



Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

n e w s l e t t e r

no. 7, Thursday 22 November

- The polytunnels come into their own
- More weather challenges
- Swings and roundabouts with the veg
- Thinking ahead
- Other improvements
- Date set for AGM

Well, we now have our third polytunnel erected, skinned, and planted up with a wide range of salads for the winter months. A lot of the work on the field over the last month has been in the polytunnels; as well as erecting and finishing the third tunnel there has been much clearing out in the first two tunnels of all the summer plants. All the tunnel edges have been dug over, removing the ever encroaching grass, and manure and ash have been spread. We had a fantastic turn out for the work morning on the day of the Samhain Social; folk worked in a not-so-cold polytunnel digging the whole area over in 3 hours. Thank you for all your hard work!



As always though, the weather brought new challenges in early November with temperatures down to -5C out on the field with the arrival of the first hard frosts. It's obviously slowed the growth of those plants that are still growing, but it has its advantages too. We had been experiencing problems with grey aphids on the brassica plot with the unseasonably warm autumnal weather and have had to apply a soft soap spray to some of the plants to stop them being overwhelmed. This cold weather will help to knock these aphids back.

Elsewhere on the field we have had a saga with the leeks. There has only been one week with leeks in the share so far, which has been a disappointment. These early leeks struggled all season to put on any great size and then started to dramatically bolt. The main crop has subsequently been the focus of attention but was held back in the seed bed until we were able to plant out later than we'd ideally have liked. Fleece was used to give the seedlings a head start but just as this helped the leeks it also helped the weeds too! Thus, after a lot of hand weeding these two beds have just been cleared of all competition with the help of several great volunteers one recent damp Saturday morning, thank you!

Not far from the leeks we've had a bumper crop of carrots, showing that it's swings and roundabouts with a growing scheme like this. We've only just finished harvesting the early bed of carrots which was begun back in mid July! Having totted up the harvesting records, we see that over 600kg was grown in this one bed. This gives us a good idea of the quantity of carrots left in the ground and therefore how long we'll likely be able to keep including them in the share.

This is a nerve racking time for the growers as the colder weather has brought growth on the field to all but a standstill. The crops can now be assessed and judgements made on what will be in the share for the next



few months. With it being the first year of growing on the land and with this group of people, we are learning and adapting all the time (as fast as we can!). However, we will have to make some tough decisions over the winter as to whether we decided as a project to buy in a limited amount of local seasonal produce to supplement the food we've grown here on the land. This is not the ideal situation and our vision is to always be able to grow the entire share from the land for every week of the whole year. We also know that the opinions of our members on this crucial issue need to be taken into account, so we will be consulting with you over this in the coming weeks.

Off the field the light has drawn right in and with the clocks going back we found ourselves caught out without adequate lighting in the yurt! Apologies to anyone who came to collect around that time and was unable to see their vegetables; we've now installed a 12volt ring of lights but know that a still better system needs to be developed. By this time next year we hope to have our new barn erected and the veg pick up will have moved into that. Some of you will also hopefully have noticed the recent improvements at the top of the drive

with 15 metres of tarmac having been laid. This was a requirement of the planning permission for the new entrance. We have also bought in some more road planings and intend to sure up the track and car park in the near future so as folk can stay off the mud.

Lastly, we have set a date for our first AGM: **Tuesday 8 January 2008, 8pm, at Radford Community Hall**. Please put it in your diaries! We will be sending out some more information about what the agenda will be nearer the time, and also asking for your input on what you would like to see discussed. This is your opportunity to come along and have your voice heard, so we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there!



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