

- This year we have been able to let more plots than usual. Interest remains high, with nearly 30 on the waiting list.
- Ros Alexander recently joined our Field Committee, alongside Charlotte, Karen, Tony and Vanessa. Many of you will know Ros already from the field's Facebook pages.

Bonfires

Thank you for cooperating with use of bonfires (very few complaints so far). Please continue to avoid Sundays and Mondays and extinguish before you leave. Thanks to all who have checked for hedgehogs first.

Trees

If you are thinking of planting trees, we can have up to 4 fruit trees (no other kind) per 10 rod plot. We are aware that some plots have more than this, but are not looking to remove them.

Dahlias

You may have seen some beautiful Dahlias on the field, particularly on Paul Calver's and Richard Risebrow's plots. Paul has been very successful in winning show prizes for these recently.

IAS Awards

Congratulations to David and Jane Wright, who won the best plot award for Sidegate. All 6 nominations for Sidegate received bronze awards, which is no mean feat. Well done also to Phillip Calver, Richard Risebrow, Konrad Rudzki, James Sayer and Simon Tate. Konrad was runner up for the best organic plot across Ipswich.



It was encouraging that Sidegate received the Most Improved Field award, thanks to the efforts of the committee and helpful plot holders. Several have already suggested that we must have been pretty bad last year!

Working party

We hope to organise a working party during the winter months, and possibly organise a skip for the field. We will let you know in advance when this will be. If you can, come and enjoy some community involvement.

Shed news

And now for some good news. We have been able to order some potato nets of a range of varieties early next year to sell in the shop, along with some garlic. Potato nets are 2.5 kg, and will be around £3.50 per net. I know that some of you have already purchased your potatoes. However, we will let you know when these are available, via newsletter, website and Facebook.

Community Payback team

Several of the payback team worked on two plots and cleared some of the Summer car park on 13th December. Hopefully we can have another group to work on the field soon.

Council News

Bills

After 2 years of many struggling to pay bills, we hope that this year will be different. The Council expect fewer problems this year and hope most will be sorted by April 1st. It is likely that the deadline for these will be much sooner this year, so please pay promptly.

One change introduced by the government requires multi factor authentication for online payments. You will receive a call or text to give a code. If you have changed your mobile number you will need to inform the council or let me know and I will pass it on.

If you pay by phone you won't have to do this.

IAS membership and insurance

Public liability is something all plot holders **must** have, according to allotment rules. Just over half of you have taken this out by joining IAS, which is still the cheapest way. Those of you who do not will have to provide documented evidence of this to the council in the future (household insurance does not cover this).

Changes to clearing plots

While most plots are fine, some are left in a bad way when plot holders move on. All kinds of items/rubbish/overgrown plots are left behind, and this has to be cleared. In the future the Council are planning to charge plot holders a **minimum of £250** if clearance is required. Please be aware of this. And remove anything you no longer need.

Field inspections

Allotment fields across Ipswich will be inspected during the next few weeks to check that people are working within the rules.

Please contact me if your contact details change, or you need to discuss matters relating to your plot. I hope you have a happy Christmas. Wishing peace and goodwill to you all.

David