

Elder Stubbs Charity Allotments 2020 Newsletter - Winter Edition

**A Happy New Year to everyone at Elder Stubbs
Hoping that you will have a very productive 2020!**



The above picture shows a previous years snow scene amongst Andy's wonderful dinosaur sculptures.

It has certainly been a challenging start to the year for those of us wanting to get our plots ready for this growing season. We have had many wet days and the soil has in the main been heavy for digging and weeding.

Winter and early spring is often a time when growers are looking to give their soil a boost by adding manure or compost. It does make a big difference which is noticeable particularly during the summer months when we are faced with prolonged dry periods. The manure or compost helps improve the soil structure, encouraging the earthworms, providing some nutrients and increasing the water holding properties of the soil.

If you are planning to order manure please remember that this is only possible when the paths at Elder Stubbs are reasonably dry to avoid damage and with at least two days' notice to allow us to remove the bollard and ensure access through the main gate.

For tenants who might find it useful to have a checklist of jobs to do on your plot each month, you might find it helpful to take a look at our website which has a monthly what to do list.

Some of the highlights from 2019: it was great to have favourable weather for our Elder Stubbs Festival and Vegetable Show which we felt was very successful with an enjoyable time had by the many local people who attended. Restore Team and members again pulled out all the stops to make the event run smoothly. Our considerable thanks to all Elder Stubbs tenants who brought exhibits for the show and gave us lots of help in putting up our marquee, providing an abundance of tea and sandwiches, getting the site ready etc.

We were very pleased to have John Purves (a long-term Estate Manager at Elder Stubbs during its recent formative development) and Mike Kent judge the Vegetable Show exhibits. Our congratulations to Restore who won best in show and to Thomas Butler who was the best achieving entrant for all his exhibits.

There were a number of very well cultivated plots in 2019 which were shortlisted for the Clerks Cup which is presented to the best well maintained plot showing excellent growing skills as well as an aesthetic appeal. Our Chair of Trustees Ms Judith Harley officiated in judging the Clerks Cup which was deservedly awarded to Peter Hulcup.

Keeping Elder Stubbs looking good – We need your help!

Keeping your plot well maintained, reasonably free from weeds and without rubbish is a great way to make the site look productive and cared for. It is important to remove weeds before they produce seed and particularly avoiding wind-blown seed.

Change of circumstances: Please let us know if you have a problem attending to your plot because of ill health, family issues etc. We can see if it is possible to come up with a plan and if possible provide some assistance. We will also be aware of why your plot may appear to be neglected.

Change of address: You will need to let us know your new address, telephone number etc.

Grateful thanks to our volunteers: We have been wonderfully supported by a number of volunteers over the past season which has provided a great team effort in attending to the many maintenance tasks around the site.

New Tenants: We were pleased to welcome a number of enthusiastic new tenants in 2019. Our website has been a good link for people to find out about how to apply for a plot at Elder Stubbs and we have a waiting list which at the moment has 16 people.

We were able to allocate a number of plots in the autumn but it did entail several days' work to make sure that the plots which they were taking on were of a suitable standard to hand on to them.

Weedy plots: Edmund Faria and Phil Creme reviewed plots 3 times over the 2019 season and letters were sent to tenants where their plots were seen to be untidy or neglected. We are trying to ensure that we can reduce our limited time available to renovate abandoned or very overgrown plots that are to be passed on to new tenants.