

Issue Number 10

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

DOWN
TO
EARTH



Felixstowe
ALLOTMENT
ASSOCIATION

Well, where did 2023 go?

I always try hard to dig my plot before the end of the year, but this year I have failed. Not because I've gone 'no dig', it's because of the almost constant rain. In future, I might just stop growing potatoes and grow rice instead. The plot looks like a paddy field anyway!

In Early November when I penned the introduction for the last Newsletter, it was raining. In early January the rain gave way to snow, and a few days later we had high winds creating havoc on many plots mine included with the greenhouse door coming off and four panes of glass to replace.

Why do we bother?

We bother because we like the challenge. We wish to enjoy home grown food and the hard work is accompanied by many conversations with like minded people.

The Christmas Coffee and Mince Pie morning was well attended as the photographs overleaf show. I'm very grateful to those who helped along the way to make it work.

The A.G.M. is approaching, and the Newsletter contains the financial workings of the Association for your perusal and acceptance in March. The evening will conclude with a cheese and wine supper and a table quiz if you wish to enter.

NEWS NEWS



The winter meetings will continue each month until March and then in April on the 21st we will hold the first of the Coffee and Cake mornings with the shop being fully stocked to help you plan for the coming growing season. The compost, of course, now being available at a discounted price at Gosling's at Trimley.

Please take your Membership Card. Might I also remind you of the Kings seed offer - a 50% discount when you use their web site via the following link - <http/https://www.kingssseeds.com/secure/register?ur=KA1183>

The roadways at both Cowpasture and Ferry Road have been improved over recent weeks, as the photograph overleaf show.

Felixstowe Town Council, our partners, helped move the hard core and funded the day. Your driving slowly and considerately will help maintain these for us all.

The seed potatoes have arrived after placing a joint order with Capel Allotment Association. The onion sets were sourced separately and both were available for members to collect in late January/February.

We anticipate the shop will have a few types left over from the main order and can be bought on a first come first served basis.

I must congratulate our members who picked up an

award via the Felixstowe in Flower competition. The ceremony was unfortunately delayed by a few weeks, but a mention must be made of:

- David Smith (Best new entry) at Cowpasture;
- Carol Bennett (Best plot) at Cowpasture;
- Anna Sullivan (Best Allittlement) at Cowpasture;
- and finally (Best plot overall)
- Lavinia Heeroma at Ferry Road.

Your hard work and time spent has been noticed. Well done.

To close, I wish to record my thanks to the Committee, who's help and support in all we do is invaluable.

We may see some changes at the A.G.M. but with about 300 members, any help along the way is very welcome in the many tasks and events that we undertake.

Best wishes to you all in 2024!

Neville



Roadway improvement
at Cowpasture

NEW MEMBERS

Cowpasture

Jessie and Clint Minter
Clinton Templeman and
Bridget Miner
Lynda Saward
Valerie and Colin Bailey
Lisa and George Jamieson
Angie Collins
Gill Morris and Ian Wright
Barbara and Michal Sabela

Ferry Road

Mike Shute
Sarah Gilder
Dan Styles

Railway Hill

Paul Patterson



Harvey and Oscar
with their Bug Hotel



HELP REQUIRED - LANGER ROAD SCHOOL

Might you have time to help establish a small vegetable patch within Langer Road School? The new leadership team have worked hard over recent times to improve the school and are now keen to extend the learning experience outside the classroom. The exact details have yet to be agreed but once the garden is established, working with parents and teachers should not be too onerous. Please contact either Claire or Neville if you require further details. Thank you!

You know it's cold when the Brass Monkeys announce they're taking industrial action over pay and inclement conditions. At least this neck of East Suffolk has managed to avoid (so far) the severe weather that's ravaging other parts of the country. Snow is lovely to look at on Christmas cards or when you're a nine-year-old with an excuse to bunk off school and spend the day carving tracks into the nearest hillside – and the seat of your trousers – with a tin tray for a toboggan, but when you need to get out and about, or depend on others being able to reach you, it becomes a real worry. Ice, but not Nice.

For us plot holders, cold weather, though, is as much a friend as an enemy.

True, the cold (and damp cold in particular) can wreak havoc on less hardy plants and crops, sweeping away the vulnerable in a matter of hours. However, it also obliterates, far more effectively than a sprayer filled with Bug Clear Ultra (other pesticides are, of course, available), the swarms of pests such as slugs and aphids that bedevil our best efforts on the plot.

It's not a well-known fact that soft fruits need colder weather to help form the fruiting buds for the coming year – a snappy Winter generally means that the coming strawberry and raspberry harvests will be especially bountiful. And if you're contemplating planting rhubarb, the lifted crowns positively relish a touch of harsh frost before they're set out, the cold encouraging them to take more enthusiastically than when cosseted with warmth and pampered care.

Figs, too, will crop better the following Summer when the Winter has been harder. Sometimes I can't help but think that many of our so-called tender favourites are a tad more Peaky Blinders than Downton Abbey, so to speak!

The colder turn has prompted me to harness the huskies (well, a distinctly unenthusiastic and unimpressed Spaniel) to the sled and mush our way up to the plot to catch up on the Winter pruning for the apples and pears. As I've mentioned in a previous epistle, the Summer pruning didn't have quite the effect that it should – having trimmed back the year's new growth to roughly a third in early September, the trees should have settled down quietly into gentle retirement, the

remaining wood ripening away nicely to be ready to confront the worst of the following Winter's

challenges. So ... did the trees

duly comply with Nature's Rulebook?

Did they heck! They put on another six to twelve inches of growth between September and November, only deigning to stop when they finally shed their leaves at the end of last month. Now, Summer pruning helps encourage the formation of fruiting buds for the next year, whereas Winter pruning generally reduces the size of the tree but has the converse effect of stimulating new growth, at the expense of energy being put into the production of fruit.

The aim is to do as little Winter pruning as possible, mainly restricting it to unavoidable surgery to correct such things as damaged or diseased branches or to open up the branches to allow air and sunlight into the crown of the tree.

But this month I've ended up giving them a short back and sides, rather than the intended perm and blue rinse, which doesn't fill me with confidence about the number of apple crumbles Mrs Monty is going to be putting on the table in 2024, alas!

However cold it gets, enjoy the New Year on your plot.

Happy Allotmenting!!

MONTY SAYS
Warmer weather would help!

MISSING ROAD SIGNS AT COWPASTURE

Members should be careful when using the one way system at Cowpasture as a number of No Entry signs have been removed from the sign posts.

New replacement signs have been purchased and erected...

...let's hope this second batch are not stolen!.

Financial Statement - Year Ended 31st December 2023

Opening Balances - 1st January 2023

Deposit Account	<i>credit</i> £11,454.08
Current Account	£3,705.54
Cash in Hand	£102.37
Total	<u>£15,261.99</u>

INCOME:

Hut 39 Shop Sales	£3,210.50	
Membership Fees for 2024	£1,832.50	
FAA Potatoes/Onions	£1,216.50	
Sundry Income	£656.10	
Membership Fees for 2023	£438.50	
Fundraising Raffles	£369.00	
Interest on Deposit Account	£122.80	
TOTAL INCOME		<u>£7,845.90</u>

HUT 39 SHOP

Sales	<u>£3,210.50</u>
Opening Stock	£970.28
Purchases	£2,795.60
Less: Closing Stock	£783.68
Cost of Sales	<u>£2,982.20</u>
Contribution to Members' Funds	£228.30

EXPENDITURE:

Hut 39 Shop Stock	£2,795.60	
FAA Potatoes/Onions	£1,685.32	
Site Improvements	£950.00	
Members' Meeting Expenses	£751.21	
Insurance	£529.67	
Sundry Expenses	£227.18	
Card Payment Fees	£34.55	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>£6,973.53</u>

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR £872.37


MEMBERS' FUNDS AT 31st DECEMBER 2023 £16,134.36

REPRESENTED BY:

Deposit Account (Barclays Bank)	£15,576.88
Current Account (Barclays Bank)	£457.09
Cash in Hand	£100.39
TOTAL	<u>£16,134.36</u>

I have prepared these accounts for the Felixstowe Allotment Association in accordance with the funds as I have received and recorded them.

Guy Pearse -
Hon Treasurer



I have examined the above financial statement showing Income and Expenditure and Funds held and confirm that it accounts with the books, statements and receipts made available to me.

Examined by
H G May

