

Our Plant Sale

We had an amazing turnout back at the start of May for our first public opening of the year. The Plant Sale was a wonderful success with over 350 folks joining us, wandering, marvelling at the peace and space AND spending! The plants, the perennials, herbs and veg seedlings from members, were all magnificent and the team who co-ordinated the bedding plant and herb purchases did a great job in selecting some terrific bargains to sell on to customers. Our bakers did us proud once again with a fabulous array of delicious sweet treats and everybody agreed that the tea, coffee and baking being sold from the pergola was a good development – making it easier to serve and avoid getting gassed! Thank you to everybody who helped make the day such a success. Really well done! Our coffers are swollen again after all that hard work with a large chunk of the day's profits heading to Scotland's Garden's Scheme for their charity beneficiaries. There's a financial breakdown of the Plant Sale. on page 3.



Ramping up improvements!

We'd planned to replace the uneven and rickety steps at the Quadrant Gate for some time. Too many folk have tripped or slipped and the entrance was impassable when it was icy or when there was flooding. But the steps are no more after a top team of concrete comrades measured masonry, mixed mortar, gathered gravel and shovelled



A VERY BIG THANKS to John C & Donald T who braved the hot weather with their shovels & to our Plot Sec who did all the planning and led the very Kirsty Wark. See p4 for more on that thirst quenching effort.



The protective fleece will be in place until early June. After that a cement sealant will be applied to ensure the ramp is waterproof & VERY non slip.



DATES FOR THE DIARY 2019

JUNE

Saturday 1st June
Coffee Morning from 10.30
includes Masterclass Session TBC

Saturday 22nd June
Mid-Summer Social Courtyard and Pergola from 5.00pm
Bring food and drink to share
Beef & veggie burgers too!
All Family and Friends Welcome

JULY

Saturday 6th July
Coffee Morning from 10.30

Saturday 20th / Sunday 21st July
Plot Judging weekend

AUGUST

Saturday 3rd August
Coffee Morning from 10.30
Waiting list folks are invited

Saturday 31st August
PLOT OPEN DAY
12pm – 3.00pm
A Public Event. All welcome!

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 15th September
Guest talk at the Pergola
2.30pm details TBC

Saturday 28th September
Final Coffee Morning from 10.30
includes Winter Master class

OCTOBER

Sat 26th October
Pumpkin Parade & Sausage Sizzle

NOVEMBER

Sat 2nd & Sun 3rd November
Work Party days – tasks TBC

DECEMBER

Thursday 5th December
AGM & Review of the Year

How does your Garden grow?

That warm and sunny spell in mid-May was a welcome reminder of what Summer can be like! You'll remember last year's hot and dry period raised concern about keeping our plants alive and the Committee were certainly concerned about water management around the plot. The Royal Horticultural Society have recently published some new research on water management in the garden and in doing so have confirmed some old beliefs and de-bunked some plant watering myths too.



WASTE WATER (Grey water)

'Used' water with some washing-up liquid or soap won't harm ornamentals, fruit or mature vegetables, but avoid pouring it onto edible leaves. Stronger detergents can be more harmful.



OVERWATERING WILL DAMAGE PLANTS

The key to watering successfully is to water thoroughly to a depth of 30cm (1ft). Avoid watering the top centimetre or so on a daily basis, for example, watering every 10-14 days (if there is no rain) is a general guide. Dig down to a spade's depth to see if there is moisture in the soil; if so watering is unnecessary - watering when the plant does not need it can increase the growth of the plant, but not the size of the part that is to be harvested.

CONTAINERS & BASKETS

There is no need for hanging baskets and containers to drip after watering: bedding plants performed well when watered little, but daily. It only took 160ml (about a teacup) of water each day to saturate the compost supporting each petunia, but only 80ml was needed to grow a good plant. In neither case did compost drip after watering. A surprise is that irrigation applied 5cm (2in) below the soil surface, through porous hose systems, increased plant quality even though the upper soil was dust-dry.



The third outcome confirms what gardeners have long suspected: overwatering leads to poor-quality plants.

For more information about good garden water management and dealing with drought go to www.rhs.org.uk/drought

New Sustainability Group

The Committee has set up a Sustainability group which will be producing a guide for members on how best to make their plot and time as allotmenters as environmentally sustainable as possible. We all appreciate how important this is but it was felt a focussed initiative will help everybody get more from our allotment lives.

The integration of allotment gardening into local sustainable community development enhances the benefits of every allotment site. By growing our own food, allotment gardeners are already making a significant contribution to local food production. Not all food grown on allotments is organic but it is fresh and it is local. Food that has travelled from just down the road can therefore make a contribution to local sustainability.



Allotments contain vital habitats that provide refuge for wildlife in urban areas. A well managed allotment can provide natural diversity, creating 'stepping stones' which contribute to species migration and connectivity in the environment - what strategists refer to as 'green infrastructure'. Many of our plot holders are already environmentally aware, and work their plots sustainably. For most of them, being able to grow organically or close to it, is one of the main benefits of having an allotment, and the function of nature and wildlife in this process is fully appreciated. Birds and insects play an integral role in pollination and pest control and allow gardeners to move away from the use of herbicides and pesticides. Allotments managed with biodiversity in mind will allow the adoption of organic methods which will in turn provide further benefit to wildlife. These mutually beneficial responses are sustainable from an ecological standpoint. Most allotment holders are committed to recycling materials, self-sufficiency and environmental competence by the very nature of what they do. Allotments are the heart of living a sustainable lifestyle and support the environment in many ways.

The *Eco Sustainability Group* (ESG) will encourage more recycling and composting initiatives and support Plot holders by providing additional guidance on sustainable practices generally.

The Plant Sale: the scores on the doors

Here's how the event income breaks down in terms of sales and the final contribution to SGS charities..

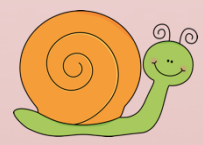
- Ardle gate income* £647.00
- Quadrant gate income* £687.50
- Member's plants* £667.13
- Clyde Valley* £1051.05
- Herbs* £259.00
- Cake counter* £540.53
- Total income: 3852.21**

With expenses of £1118.42 we had clear profit of £2733.79 meaning a share (at 40%) for SGS of £1093.48 and a bank account expanding sum of £1640.31 for MPA.

Well done everyone!

Gastropod-tastic!

The snail thought by getting rid of his shell, he could travel faster...



...turned out he was as just as sluggish...

...which is a good thing when we are trying to catch them! It is widely recommended we use ferric phosphate slug pellets instead of the old methaldehyde type. These Iron based organic ones only target snails and slugs and are more environmentally friendly - actually breaking down to nourish the soil. They are not harmful to birds or pets. Please use sparingly though.

Plot Development News

We are on the lookout for more volunteers to help look after the grass paths & edges we have on site. Last year a successful rota system was put in place to manage 3 teams across the early, mid and late summer months. Each team of 4 will share mowing and strimming duties for roughly 6 weeks. It's an important job which keeps the site looking cared for. The teams are able to self schedule so it's very flexible too.



John Copland is offering full training (or a refresher for any folks from the class of 2018) on **8th June** by the 61b tool shed at **11am**.

Please let us know if you can help via the volunteer email address on Page 4.

Plot Development letters from Committee have now been sent out. Members receive these letters because they:

- are considered 'behind,' as little or no work has been done so far.
- work previously promised by plotholders has not been done in the agreed time.
- Plots have excessive rubbish or junk lying around.
- Plots have excessive or out of control 'heaps' which are dormant composts or may be causing obstructions on the communal paths.

If you are having difficulty, please let the Committee know.

They can, and will help.

Your paths need looked after !

The PD group would like to remind everyone that they **MUST** keep the paths to the North and East of their plot (the gravel or grass paths towards the school's grounds or the tennis club) clear of weeds, any over-hanging growth or structures. A simple hoe and rake will sort this. It's a job that takes little time and if not done, makes the whole place look unkempt. The Association spent a great deal of time, money and effort refurbishing the paths recently and it is important to keep them all weed free and tidy. The condition of paths will be included in July's plot judging.

The View from 65



Thank you to everybody who helped make our Plant Sale such a great success. We were visited by well over 300 people who enjoyed the terrific energy and lovely atmosphere of the day. Everybody

who contributed plants, baking, or their valuable time (before the day or clearing up after) gets a special Presidential pat on the back! If you didn't manage to help out this time, please do something for the Open Day - it is fun and is really satisfying*. The feedback from the visitors as they left, or in letters sent later is proof it was a successful event. Reaching the local community is really important. We tried some new things which worked out well, like the catering under the pergola which everybody serving was pleased with. And we'll definitely be selling our fresh Spring Rhubarb again next year - the customers couldn't get enough of it! What was very new was the partnership with Scotland's Garden's Scheme. We benefitted from their book and online promotion and in return, their nominated charities are almost £1,100 better off. Not bad for an afternoon's work! We did extremely well too of course. Those funds will be ploughed back into projects and spending which will benefit all Members, and those in the future too. Please get in touch if you have any ideas for big or small projects that would benefit our community - structures, planting, security, water harvesting etc.

That leads nicely to that RHS research about good practice in watering our gardens, and a reminder to all plotters that irresponsible spraying of water during extended dry periods is frowned upon. Spot watering is more efficient, produces better results and is more considerate to your neighbours. The best way is to fill your water butts and use those to fill watering cans ...and do try to get rid of any weeds which are soaking up valuable water too.

That's it for now, I look forward to seeing you at the June coffee morning - please bring a little bit of home baking. And don't forget to pick up your Competition Sunflower seeds from the gang hut when you are next down... Measuring tapes and ladders are being dusted off in readiness for the big reveal at the Open Day.

Happy June everyone!

DL

*not fake news

Courtyard Makeover



A terrific team met on the last weekend of April to spruce up the courtyard and pergola before the Plant Sale. Painting, raking, pruning, digging and clearing were order of the day and they set about the tasks with great gusto! Sometimes you can look back after a morning's work and you just can't see the effort you put in... but not in this case. The successful mission was evident with the place looking really great in just 2 hrs. That great effort set the tone as we approached the Plant Sale.



Well done to everyone who gave us their time & worked so hard.

A big

"THANK YOU"

to you all!

Prize caption competition!

Please send your witty and biting comedic gold to: "Beer in a jam jar caption competition"

merrylee.photos@virginmedia.com



2019 COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Please get in touch with any of the Committee if you have concerns or wish further info on any aspect of the Allotment, the Association or if you want details regarding events, volunteering or work parties.

- Derek Livesey (Pres) (65) 07768964027
- Ian McCracken (Sec) (9) 07580287498
- Ronnie Bain (VP) (24) 07976846278
- Sheila Hawthorn (Treasury) (49)
- Lesley Swift (51)
- Eric Livingstone (21A)
- Tania Moran (66A)
- Sally Packer (53B)

Correspondence, general enquiries & ideas should be emailed to:
merryleeplots@yahoo.co.uk

or volunteer for grass cutting and event support:

volunteer4merrylee@virginmedia.com