



THE CURRENT COLD SNAP makes this issue really feel like a winter issue. This newsletter coincides with the start of a slightly different way of managing the growing work at Canalside, and this is reflected in Will's *News from the Veg Field and Fruit Orchard* which is now a combined update due to the fact that he is overseeing all the growing work. Our AGM was held in late January, and if you weren't able to be there you can read the **AGM highlights** here. There are lots of **New Arrivals**, and we also say goodbye to a long-standing member of the team in **Departures**. Tom tells us about **Site Developments** which are in the pipeline, and you can find out how you can help with the **Education**



Working on a sunny December day

Project when the visiting season restarts. Socials have continued through the coldest part of the year – read about these and see what is planned for 2015 in **Events**. And at the back are the usual regular features with our partner projects and the members' ad sections. I hope you are staying warm in these sub-zero temperatures and feel re-energised with the lengthening days which are starting to be noticeable.

Ali, January 2015

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NEWS FROM THE VEG FIELD AND FRUIT ORCHARD – by Will Johnson

Things are pretty quiet down on the farm at the moment. At this time of year there is quite a bit of stuff that can be done at home behind a desk (believe it or not). I have been catching up on documentation (never a priority when the sun is shining, except in an illegible scrawl that no one else can read), putting the main seed order together for the year (£1000 spent this week so far - on seed, I know!), researching equipment that we'd like to buy (update: just bought a plough!), and generally finalising plans for the coming season. You would have thought that it would be simple enough to locate some animal manure and to find a simple, efficient and inexpensive way of getting it to the farm and putting it on the ground, exactly where we want it to go, but it's never simple. We do like a challenge though (Rome was not built in a day). It is that time of year.

We will check and repair the perimeter fence and clean all the polytunnels over the coming weeks. It is that time of year again.

We spent last week up in the orchard pruning the apples and pears, and marking the plum trees ahead of their summer haircut (they prefer to be pruned in the summer). The main task before



Mulching fruit trees with wood-chip

the first main harvest of the year (rhubarb in March/April) is to mulch all of the trees with woodchip, which we buy from a yard in Warwick. We have also been putting some thought into how we will use the soft fruit harvests; whether we trial a pick-your-own system when the fruit is ready or plan group activities and workshops around those harvests (jam making, for instance), or a combination.

It has been good to spend some more time in the orchard at this quiet time of year to do some planning for the year ahead, and the next few years. To this point the orchard and the vegetable growing areas have always been managed separately but we have finally felt the time is right to think of the fruit growing and vegetable growing as one thing. This coincides with the beginning of a slight change in what we do, though it follows the original plan for Canalside CSA, and that is that the weekly share, whether you get a small, medium or large, will sometimes include a few fruit items (at no extra cost, just to be clear!). We will find out how it works this year but needless to say it is a decision that has been carefully and thoroughly thought through (try saying that quickly) and we are confident it will work well.

All of the stored veg seems to be keeping really well and is in good supply. We have fewer potatoes than usual but more squash and celeriac than ever before. The onions cropped really well and though I'd thought we would have had to grade out a lot by now (they seemed to have got the rot soon after we harvested them) it turns out not to be the case, which is a welcome surprise. As usual we have a lifetime supply of beetroot in the clamp.



The beetroot clamp filling up in November

With a pretty cold January (by recent standards) the leaves in the tunnels have not grown back quickly so we've been a bit short of salad and greens lately but don't worry, there are plenty in the pipeline. Similarly, outdoors the leeks are dragging their feet and are smaller than usual anyway (due to their enforced autumn haircuts) but we are hoping they will shoot up next month. Spring crops like purple sprouting broccoli and cauliflowers are looking good and hopefully feeling cleansed and invigorated by the recent hard frosts.

It is exciting to think that in only three weeks time we will be planting the first seeds of 2015, and in a couple of months transplanting one-year old asparagus plants into permanent beds on Millfield – complete with that manure that I know will appear from somewhere...!

Will, 26th January 2015

AGM HIGHLIGHTS – by Ali Jeffery

Our 8th AGM earlier this month was one where we were able to report lots of positive outcomes from the past year of growing, and where we outlined the new business plan which sets out how certain aspects of our work at Canalside will continue to evolve over the next few years.

The strategic aims that form the basis of our business plan were outlined in a presentation from Ben Cowan, workshare and steering group member. You can see his presentation [via this link](#). These new strategic aims mark the start of the next phase of Canalside's life, as we are now a well-established CSA and in a position to complete on the aims which were founding principles when Canalside was established and take them further. The aims are:

1. **Creating value, sharing produce:** Each week, ensure that members receive a share comprising at least 7 in-season organic vegetables and fruits of a quality, and in a quantity, that represents fair value.
2. **Staff wage rates:** Ensure a living wage for staff by incorporating an above RPI (Retail Price Index) wage increase as part of a yearly review and according to Canalside experience pay scales.
3. **Staffing and volunteer capacity:** Develop and maintain a labour register of persons able to work for Canalside, including salaried staff, deputy growers, worksharers and committed volunteers.
4. **Fruit and vegetable share integration:** All members to share in fruit and vegetable production, costs and processes. When available, 'top fruit' (apples, pears, plums, currants) will be divided as per vegetables. The management of fields, tunnels and the orchard will be fully integrated.
5. **Community participation:** Constantly strive to create opportunities for members to participate in farm work, social and educational events. Ensure the site, especially the community and social area, is well designed and organised so that members are able to fully realise the benefits.
6. **Partner organisations:** Become a 'pioneering' Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) network hub for the West Midlands by promoting innovation, mentoring other CSAs and hosting network events.
7. **Organisational independence:** Develop and implement investment strategies which enable Canalside to operate independently of Leasowe Farm; including equipment/machinery, fuel, water, and eventually land ownership.
8. **Financial prudence:** Strive to produce a financial surplus of 10% of the total turnover by closely monitoring and managing revenue and costs. This surplus will help to finance an investment strategy and help mitigate against potential revenue losses.

There were other key highlights from the evening. The first was confirmation that, following our extensive interviewing of veg share members, we will be integrating the fruit and veg into one combined share, as mentioned above by Will. This will mean that when fruits such as apples, pears, plums, currants and strawberries are in season, veg share members – who we might now call produce share members - will receive a share of these harvests alongside their veg, getting more or less depending on the size of share they take. This will be at no extra cost! As everyone will be receiving fruit, the harvests we get will be distributed more widely. We look forward to being able to put early rhubarb in the new combined share in the early spring.

The other important news that was shared at the AGM was that we will be increasing the price of the shares in July. This is the first price increase since 2013 and will put us on a sound financial footing to implement some of the strategic aims from the business plan. The increase will equate to:

£1 per week for a small share	£1.50 per week for a medium share
£2.25 per week for a large share	

Full details of when and how to make the change will follow in the spring.



*How the site might look with upcoming changes realised
(Thanks to Verity Thompson for this illustration)*

Plans were shared for site changes too: a proper kitchen facility, office space on-site and improved social facilities for members in the pole barn. For more details see Tom's 'Site Developments' below.

The full minutes and all the other documents from the AGM will be circulated in due course – please look out for an email about that if you are interested to know more details about the finances that were presented and questions that members asked.

NEW ARRIVALS...

New'ish members *Ellie and Hamish Sutcliffe* welcomed their first child into the world on 13th October 2014. *Rowan Aroha* is growing up fast and is (generally!) a lovely, smiley, happy little girl.

New subscribers have continued to join at a fair old pace over the past 3 months, with a large number of families joining after they completed their trial share from the Food and Drink Festival. A warm welcome the following new members:



Rowan Sutcliffe

- *Stuart & Gemma Foster and family* • *Tanya Brittain and family* • *Andrew Cooke* • *Sally & Pete Thompson and family* • *Hannah Rowe* • *Anna Rowland* • *David Smyth*
- *David Blair and family* • *Craig Saxton & Harriet Mann and family* • *Lorraine Daniels* • *Alice Taherzadeh, Hannah Wheatley, Chris Maughan, Vishal Chauhan and Dexter Bushell*
- *David Snatt and family* • *Rebecca Thomas and family* • *Catherine Reeves and family* • *Gautama & Agne Payment and family* • *Mita Mistry and family* • *Nehir Gundogdu* • *Josie & Marc Sanderson and family* • *Rosemary Hague* • *Rachel Walton*

On the workshare and volunteer side of things, we have two new workshares who have joined the team: *Chris Beeny* and *Jennie Aird* . *Andy Forbes* also returns to the workshare team after several months away, and we have a group of students who are working towards their Duke of Edinburgh award and are doing the volunteering part of the award at Canalside: welcome to *Ola, Hannah, Patricia, Amrita* and *Jolene* .

...AND DEPARTURES

This issue sees us saying goodbye to *Amy Willoughby* who has a long-standing connection with Canalside, as a veg share member, workshare and most recently as one of the key players in Team Fruit. Amy also participated in the steering group for two years, and many of you will know her as one of the lead people in the Willows project which operates from its base – the cabin at Canalside. On top of her work in the fruit field and



steering group commitment, Amy has also helped lead countless social events, mainly linked to the fruit, including jam-making, wassailing and apple juicing. We thank her for her long commitment and hard work in all the different aspects of Canalside and wish her every success with her ventures which are now taking her to Somerset. She will continue to visit to carry on with her work with the Willows project over the next few months, so if you wanted to wish her well, you may find her at Canalside on the occasional Wednesday!

SITE DEVELOPMENTS – *by Tom Ingall*

For those who were either at the AGM or have read the write-up above you'll know that we've got some exciting changes coming up for the site here at CCF during 2015. After taking the time to talk to a large percentage of you at the end of 2014 about your use of the site and our plans we're hoping that over the next few months these will start to be realised. Top of our list is the railway carriage conversion that I'll be starting work on during February, with opportunities for community help so keep your eye out for more details! With a functioning quality site kitchen there will be a lot more opportunity for a wide range of processing events and the site will be an increasingly well appointed area for members to use and hire out too. Inside the pole barn there is work going on to create an indoor social area where members can comfortably stop and chat over a cuppa whilst picking up their fruit and veg or after a volunteer session. Ali will also soon be working on site from a caravan office as we're having to vacate our offices at East Gate Lodge at the end of February. So with all these improvements, and more of us on site for more of the time, we're hoping for a more engaged and interactive CCF site experience in the future. To get involved or if you've any ideas related to all this then just get in touch!

EDUCATION PROJECT – *by Ali Jeffery*

Visits to the site for school groups will restart in April and we already have a visit booked in for late April. If you would like to help with this or other visits during the summer term, look out for a call for volunteers in March and beyond. And there is plenty of space for more visits, so if you would like your child's class to visit Canalside, please contact me for some information to share with the class teacher. We need 4 weeks' notice of the date to ensure that we can make all the necessary preparations, so it's worth telling schools about this opportunity now! There is no charge for visits and we may be able to offer a bursary to help with the cost of transport if the visit wouldn't otherwise be possible.

EVENTS – *by Ali Jeffery*

With the slower pace in the fields at this time of year, the social side of Canalside also slows down in winter. That said, we have still had at least one social event each month.

November – beetroot harvest and shared meal:

A group of hardy beetroot harvesters helped to get the clamp in the pole barn filling up, and survived the muddy experience that digging up beetroot involved that day! This crop has been very successful, and as Will mentioned in his update, we have a lot of it. The morning was rounded off with warming soups to bring the blood back to fingers and toes, including Borsht – beetroot soup, of course! We are still working our way through the clamp of beetroot, and expect it to last at least through April. If you would like extra beetroot, you can order some through the weekly update or by emailing Ali – it is £1 per kilo, payable on collection.

December – social in the pub and double share collection drinks:

We ended the year with a social in the pub (very warm) and mulled drinks in the pole barn alongside the double share collections (cold outside, warm inside!). Thank you to everyone who stopped for a chat and a pause from their pre-holiday errands to share news and plans, and to everyone who responded to our questionnaire in the final few collections before our winter shutdown. We think we spoke to almost everyone about our plans for the coming year, and were interested to hear your ideas for improving the social area and your experience of coming to Canalside.

January - AGM:

Our AGM took a different look this year, with us trying out a new venue in Leamington itself – a departure from meeting in the village hall in Radford Semele. Around 25 members joined the steering group for an overview of the finances and activities of the past year and the plans for the coming year, including the strategic aims of our new business plan. The presentations were interspersed with a wide variety of questions and interesting discussions. Thank you to everyone who joined us, and for the delicious goodies that people brought to share!

- wassailing:

A handful of members, with workshare volunteers and staff, enjoy soup and homemade cider last Saturday, and performed a traditional wassailing ceremony – they soaked bread in cider which was hung from the fruit trees to encourage them to produce a bountiful harvest this year.



Bread plus cider equals lots of fruit, we hope!

2015 socials

Feb: Sat 28th – lactic fermentation workshop – find out how to make sauerkraut and other fermented vegetable preserves, with member, Erica Moody. Limited places available.

March: Sat 28th – big spring social – onion planting and lunch

April/May: blossom walk, date to be confirmed

June: Sun 7th – Open Farm Sunday tours and picnic

Sat 13th–Sun 14th – Peace Festival publicity stall

July: Sat 4th – open day for the general public – tours, picnic in the social area

Sat 11th – big summer social – annual barn dance

Aug: Tues 19th – jam-making workshop

Sept: Sat 5th–Sun 6th – Leamington Food and Drink Festival publicity stall

Sat 19th–Sun 20th – big autumn social – potato harvest, camping weekend, harvest meal

Oct: Sat 10th – apple pressing, bring a picnic

Nov: Sat 7th – big winter social – beetroot harvest, shared meal

Dec: date TBC – final social of the year

Jan: date TBC – AGM

Look out also for socials in the pub and other activities which may be added at shorter notice. As always, events are publicised through our members' mailing list and upcoming events are listed in the weekly update.

Want to be more involved? Our big event of the year – the annual barn dance – needs people

to help prepare for it. If you'd like to be involved, please get in touch. Also, as you will see there are some months with no events planned. If you have an idea for an event that you would like to offer to other members, please get in touch with Ali to discuss possible dates (mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk).

CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE

Canalside Community Bees, by Kath Pasteur

Join the Bee Club in 2015! If it's not too late for resolutions, then how about learning a bit more about bee keeping this year? We have line-up of fun and interesting activities planned for the coming year. We will be starting on Sunday 1st Feb with a good spring clean of our equipment giving you an opportunity to learn about the tools of the trade. On Saturday 7th



Members Ray and Yvonne helping to hive a swarm last summer

March we will be making candles with some of the past year's bees wax. Then once the weather warms up, meetings (first weekend of the month) will revolve more around actually opening the hives and managing the bees. For just £20 for the year you can get hands-on in the apiary, or you can just wait for your honey share. Members get a couple of jars of honey and the opportunity to buy more at a heavily discounted price (making it well worth the membership fee if the harvest is good). Email canalsidecommunitybees@yahoo.co.uk to get a membership form.

The Willows Care Farm, by Amy Willoughby

The Willows Project had a great, enterprise filled December with a stall at the Old Town Christmas Market, gifts for sale in the Canalside collection space, and a local florist buying some willow wreaths from us. We had a great time developing and making our products, so many thanks to Canalside members for your support.

There are quite a few changes to the Wednesday group (for adults with learning difficulties) with Sybil now running the group. She is being greatly supported by Sara, our new volunteer and they have some great Valentine's gifts coming to a health food co-op (Gaia) and collection space near you!

We also have a new participant, Annie, who is full of energy and we all have to work much harder in order to keep up with her! The group has transitioned to its new staffing very smoothly and Wednesdays are full of laughter!

The Willows is looking for people to become involved with the development and delivery of new projects and we are keen to hear from people with skills, experience and enthusiasm for our work.

Please be in touch via our e-mail: thewillowsproject@gmail.com



MEMBERS' CORNER Do you have any interesting projects, charity fund-raisers or other not-for-profit activities you'd like to promote to your fellow Canalsiders? If so, then this is the space for your free advert! Get in touch with Ali for advertising in future issues of the newsletter.



CULTIVATE | CONNECT | CHANGE

FOOD UNION is a new organisation based in Coventry aimed at tackling food poverty. Over the next few months we will be setting up a community garden, running a café with local produce, and strengthening ties with local projects. Want to know more? Email: chris.maughan@coventry.gov.uk or visit timetodigestcoventry.wordpress.com.



Would you like to run a workshop at Foundry Wood this year? Do you have a craft or skill you'd like to share? Could you run a workshop or talk in our Outdoor Classroom? Visit www.foundrywood.co.uk or get in touch with kristie@arccic.co.uk or kath@arccic.co.uk for details.

SMALL ADS Do you have any business or money-making ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then this is the space for you. Please contact Ali for future adverts.

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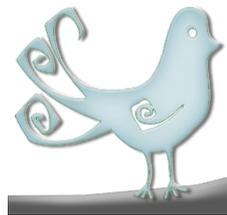
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Morning Chorus: a singing group to brighten up your Monday mornings in Leamington Spa!

Rebecca Knight, former co-leader of Songlines Community Choir, is setting

up a new group on Mondays 9.30-11.30am from February 23rd.

"All voices are welcome, we are singing for fun! All songs are taught by ear, so you don't need any experience of reading music. You will have the opportunity to learn about and improve your singing voice through body and vocal warm up sessions."

Be part of a friendly community of singers. Each session ends with a cuppa and a biscuit or two! Venue: the upstairs room at St Mary's Church, St Mary's Road Leamington Spa, CV31 1JW.

To reserve a place on the 5 week term email: rebeccaknight@naturalvoice.net, or for more information phone: 01926 778454, or visit: www.morningchorus.co

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Link to our Flickr photos for a fuller selection of photos of the past 3 months:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65686573@N02/sets/>

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Next newsletter due out end of April 2015.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – Sunday 19th April.

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