



Annual Report May 30th 2013

1. Membership

Thanks to all those who have paid subscriptions for the coming year. Formal membership is very important because it makes us more credible to other organisations and people in the community that we are a representative group. As you are aware we encourage anyone who supports our aims to join whether they own or rent a plot or are a neighbour. Currently we have 32 paid-up members and hopefully we will increase that to about 50 when everyone has paid up. (NB our 'best' year was 2009/10 when we achieved 53). It's never easy asking people for money and everyone has good intentions to pay, but one idea is that it might be helpful if we had a standing order system.

2. Waiting List & update on plots

Since April 2012 a number of plots have been cleared.

On Path B –

- 3 plots became available for the first time (nos 41 & 42 were sold & 40 has been made available to rent – with the owner donating the rent to FRQA, which we appreciate).
- Another 3 plots changed hands, two by rent (45 & 62) and the other was sold (54).

Anyone who has not walked down that track for a while will notice a real difference now as these gardens are now in the process of being opened up and brought back to a productive life. It also means we have been able to bring 7 families off the waiting list on this one path alone.

On path D-

- 2 half plots became available to people on the waiting list (114 & 107)

Waiting List - At the time of writing there are 26 people on the list, going back to August 2011.

Working Parties since April 2012

We've held around 5 working parties this year in Autumn and early Spring. They encourage and help people who are trying to get started on overgrown plots. It's amazing what a difference it can make when 8 or 10 or more volunteers turn up with their secateurs, loppers, and other useful kit and slash their way through daunting jungles of brambles and weeds! After a couple of hours and fortified with coffee and cake our combined labour is like the equivalent of 2 – 3 days work and extremely appreciated by everyone.

They're fun too and a great way for us to meet socially and productively with our gardening neighbours. We would like to thank everyone who has taken part, even if it's only been for an hour or so, but also particularly want to acknowledge the support of those who turn out for nearly every working party, in all weathers – even snow!

Community Plot: 'Growing Together' Plots 96 / 97.

Growing together is a registered Community Interest Company with the aim of supporting people with a Personal Budget, in particular, but not exclusively, people with learning disabilities, to work as part of a team which grows and cultivates vegetables and herbs for sale in the Queens Road / Clarendon Park area. Crops will be sold to houses in the form of a home delivery box scheme and distributed by an "ice cream seller" style bike.

It is important to note that selling crops is one of our outputs and outcomes rather than our main objectives. Any revenue raised will be ploughed back into the project. In the longer term we hope to be able to employ staff to help run the project.

We plan to be self-sufficient. Our revenue will come from the personal budgets [a new way of funding social care where the money is given to the person as opposed to being held by the local authority] of the people we support.

The founders of Growing Together Rick Hall and Laura Newcombe have extensive experience of supporting people with learning difficulties, and setting up and running a previous charitable organisation from scratch that is still operating.

Setting up the organisation has taken longer than anticipated but initial funding has now been secured and work is due to begin shortly in finishing clearing the area and setting up the site. We are grateful to the efforts previously made by the working parties.

We are currently checking regulations regarding whether we need planning permission to erect a temporary structure made from recycled materials to serve as a combined shelter / shed / office as previously constructed on an earlier project.

We look forward to working with and alongside our fellow allotmenters in the near future. Heather Cross on behalf of Growing Together.

3. Community Involvement & Events

April. We gave an illustrated presentation on the allotments at a South Knighton Community Event at Holbrook Hall. It was an enjoyable gardening- themed evening and we were pleased that as well as being attended by many local residents it was well-supported by people from our allotments.

June. We held another very well attended BBQ in late June. Many thanks to Steve and family for 'loaning' their plot, to Lynne & John for organising BBQ equipment , and to everyone else who helped with preparations

August. We held another successful Open Day Morning with lots of donations of vegetables and fruit, and many satisfied visitors who enjoyed their time talking to allotmenters. Quite a few of our local councillors were able to attend also. We also gained about 6 new people onto the Waiting List. Thanks to Tina and Wendy for organising and to lots of volunteers to show people around or staff the stall

September. Ted organised a plot numbering competition which was fun, and deserves a prize for the originality of the categories devised and certificates awarded to participants

December. The Winter Warmer held at St Thomas's Church has become a regular event and is a lovely way to finish the gardening year with everyone who attends. Many people helped to make it a success, but thanks to Wendy, Tina and Rebecca for organising

4. Other Projects

Not Lost the Plot – this is the title of our successful grant bid to the Heritage Lottery-Funded programme "All our Stories". We were granted £8100. Details of the work we have been doing since finding out we were successful are going to be given as a separate presentation

- of the maps (Mike Peet),
- some of the historical background discovered, (Mary Campbell)
- and an edited version of the filming so far (Bill Newsinger)

Thanks also to Reb, Russ & Lynne for starting us on the track of developing a presence on the internet. This is still a work in progress as we continue to search for the most effective means of communicating with each other and the wider world.