

# Issue Number 6

Of the Newsletter of the Felixstowe Allotment Association  
www.felixstoweallotments.co.uk  
Edited and designed by Peter Constable

**A belated New Year greeting** to you and your families. I nearly always start with a reference to the weather and this article will be no different. After such a hot year in 2022, all we have now is rain and more rain. My plot at Cowpasture is nearly all turned over, ready to go, but getting it done between showers is not easy.

With the rain we see the road ways suffering, leading to more road maintenance and any help is welcome, especially at Cowpasture, which is currently trialling a one way system. Please support the trial as I believe it will ease the pressure seen in and around our one vehicular gate. Felixstowe Town Council, at our partnership meetings are supportive of this venture and have notified ALL plot holders of the changes.

I've been interested to read the seed offers from the major suppliers and I find their prices surprising. The seed potatoes have increased hugely, but for those of you who ordered with the Association, we have struck a very reasonable deal with a local supplier.

Additionally, for those of you who need more seeds from Kings, or just missed our order deadline, we can now provide you an internet link to Kings, so you can buy vegetable and flower

seeds at 50% discount AT ANY TIME. However, the discount does not relate to potatoes! Just ask if you need the link.

Prior to Christmas we organised a coffee and mince pie at Hut 39. We were delighted so many attended, many wearing a Christmas jumper and we all enjoyed the opportunity to chat and take advantage of the hut. How about we hold an early summer BBQ one afternoon at a weekend? Send us your thoughts.

Also I invite you to think of a name for the shop and hut complex at No. 39. The winner will, of course, be well rewarded for their efforts with a voucher for our shop. Get your thinking caps on.

Within this newsletter will be an invitation to the AGM to be held on 23rd March at the OFCA meeting room. A cheese and wine will follow and a lighthearted table quiz will be offered to those who like a challenge. The winter meetings close in April and recommence in September. If you have any topics or offers of speakers do tell me as finding suitable presentations is not easy.

The Association has been in contact with the Felixstowe Garden Club, who on 15th July will be holding a flower and vegetable show at OFCA. If you wish to enter you can, just get in contact with Claire (the

## NEW'S NEWS



- Compost** 60 litres **£6.50**
- Chicken Pellets** 4kg **£4**
- Bonemeal** 3kg **£3.50**
- Fish/Blood/Bone** 3kg **£3**
- Growmore** 3kg **£5.00**
- Potato Enricher** 3kg **£5.50**
- Fine or Large Mesh** **£1.50** or **£2** per metre
- 8ft Bamboo Canes** **£10** for 12
- Fleece** 35g **£1** per metre
- Garden Lime** 3kg **£2** or **£10** per bag
- Paper Potato Bags** **£1.50** for two

*Prices subject to fluctuation.*

DOWN TO EARTH



**Felixstowe**  
**ALLOTMENT**  
**ASSOCIATION**



**NOW OPEN!**

9am - 12.30pm most Saturdays

Membership Secretary) who can furnish you with the entry requirements. If you ever wanted to grow prize winning vegetables now is the time. Get in early, get planning.

Finally, we have seen some new faces on the plots as a few long standing members have hung up their spades and fork. There is a waiting list for plots, so those who neglect a plot may be requested by the Town Council

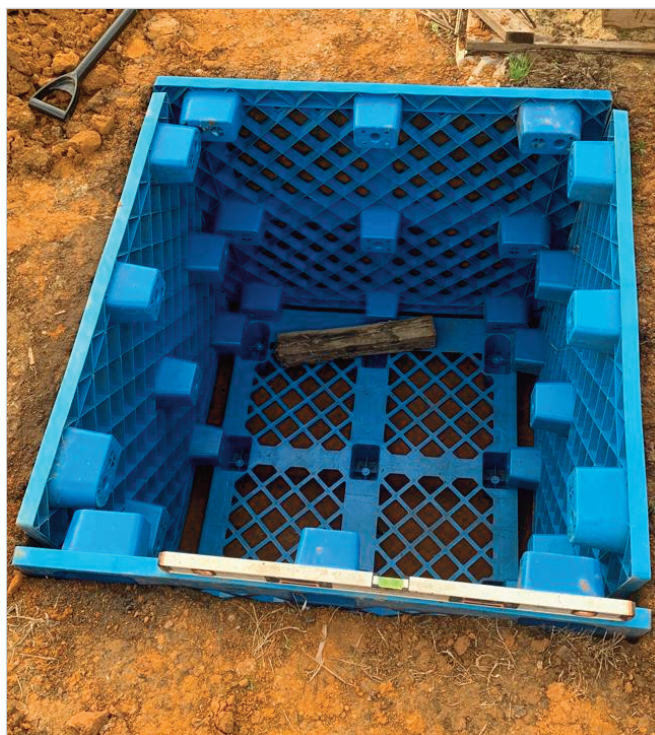
to relinquish it, in accordance with the tenancy agreement. Also, for those who have an excess of produce, consider donating it to the food banks which operate across the town

They are :  
**St Peters & Paul Church,**  
**Church Road Thursday 1100.**  
**St Johns Church, Orwell Road**  
**Monday 1000-1600. Saturday**  
**and Sunday 1100-1700.**  
**Langer Road River of Life**

**Church, Friday 1100.**  
**Wadgate Road, St Phillips Hall,**  
**Tuesday 1100.**  
**Salvation Army, Cobbold Road,**  
**Each week day except**  
**Wednesday, 1000-1300.**

So, to close on this wet soggy January morning, get your digging done if that's your thing. Start off the seeds and plants ahead of what will be another challenging year, as they all are!

*Neville Farthing, Chair*



## The On-site DIY Freezer!

In early 2022 a new member at Cowpasture erected his own super-sized poly tunnel. The Council assisted in agreeing the dimensions and within a short time, it was planted with tomatoes, peppers and lots of interesting varieties of salad crops.

Danny was determined to replicate the vegetables from his birth place, Romania. Given the weather and such high temperatures, I and probably a few others were sceptical that the venture would bear fruit. How wrong I was!

Daily visits kept the plants growing and growing with the tomatoes having six or more trusses. The size of the fruits were immense.

His next thought turned to harvesting.

Danny was not only feeding his ever growing family. but he had a plan to store the excess. The plan was to dig a hole and bury it out of harm's way and below any frost. So, that's what happened.

Have a look above at the photographs. A perfect neat hole of some size and depth was

sorted within a matter of days.

A firm, safe child-proof top was added and the vegetables, in containers, with suitable preservatives etc, were piled up in the 'store room' ready for use later this year.

As a traditional (some may say boring) vegetable gardener, I found the energy and thinking of Danny most refreshing, showing me what can happen and plainly does happen, in parts of the world where freezers and kilner jars don't exist.

Well done, Danny!

*Neville*



# Your invitation to a Barbeque - or two!

**Now that** the new hut at plot 39 Cowpasture is complete and the grass is growing nicely around it, how about we have a BBQ?

The Committee would like invite you to come along on Sunday 2nd July, with a second BBQ on Sunday 10th September. We will provide the BBQ, you just need to bring your own food and liquid refreshment, cutlery and glasses We can provide tea and coffee.

Don't forget we now have access to our own fully serviced toilet on the same plot.

## New Members

### Cowpasture

Sarah Midgley  
Paul Weavers

### Social Member

Charles Quinn

### Ferry Road

### Railway Hil

### Taunton Road



*The photograph above is a Whitebeam tree planted in memory of our late Secretary, Jeremy Pratt and once established will provide shade for those who linger over their coffee on a sunny day.*

## Allotment Production Project 2022

**To demonstrate** the benefits of working an allotment, we decided to record all that we produced and the time spent on various tasks, over a whole year.

Fresh air, exercise, good things to eat and talking to like-minded people, are all the physical advantages of having an allotment but what are the other rewards?

We have two 5-rod plots – his 'n hers – which amount to 280 sq.m of which we crop 180 sq.m, or 2/3 of the total.

We grew 70 varieties of vegetables and soft fruit. We aim

to have something from the plot to eat every single day of the year.

The harvest total for the year was 350kg – just shy of 1kg/day – and the total value amounted to £1,330, or £25 a week. The crops were valued against Tesco's basic on-line prices for ordinary produce.

What we grow would qualify as organic, which carries a hefty premium with most retailers. We did a price comparison between Tesco and Eversfield Organic, who deliver boxes of vegetables and fruit, and discovered that we

would pay 54% more for the organic stuff. Tesco's organic courgettes are 82% more expensive,

If we bought all our vegetables and fruit from Eversfield, we would have to pay £40 a week plus a delivery charge of £6.95. There is no fresh soft fruit available in the winter, so I guess that there would be a further premium to pay for that in season.

Against this, Tesco's non-organic price would be £25.

Our costs amount to £3.85 a  
*continued overleaf*

week or 1/12th of the Eversfield price.

Our labour to produce all this amounts to 334 hours for me and half that for Delia. Less than 1½ hours a day between us.

Half the time was spent on maintenance, which included plot preparation, weeding and tidying

up, whilst the rest was fairly evenly divided between watering, planting and sowing, harvest and pottering.

Why did we carry out this exercise? Partly for our own information, but also to show what it is possible to produce from a small area of land, and to

demonstrate to people new to allotments, that the rewards make it all worthwhile.

We have a more comprehensive report which we are happy to share. If anyone would like me to email a copy, then let Clare or Neville know.

*John and Delia Holmes*

**Cowpasture is a bleak**, desolate old spot at this time of the year. There's been the occasional bright day when I've been tempted to venture up and tickle a few intrepid weeds with the business end of the fork, but the lure of the armchair has been just enough to keep me in the warmth.

At this time of the year, about the closest I get to gardening is arranging my seed packets in alphabetical order. I must though, very soon think about winter pruning the apples and pear trees and cutting last year's growth (perversely still healthily green and leafy) off the autumn raspberries.

And on the subject of raspberries, has anyone else noticed suckers emerging, blatantly ignoring the Rules of the Seasons?

At the outset, I need to make it absolutely clear that I'm not expecting any nomination for a Nobel Prize here, (although the £8 million might nonetheless come in handy when paying next month's electricity bill at Monty's Mansion!), as I've not 'discovered' anything, instead I've just done a bit of curiosity-led experimentation...

I tend to bring on most of the veg on the allotment in seed containers in the greenhouse or cold-frame, planting them out after a decent hardening-off period. I do this for two main reasons – firstly, it's so much easier to control the germination environment this way, and secondly, I became fed up feeding mice and voles with my precious pea and bean seeds in particular.

A couple of years ago Mrs Monty bought some bedding plants at Dobbies, (other garden centres are, of course, available), which came in translucent green trays. In a moment of uncharacteristic environmental enlightenment, I washed the trays out and

subsequently decided to use them when sowing peas in the greenhouse. At the same time, I also sowed the same seeds in the same compost, using the opaque black plastic trays I had used for a number of previous years. The difference in germination results was amazing, not only did the seeds in the translucent trays come through much quicker but the plants were noticeably stronger and grew away better when put out on the plot.

I repeated the same

**MONTY SAYS**  
**Shouldn't it soon be Spring?**

experiment with successional sowing of peas and got the same outcome.

Since then, I have

used translucent trays,

(Incidentally, Mrs Monty's breakfast yogurt pots are just as effective as 'proper' seed trays and cost only the effort of washing them up, for almost all of my veg sowings).

The one thing that doesn't seem to like light at the roots is lettuce, they grow better in traditional black trays – I've tried many times using different varieties but consistently sowings in the translucent trays show poor germination rates.

Tomatoes seem to positively relish the light, with two packets of seed last year I achieved 100% germination and by a country mile the healthiest plants I've ever brought on.

I'm not a fan of plastic, but if seed trays are washed and re-used many times, other 'waste' material, such as yogurt pots, are re-purposed prior to being put in the recycling bin at the end of the gardening year, it does feel as though these things are being used responsibly.

Bring on Spring....

The seed potatoes will be landing at Cowpasture soon.

Happy Gardening!