

# Elder Stubbs Charity Allotments

## 2016 Newsletter - Winter Edition

**A Happy New Year to Everyone at Elder Stubbs and wishing you an excellent and productive growing experience for 2016!**

Welcome to this years Newsletter and please note the News and Tenancy updates in the section on the additional page.

2016 has arrived and the Winter from having started very mild has been followed by plenty of rain. The more keen and hardy tenants visiting their plots over Winter will have noticed water collecting on some of the low points of the site as the water table is rising. The pond from being almost dry has just started to refill with water. The photograph below illustrates that situation and those with a keen eye may just notice a grey wagtail inspecting the dried out pond for food. A contrasting Spring pond view is alongside.



Talking to many of the plot holders during the season has given me the impression that most have been satisfied with producing some good crops.

Last summer had sufficient warmth and sunshine to enable successful results from outdoor tomatoes and for a change blight did not prove to be a disease problem.

It was a disappointment that we did not manage to get our usual load of municipal compost from the Council. I am hoping to be able to receive a load this season if the path dries out sufficiently. Those of you who added compost or manure to your soil would have noticed that it helped to retain moisture whilst also making the soil more workable and productive particularly during the dry spring and early summer. Details of who to contact for manure can be found on our for sale section.

**Highlights of 2015:** We managed to make a number of site improvements.

**Security:** We hope that the new signs put up on each of the gates announcing that the site is protected by surveillance cameras will help to deter unwanted visitors. If problems do arise, please let me know about any incidents of theft or damage to your plot. Crimes should also be reported to the police.

**Oxford Field new facilities:** The compost toilet was in urgent need of replacement which we have now done. After putting it together I reckon any IKEA flatpack should be a doddle!

**Site maintenance and a big thank you to all of you who have contributed your time:** This has been invaluable to enable improvements to be made to many of the habitat areas including pruning orchard fruit trees, keeping hedges clear from shrubs growing too close and ensuring perimeter paths are kept accessible to name but a few.

**Hedge cutting:** Elder Stubbs has a significant length of mature hedging that requires cutting annually. It was beneficial and a cost saving that we managed to do this ourselves again last year.

**Essential professional site maintenance:** Our usual tree surgeons have again done some excellent work for us ensuring that some of the larger trees on our boundary have been suitably maintained.

## Highlights of 2015 continued:

**New Website and E-mail address:** This has been recently put together and can be viewed on line. There is a lot of useful information including a section for Diary events and News, Newsletters and Tenancy documents. New tenants may find the monthly review helpful, of what jobs to do, what to sow or plant and what can be expected to be available for harvest. Do let me know if you wish to have something publicised or other ideas which you would like to see included within the website.

**The Elder Stubbs Festival & Vegetable Show:** Another very successful event last year which was well attended. The Festival enabling Restore to make its work with people recovering from mental illness more widely known as well as raising some much needed extra funds for their essential work in our community. Many thanks too for those of you who contributed exhibits for our Vegetable Show. John Purves kindly agreed to judge the exhibits in the show. **It would be brilliant if we can continue the tradition of the show but it needs your input as tenants to consider growing some interesting vegetables and flowers to put on display.**

## Highly Commended growers of 2015 season:

**Clerks Cup:** This is awarded for the best well maintained plot showing excellent growing skills as well as an aesthetic appeal. Dr. Nigel Northcote kindly agreed to judge the plots and for 2015 we congratulate Matthias Jore and Susanne Mak as worthy winners. Judging takes place just before our trustees have their annual view of the site so it provides a good excuse to have your plot looking good in July. A difficult choice from the numerous well-presented plots this year!

**Oxford Allotment Federation Competition:** Many thanks to all who participated from Elder Stubbs. Mr. J. Guschtscha was disappointed to only achieve 2nd place in the overall best plot category having won over the previous few seasons, David & Hilary were highly-commended, Matt Jore & Susanne Mak achieved 3rd in the under 35 category.

## 2016-17 Rental Payments

Your rental payment notice is included with this Newsletter. Payment is due by the end of March and can be made at Elder Stubbs 10 – 11 am on 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> March. Payment by cheque can also be made from now (a good idea if you might forget later) Details are on the accompanying rental payment notice.

Payments made after March will have a £5 surcharge to reflect time needed to chase any that become overdue.



**All plots must have a number** which is a Tenancy responsibility. I will eventually hand on my role of Estate Manager - Your plot number clarity will then be essential. Purpose made metal labels can be obtained at cost (green centre) £5.50, you will just need to add your number.

**Maintenance Charge:** Ideally you will be able to find 3 hours over a season to put into making Elder Stubbs look good and function well. If you can manage more, that would be welcomed. It is preferred that you come up with a positive use of 3 hours of your time rather than paying. The Estate Manager has considerably more work to maintain the site than the hours allocated. It is reasonable to expect that all tenants will take some responsibility to help with this.

**If you are moving home** or changing your telephone it is necessary to pass on your new details.

**It will be really helpful if you have decided not to continue with your plot to let me know as soon as possible.** This could enable a new tenant to make a start with preparation for this season.

**Waiting list for plots:** Allotment tenants with plots can add their name to the waiting list to take on an additional plot. Consideration will be given where their current plot is being well maintained within the Tenancy Agreement guidelines and up to a reasonable combined total plot area.

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