



Kate Jones grew sweet potatoes from slips prepared from a supermarket purchase

*In this news letter*

**AGM**

New committee elected

**Keep On Gardening**

Full steam ahead!

**Doggie Passports**

Trustees revisit thier decision

**Seasonal Reminders**

Dig it!

**Waiting List**

Down to 12 months?

**Dumping On Site**

Don't do it!

**Our Police Officer**

Phone 0845 8505 505

**52 Years A-Growing**

Mervyn, a plot holder since 1954

# It's Dis...

**AGM**

We had a good AGM with useful discussions about site issues and the proposed disabled plot. A full new committee was elected, including a representative from the Chapel Hill site.

We also had time to compare notes on this year's strange growing season. French beans, courgettes, sweet corn plums and shallots did well, but runners, lettuce, parsnip and early potatoes were not good.

**Keep On Gardening**

The AGM gave the thumbs up to the plans for a disabled plot, the committee checked over some points and the 'Awards For All' (the National Lottery) application was posted. We expect to hear the news in the first half of January.

We want to help people keep on gardening on our lovely site even when things get tricky. We need about £10,000 to do the job well. We have already received some gifts, and many

favourable comments on the project. There is lots of goodwill out there, and various other possibilities if we are not successful with our first attempt at major external funding.

Whilst we intend to hire a contractor to do most of the heavy skilled work, there will be plenty of different ways volunteers can help.

It will be very important to get future users to check out the designs when the cash is secure, but before the practical layout is finalised. We want to be sure the cash is well-spent and the eight plots are easy to use. If you might be interested in a plot (or know someone who might be) please let us know so we are ready to seek your advice when the time comes.

**Doggie Passports**

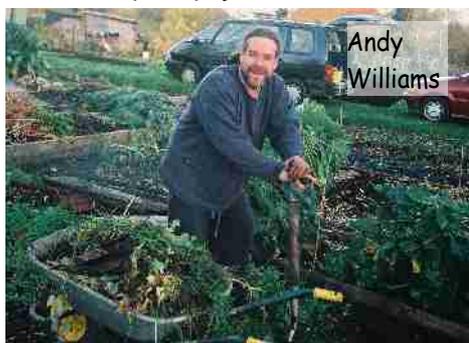
Following the AGM, the Trustees have decided that some plot-holders will be given permission to bring their dogs on site, subject to certain conditions. For more information contact Oliver Jenks.

Plot Holders Committee 2006/2007						
Chair	David Griffiths	PB10	9421141			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasure	Ken Phillips	AB14				
Committee	William Macphee	AA20	John Kirton	PA3	Gill Mills	PC9
	Richard Buckingham	AB11	John Butt	AA1a	Kim Pierpoint	AB18
	Wendy Levey	AB5a	Colin Robinson	AA20	Mick Geater	CH

## Seasonal Reminders

**Xmas Lockout** All gates (pedestrian and vehicle) will be locked from sundown on Christmas eve, until sundown on Christmas day.

**Water off** Both water supplies on the site will be turned off by our two water-volunteers. *Please do not turn it on, even for a short time.* The authorised volunteers will switch on again at the beginning of March. Also please report any problems that need attention during the turn off period (like drips and leaks). We want to get them sorted out promptly.



Winter is a good time for digging (if you do it). It is also the traditional time to add muck or compost to the plot, do construction projects, tidy the shed, clean up plant pots, plant shallot sets, and plan for next year.

**Christmas Chips** Help yourself to last years supply before the next ones come along. RBC will collect Christmas trees and return the chippings to us for use on the site. See notices in the press.

**Leaf mould** There is a good supply of leaves in the carpark. Help yourself to this valuable resource.

**Manure** Improves both heavy and fast-draining soil. Plot-holders have used two regular suppliers: Mrs Dayton (**9572379**) and Tim Metcalfe (**9428001**) who both supply well rotted manure delivered on site. Check the price when you phone.

## New Fence

RBC's plans for a 2.4m Victoria Rec fence go to planning Committee on 6 Dec. If all goes well the fence will be in place before the end of March. The fence will cut off trespassers', thieves', and vandals' major route into our site.

## Waiting list

We have only one half plot left to be let; there are 12 people waiting, all will probably get a plot within twelve months.

Nine families have recently taken up plots. It is good seeing people enjoying their new hobby. Why not have a chat? We hope people will like coming to our site. Everyone welcomes friendly advice, sometimes people need reminding not to do too much at a time or get overburdened by awesome lists of tasks. The hobby should be fun!

## Dumping On Site

Dumping is becoming a nuisance again. Some comes from visitors to the site, some from plot-holders. The allotments are a **no-dumping area**, and so is the reserved land.

Please remember that you are responsible for your junk including green waste. You may keep junk for the third weekend in March (when we get a skip service), or deal with it yourself; taking it home or to the tip.

Green waste should be composted, or, if diseased, left to dry and then burnt. There is a SMALL area hidden near the hedge off Armour hill, where green waste will do no harm and is acceptable, but nowhere else please, and **NO PLASTIC**.

Please do not dump stuff on the reserved land, and do not turn a blind-eye to neighbours coming in and leaving stuff near our gates. We want a clean site.

## Our Police Officer

PC 3406 Wayde Bohne (contact him on the number below) has been round our site several times, talking with plot-holders and successfully following up information about some nasty incidents.

Please keep reporting incidents. Using **0845 8505 505**. Give the details of **EVERY incident** of theft or criminal damage on our site.



Mervyn Taylor has had a plot on our site since 1954. There was no water on the site then. For a period he filled barrels with water from the Kennet and brought them up in a horse-drawn cart! Eventually a water dowser found underground streams. People dug a hole where the dowser thought there was water. Old dustbins provided the lining, and the hole filled with extremely cold water. Water still comes to the surface at the spot close to Armour Hill. Today it looks like a natural spring.

Mervyn says that the main difference between then and now is the quantity of livestock kept. A Cow and calves were kept near the Victoria Rec. There were ducks, geese hens, and two sizeable piggerys, one next to Swansea Terrace, and the other close to the scout HQ. So great was the production of pig manure, that the supply outran the demands of the plot-holders, and 'pig mountains' of manure grew up. With swathes of land not cultivated large areas of brambles developed, producing occasional spectacular fires.

When he was younger Mervyn was a keen competitor, and took the produce of his allotment to local shows. In his best year he won 13 cups.

Mervyn remains a skilful, if less competitive gardener. We wish him many more years of happy and successful gardening.

