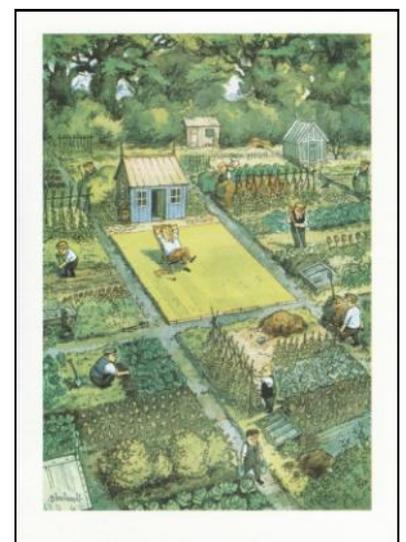


We have been offered some horse manure and need to get a team together to collect it, especially as a number of people have asked about it. The shed on plot 33A has been given to us for use as a communal shed for the site, it will be used for storing our lawnmower etc. It has already been renamed



The Gardeners Arms!

Thank you for your efforts and support during 2016. All your Site Reps wish you very happy gardening in 2017, preferably not like this example in my favourite Allotment cartoon!



Upherds Lane site report

by Peter Holden & Tamsyn Hardy

Spring is round the corner, but spring and summer this year will be special for Upherds plot-holders. In wet weather there will be dry access underfoot, and in dry weather there will be water available for thirsty plants, so bring on your worst 2017...we are ready! At last water is available at four points on site, with hard pathways between, both of which will benefit gardeners and their families visiting the site. A big thank you to all who helped with the clear up before and after these new additions to Upherds.

For many of us the water points will be a permanent reminder of our dear friend Nigel Clarke. Nigel had investigated the possibility of installing water on several occasions over the years and was looking forward to it becoming a reality at last with the help of Tesco. We will sadly miss the opportunity to gather round a trough with him to draw a bucketful and enjoy plenty of cheerful chat putting the world, the weather and growing to rights.

We hope to have a grand water Switch On in April, with some publicity and a chance for everyone to meet each other, especially the new tenants who have taken up plots recently. Before then, a chance to meet, greet, chat and eat cake is at the AGM on 20th March, 7.30pm at Centre E, Barton Road. You can also let the Association know your comments, ideas, and suggestions for our site.

Wishing all plot holders happy and productive gardening.

Canterbury Avenue & Back Hill

Not forgetting the two smallest sites managed by the Association: Back Hill has just two plots and is perhaps our best-kept secret, whilst Canterbury Avenue is looking forward to a revival of interest and enthusiasm this year as they also enjoy a shiny new water point.



Before: the main site path at Upherds Lane



The new path and a water point at Upherds Lane

Webmaster's Words

Our email address

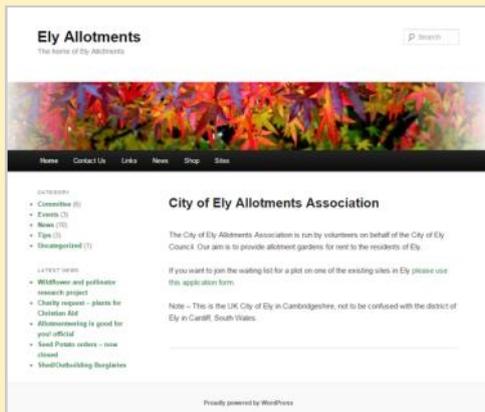
cityofelyallotmentsassoc@gmail.com



The Association's email address is now an essential part of our administration. All plot holders who have registered an email address with us receive all communications electronically. This has generated significant savings on printing costs and postage, but particularly in volunteers' time and shoe leather distributing paper mailings around Ely. Please let us know if you wish to join the email distribution lists, or conversely wish to be removed. Also—please be sure to notify us if you change your email address.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page



QUESTION: Have you ever looked at Ely Allotments on line?

If NO, then do it now by going to www.elyallotments.com

There is a host of information, and some nice links, take a look at *This Blessed Plot*, where Zoe chats about her plot at New Barns.

The website is our public face and most inquiries from prospective tenants come via the 'Apply for a plot' page. There is also a 'Contact Us' link where you can send messages to the Secretary without using your email. We would like the website to be useful to existing members so if you have any suggestions for content you would like to see there please let us know. A reference list of vegetable types that are best suited to the soils on the different sites has been suggested, e.g. this contribution already received: *'on Bridge Fen SWIFT POTATOES plants only produced marbles, SWEDE won't grow at all and TURNIPS often bolt. The only reliable Brussels sprout is DIABLO'*.

The Association has no 'official' presence on social media. Would this be a more suitable channel for members to interact than the conventional website? Does anyone feel this is necessary and importantly have the skills and willingness to take it on?

John Mitchell

A message from the City of Ely and District Horticultural Society

Dear colleagues,

Over recent years we have suffered from decreasing availability of qualified judges, experienced show growers, visitors and show organisers. It has therefore been decided not to hold The Great Autumn Show in 2017. We will instead concentrate Society activities to the Stores, maintaining the garden outside St Mary's Church and promoting gardening in the local area.

This year we are trialling a School Potato Competition. We will provide a re-usable bag, compost and three early seed potatoes to groups or classes in junior schools. They will grow these and at the end of summer term we will have a "Weigh In" with a prize for the heaviest crop. St Mary's School has agreed to participate this year, and if it is a success we will open it out to other local schools. These bags, compost and seed potatoes will also be available to buy at the Stores in Lynn Road for others with limited space to grow a crop.....no prizes, just the joy of fresh new potatoes on your plate. As usual these and other activities need ideas and manpower to succeed. So if you can provide either or both, please feel free to step up, join the Society and get stuck in.

Our Stores in the grounds of the Ely Beet Sports & Social Club (Lynn Road, Ely, CB6 1DD) are **open to all**:

STORES OPENING HOURS	
February to November inclusive	December and January
Saturdays 10.00 to 12.00 noon	Saturdays 10.00 to 12.00 noon
Mondays 18.30 to 20.00 (except bank holidays)	

You do not need to be a member of the Horticultural Society to make purchases, but if you wish to join you may pay at the Stores or send a cheque, made payable to City of Ely & District Horticultural Society. We will need your name, address, telephone landline and/or mobile number and your e-mail address. Membership is £8.00 due on 1st October annually. This will entitle you to a discount of 10% on any purchases from the Stores.

The Stores provide many gardening items and are run by volunteers, if you are willing to help, please let us know. A price list for stocked items is on the Allotments website. We also run schemes for seeds from the Kings Seeds catalogue, (orders arrive in December) and seed potatoes which arrive mid February.

I trust this information will be helpful to you and if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my colleagues, details below.

Teresa Bye

General Secretary, City of Ely and District Horticultural Society

teresabye@ntlworld.com Tel: 01353 610370

peterholdenemservices@btinternet.com Tel: 07949274513

Alan Jillings – Tel: 01353 667032

Tony Edmondson – Tel: 07946676708