

Lease Update – We’re making history together!

We are pleased to announce that the vote to register with the FCA as an incorporated Cooperative under the sponsorship of the National Association was passed by 95% of the membership!

As we reported at this year’s EGM, we have made significant progress in securing the allotments for what will be an unprecedented lease arrangement of 99 years. Not only does this give us security of tenure, it is rent free, has minimal liabilities and service level arrangements and formally unpins the self-management we were granted in 1978. We are pleased to add that the two issues which were outstanding at the time of the EGM with regards the ‘break clause’ and ‘contribution to the repair and maintenance of the road’ have both been successfully addressed.

The lease framework, which is subject to contract, has been circulated to all. It now goes through the LBTH process of approvals and is turned into a full legal lease. The terms of the framework should now stand and have been agreed by all parties. However, we do not expect the lease to be completed and registered at the Land Registry until late Spring 2019.

We must now quickly become a legal entity such that we can take on the lease and this needs to be expedited such that it is accepted by the Legal Department at LBTH.

In order to pursue this lease we now need to adopt the registration as a Co-op and make the necessary changes to ensure we continue to operate as we do today and maintain relationships with banks, insurance and other third parties. This move removes the current personal liability against officers and committee. It also protects our rights to privacy.

As explained at the EGM the registration is done under ‘model rules’ (constitution) agreed between National and FCA aimed at covering potentially 2800 independent allotments. This means that they include terms which don’t fit us. The arrangement is that we register under the model rules and then submit changes to these which should be approved. This saves us considerable time as it would take many months to get bespoke rules passed pre-registration. It also saves us considerable cost as the charges for bespoke rule changes upfront cost hundreds of pounds. The point to remember is that National Legal Head has been working on this for 3 years, has vetted every document, and will work with us to ensure all the legal aspects are fully cleared.

Chair Notes



Well, what a year it's been! With one of the longest and hottest summers on record, whilst it was a struggle to stay on top of watering, most of us enjoyed bumper harvests!

Since our last newsletter I'm personally delighted by the outcome to become a Co-Op. We've worked hard with the NAS, LBTH and Mudchute Associates to secure our lease and set us up for the future. We have a bit more work to do and I know there is a lot of paperwork to read but the finish line is in sight and this should give us all comfort in our status and security for years to come.

Alongside the lease, we've achieved a lot together this year. We've raised more funds than ever before, created new community areas, strengthened our relationship with the farm and provided over 500 free plants to fellow allotment friends and community groups to grow their own food. After all, that's the main reason we do it right?!

Going forward there's a lot of exciting opportunities in the pipeline. We'll be working more closely with the Canary Wharf Group, the Farm and local community groups. Watch this space for opportunities to get involved and in the meantime I hope to see many of you at the AGM on December 1st.

Saving vegetable seeds

Saving seed from one year to plant the next is an age-old tradition. It may sound like extra work but the results can be extremely rewarding as you will end up with plants adapted to your growing conditions and save yourself a bit of money.

An important point to remember is to only collect seeds from heirloom varieties and not F1 hybrids. F1 hybrids combine qualities of two parent plants such as resistance to disease, pests or bolting and a tendency to produce heavy yields but if you save and resow these seeds, you will not know which parent you are growing and although commercially produced F1 seeds should be easier to grow and produce bumper crops, seeds taken from F1 can be infertile.

Beans

Pods should be dry and can be picked by hand or by cutting the plant at ground level and left to finish drying out of the rain

Chilli and sweet peppers

Allow the fruit to overripe on the plant, harvest. Cut, if seeds are ready, they will fall off when you touch them. Spread seeds on a flat surface and dry for at least 48 hours at room temperature

Melons, watermelons, marrows and squash

Ready when the tendrils are dry. Let your courgettes turn into a marrow allowing at least 1 month after they stopped growing in size. After harvesting, allow to ripen for 21 days before removing seeds. Cut fruit, scoop out the seeds, wash well under cold running water, leave on a flat surface till completely dry (try to bend the seed, if it breaks - it is ready).

Volunteer Jobs

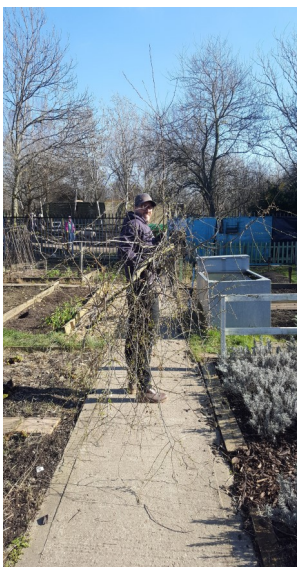
Bulb Planting

If you're free on Sunday 2nd December we need some help to plant spring bulbs in the memorial gardens and around the allotment. If you'd like to get involved, speak to Paula, Brian or your favourite committee member so that we can organise meet up times etc.

Since the last newsletter we've had a few repair jobs to do. A special thanks to Pat and Brian who rebuilt a collapsed wall outside the allotment pavilion on the lower allotments.



And also thanks for Paula and Brian for repairing and laying a new communal path with astro turf supplied to us by the farm.



Pruning

Our annual program of tree thinning will begin again over the winter. Please look out for volunteering days on the notice boards. There's always lots of tea and cake available on the day and more hands will make light work of this heavy work!

What you could be sowing and planting now

It may be November but there are still some things you can be busy sowing and planting.

- Broad beans
- Peas for pea shoots
- Spring onions for an early spring crop next year
- Winter lettuce
- Mustards
- Sweet peas in a greenhouse or cold frame
- Pak Choi under cover

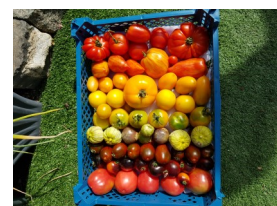
You could also be planting out:

- Autumn Japanese onions
- Garlic
- Spring cabbage (bought as plug plants)

What are you growing next year?

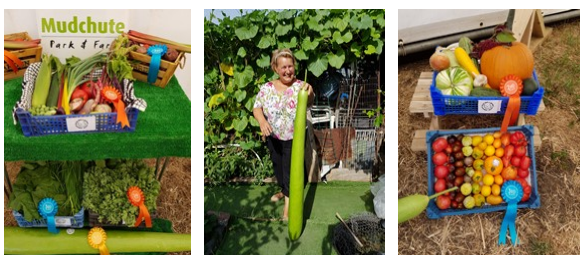
Now is a good time to start thinking about what you'd like to grow next year and with so many different varieties out there it's hard to choose! Blight can be real problem on our allotments in warm, damp summers so here are some tried and tested Blight Resistant Tomatoes as recommended by Paula. She says the seeds can be a bit expensive but they are worth it as they produce strong plants and plenty of tasty tomatoes right through to October and beyond!

Ferline - Cordon
Magic Mountain - Cordon
Crimson Crush - Cordon
Losetto - Bush



Our crops win prizes!

The 2018 Mudchute Agricultural Show took place in August and for the first time in many years the allotment submitted a number of entries. Many plot holders took part and you can see from these pictures how well we did! Roll on next year.



We need your old plastic pots

We need your help and your old plastic plant pots! We'll be growing even more free plants next year for both plot holders and our local community. If you can spare a few pots and would like to recycle them for a worthy cause, please bring them with you to the AGM or notify Brian who will collect them in.



Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and our website. The next newsletter will be out in the new year.

<https://www.iodadas.com>

To contact the Editor with photos, ideas, articles and corrections: isleofdoganddistrictallotments@gmail.com

If you're looking for some good places to buy your allotment supplies, here are some we recommend

All round good supplier

Waitrose Garden - <https://www.waitrosegarden.com/>

Primrose - <https://www.primrose.co.uk/>

Fruit trees and bushes

Blackmoor Nursery - <https://www.blackmoor.co.uk/>

Vegetable plug plants

Delfland Nurseries - <https://www.organicplants.co.uk/>

Dobbies of Devon <https://www.dobbies.co.uk/>

Seed suppliers

Don't forget you get a discount with Kings Seeds as an NAS member!

Kings Seeds - <https://www.kingsseeds.com/>

Thompson & Morgan - <https://www.thompson-morgan.com/>

Mr Fothergills - <http://www.mr-fothergills.co.uk/>

The Real Seed Catalogue - <http://www.realseeds.co.uk/>

Sutton Seeds - <https://www.suttons.co.uk/>

Fruit and Vegetable Cages

Harrod Horticultural - <https://www.harrodhorticultural.com/>

Organic Gardening

The Organic Gardening Catalogue - <https://www.organiccatalogue.com/>