

Framfield Allotments Association

www.framfield-allotments.org.uk email: secretary@framfield-allotments.org.uk

Newsletter – Spring 2012



Myles Carr

We would like to send our condolences to his family and many friends. His gentle humour will be very much missed by everyone at Framfield. His readiness to help others encouraged a real sense of community on the allotments. He especially loved clearing plots for newcomers using a rotovator that was bigger than he was. Rest In Peace.



News

Thanks....

..... to everyone who came along to help on the last work day (especially those who brought the wonderful cakes along with them!). We cleared another huge pile of rubbish, including lots of broken glass from the wildlife areas. We also shifted lots of sand to make a good start on laying a paved floor for our new meeting space – thanks as ever to George for his work on this. As always, we really appreciate all your efforts

Security issues

Once again we have heard reports of thefts at other allotment sites. Brentham was hit on Easter Sunday (following a major break in over the winter), and once again sheds were broken into. As well as machinery and metal including taps, thieves this time also took petrol from people's sheds. Also, all of the sheds on one of the smaller sites in Greenford were broken into in April.

Can we remind you to keep the gates locked at all times, and never to give keys to anyone that you do not know well. Please do not leave anything of value in your sheds. If you spot any damage to the fences or gates, please let Tony or Dennis know ASAP.

Cecil the Pig

Cecil the rescue pig has now been rehomed. He was becoming too big to be housed on the allotment, and has now joined a group of fellow kunekune pigs in Surrey.

Self-Management

This is currently one of the hottest issues in the allotment world, not just in Ealing but nationally. Basically, councils are changing the way they manage allotments in order to save money. This is being implemented in various ways and with varying success across other London boroughs.

At the meeting to discuss allotment rent increases on September 15th, Ealing Council said that they wanted to change the way that they manage allotments. They put forward several possible scenarios:

- (i) Self-management of individual sites by local associations, as at Pitshanger allotments. The allotments lease their site from the Council, and set and collect their own rents.
- (ii) The setting up of a self-managing charitable trust to take over responsibility for all Ealing Council allotment sites.
- (iii) Contracting out allotment management to a private company.

None of these are definite yet. Ealing Council has not announced plans to sell off any allotments. Indeed, they have recently created a new site at Ealing Common.

Since September we have heard nothing from them (they have been rather busy lately sorting out the issues with refuse collection!). This has caused much uncertainty and confusion amongst tenants.

There is a concern that the Council could suddenly spring their plans on the allotment community, giving us little time to discuss or influence the changes. It would be far better to engage with them early in their planning in order to try to get the best solution possible.



In order to do this, Framfield recently hosted a meeting of representatives from other local associations – Blondin, Brentham, Horsendon, and Oldfield. The group agreed to establish a forum with the following aims:

- to initiate discussion with the Council to find out what their plans and timescales are
- to communicate these plans to the Ealing allotment community
- to bring issues from the allotments to the council, and seek ways of resolving them

Within the group we have good contacts within other local boroughs, and with national allotment organisations such as the Allotment Regeneration Initiative.

As soon as there are any developments in this area we will let you know.

Digging Deep – Finances

Grant income



In December we received a grant of £1,000 from Team London, a Mayor of London initiative to support the efforts of volunteers. We have spent this on materials to repair the kitchen roof, and for the new meeting area next to the kitchen, e.g. paving slabs and roofing.

Future funding

Our current non-grant income is just under £400 per year, including summer social income, web site commission, and manure profits. Our running costs are around £900 per year, including insurance, building materials not covered by grants, fuel, costs related to events, subscriptions and office costs. Therefore, as a priority, we have to identify ways to plug the shortfall of around £500 per year so that we become fully self-funding – we can't rely on grants for ever.

There are a number of ways that you can all help to ensure Framfield remains somewhere we can all be proud of and enjoy.

Internet users can help us easily:

Easyfundraising www.easyfundraising.org.uk/faa

Usage has increased, and we have raised over £80 since the New Year (much of this comes from some of our plotters booking flights and accommodation for their job). The total number of users is still relatively low compared to number of plot holders with emails.

To make it even easier, download the easyfundraising browser toolbar. When in the easyfundraising website, click on Raise More, then Find and Remind. This takes the hassle out of checking which web sites give Framfield a commission - you just click on the button when it appears at the top of a web site and then anything you buy on that visit gets a commission.

Easysearch www.faa.easysearch.org.uk

This is very easy to use (those of our plotters who work for google won't like us saying this!).

IE and Firefox users can add this to your searchbar. Every search you make raises funds for Framfield – the average internet user should raise around £20.00 per year.



Non-internet users can also help us!

Selling to the public

There is an opportunity to set up a stall at the main gate over the summer to sell produce/ plants/ jams/ cakes/ eggs etc. We will need help in a number of ways, such as manning the stall, providing goodies for sale, advertising etc. Please let us know if you are interested in organising this or helping.

Marquee available for hire

If you are planning an event over the summer and require a marquee, then why not hire ours? Contact Tristan for details – reasonable rates! Please note – it is already booked for a street party on 4th June and for the Framfield Summer Social (details of this below).

Diary dates

21st and 22nd July - Framfield Summer Social

This year we are planning to hold a two day event, on Sat 21st and Sun 22nd July.

On Saturday 21st July we are hosting a first for Ealing's allotments – open air theatre!



The Mikron Theatre Company will be visiting us on with their production of 'Losing The Plot'. Mikron has been in existence for 40 years, and is based in the North of England. Mikron is the only theatre company in the world who tour professional theatre by narrowboat, covering the whole of the country via canals and rivers onboard their 75 year old narrowboat. Their new show is set on an allotment, and they were looking for allotments to perform it on..... where better than Framfield?!

The show is suitable for all ages. It will run from 14:00 to 16:00, including an interval. Arrive early to secure a good spot! Bring a picnic and something to sit on. We will be making a small charge for plot holders and friends and families (children free) – details later. There will also be a collection at the end of the show (the actors have to eat!).

We will be holding our usual summer social on Sunday 22nd July– details to be finalised.

Blooming Marvellous

Ealing Council has decided to enter the **London in Bloom** competition this year, for the first time since 2009. You may remember that Framfield then was awarded 3rd place out of all the allotments in London. The judging criteria include community involvement and environmental awareness – our high placing was a reflection of the hard work all our volunteers put in. Our success helped us to secure useful grants.

We are pleased to have been asked to represent Ealing again this year. Judges will visit us on July 12th. We will be organising some work days before this to do some tidying up – details to follow soon.



Volunteers needed – Children’s Club

Like most other allotment sites we are attracting a large number of tenants with small children. It is great to see children develop an interest in where their food comes from, and being outside away from computer games. However, we also experience quite a high turnover rate amongst this group. This is disappointing for the families (and causes a lot more work for the committee).

We understand the problems of looking after small children on allotments, and that parents cannot put in the time they would like to tend their plots whilst at the same time tending their children. We also understand that other gardeners may not appreciate children playing hide and seek on their plots!

As a way to support our families, and reduce the problems, we would like to develop a children’s club on site. We will soon have a new meeting space by the kitchen which would be ideal for this. With the summer holidays coming up, this would be a good time to start!

However, the committee really does not have time to organise and run this, so we would like to ask parents to get together to set one up.

This could be an informal crèche (supervised by one or more parents). It could be on a regular basis at weekends, or somewhere for the kids to go when it’s raining. We know that we have tenants who are used to organising face painting and craft classes. We could have sunflower or pumpkin growing competitions – whatever you like!

If you are interested in helping to start this off, please let one of us know. We can then put you in touch with each other.

Dennis, Hilary, Tony and Tristan

