

# Slopefield News

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## A Note from the Chair

Greetings and welcome to the second Slopefield Allotment Association newsletter.

We hope you found our first newsletter interesting and useful in understanding the aims of the Association and how it can help you as individual plot holders and also all of us as an allotment community. As we all know we are in a time of increasing austerity measures and public sector resources and services provision are under increasing pressures. The Association ensures we have a voice with the Council and aims to ensure two-way communication about the provision of the facilities at our site.

So what has happened since the last newsletter, what has the association done for you? Here are some examples;

- ensured we have a seat at the table on discussions on the roll out of the Aberdeen Allotments Federation proposals and Vision from the Council,
- raised issues on site security, fly tipping, theft and vandalism,

waste removal, composting and water provision – all which have been addressed by the Council,

- discussed with the Council on how to roll out their new "micro-plot" allocation and succession planning for people to move to full plot allocation in an equitable way,
- ensured we have had regular supplies of bark for paths, pallets for composting bins, and ad hoc material to assist people in getting their plots rabbit proofed,
- provided over 30 composting bins to plot holders at Slopefield,
- negotiated the use of Plot 11 as a Community space for use by the Slopefield site plotters, and submitted an application to the Beechgrove Community Garden Initiative for support to transform the area,
- initiated our first working party to help transform the plot 11 into a wonderful space for us all to enjoy,

- organised the site spring-clean,
- held a summer BBQ, attended by over 30 plot-holders and family . . . and,
- ran the 2010 Giant Onion Competition!

You will read more about these activities in the enclosed articles and we hope you consider that this is an exciting time for Slopefield and that the Association IS working for you. As we have always said – communication is key – and so if there are any issues you would like to discuss then please do not hesitate to speak to your row representative (who are happy to raise any issues in a confidential manner) or drop a note in to the red letter box on the Association notice board.

Now that spring is breaking we will now see lots of people up at the plots enjoying the environment and facilities that Slopefield offers and we wish you all have a successful season.

Sue and Bob  
Slopefield Chairs



### Slopefield Yahoo Site

### Email

### On-site notice board

### The Red Box



### Solution to last issues crossword

## Keep In Touch

To access this site, you need to become a Slopefield Yahoo group member, and for this you need to have a Yahoo account (i.e. a Yahoo email address). You can create a Yahoo account by typing

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/slopefield/> into a web search, and following the instructions to join. Once in the 'create an account' procedure, your 'primary email address' should be the email address to

which you want any messages from the Slopefield Yahoo site to be sent. This could be your new Yahoo email address, or, most likely, the email address that you would normally use.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/slopefield/>

Contact Slopefield Yahoo group members by sending an email to [slopefield@yahoo.groups.com](mailto:slopefield@yahoo.groups.com) Your email

will appear on the Slopefield Yahoo site, but will also be sent automatically to all Slopefield Yahoo group

members at their allocated personal email address. The email will have [Slopefield] in the subject line.

[slopefield@yahoogroups.com](mailto:slopefield@yahoogroups.com)

Notice boards and Committee Minutes Board are located at site entrance.



If you have any ideas/concerns/seen anything interesting on site, you can drop a note into the Red Box attached to the notice board.

## Mushroom Compost

The mushroom farm have decided to stop cultivating mushrooms, but intend to carry on supplying compost.

The compost they supply is what they use to grow mushrooms on rather than the spent mushroom compost

they previously sold. They can deliver to Slopefield.

Tel 01358742329

### Across

- 1 Slopefield
- 6 chop
- 9 Girl Guides
- 10 Orla
- 12 first harvest
- 15 spaghetti
- 17 petit
- 18 cacao
- 19 maelstrom
- 20 orchestrated

### 24 oboe

25 blossoming

26 Yesa

27 compositae

### Down

- 1 sage
- 2 okra
- 3 English roses
- 4 ivies
- 5 leechlike

7 harvesters

8 plant stems

11 preposterous

13 psychology

14 catch crops

16 tomatillo

21 Aesop

22 dirt

23 ogre

## The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is to see a move from a position where tenants are wholly dependant on the Council to manage and maintain allotments, to a position where tenants are organised enough to take on this role in an almost self sufficient manner. This eventual position will empower tenants to direct what happens at their respective sites

and access funding to meet their aspirations. There are several steps within this transition process:

- Dependence: we have moved from this already
- Participation: Tenants have a representative and accept informal responsibility for minor maintenance.
- Delegation: Tenants are members of an association which accepts formal responsibility for a range of duties
- Semi-autonomy: The association is almost self sufficient, leases site from the Council and takes on full management.

**Aberdeen  
City Council**



## The Benefits of Joining an Association

- To improve maintenance and management of the site
  - To act as a collective voice to access funding
  - Promotion of vacant and uncultivated plots
  - Retention of rents by the association ensures plotholders' cash is ploughed back into services, as determined by the association.
- This is an opportunity we should grasp to have control over improving our site.

## Slopefield Summer BBQ

We have already used our community plot, and on the afternoon of Sunday 5th September held our first BBQ. A really successful day with over 30 plot holders and their families attending, we were blessed with a wonderful sunny day. With lots of lovely produce to sample and stories to swap, it also was an opportunity to meet new people, and most importantly judge the Giant Onion Competition. The winner was Ethel with a monster judged to

be 785g in weight with a girth of 37cm, second place went to Sheila for 375g (30cm girth). Well done to both.

As you can imagine this competition was a great success and good fun. So much so we have decided to expand the competition therefore be prepared for this year's summer BBQ where there will be outstanding prizes for the:

- Longest carrot
- Most exotic vegetable
- Best single bloom



- Best bouquet, and
- Weirdest shaped vegetable!

Good luck!

## Composting

### Composting at Slopefield

As you will be aware from the letter from the Council, the community composting facilities at Slopefield have now been stopped. This is extremely unfortunate as many of us used this service to compost large amounts of waste generated on our individual plots. So, firstly PLEASE do not add any more material of any kind to the bins or worse still leave it outside of them. This material will not be moved and you are just creating a waste problem for us all. The removal of all non

compostable material is your own responsibility – dumping it somewhere else on the site is just tantamount to fly tipping. The Committee is actively seek opportunities for waste removal but until this is confirmed, please be sensible about what you do with your rubbish.



You will have noticed that a group of volun-

teers kindly gave up a Sunday afternoon to tidy up and lock the bins and in the process pulled together an amazing amount of rubbish from the site. Many thanks indeed to them for their efforts – there were plenty of weary people by the end of the day, which is not surprising if you have noticed the pile of junk collected opposite the top bins. Please respect their collective efforts and don't leave rubbish lying around the site. We now have a much tidier and safer site.

### Making composting and making it work for you!

We must all now look to compost on our own individual plots. Composting is a great way to dispose of your kitchen and garden waste. Your waste breaks down to produce organic matter stuffed with nutrients which help your plot grow. It is a free soil conditioner which helps soil retain moisture and it improves plant health and growth – and can increase yields of vegetables, fruit, and flowers.

There are some very basic rules to composting. Ideally, the material that you put into a compost bin wants to be not too hot, not too cold, not too wet and not too dry. That already

seems too complicated – well not really. To make these conditions you want the mixture to contain both "browns" and "greens".

**Greens** are materials which contain lots of nitrogen. They break down quickly and help to keep the compost moist. Green materials include: Cut flowers and house plants, fruit and vegetable peelings and scraps, tea leaves and bags and grass cuttings

**Brown** materials on the other hand contain lots of carbon. They break down more slowly and add structure to your compost. They also create air pockets which are important for air

circulation. Brown materials include: shredded branches and twigs, hedge trimmings, paper items which can include scrunched up cardboard, egg boxes, toilet roll tubes, and material such as straw and hay.

You want to aim for a mixture of 50:50 greens to browns, added in alternate layers and your compost will be perfect. The worms and bugs will have a field day and in a few months time you will have a product that John Innes would be proud of. Now, I bet you never thought that a sports car and a compost heap had something in common. Well, although a little tenuously, they do. Both

## Composting

need to be tuned now and again to get maximum performance. So, check your bin every month to see that's all going at full pace – looking a little too wet and sad perhaps? . . . then add some browns. Too little gas in the tank and nothing much happening . . . then add some greens and get those bugs fired up. Simple.

If you are interested in trying then again there is a leaflet produced by Waste Aware Scotland [http://www.wasteawarescotland.org.uk/pdf/compost/HowTo\\_Learflet%2008%20v2.pdf](http://www.wasteawarescotland.org.uk/pdf/compost/HowTo_Learflet%2008%20v2.pdf) which leads through everything and is excellent. You never know, you might catch the composing bug (dreadful pun). Our Waste Aware Scotland rep is Bob at #79 who is

happy to offer advice and help people get started. He can usually manage to get hold of some pallets for you to build a bin if you need. Recently, the Committee managed to get hold of over 30 proprietary compost bins which have been distributed to plotters. We will enquire about more and let people know if they become available.

## Composting

## Site Security

Site security is always an emotive issue. On one hand we are receiving a constant stream of emails and messages about stolen property and crops, joy-riding of vehicles, fly tipping of garden refuse and even worse waste, and vandalism. This is not a new issue but it is quite apparently getting worse, both in the number of incidences and the severity of the damage and of theft in particular. On the other hand people want to have access without the apparent difficulty of a padlock or secure lock.

So what do we do? People making representation to the Association are keen to see security improve but we know that some may be vehemently opposed to this as evidenced by the continual snapping off of the lock. Well, the

Association aims to try and find a resolution and is undertaking a consultation of all plot holders to gauge opinion. **There is a tear off strip in this newsletter for you to post your opinions back to us (just fill it in and post it into the red letter box).** This is not just about a lock or no lock as it is quite apparent that the majority of plotters would favour a secure site, but also feedback on why a lock causes difficulty. Is the type of lock too difficult to open and close – too difficult to see perhaps, to fiddly to use? Or are you not aware of the combination (we are aware that some plots may be worked by people who are not the registered leasee and may not have received a letter directly from the Council with the information)? None of these issues

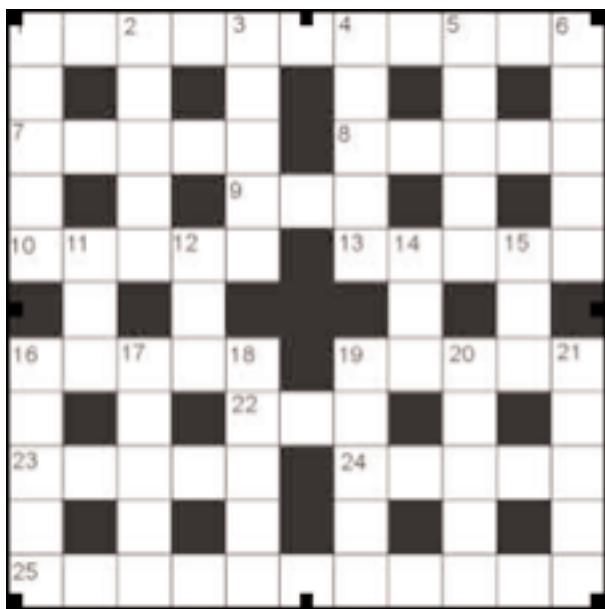
are insurmountable, and nobody will be inconvenienced or compromised.

We aim to find a workable solution for all, so please express your view (confidentially is fine), and we will inform everyone of the results of the consultation. This is not about causing inconvenience, only about finding a workable solution. We encourage ALL potholders to respond to this important issue and thank you in anticipation.

Information will be fed back via the notice board and web-site, along with a suggested course of action that is proposed by the Committee. Advanced notice will be given of any possible change, and we will make sure that everyone is informed.

## Site Security

## Slopefield Crossword: compiled by Lorraine



(Solution given in next Slopefield News)

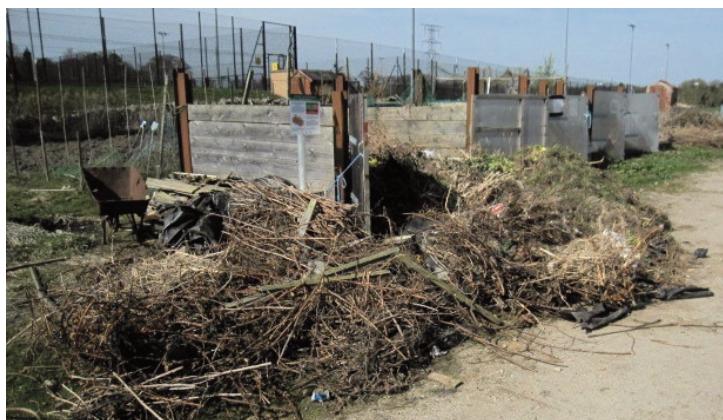


### Across

- 1 At Slopefield – last out does this (4,3,4)
- 7 Rhubarb plant head-dress? (5)
- 8 Opposite of wetter (5)
- 9 Essential for curling (3)
- 10 Loose fitting garment, usually knee length (5)
- 13 Garden tools exposed may be subject to turning thus (5)
- 16 Irish illuminated manu-
- 19 Garden ornament banned from Chelsea Flower Show (5)
- 22 What corn uses for listening? (3)
- 23 The main port of Iraq (5)
- 24 Parent's male sibling (5)
- 25 Seen at Slopefield – e.g. kestrel, buzzard, peregrine (5,2,4)

### Down

- 1 Legal (5)
- 2 To sing softly (5)
- 3 Therapeutic water containing quinine (5)
- 4 Native tree, *Sambucus* (5)
- 5 Fir tree genus (5)
- 6 Grown in time, these potato varieties may avoid blight (5)
- 11 To utilise (3)
- 12 Unwell (3)
- 14 Container for The Ashes (3)
- 15 --- Thumb, Nasturtium (3)
- 16 Food usually served as shish or doner in UK (5)
- 17 A device using concentrated or amplified light (5)
- 18 Mammals, Grey and Common seen on shorelines (5)
- 19 Stern sounding, as *The Billy Goats* (5)
- 20 Prestigious award for members of the film industry (5)
- 21 For plotters, the vine weevil, New Zealand flatworm and Cabbage White Butterfly for example (5)



Compost bins before and after tidy-up



## Chilli Purple Sprouting Broccoli

### Ingredients

Purple sprouting broccoli

Groundnut oil

### Method

Trim any thick stems from the purple sprouting broccoli and blanch in boiling water for a minute.

Heat a tablespoon of groundnut oil in a wok, then add a generous

Chilli flakes



pinch of dried chilli flakes.

Tip in the broccoli and sear for a few minutes until tender and starting to catch in places.

Malden sea salt

Parmesan cheese (freshly grated)

Season with Malden salt.

Serve sprinkled with Parmesan cheese.  
Serve as a starter or a side dish. Yum!!

## Spring Recipe

## Slopefield Community Plot Update

As mentioned earlier we have been given Plot 11 as a Community plot for the Slopefield Association. Many of you may know of the various previous attempts to make this plot productive but it suffers from poor drainage and has now been given over to us for our collective use. The plot has much potential as a meeting space and we are developing long term plans but are keen to canvas views as to how this plot should be developed. If you drive or walk past you may notice that some initial volunteers have started to tidy the plot, and we will continue to do this over the next while.

We are therefore seeking volunteers who are willing to offer an hour or two periodically

(usually at 2pm on the last Sunday of the month) to assist. Many hands make light work and it was impressive to see how much we actually achieved in such a short space of time. As a starter for ten we hope to complete a bark covered area on which to hold our various social events (see Events Diary).

So please watch out for messages on the Association notice board and Yahoo website about our clean ups and if you can lend a hand that would be great! In addition if you have good ideas or suggestions for how to develop the site then we would be keen to hear from you (see Keep in Touch) as we would like to prepare a more detailed plan to improve the site for all.

Earlier in the year we made an unsuccessful application to the Beechgrove Community Garden Initiative (details of which can be found on the Yahoo Slopefield Site), but perhaps some of the suggestions would be useful? – so please let us know.

It's going to be our space, so let's try and make sure we capture as many views as possible.

Also could you please note that we are collecting materials – paving, bricks, timber, fencing etc on Plot 11 to develop the site – please respect this and do not remove anything. Thanks.



## Slopefield Sunday Swap-shop

## Summer BBQ

## Other Events

## Events Diary

Do you have any half-packets of seeds or a few spare potatoes or seedlings? Spare tools that you don't need? Then come to the Community Plot on **Sunday 24th April at 2pm** at Plot 11 and see

what you can swap them for.

We are encouraging anyone to come along and find out how you can turn a surplus of one thing into an opportunity to get something

you need or indeed save some money. Anything is fair game!

(Sue is threatening to bake a cake, so that's incentive enough). We especially welcome any new plotters.

We are aiming to hold this year's summer BBQ

on **Sunday 5th September** at 2pm on

the Community Plot. Stick it in your diaries!

Remember this year's competitions – longest carrot, most exotic vegetable, best single

bloom, best bouquet, and weirdest shaped vegetable!



## Site Security Consultation

As you will be aware we are undertaking a consultation on site security. We ask you kindly to mark your preference in the boxes below and please add comments if you wish. Comments could include highlighting any difficulties you may have encountered with the previous locks, or information that would help us find the most appropriate type of lock, etc.

All plotters are encouraged to respond – we would like to make sure that we have a consensus view for the best way forward. Many thanks in anticipation.

(please detach)

### Would you like to see the Slopefield site:

Locked

Unlocked

Plot number (optional)

Comments:

Please place all responses into the RED LETTER BOX on the ASSOCIATION NOTICEBOARD by Sunday 8th May