

Royal Paddocks Allotments
Annual General Meeting

11 November 2010

Social Secretary's Report
Jenny Bourne

There was a wide range of plants on offer at this year's Seedling Sale, for those of us who hadn't got round to germinating! Highlights included interesting squash varieties, aloe vera plants, and Martin Scotton's fine sprouts. The café volunteers provided the usual delicious cakes and refreshments. Thanks to all who manned the stalls, contributed seedlings and plants, and came along to help make a profit of £268.60 for the RPA.

There was also a good turnout for September's Autumn Social. Home-made produce flew off the stall, and the café and bbq did a roaring trade (memo for next year: more sausages!). Raffle tickets were bought and great prizes were won. We all enjoyed Michael de Podesta's officiating skills at the pumpkin competition, although he may have been a bit over-optimistic with his hi-tech Ikea weighing equipment, designed for pumpkins up to 80kg – Ray's winner tipped the scales at just 14.86kg! We can blame the poor growing season - *but we must do better next year!* And, despite the difficult growing year, the quality and variety of entries in the Produce Show gave the judges a difficult job. Impressive squash, colourful chillies, succulent mixed veg, gorgeous floral displays, and spectacular veggie bugs and monsters! Congratulations to all entrants, young and old. The café volunteers were kept on their toes, serving a total of 16 cakes and non-stop drinks. We made over £390, and it was a great way to get together to celebrate our growing successes and to wind down our yearly toiling on our plots.

These events are planned and organised by the Social Committee, this year comprising Sue Croft, Joan Fulton, Anne Wingrove, Gaby Armstrong and me. It's a truly team effort, along with the café volunteers and the committee members and ploholders who contribute their valuable time and energy to making the Autumn Social and others so successful. So, thanks to: Joan Fulton for organising the Raffle and persuading local businesses and ploholders to donate generous prizes; to Sue for all her hard work and to Martin, John, David and Jem for cooking up a fine bbq; and to Helga and Michael Foss for the drinks bar. Also to Anne Wingrove and all the café volunteers: Liz and Gray Rigge, Gaby, Joan, Erica, Kristina, Janet, Helen, Carol, and Sue. Many thanks to all who helped set up, man stalls and clear away, and thank you to anyone I may have forgotten – you know who you are!

Looking forward to next year, we'll be selling 'Atlantic Giant' pumpkin seeds at Seedy Sunday and the Seedling Sale and hoping for the perfect monster pumpkin summer weather! The date for the Autumn Social and Produce Show will be announced early next year, to give everyone time to plan and prepare their prize-winning entries!

My personal hope is that eventually there will be a more permanent setting for the café, for committee meetings, for talks, demonstrations, exhibitions, etc. – an amenity for our flourishing and expanding allotments association and for future generations of ploholders to use.

We always need more volunteers for the socials and for the café, whether to bake cakes or join the café rota. And we always need your contributions to the newsletter - articles, information, growing tips, recipes, pictures and photographs. Please also keep an eye on the notice board by the pedestrian gate and on the website - our main sources of information and communication.

Following the success of the sale of the eco-bags designed by Sue Croft, our new retail venture is tea-towels, with a similar design by Sue, just in time for Christmas. These will be on sale asap at the café. There will be a Christmas café with mulled wine, mince pies and the usual delicious cakes on Sunday 19 December. Look forward to seeing some of you there!

Finally I'd like to thank Bob Trevillion, Chair, and the committee members who have supported the Social Committee and the café throughout this year.

Jenny Bourne