

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Page 8

2021 MARCH 9TH, 7.30 A JOINT "ZOOM " MEETING WITH THE GARDEN CLUB
—FOR DETAILS AND LINK SEE HUGH MAY'S RECENT E-MAIL

AGM DATE TBA

JUNE BARBECUE IF PERMITTED

DEVELOPMENTS

Ferry Road

The Laureate Fields development to the north of our Ferry Road site continues apace. Most of the building next to our boundary is nearing its conclusion. Much of the fencing along our boundary has been completed and provides security in both directions. We are still pressing for the fencing that is missing (along our boundary with the Laureate Fields car park) to be provided.

Candlest Road/Cowpasture

East Suffolk Council has now given detailed planning consent for the first phase of the development and Persimmon Homes have said that they intend to start work soon. Indeed, by the time you read this, tree felling (ahead of the bird nesting season) may well have taken place along the verges and embankment slopes of Candlest Road. This will allow the new traffic light controlled junction with the estate distributor road, which runs roughly where the stables now are, to be constructed. Expect some significant disruption on your journeys to Ipswich!

The planting on the embankment slope between the allotments and the layby should be largely unaffected. The A154 and the junction have been moved south to give room for the cycle track /footway that will link the development to Beatrice Avenue/ Grove Medical Centre. This was done to preserve the trees and shrubs and to try to retain as much of the current appearance as possible.

Published by Jeremy Pratt for FSALG

11 Priory road Felixstowe IP11 7NE

Tel 01394 286649 E-mail JEMANPRATT@BTINTERNET.COM

Printed by Tuddenham Press

Happy
Easter

SPRJNG

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 March 2021



CHAIRMAN'S NOTES From Neville Farthing



The allotment's sites, although very soggy after what seems like continuous rain are busy. Covid has brought about a resurgence in growing, and Felixstowe Town Council now have a list of names waiting for an allotment. The Association continues to see a steady rise in the membership, which now exceeds 250 people, over twenty joining since November.

As mentioned in the December newsletter the upturn in numbers and increased interest in allotmenting has provided the committee with the opportunity to look at what we have. A small working group is now carrying out a review of the "social hut" which sits close to the shop at Cowpasture. The building is well past its best and may need replacing. I anticipate the costs will take advantage of external funding streams plus using some of the Associations accumulated funds. I will keep you informed as this project rolls out. The Covid restrictions didn't help shop sales last year but as this year opens up I anticipate members will seek to use the shop more frequently.

The Kings seed order plus the potato order from Horticultural supplies [Bramford] has seen a busy few weeks for the committee in particular, and I wish to place on record my thanks for their hard work. The members also helped no end by collecting their seeds promptly once delivered and by following the Covid advice.

The community orchard at Cowpasture has now been fully agreed and almost totally funded by the Town council and a local benefactor. The apple trees have been purchased and with members help should be planted in the near future.

The Town Council have also agreed in principle to the siting of an end carpark at Ferry road allotments. The problem however is site access for "construction traffic". To that end an approach has been made to the developers at the Laureate Fields building site to see if access through the North hedge can be established with fencing then installed once this project is complete.

This cauliflower (Centris F1) which was picked on 5th December was as white as the snow outside my home, the size of a small football and perfect. It sums up why I grow vegetables, but I do have my failures as well, as we all do.

To close, I have tomato plants growing on my window sill alongside early leeks, the onions sets are growing nicely in cells inside my greenhouse. Spring is soon to be upon us; my plot is dug ready to plant. Is yours? I hope so.

Neville



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Unfortunately once again due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic we have had to postpone our AGM, however, as soon as we are allowed to meet again, we will reconvene it at OFCA. See the certified accounts and the shop returns below and on the next page

Hopefully, we will be able to celebrate a return to some sort of normality with our normal cheese and wine event!

HUT 39 SHOP

Hut 39 Shop Accounts

Sales	£1,739.58
Opening Stock	£584.81
Purchases	<u>£1,375.83</u>
	£1,960.64
Less closing stock	£576.82
Cost of sales	<u>£1,383.82</u>
Surplus	<u>£355.76</u>

Once again, we are indebted to Maurice Barber, and John Austin, who have managed to achieve a very nice profit .

Figures carried forward to Financial statement on page 3

ALLOTMENT SITE ROADS AND PARKING

Our wet winter has softened the ground and led to damage to the tracks at Cowpasture and Ferry Road.

Cowpasture

We continue to have potholes appearing on the tracks particularly where puddles form and soften the ground underneath. These are made worse by people driving through them; the faster we drive and the heavier our vehicle, the more damage we do. There is a 5mph restriction that is there not only to keep people safe but also to limit damage so please keep your speed down.

The Town Council has kindly provided 2 loads of hardcore so that we can repair the damage. This is done by our members often assisted by the Town Council staff.

In the late autumn, we were able to solve some of the drainage problems at the car park by Abbey Grove. This was done by creating a shallow drainage channel to direct more of the rainwater to the soakaway that we built a couple of years ago. We also extended the parking area by hardening the surface along the fence.

Ferry Road

The grassy track up the centre of the site has been badly rutted by over use by vehicles when the ground is soft. The ruts filled with water and got deeper and deeper until we had to close the track to prevent further damage.

Roger and Tom from the Town Council helped load hardcore at Cowpasture and transport it to Elmcroft Lane. A working party, organised by Keith Horn and keeping socially distant, barrowed it to fill the ruts on the way to the existing car park. Then we laid geotextile into the ruts on the green track and filled them with more hardcore until we ran out of time. We will be arranging another working party to extend the reinforcement of the track.

We have asked the Town Council to consider grading out the green area by the northern boundary, compacting it and then laying geotextile and hardcore to make an additional car park. Apart from the cost, one of the major obstacles is getting the hardcore to that end of the site. It would be a lot of barrowing!

So we've lost the potential for about 10 litres each of red and white for those vines. The twelve vines we bought from Shawsgate Vineyard have never done well for some reason. They struggle to produce a crop. So production is down a little by seven vines in each colour. When a vine is mature, it can produce up to 6 bottles of wine. Perhaps with good fertiliser and management I can bring it up. The allotment is in an excellent position for the vines. It's well drained and catches the sun perfectly with not too much exposure to the winds

Now it's November, the vines are starting to go dormant, and the next task in winter is a bit of careful pruning.

It's a pleasure to be on the allotment with good company all around and people interested enough to begin their own small wine making projects. We must get together for a tasting!

I'm sure 2021 will be another interesting and challenging growing year. When we get clear of this virus and can have another allotment BBQ we should celebrate the vintage, and bring out the wine & cheese ... posh!

Soggy Bottom Wines.

The 2020 Cowpasture Vintage.

Rob & Liz

Plot 37 Cowpasture



The vines in great shape just before the harvest

INCOME

Membership fees for 2020	£290.00	Opening Balances 1st January 2019	
Membership fees for 2021	£1,624.50	Deposit A/c	£7,935.60
Subs in advance for 2022	£7.50	Current A/c	£3,471.95
Fundraising Raffles	£115.00	Petty cash	£107.91
Refreshments	£29.30	Total	<u>£11,515.46</u>
Hut 39 Shop	£1,739.58		
Kings Seeds	£4,358.90		
FSALG Potatoes	£1,244.00		
Interest on Deposit account	£6.23		
Donations	£379.28		
	<u>£9,795.19</u>	Total paid in	<u>£9,795.19</u>

£21,310.65

EXPENDITURE

Meeting expenses	£44.00		
Raffles	£16.00		
Refreshments	£91.68		
Speakers	£160.00		
Awards	£447.50		
Hut 39 Shop	£1375.83		
Kings Seeds	£3,616.00		
FSALG Potatoes/Onions	£867.26		
Site Improvements	£396.32		
Committee Exp's / Misc	£175.39		
Insurance	£609.10		
Under/over	+£3.83		
NSALG/OFCA Subs	£629.00		
	<u>£8,431.91</u>	Total Pd out	<u>-£8,431.91</u>
			<u>£12,878.74</u>

Confirmed Balances 31/12/20

Deposit A/c	£10,441.83
Current A/c	£2,111.65
Cash in Hand	<u>£310.26</u>
Add cheques not presented	£15.00
Total	<u>£12,878.74</u>

The above accounts have been prepared by Hon. Treasurer Guy Pearse, and certified as a true record by Mr K Horn.



COWPASTURE VINEYARD

I first came to the Cowpasture allotments for an open day in late 2016, with Liz, my partner. Liz and our friend Kim thought an allotment would be a good idea. Fresh air, sunshine, home grown produce... Number 38 was coming vacant along with 37. Now I had started a vineyard in Australia before emigrating to the UK in 2012. It was named "Soggy Bottom", because when it wasn't as dry as dust, the vines were drowned by floods. So I couldn't resist number 37, seeing straight away that it would be perfect for a small vineyard. The soil was in a poor state, but that's fixable with patience. And so the work began. Trellis to install and vines to buy and plant. Vine guards to keep the rabbits away. By February 2017 the infrastructure up and ready for vines. First of all I bought six red and six white vines from Shawsgate Vineyard near Framlingham. Then I bought bare root vines from a company in Devon, who import vines from Europe, so they should do well in the UK. I bought 25 Sayval Blanc and 25 Regent red vines.

We were off!

Three years later, and it's been an interesting journey and huge learning curve so far. A few miscalculations along the way, learning about English weather as I go. The vines are now three years old, or in their fourth year, and just starting to give good yields. 2021 looks promising, as the vines become sturdier and more fruitful by the year.

In (2019) I made 33 bottles of white wine, and only 6 red. The white was delicious – typical dry English white. The red was a bit disappointing – except for the one bottle I kept under the stairs for a year.

This vastly improved with age!



This year there is still slightly less red produced than white - 68 bottles of Red (Regent), and a mere 104 bottles of white (Sayval Blanc). Should keep us going for a few weeks!

So perhaps buying the first 150 litre stainless wine tank for the red this year was a bit optimistic! I'll fill it next year, fingers crossed. It doesn't matter though, as the tank has a special adjustable lid to seal it right on top of the wine, at whatever level. For the white I'll probably get a 100 litre stainless tank later in the year, ready for the 2021 vintage.



The vines are doing really well, and loved the weather last year (2020) in particular – lots of rain at the right time, and plenty of sun to sweeten the grapes. Unfortunately I lost two of the good vines last year. Just up and died! .

