

2019 NOVEMBER ODFAA NEWSLETTER

Centenary events

Stop press ...we had booked Val Bourne 'The Natural Gardener' for our ODFAA's 2019 Annual Talk on Saturday 30th November 2019 at West Oxford Community Centre, However we have just heard that due to personal circumstances Val is not doing talks this winter. We have CANCELLED and sent Val our best wishes.

Competition Award Evening was held at West Oxford Community Centre on 28th October

This was attended by about 70 members from the contributing sites who heard comments from the judges, Tim Treacher and Mike Kent. The prizes and certificates were managed by Tim and Ian Sheppard, the ODFAA Competition Committee and presented by Wendy Skinner Smith, Chair of ODFAA. John Lardner organised drinks and vegetarian nibbles were by Vladmira and Tom from the WOCA café. Phil Baker welcomed members and sold ODFAA books. [Final results and awards](#)



75+ winner - Richard Haigh,
Cripsey Meadow



65-74 winner -
Polly Woolstone, Fairacres



35-64 winner - Louise and
Rob Bruce, Cripsey Meadow



Under 35
Ellen Dyer
Barracks Lane



Small Plot
Clive Lindley Jones
Fairacres



Challenge Trophy
Ian and Helen Matten
Lenthall Road



Alderman Knight Shield for Best Site was jointly won by **Cuttleslowe and Fairacres**. It was collected by site members including Gerald Clarke (3rd from left) who also got a Special Award as our oldest contestant. Still plotting at 93 he is an inspiration to all.

We reported in August on our **Centenary Birthday** on August 21st and the ODFAA **Reception in the Lord Mayors Parlour**. [News](#) and [Photos](#) on these and on the competition awards are on the web site as are details of the availability of the limited edition of **ODFAAs Centenary book 'A Growing Concern'**

National and local politicians are now firmly wrapped up in elections so allotments may seem rather small beer.. but an article in the recent NAS magazine entitled “ Are Allotments the future” refers to a paper written by Prof Coulson of University of Sussex about bringing people back onto the land and reorienting subsidies to small scale sustainable farming which could help the environmental crisis. He points out that allotments can produce abundant food while supporting a healthy biodiverse environment showing that the two need not be mutually exclusive. Studies on the productivity of allotments show that they can produce the equivalent of 35 tonnes of food per hectare. The food grown on allotments is healthy, local, generally pesticide-free, creates zero waste and involves no packaging. The paper argues that getting more people involved in small scale farming, primarily growing mixed fruit and vegetables for local consumption would not only enable people to eat healthy food with minimal packaging but it would also provide a route into employment in a time when more and more jobs are becoming redundant due to automation. For more on this visit <https://foodresearch.org.uk/publications/grow-it-yourself-sustainable-farming/>

Allotment agreement UPDATE

ODFAA got a first draft of an agreement in September and all sites have had information about their future site rent. We hope to have a draft for association in January. ODFAA is still working with OCC to resolve the issues as reported at the September ALM.

- the benefits of licenses vs leases (latter clearer and firmer)
- the need for a Client Officer in Communities to oversee service provision and working with OxfordDS,
- to review the allotment charter and plan for review of Green Spaces Strategy 2027
- Whilst sites have devolved management we still pay rent to OCC which forms most of the allotment budget on the firm agreement that this will be fully returned in services to allotments annually
- Clarification as to how the allotment budget will be used for handling trees and ditches;
 - Some Associations have taken the initiative and surveyed their own trees. We already know that the scheme will be primarily H&S driven, but we need to be sure trees will be managed to allow cultivation.
 - OCC should share tree surveys as a start of the proposed tree management rolling programme.
- Clarification of the assignment of assets and insurance.
 - OCC doesn't feel the need to undertake Asset Condition Surveys prior to assignment – We need to make sure we don't take on future problems (e.g. Association sheds with asbestos-concrete roofs).
 - Need to make the distinction between Asset Condition Surveys and the Site Condition Surveys. Need for annual returns to ODFAA/OCC to ensure service provision
 - ODFAA Insurance comes out of the allotment budget which is made up of site rents and some site income from external services. We await clarification of this income stream. **ODFAA HAVE TO PAY THE INSURANCE UPFRONT AND ARE THEN REPAYED FROM this budget.** If not the site rents need to be reduced by an equivalent amount.
 - Zurich is being more helpful. We are waiting for an example to share with other Associations, but most are finding asset insurance prohibitively expensive. JL has collected quotes and Zurich still looks like a fair future provider. Document needs to recognise ODFAA role re insurance and contain a number of 'what-ifs'. May need the future lease/license needs to stipulate that Associations must provide adequate insurance to cover those assets. See Barnet document on insurance cover.

- Clear demise and reversion clauses.
- Clarification of the roles and distinction between 'allotments management' and 'service provision'. The Associations manage the allotments sites (clearing plots, maintaining the assets e.g. water provision, fences, tracks, sheds, and paths etc.) and have members and subscriptions. OCC provides Associations with services administering and accounting site rent income to provide insurance, tree and ditch management, monitoring and supporting the associations... who remain OCC's agents.
- As agreed at September ALM Cripsey Meadow AA has joined NSALG to facilitate legal advice.

Looking ahead

Organised by the Oxford & District Allotment Associations

!EXTRAVAGANZA!

Don't Miss

West Oxford's 2020

'GROW YOUR OWN'
POTATO DAY
AND SEED
FAIR

• 60 plus varieties of Seed potato, all for sale by the single tuber plus Onion & Shallot sets, planting garlic bulbs and a comprehensive range of heritage seeds, in addition to a selection of fruit trees, soft fruit, kitchen garden plants
and so much more!

FREE ADMISSION
Good Cafe for Refreshments

Please bring your own Carrier Bags

Sunday - 5th January 2020
(10.30 am to 1.30 pm)

West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road,
Oxford OX2 0BT

Pennard MASTER GROWER 2019
RHS MASTER GROWER 2019

The Walled Gardens, East Pennard, Somerset BA4 6TU
Website: www.pennardplants.com




- **December 10th** Tues 3.30pm - 5.30pm
OCC / ODFAA Committee only
- **January 5th 10am - 1.30pm Pennard**
[Plants Potato Fair at WOCC](#)
- **January 21st** Tues 7pm for 7.15pm
Allotment Liaison meeting
- **March 10th** Tues 3.30pm - 4.30pm
OCC / ODFAA 4.30pm - 5.30pm
ODFAA
- **April 7th** ODFAA AGM Tues 6.30 - 7 pm
7.15 - 9pm ALM

2019 has been an exciting and demanding Centenary year. The demands of this very worthwhile voluntary work have been extremely interesting and rewarding and with all your help ODFAA has seen many changes during that period. I will have done 12 years in April 2020 and as you know I will not be standing again as ODFAA chair. More grandchildren, visitors and not enough time to paint means that it is time for me to move on. I shall remain an interested body as I plan to be a plot holder for many a year yet and I shall seek to stay as Chair of CMAA ...but not as their ODFAA rep.

Meanwhile I hope your summer crops are harvested, your winter crops are safely mulched and wrapped if need be and you are looking forward to 2020's plot. Good gardening to all,
Wendy Skinner Smith
www.odfaa.com Chair Oxford & District Federation of Allotment

Associations

Please print and display the attached Pennard Poster.