



Autumn Newsletter 2014

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter. If you have any comments about this issue of the newsletter please email the editor - editor@raga-leeds.org.uk.

Dear Members

Rents for next year and beyond

As you will know the Leeds and District Allotment Gardeners Federation (we are all members of LDAGF) challenged the proposed allotment rent increases agreed by the Council. The Federation won its case in July. All the rent increases were judged to be unlawful. Consequently rents for 2014-15 will remain the same as 2013-14 as will the concessions and the money our association keeps to run the site. LCC were refused leave to appeal by the judge at the judicial review but are now seeking permission to appeal from the High Court. We won't know the outcome of that for some months. On the 17th September 2014 LCC approved the same increases as before giving the council a 300%+ increase with a 25yr income freeze for associations! The Federation is working hard on your behalf but please contact your local councillors and make them aware of your concerns.

New Lease

As a self-managed site we have an Association (RAGA), a management committee and three trustees, elected at the AGM. Our allotment site is leased to us by the council and the lease is signed by the trustees on behalf of the association. The new 25yr lease (previous one

was for 7 yrs) has to be signed before 15 October 2014 or the site will revert to Council control. Once we have received written confirmation of the changes for rents and concessions for 2014-15 the trustees intend to sign the lease. However the committee and trustee are very concerned that the conditions in the lease ensure that the money from the rent that RAGA can keep to maintain the site is fixed at the 2013-14 level for 25yrs. The other is the change in concessions; from 2015-16 members on a state pension will only receive a 20% reduction, not 50% as now.

Plot Inspections

The three inspections a year system seems to be working well. Most plots are of a reasonable standard, some of course are exceptional and give us all something to aspire to, and a few unfortunately are under used and weedy. If you are experiencing difficulties keeping on top of your plot, please ask for advice before it gets out of control. Now is the time to gather in the harvest, sort out the weeds, get your winter digging started and **plan for next year!**

Better News

On Thursday 2nd October we will take delivery of our disabled access **composting toilet**. It will be sited just beyond the tool store near the wildlife area. Full instructions will be provide inside. It has a solar panel to power a light. **It is a sit down system for men and women** so that liquids and solids are separated. A scoop of sawdust after use ensures there is no smell. We have waited a long time for this but after much consideration it

is finally on its way. I hope you enjoy using it. Please make every effort to keep it clean and tidy. It will have an external padlock with the same combination as the gate.

Best wishes
Paul Lattimer
(Chair & Trustee)

Tool Bays

The hut has a number of bays which members can use to store tools. Some of these bays will be coming free so if you would be interested in having one then please leave your name and plot number in the hut.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

On Thursdays a small group of us - The Thursday Volunteers meet at the allotments, we are gradually making a positive difference to our site but sometimes there are as few as two of us and never more than six. As one of these people I am making a direct appeal to you, please come and help us.

At present we have more jobs on hand than we have willing hands for.

Currently we are creating a manure bay, an area of hard standing for our new composting toilet, we are doing maintenance on the young new perimeter hedge, managing the wildlife area, grass cutting, we will soon have more hedging plants to put in and our most pressing job come leaf fall will be hedge cutting on the north and east boundary.

A future plan is to make several starter beds for prospective members who are new to gardening.

As you will appreciate it is more work than our small group can realistically manage.

Please consider joining us, it is a great way to get to know your fellow allotment holders, we have a pleasant coffee and biscuit break half way

through and would love to see some new faces between 9 and 12 any Thursday.

If you would like to help but can't manage that day or could only come on Saturday or Sunday then let us know, we could always make other arrangements.

Many thanks.
Margaret Lattimer

We will have a skip on site for your non-compostable waste on the 10th and 11th of October.

Shop News

King's Seed catalogues for the new growing season are available in the hut. Orders are for **seeds** only and are eligible for a 25% discount. Payment with orders please, full instructions inside catalogue.

Order Lists for potatoes, onions and shallots will be in the hut. Potatoes available in 2 kg nets from the distributors which saves us a lot of work in very cold weather. Please note that if you do not order there is no guarantee of many spares being available. The more orders we get the cheaper it may work out to be. Last orders for seeds/potatoes etc is the end of November.

We also have bags of strulch available, 150 litres @ £7 a really good price when compared with Garden Centres. Strulch is an excellent mulch which feeds your plants and takes about 2 years to decompose.

When we have a little more room in the hut we shall be able to order some more Composted manure, hopefully we will not have to wait long.

Our delivery team is becoming a little exhausted so any new blood/muscles will be very welcome just let us know of your availability and we will slot you in.

Margaret Pickersgill