
Digging for Victory (and the Suburb's Good Life)

Wheelbarrows up the twittens, prize marrows behind the privet; earth turned with sweated brow, produce proudly on the table. What exactly is it that persuades some to forego the delights of supermarket shopping for 'growing your own'? Why do some choose careful cultivation of delicate blooms beyond the confines of their domestic plots, away from the attentions of the contract gardener and his noisy machinery?

Whether the motive be exercise, organic food, certainty of origin, creativity, peace and quiet or a passing interest in Voltaire, any resident

feeling the urge is warmly invited by the Trust to make use of its freehold allotment land in the Suburb. Those who neither till the soil nor abut those hidden open spaces may be surprised to know of the existence of the Trust's 11 allotment sites scattered around the Suburb.

Their administration is carried out by the Residents Association's Allotments Committee operating through Secretaries for each site. A modest annual rental is levied on each worked plot which is collected by the Allotments Committee and paid over to the Trust. Until now, Trust

expenditure on the allotments and overall management has been on rather an ad hoc basis. The Trust is now introducing a specified annual budget figure to be spent by the Trust on maintenance of the allotments. This will in future years be linked to the amount of rental income received by the Trust. It is intended that the Allotments Committee will mostly determine spending priorities.

The Trust hopes that this will engender a renewed sense of co-operation. Limited Trust funds mean that allotment holders' help is needed in general maintenance. Residents owning gardens bordering allotment sites are asked to ensure that boundary lines are respected and that Lease and Scheme of Management obligations regarding hedge and tree maintenance are carried out. The Trust will increasingly enforce these matters. In some places, overgrown hedges prevent sunlight and successful cultivation. It is in everyone's interest that these open spaces are maintained as viable working plots.

As a further step, the Trust intends to investigate the possibility of lottery funding to provide mains water supply to some of its sites to replace the somewhat patchy existing arrangements.

In the meantime, anyone who feels the slightest urge to get digging and planting is strongly urged to contact the Chairman of the Allotments Committee, John Freeborn, on 8455 9320. The Trust hopes that with co-operation from all parties this important Suburb amenity – part of its structure and heritage – will go from strength to strength.

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