

After all the rain over the summer the weather for our two work party weekends in October was good enough to achieve many of our aims - clearing ditches and brambles, moving a water tank, repairing and improving the fencing along the upper field, collecting wood for the bonfire, and beginning work on regenerating a proper mixed native hedgerow between the two fields. However, there is still more that needs to be done and we hope to schedule several more work party days in the early part of next year.

The following members (in no particular order) helped at the work parties and on subsequent days – Lionel Luxon, Mike Lapworth, Charlotte Stockley, Joan McConn, Sidney Mygind, Maria and Chris Outrim, Ruth Green, Sue Whitehorne, Ann O’Sullivan, Andy Dodds, Ian Turnbull, Frances Shortt, Camilla Sykes, Jeff Townsley, Rebecca Hurley, Hywell Davies, Pascal Boulvais, John Ibbitt, Val Steed, Joan and David Coy, Beryl Randall, Jonathan Grellier, William Vincent, Claire Porter, Andy Watters, Doug Grace, Sally Swaine, Howard Horner, David Pinder, Barbara Knowles, and Helen O’Donovan.

If I have inadvertently left anyone out please accept my apologies.

Although many members do turnout to help there are some who rarely if ever do so. Remember that these are your allotments and some effort by **all members** is essential for them to be a success, and if you have not yet helped I hope that you will be able to do so in the future.

Sadly, Anne O’Sullivan and Jose Doe have stepped down from the environmental sub-committee and we thank them for all the dedicated work they have done in the past. The report the sub-committee produced has been welcomed by the AGAA committee and will be taken into consideration in planning future projects. On advice from Gordon Bell, we have purchased a variety of native hedgerow plants which will be planted to regenerate and so improve the sadly neglected hedgerow between the two fields - this work will be done in the first part of next year. We also plan to purchase and plant holly and pyracanthus plants around the perimeter of the site adjacent to the cemetery to improve future security in that area.

The annual bonfire party cum BBQ on the lower field on 2 November was a very enjoyable event with about 65 participants, young and older, enjoying the mulled wine, BBQ foods, home-baked cakes and soft drinks. A few of us also had the delight and privilege to sup a glass or two of Mike and Charlotte’s delicious sloe gin.

The bonfire, which had been constructed earlier in the day, was lit with one match by young Maya Grace ably assisted by her young friends (picture on the website) and at 8pm we had a grandstand view of the Kingsmeadow firework display.

Many thanks to almost all the plotholders who have paid their fees for 2013 on time. Remember that if you have a friend or partner helping you with your plot they are entitled to become an associate member for a subscription of only £5 pa. The application form can be downloaded from the website, or obtained from Ian Turnbull.

Following the summer plot inspections a number of poorly worked plots were freed up and also several were given up by ploholders moving out of our area. Seven plots have become available for re-letting in 2013 and we hope that all existing ploholders will ensure that at least 75% of their plot is in proper cultivation next year.

We had planned on having our AGM on 21 or 28 April next year but unfortunately these dates are already booked up at the Parish Hall. However, the 14 April is still available and the hall has been provisionally booked for that day at 4pm.

The Committee and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we hope that you will have plenty of winter vegetables for your Christmas dinner(s), and that next year will be drier, warmer and more bountiful.

Finally, I would like to end on a personal note. My wife (and our Lettings Secretary) Joan McConn, was presented with the British Empire Medal on 7 December at the Tower of London. This honour was awarded in recognition for her services to the community in Kingston over many years – and her work for our allotments is only a small part of that. And over all these years she has had to keep me on the straight and narrow as well! Photos and details of what she has been involved with can be seen on the website.

Best wishes to all,

Karol Smal

Chairman

On behalf of the AGAA Committee