

Slopefield News

New Car Park

Our collective thanks go to the management and staff at Bancon Construction Ltd on their extremely generous gesture of building a new car park at Slopefield. As many people will remember the area next to plot 45 was notoriously wet and it was impossible to park on or near the verge. This very much reduced the available parking at busy times.

Thoughtful negotiation by Dave Gisby (#46) with Bancon resulted in them agreeing to help resolve the problem for us. They dug out and removed the saturated ground then prepared the area with hardcore to improve drainage and finally top dressed and rolled the ground to give us an extensive and fit for purpose area for parking. We are indebted to both for their efforts on our behalf and this has been a really important development at Slopefield and we are extremely grateful to the generosity of Bancon – especially in these austere times. A splendid community gesture from Bancon and one in which we can all benefit.

Inside:

News	1
Communication	2
Site Security	2
Council News	3
Community Days	3
Composting	4
Wildflowers / Britain in Bloom	4
Bonfires	4
Plot Numbers	5
AGM	5
Swap Shop	5
Slopefield Crossword	6
Seasonal Recipe	7
Competitions	7
Recycling	8
Events Diary	8

Parking

There are over 90 plots (including 8 new micro-allotments) at Slopefield which means that if we all turned up at once there wouldn't be space for all the cars! Now plotters all attend to their plots at different times to fit in with their own schedules and so it is unlikely that this situation would ever arise, but some days it can get really busy. In order to address this, we would be most appreciative if you could be as respectful as possible of others and do not park cars where they block access. If possible, could people please park NOSE ON in the new parking bays which we have created at each end of Slopefield. Thanks very much in anticipation.

Community Shed

The Association is delighted to announce that we have a new shed on our community plot (#11) kindly donated by retiring allotmentee Norman from Plot 76. The "Norman Edwards Community Shed" provides a great space for us to store our communal bits and pieces and also somewhere to hide out of the rain! We are most thankful to Norman for this extremely kind gesture.

In Deepest Sympathy

It is with great sadness that the Slopefield site heard of the sudden passing of David Lindsey in December of 2011. A great supporter of the aims of the association and with a bountiful love of allotmenteering, he will be sadly missed.



Communication, Communication, Communication !

Slopefield Yahoo Site/ Email/On-site notice board/ The Red Box



The association can only really help you if we know what your issues are. Although we try as much as we can it is important that we receive your feedback, either by email, a note in the red letter box, or through chatting to one of the row reps or Committee. No issue is too small.

We have provided a new whiteboard on the Community shed on plot 11, for people to leave messages. So if you have spare plants or are looking for a new shed or greenhouse – why not write it up and see if anyone can help. We want messages to go both ways – offers and requests, so why not get in the habit of looking at the board and see what available. You will be amazed what offers turn up.

If you have not already done so, you can become a member of the Slopefield Yahoo group by accessing the website

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

and following the instructions to join. Newsletters, minutes of Association meetings etc can be found on this site.



You can contact Slopefield group members by sending an email to

slopefield@yahoogroups.com

Site Security

Last year we conducted a poll of all plot-holders at Slopefield about whether we should become a secure site and keep the access gate locked. We received an overwhelming YES to this suggestion and this year we will move to establish a lock at the front gate in accordance with people's wishes. The importance of this has been realised lately as we have undergone yet another spate of vandalism, theft and fly tipping. An overwhelming majority of last year's respondents (95%) voted for a locked site and after canvassing our new allotmenteers it is clear that that is their desire also. So what will this mean in practice?

The association is presently reviewing options but the most likely course of action will be for a key operated secure padlock (we have had previous issues of the padlock being broken but a more secure lock is being sought). Once this has been sourced and attached we will advertise the date on which the site will become locked. We will contact ALL plot holders to let them know exactly when this will be and how they should collect their key. We will NOT lock the site until everyone has been informed and got their key. Given the cost of installing this we envisage a returnable deposit of approximately £10/key will be required but more details will follow.

We would ask that you respect the overwhelming wishes of the plot holders at Slopefield and agree to lock the site. A lot of people invest a great deal of time and effort in maintaining their plots, developing community projects to keep Slopefield safe and tidy, and their own resources in sheds and green houses, so please lets ensure that we move forward together on this issue.

Site Security

Current Developments with the Council

The Council's eventual aim is for allotment sites to be self sufficient, to be responsible for leasing the site, management and maintenance. We are some way down this road already taking on some maintenance and improving our site. Other sites feel they cannot take on this role and have voted for a federation to be formed as an "umbrella" to take on the management of leases and rent collection. It has been suggested this work could be done by an existing charity. This would have a number of advantages for us in that they could source funding, deal with legal issues, run training sessions, trading events and allotment shows. We could also share information and resources with other allotment sites. Our representatives meet with the Council every three months to give the views of Slopefield plotholders. Let us know what you think!

Aberdeen
City Council

Thanks

Once again we must applaud the efforts and support of Aberdeen City Council during these difficult times. Regular deliveries of bark and other materials have been continued at no cost, leaks to the water network have been resolved and this has been to the benefit to all plot holders. We acknowledge that services are under pressure, and appreciate their continued communication on developing issues and engagement in discussions on the establishment of an Allotment Federation in Aberdeen.

Community Days

Many hands make light work! The environment at Slopefield had improved markedly over the last few years due to the sterling efforts of a dedicated band of helpers. Gone are the piles of rubbish, fly tipping, broken glass and overflowing compost bins. The site is much cleaner, but it is an ongoing task to ensure that we all take responsibility for keeping it so.

Building a community spirit at Slopefield is an important aim of the Association and is indeed a rewarding part of the allotment experience and you can engage as much or as little as you like. We set aside the last Sunday of every month in the summer to do a little work to enhance the site. This might be to work on a community project on Plot 11 (our community plot), help to fill in the potholes or clean any unwanted fly tipping.

Simple tasks for an hour or so and that always culminate in a refreshing cup of tea and Sue's gorgeous home bakes! Remember, even if you are busy working on your own plot, why not take a break and join us for a cup of tea and a chat at around 3.30pm?

This year we intend to post a message on the Slopefield Yahoo Site, and also on the Community Plot notice board to give an idea beforehand of what we will be doing at each community day.

Our first Community Day will be on **Sunday 29th April** at 2–4pm.
Hope to see you there!

Community
Days



Composting

Composting at Slopefield

Please remember that you **must** compost on your own plots for now as there are no communal facilities.

Bob at #79 is more than happy to help you if you are not sure of the basics, or are having any difficulties.



Please do NOT place anything in the communal compost bins (organic or not) as the Committee and volunteers are getting pretty tired of having to empty the rubbish out and its everyone at Slopefield's responsibility to take their own debris away and place it in their street or house refuse collection bins.

There will be a Composting Day on **Sunday 29th May**, when Bob will talk about composting and show you how to build a compost bay for your own plot. Meet at Plot 11 at 2pm.

Wildflowers / Britain in Bloom

Wildflowers for Slopefield/ Britain in Bloom 2012

We have registered with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) 'It's Your Neighbourhood' (IYN) scheme. This is a grassroots community gardening campaign helping people to make lasting improvements to their local areas.

Groups are supported by the RHS in their activities with advice and guidance, and receive annual feedback from expert IYN assessors. An assessor will visit Slopefield during the summer, and provide tips on how further improvements can be made to our site.

Through the IYN scheme, we are entitled to apply for free wildflower seeds as part of the 2012 Britain in Bloom/RHS campaign. We will hear at the end of March if we have been successful. We will keep you posted!

Check out the website for lots more details:

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/It-s-Your-Neighbourhood/New-to-its-your-neighbourhood/How-the-campaign-works>

Bonfires

By law we are not supposed to have *ad hoc* bonfires on the Slopefield site without contacting Grampian fire brigade. Last year though we organised two bonfire days when people could rid of unwanted (but untreated) wood, raspberry cans and other spare timber etc.

For the coming year we will do the same so can we please ask you to keep all your combustible material on your plot until we organise the next bonfire. We will advertise on the notice boards and entry gate, the time and place of the bonfire **at least two weeks** before it happens and give more guidance about where to bring your material. We will then liaise with the authorities and ensure that somebody is there to bring it to a conclusion.

Plot numbers

Did you know that it is part of your lease conditions that you have to prominently display your plot number? So please ensure that you adhere to this condition as it has been flagged up to the Association during recent site audits. Nothing fancy is required – just some simple identification. Many thanks in anticipation!

Annual Meeting

The Slopefield Allotment Association AGM will be held at the Aberdeen Grammar FP Club (86 Queens Road) on **Thursday 26th April** at 7.30 so please place that in your diaries. In addition to the Association business there will be a short presentation and slide show to highlight developments and achievements at Slopefield over the last year, and an opportunity to air your views, concerns or other comments you have about Slopefield and its future. There is a pay bar, and we will provide some nibbles.

AGM

So please put this important date in your diary and please try and attend – your views are really important to us, and it is also a great opportunity to catch up with your fellow plotters (without a spade in your hand!). If you are interested in becoming more involved in assisting with the running of the Association can you speak to your Row Rep or a member of the Committee. We are always looking for fresh ideas and for people to become part of the Slopefield vision.



Slopefield Spring Swap Shop

Last year's Swap Shop was a great success, with around 25 people turning up to exchange plants, seedlings, spare seeds, seed potatoes, onions, garden tools, gardening tips, stories... anything really! This year we have decided to ramp it up a notch by suggesting you could also bring along any jam, chutneys or pickles you may have a glut of – and several jars of gooseberry jam have already been promised. On the plant front we have been offered a supply of irises, aconite, geraniums, astrantia, and other perennial flowers and herbs such as oregano and chives. Another plotter has agreed to grow some annual herb pots which she will be donating.

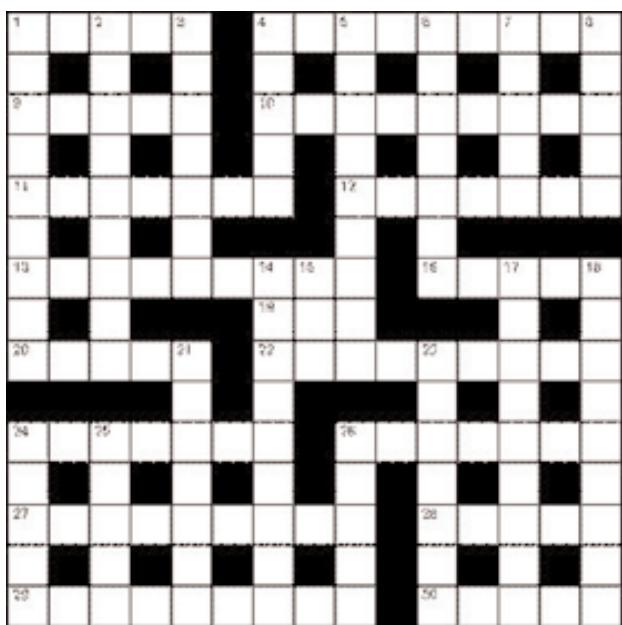
Swap Shop

This year we thought the Swap Shop might be an opportunity to start to raise some funds for site maintenance and improvements, so we will be accepting small donations for the produce! So please – if you have an excess of anything such as seeds, seed potatoes and seedling, or even feel inspired to make/bake/grow something especially for the Swap Shop, please bring it along to Plot 11 on **Sunday 15th April** from 2–4pm.

Stones – a valuable spring crop!

As people work their plot you always generate a new crop of stones year after year. But don't worry, those stones are a valuable crop at Slopefield. Instead of piling them on a corner of your plot and loosing valuable space, why not fill a bucket of them and fill the closest pot hole to your plot. We now have to pay for any repairs to the roads so this simple task saves us money. The roads always take a bit of a battering especially in the back end of the year so that a spring crop of stones can come in extremely handy. A bucket each and the roads are fixed!

Slopefield Crossword: compiled by Lorraine



(Solution given in next Slopefield News)



Solution to last issues crossword

Across

- 1 Lock the gate
- 7 Crown
- 8 Drier
- 9 Ice
- 10 Tunic
- 13 Rusty
- 16 Kells
- 19 Gnome
- 22 Ear
- 23 Basra

Down

- 24 Uncle
- 25 Birds of prey
- 1 Licit
- 2 Croon
- 3 Tonic
- 4 Elder
- 5 Abies
- 6 Early
- 11 Use

12 III

14 Urn

15 Tom

16 Kebab

17 Laser

18 Seals

19 Gruff

20 Oscar

21 Enemy

Feeling Flat?

Then come along to the Community Sunday and get your wheelbarrow tire pumped up for a token donation to association funds. Why struggle on empty, when you can enjoy the pleasure of that Grand Prix feel and increase your barrows top-line performance! Don't forget – last Sunday in the month at the community shed.

Elsie's Jellied Beetroot

Ingredients

Beetroot

1 packet of Raspberry jelly

Vinegar

1/4 pint water

Salt



Method

Wash beetroot and twist off shaws (do not cut with knife). Bring to the boil in salted water, as you would do with potatoes. When ready, leave to cool slightly and rub off skin. Dice and put in sterile jars. Make up jelly with the water then make up to a pint with vinegar. Pour over the beetroot. Allow to cool then cover with suitable lids and store in fridge.

Photo Competition

This year are having a photo competition, with a view to producing a 'Year at Slopefield 2013' calendar featuring the winning shots, with the idea that we could then raise funds by the sale of the calendars. So please get snapping! In the meantime, we would like to encourage you to brighten up our Yahoo Site by posting your Slopefield photos on it throughout the year. In November we will hold a social/judging evening (which should be a bit of fun!) and of course you can enter any photos taken of Slopefield in previous years as well. The competition categories will most likely be based on the four seasons but please snap away at anything and everything – wildlife, flowers, arty shots, beautiful or weirdly –shaped vegetables, and put them on Yahoo and then choose your favourites for the competition. And remember – photos with recognisable faces can only be shared if you have the face-owner's permission!

This Year's Competitions

Over years the Committee has organised an annual Slopefield BBQ, a fantastic fun filled Sunday afternoon, providing a great opportunity to meet up with your fellow plotters whilst enjoying a plethora of fantastic grills, homemade salads, relishes, and homebakes. The day is a celebration of all our joint efforts over the year and we also use the day to judge our annual competitions which have provided so much fun over the years. Congratulations go to the Winners of the 2011 competitions!:

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Best Single Bloom	Moira #23	Judith #5
Best Bouquet	Sue #80	Judith #5
Longest Carrot	Hugh #35	Ethel #52
Weirdest-shaped Vegetable	Patty #30 (Turnip)	Anne #55 (Carrot)
Most Exotic Vegetable	Wendy #4 (Mouse Melon)	Wendy #4 (Aubergine)

For this year we are going to run with the usual favourites, but are encouraging our younger plotters to enter the kids' sunflower competition. Everyone will be a winner, and there will be a special prize for anyone who enters a sunflower taller than they are.

Seasonal Recipe

(from Anne, Plot #55)

In my job I am fortunate to meet many seasoned gardeners. They pass on gems of advice on how to produce the perfect veg and fruit and also suggest the occasional recipe.

Elsie who lives near Inverbervie kindly donated this recipe.

Competitions!



Winner of Best Bouquet

Entries for the Weirdest-shaped Vegetable Category

Competitions!



Recycling

Events

- Swap Shop
- AGM
- Community Days
- Composting Day
- Summer BBQ
- SAGS Events



The date of the BBQ is **Sunday 9th September** so make sure you put it in your diaries now as it's a day not to be missed. We are happy for entries (on the day please) for the following categories:

- kids' sunflower competition
- biggest onion (weight)
- longest carrot
- heaviest vegetable
- best single bloom
- best bouquet

Recycled Bottle Greenhouse Project

Please continue to save your 1.5 and 2 litre plastic bottles for our Greenhouse Project. 1500 bottles will be required! When we get enough we will be inviting anyone interested to lend a hand to build it on Plot 11. Please rinse bottles and remove labels, then you can pop them in plastic bags and leave on Plot 11. It should be an interesting project! Please contact Ethel (#52) or Wendy (#4) for further information.

Events Diary

All events at **Plot 11** unless otherwise stated. Please read the Newsletter articles for more details. If you have any ideas for events/projects please let us know!

Slopefield Spring Swap Shop – **Sunday 15th April** 2–4pm.

Slopefield Allotment Association AGM **Thursday 26th April** 7.30pm at Aberdeen Grammar FP Club, 86 Queens Road.

First one to be held on **Sunday 29th April**, and then on last Sunday of the month. 2–4pm, meeting at plot 11.

Composting Day **Sunday 27th May** 2pm

Photo Competition. Judging date to be confirmed (**late November**). Get clicking!

Annual BBQ and competitions **Sunday 9th September** 2–4pm.

The Scottish Allotment and Garden Society (SAGS) website is a great place to get advice and information. They also arrange events and workshops throughout the year. Check out their website www.sags.org.uk