



Autumn Newsletter 2015

Welcome to the autumn newsletter. If you have any comments about this issue of the newsletter or would like to contribute an item to the next issue please email the editor - raga@raga-leeds.org.uk.

Dear Members

No doubt you are well on with harvesting and with the lovely weather we have had at the end of September beginning of October the autumn raspberries are still cropping well and those of you with apple trees seem to have a good harvest. I know many of us want to get as much as possible out of our plots; unfortunately some members have planted right up to the path edge which means that plants inevitably overhang the paths. This is especially a problem with soft fruit and fruit trees. If your bushes or trees overhang the path they must be pruned so that the pathway is safe for others to use. It should be possible to get a wheel barrow along the main paths and a car along the central roadway. Fruit trees should be pruned so that the fruit can be picked without the need of a ladder. All none edible fruiting plants must be kept small, and should occupy no more than 40% of the plot. Plants such as buddleia (the butterfly bush) need to be cut down to at least 2ft (60cm) in March. If they are not pruned the bushes become unmanageable. Roses also need pruning and must not over hang the paths.

The **Thursday Morning Volunteers** are a small but willing band of up to eight but recently there have only been three or four of us. If you can spare an hour or two on a Thursday morning you will be most welcome. We start at 9am, stop for coffee and biscuits at 10.30 and finish at 12.00. At the moment we are constructing a turning area and additional parking beyond the wildlife area. After leaf fall there

will be the hedges to cut and gap filling to do. We have also taken on the task of clearing vacated plots before they are re-let and we maintain the wildlife areas. There are a wide range of tasks whatever your skill or fitness level.

Can I remind members that crops, plants and equipment must not be removed from plots without the plot-holders permission even if it appears that the plot is vacant. When a plot is vacated for whatever reason the out-going tenant always has a period of time pick any remaining crops and to collect any equipment. It is then for the committee to decide what is left on the plot for the new tenant.

The Summer BBQ was such a success we have decided to have **Christmas Pot Luck Lunch Event** this year for members, their families and friends. It will be another opportunity to get to know each other a little better and share our allotment knowledge and experiences while having something to eat and a drink. There will also be a bar for those who want more than a cup of tea. Here is the date for your diary, **Saturday 12th December 12.30 -2.30pm**. £2 per adult to cover the cost of the venue and everyone is asked to bring a food contribution. There will be a sign-up sheet and ticket sales in the Allotment shop from November. Please also indicate the age of any accompanying child/children, there will be a small gift for them to take home. The lunch event will be at the Police Social Club on Gledhow Lane, which has ample car parking.

Best wishes
Paul Lattimer (Chair)

Skip

A skip has been ordered for Thursday 22 October and will on site until after the weekend. Now is the time to sort your plot out but keep the rubbish on your plot until the skip arrives. Please don't put it in the car park beforehand.

Scaffolding Boards

We now have a range of scaffolding boards for sale, because they vary in length they have been priced up individually at £2 per metre. The boards are stacked next to the paving slabs near the wildflower bed. Please make your selection and pay at the Sales Hut on Sunday mornings 11.00 -12.00

Wildlife and Communal Areas.

Those of you who came to the Summer BBQ will have seen how pretty the sunny wildflower bed was with poppies, cornflowers and corncockle. Hopefully the perennial species will start to get a hold now that the annuals have been cleared away. The ones grown at home became really strong plants and have now been planted in the bed. We may really see a 'Purple Haze' next summer.

As soon as the leaves fall we will start to cut the hedges on the north and east boundaries. It is an enormous task so any help would be much appreciated either in your own time or at our usual working party time of 9 till 12 every Thursday morning.

Sometime during the winter we will be tackling the most neglected part of our site which is the 'hedgerow' at the side of the plots bordering Old Park Road. We intend to continue putting up the chestnut paling fence to increase security, then we will be clearing from fence to plot edge. Can we please ask those of you who have these plots to please make a start so that our task will be a little easier? A good tidy up at plot side will really improve the look of that side of the site and make for good storage/compost areas for you.

We were fortunate to be given lots of plastic mesh squares from Red Hall these have been bedded down and secured where the nettle patch was near the water meter hatch to give hard standing for about four cars. This will help plot holders at the west side and relieve pressure on the car park.

An area near the bug hotel has been cleared for the stumpery, we hope to plant it up soon. If you have any stumps, ferns or any other real shade loving plants please leave them in that area.

I have applied again to the Woodland Trust for a Wildlife Harvest pack of saplings but only 104 this time, if we are successful the little trees will be used to fill in the gaps in the hedge on the southern boundary. Please pot up any seedling trees you come across on your plots and leave them by the side of the hut we can always fit them in somewhere along the hedges.

Please help yourself to any of the donated items left at the side of the hut, at present there are some compost bins (you will have to fashion your own doors and lids for these) an old water butt that could be inverted and used as a compost bin, two wheelie bins, several buckets and lots of plant pots all sorted into various sizes. Please don't take the watering can or the small lidded bins, the latter are for pot storage.

Please contact me if you have ideas for further development of the communal areas. Margaret Lattimer 2160606

Lists are up in the hut for potato and onion orders please put your orders in ASAP. The seed catalogues are in the hut ready to be collected, please order only seeds for which there is a 25% discount off your order. Again please try and take your orders to the hut plus cheque or cash in an envelope ASAP. Next year is the year of the tomato so be brave and try a new variety.

Have you submitted a recipe yet which uses produce from your plot? I thought not, as at the moment we will only be able to produce a leaflet - about six recipes- a bit pathetic for over 120 plot holders.

Margaret Pickersgill

Eco Toilet

A lot of people have made use of our composting toilet this year. Some people still have difficulty putting the wood shavings only in the rear section of the toilet. Please take care to do this and avoid blocking the front section. At the moment we only have two volunteers to check the toilet on a Thursday to make sure everything is as it should be and top up the supply of materials. Could you help by being on a rota to check the toilet at the weekend? This would be especially helpful when our Thursday volunteers are on holiday. If you can help please text Paul on 07914792829 or email paullattimer@msn.com