

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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2021

SEPTEMBER 18th FELIXSTOWE GARDEN CLUB AUTUMN MINI SHOW

OCTOBER PUMPKIN COMPETITION

NOVEMBER 25th EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING TO BE FOLLOWED BY CHEESE AND WINE

2022

JANUARY 27th MEETINGS RESTART AT OFCA SUBJECTS TO BE ADVISED

FEBRUARY 24th OFCA MEETING SUBJECT TBA

MARCH 24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 28th OFCA MEETING SUBJECT TBA

FAREWELL

As I am sure most of you are already aware, for health reasons, I am giving up my responsibilities to the Allotment Association, Steve Brewer has already very ably taken on the secretary's role, but we do need someone to edit the newsletter so if you feel you can become a media tycoon, let Neville know, it is not a terribly onerous task, as most of the hard work is done by contributors.

I am leaving at a time when the Association is healthier than it has ever been with nearly 300 members and the future of the Association looks very bright.

Thanks for all your past support and good wishes. *Jeremy*

Published by Jeremy and Angela Pratt for, FAA, 11 Priory Road, Felixstowe. IP11 7NE Tel 01394 286649
E-mail JEMANPRATT@BTINTERNET.COM

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES From Neville Farthing

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

Issue 3 September 2021

As I write I'm thinking, "what summer". After a difficult Spring for the plants, we now see healthy potatoes withering



overnight and conversations around the word "blight".

You might wonder why we cultivate at all, but then see my two carrots, guaranteed to lift your mood.

Over the five sites in Felixstowe we have seen a number of new tenants with

the waiting lists still not reduced to zero. The Association has grown in tandem with this increase and I am delighted to see new faces across the plots. We now have 293 members which is gratifying to see.

The small group looking to replace our meeting hut at Cowpasture, plot 39, continue with a work plan and with costings being submitted in August. The hope is that grants will provide for the structure and its foundations but the

Association will meet the costs for the internal and some external fittings.

The Community orchard at plot 115 at Cowpasture is now fully planted and years of rubbish removed. The Mayor is to "open" it in August. We hope to see fruiting trees within 2/3 years. With regard to leaving the National Association (NSALG);- that has now happened, and I was grateful to read forty emails in support of that decision. We have negotiated with Kings seeds a new scheme which will allow you to buy vegetables and flowers (not sundries) at a 50% discount. The paperwork and catalogue are almost identical to previous years, more details will follow once we receive them from Kings. (See Article later)

Although we have left the national Association one committee member will join as a full member plus we intend to join Fairfield & Colneis/Kingsfleet primary schools to the schools scheme offered by the NSALG.

The developments of housing near to Ferry Road and now Cowpasture allotments, after more pushing and questioning we are to see a 1.2M wooden fence go up at Ferry Road on the North side. The Trelawny site may see a new (controlled) pedestrian gate into Cowpasture and we are talking about the provision of electricity and possibly sewers into or at least adjoining the site.

Talking of sewers, the trial at Cowpasture of a portable toilet for the summer continues without comment. I would welcome your views as regard the permanent provision which is possible but funding and servicing must be viewed carefully against actual usage over a 12 month period



Chairman's notes continued

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The committee have discussed the return to winter meetings at OFCA. We are still mindful of the fall out and concerns around Covid. It has been agreed we should seek to hold an Extraordinary general Meeting at OFCA on Thursday 25th November followed by a social event/ cheese & wine. This provides us with an opportunity to ratify the (Zoom) AGM of this year, seek acceptance of the accounts and to consider committee changes that are going to happen.

Finally can I place on record your thanks to Jeremy and Angela Pratt who are stepping back from the Association after many years of dedicated "service". I won't go further but in some regard they have enabled this Association to flourish and grow to where it is today. So, if you fancy producing the next Newsletter around Xmas give me a call or send me an email.

Keep hoeing. *Neville*

CESSATION OF BONFIRES

In the June Newsletter I mentioned the desire by the Council to stop open fires across their sites. Although I personally still see a fire as an opportunity to remove certain rubbish, but I accept that ultimately we have to stop altogether. The tenancy agreement we all sign up to does not yet ban open fires but that may soon occur. So, how do we remove and get rid of "rubbish".

Plainly, to run a compost bin or two is a good start, and not to let a plot get into such a state in the first place will also help. Bringing items from home to either store and later burn is not what we want to see. With a waiting list for plots those tenants who do allow a plot to deteriorate may see their agreements terminated sooner rather than later so that a new tenant may take over more quickly.

Composting is not the total answer as some virus and disease can't be composted away, club root and onion rot to name but two. So, might you wish to see a skip provided ? permanently or at a point in the year when rubbish is at its peak, not sure when that might be. Skips are expensive, another factor.

I'm able to get to the local rubbish tip and I run large heavy duty bags that take my non compostable items to the tip, but some members may not have this capability.

Fires can be the source of annoyance and irritation both to plot holders and householders who border our plots. Time of day and wind direction must be considered if a fire is to be set.

Burning plastics and the like is by most, accepted as a no no. Bone dry debris with little or no smoke should be the norm but we all fall make mistakes and up goes the smoke!

So, to close I have no clear answers, I do however, think we should work as an Association to see the stopping of open fires. Please give me your thoughts and views, good or bad but the problem will not go away. The climate issue and the bigger picture around it is one we all should be looking at.

Neville

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

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Ferry Road

Peter & Sheila Constable

Cowpasture

Bob Greatrix & Tracey Knight

Patrick Favre & Malinda Botma

We extend a very warm welcome to you and hope you enjoy many happy times cultivating your plots. If you are new to growing your own, never be afraid to ask for advice from your neighbours;- advice costs nothing and it is flattering to be asked.

Don't forget as well that the shop at Cowpasture Plot 39 is always open on Saturday mornings where you may get supplies for your plot at much reduced rates, and if you are fortunate you might even get a cup of tea and even a biscuit!

FELIXSTOWE GARDEN CLUB SHOW 18TH SEPTEMBER

Having not had their normal Summer Show for two years due to Covid, Felixstowe Garden Club are holding a mini show at OFCA this year on 18th September 11.00am –5.00pm. Classes are open to all and sundry so why not have a look at the schedule on their website <http://felixstowedistricts.onesuffolk.net/> I'm sure there is a class that you could enter and it is all in a good cause and a bit of fun. Let's all celebrate the freedom we are at long last experiencing by socialising back at OFCA like we used to do!

SQUASHES

Squashes are greatly underrated in my opinion, a lot of people grow Butternut Squashes, which are fine, but they don't store terribly well. I much prefer the ones you can see on the right, the big green ones are crown Prince, and the orange ones are onion squash or to give it's proper name, Uchiki Kuri! The big bonus with both these varieties is that they store extremely well and will last well into the following year if they are ripened well. See Page 6 for recipes





SEED & POTATO ORDERS 2021/2

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Seed Orders for next year will be slightly different from previous years because we have changed our package with Kings. The Kings catalogues will no longer show the discounted price for the vegetable and flower seeds but these will be subject to a 50% discount. There will be a blue form instead of the green one that we have been used to.

When you have completed the blue form, you will need to deduct the 50% seed discount from the amount that you pay to our Association. We will then pay Kings the total discounted amount as previously. The catalogues will be out soon and the very latest return date will be October 22nd. Put the date in your diary/ calendar now! The potato and onion order will be similar to previous years but there will be no Lady Christl due to the grower's crop failure. This has been replaced by blight resistant Ulster Sceptre as an early. There will also be Sarpo Mira which is a blight resistant maincrop potato. Note that they are blight resistant and not blight proof!

The relevant order forms and membership renewal will come out with the catalogues.

SQUASH RECIPES

The most delicious soup which will warm you up on a cold winter's day is Sweetcorn and Squash soup. Take a medium size onion chop finely and sweat in butter till soft not browned. Add about 750 grams of squash chopped into cubes and a tin of sweetcorn, about 500grams, season well and sweat again till everything is soft. Add 250 ml milk and 750 ml vegetable stock simmer for about 20 minutes then zap with a blender– enjoy.

Another very simple dish is to simply toss cubes of onion squash in seasoned flour then fry gently in butter or oil until tender, they will taste like a cross between roast chestnut and baked potato.



CANDLET ROAD DEVELOPMENT NOW TRELAWNY PLACE

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The Persimmon housing development is proceeding quickly with initial drainage work, the site entrance and the distributor road already taking shape. The public footpath from Candlet Road to The Grove has been temporarily closed. The closure Order also covers the length of path from Candlet Road towards Walton but this has not yet been implemented. This path is to be surfaced and lit as part of the development.

A four lane traffic light controlled junction including dedicated left and right turn lanes will be built to give access to the development. This will remove both the east and westbound laybys on Candlet Road. It will also have crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to go from the development to Walton. This work is scheduled to take 23 weeks, starting in September.

Phase 1 of the development includes the area between the distributor road and Gulpher Road and the western half of the former horse paddocks to the north of the allotment site, where the topsoil has now been stripped and stacked, some of it along the allotment boundary. A looped distributor road will be built to give access to the side roads on which the houses will be built. There will be a pedestrian and cycle only access to Gulpher Road ie no vehicular connection. Persimmon expect this to take 3-4 years to complete. There are no detailed plans of Phase 2 yet. This will fill the gap between Phase 1 and The Grove/Abbey Grove.

Ponds to take the surface water will be constructed near the footbridge into the Grove and a foul sewer pumping station will be built in the north east corner of the site. The triangle of land set aside for sheltered living (which does not form part of the current planning consent) abuts the western half of the Cowpasture northern hedge boundary and the ends of two culs de sac about the eastern half.

We can expect more construction noise and disruption for years to come! Guy Pearse

Guy Pearse

The incessant bleeping noise of construction equipment reversing I suppose is essential for health and safety reasons but it is SO irritating! Ed



MONTY SAYS

We're getting towards that point in the year when Mother Nature prompts us into gentle reflection on how the year has gone, the sepia tints of retrospection making in turn our triumphs seem far greater and our failures far worse. Of course, in time Wisdom and Patience will teach us to moderate both, to be grateful for our achievements, however modest, and to look forward with optimism and enthusiasm to the challenges and opportunities the next year will bring.

We've had our allotments at Cowpasture for seven years now and in this time have come to view a select group of vegetables as old friends, not necessarily the most outstanding in their quantity or quality, but dependable, year in and year out, come drought or deluge, heatwave or permafrost, for producing a decent and satisfying crop. In those seven years we've grown a wide range of different varieties but always seem to come back to our favourites, because we know them and can trust them. The allotment equivalent of an old, comfortable, warm woolly jumper. Perhaps importantly, they've regularly proven that they like the particular conditions on our plot.

The first of these is Beetroot "**Kestral**". This is so easy to grow, with dark burgundy, smooth globe-shaped roots which stand well without bolting (an important quality in the heat and dryness of recent Summers). It has a superb earthy-sweet flavour, perfect to be eaten both raw in salads and cooked. The roots aren't as large as those of many other beets, so it's ideal as a mini-vegetable, a quality which also allows closer planting than many other varieties.

Personally I'm not the greatest fan of courgettes but Mrs Monty's firm favourite is "**Midnight**". This is a dwarf variety which is as happy in pots on the patio as it is on the plot. The darkest green fruits look as attractive on the plate as they are delicious to eat (according to Mrs Monty, that is). Although not quite so robust a variety as "Defender", it manages to shrug off perennial cucurbit problems such as powdery mildew until the plants weaken towards the end of the productive season. Unlike many of its siblings, "Midnight" is almost spine-free, meaning you don't need to wear chain-mail to get with- in picking distance.



By a long country mile the best potato we've grown is "**Jazzy**". Described as "the small potato that packs a big punch", this variety is variously listed as a salad, second early and maincrop, all of which terms are completely accurate as it simply does all three jobs, equally well. The yields are consistently impressive and we've regularly dug up fifty or sixty potatoes under single plants. It is tolerant of dry conditions and keeps its head of foliage erect and healthy when others all around are losing theirs. The flavour is absolutely exceptional, the only thing that "Jazzy" doesn't do well in the kitchen is chips, but that's about its only shortcoming. Sauteed slowly in butter and lightly salted it is the nearest I've yet come to Heaven on Earth (a point my cardiologist may well agree with, albeit in a very different sense!). Next year we're thinking we will only grow Jazzy, to the exclusion of all other spuds.

Our go-to runner bean is "**Firestorm**". It's technically a hybrid, a Frankenbean cross between an old-fashioned runner and a climbing French bean. The hybridisation has given Firestorm its greatest strengths - the fact that it's self-setting, so you avoid the problems of poor pollination (something to bear in mind as insect numbers are in such sad and worrying decline) and it is less sensitive to adverse weather, producing excellent crops of superb-tasting, sweet stringless beans even in hot dry conditions. The only downside we've noted is that the cropping season seems slightly shorter than that of traditional runners. Maybe a candidate, therefore, for a couple of sowings to prolong the season successively (only if you have the patience, of course!)

If you're looking for something different to try next year, why not give any of these a go?

In the meantime, Happy Gardening!