

**MILL LANE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION 2017**

After a number of years Maurice Smith stood down as Chairman of our association at our annual general meeting at the end of last year, the committee reluctantly accepted his decision. Maurice served as Chairman for 6 years and because of his enthusiasm, and amazing generosity of time, knowledge and determination, the association thrives today. All other officers remained in position, however Steve Dickman who is the current Treasurer will stand down as and when he moves from Suffolk to Devon, Fiona Kenworthy will take on that role once Steve has left so there will be a smooth transition.

As always at this time of year there is a lot of groundwork happening at the allotments, hampered sadly by the effects of the recent Storm Doris which caused havoc with many of our greenhouses, polytunnels and fruit and brassica cages! So clearing up and rebuilding and retrieving plastic panes has been the priority at this time.

Plot holders reported differing levels of success in the growing season, nearly all reported poor showings for courgettes and marrows, which was mirrored by the national and international picture, as always many of us struggled with blackfly on our Broad Beans which in some cases migrated onto French and Runner beans! However everyone enjoyed the fruits of their labours, especially at the two well attended BBQ's held in the summer months, although erecting the marquee in case of rain (which it didn't) caused hilarity when the early morning slightly windier conditions threatened to take a member of the association on an unexpected paragliding experience!

We had our usual small turnover of members; four plots changed hands and as of this report we have two new people (recently moved to the villages) on our waiting list, however we have at least one to be vacated when our Treasurer moves and suspect one more maybe vacated this season. It appears that there are always more people requesting than vacating.

Another block of rainwater tanks was erected at the top of the site courtesy of the members and the past Chairman's ability to get things done, we also put over one of the difficult to manage top plots with an irregular shape to an area for compost and manure deposits courtesy of the local stables.

We contributed to the Harvest exhibition at Botesdale village Hall with a very fine display titled Mr McGregor's Garden and also to the well attended Nativity exhibition at St Mary's Church Rickinghall where our display (Crib Scene) was mentioned on BBC Radio Suffolk for its unique use of seasonal vegetables to depict the Nativity scene especially the use of Leeks with cut tops representing crowns and Cauliflower to represent sheep!

Iain Davidson  
Chairman, Mill Lane Allotments Association