

New Newsletter Editor

My name is Ben Hastie, and I'm a 32-year-old sometime artist and full-time freelance journalist, currently residing on Cherry Bank Road in Norton Woodseats.

Some months back I wrote an article about Hazelhurst for the Postcode Gazette; after becoming acquainted with some of the group members at various farmers markets and environmental events I've been enlisted to take over the editing of the newsletter from Bardy, who's moved on to pastures new.

Hopefully I'll be seeing some of you over the coming weeks and months in my quest to document the specific workings of the CSA for an upgraded and expanded website.

Transition Sheffield Award Nomination

Hazelhurst is among the nominees for the upcoming 2012 Transition Sheffield Awards, in recognition of the hard-work that has gone into developing a sustainable, community-focused source of organic produce.

The ceremony will be taking place from 7pm – 11pm on Thursday, November 29th at the Burton Street Function Suite in Hillsborough. It would be great to see a few of you there in celebration of similar projects across the city.

Tickets are available for £5, £8 and £12, depending on income, and can be purchased by following the web-link:

<http://www.transitionssheffield.org.uk/node/114>

Leaving do for Matt

Organic Grower Matt Holborrow will be leaving the project at the end of the year. Hazelhurst Chair Joan Miller said:

"I am very sad to report that Matt, our grower, has decided to leave at the end of December. He has done a tremendous job in getting Hazelhurst growing off to a good a start in our first full growing season. We had delicious and plentiful crops despite the extremely wet summer conditions. His knowledge is wide and deep and I have always valued his opinion on any subject. He has worked very hard including putting in many extra hours in the spring to get a completely empty field and poly-tunnel producing a full set of vegetables by July. We tried to persuade him to stay and he will be missed. We have advertised the post and hope to interview at the end of November.

Hazelhurst has been holding regular monthly socials at the Rutland Arms on Brown Street, providing a forum for people to find out more about the project, meet some like-minded characters and renew acquaintances with old friends. It seems fitting to combine the next one, scheduled for 7pm on Friday, December 14th, with a leaving do for Matt, giving group members the chance to thank him for his contribution and wish him well for the future.

Hope to see some of you there...

New Project Manager

Naomi Hinch was recently appointed as Hazelhurst's Project Manager, quickly immersing herself in the varying stages of the journey from seed to veg bag.

Naomi will be working on Thursdays and Fridays to develop and expand the various strands of the project, overseeing the communications group and managing the twitter and face-book accounts.

She was also behind the Hazelhurst stall at the upcoming Carfield Primary School Festive Fair, taking place from 12noon – 3pm on Saturday, November 24th, giving members a chance to pop along and say hello.

Annual Report Delivered to the AGM

The Hazelhurst AGM took place at the Quaker Meeting House on Wednesday, October 3rd.

The Annual Report for 2012 highlighted the £18,000 raised by the share offer and detailed the success of the veg bag scheme, currently supplying fresh produce to 35 customers.

Hazelhurst has this year been used as a model for a case study by the Co-op's Start-Up advice kit, featured in a presentation on CSAs in Ireland as well as appearing in the pages of the Sheffield Telegraph and on Radio Sheffield.

The profile of the project has also been raised with a continued presence at community festivals and local farmers markets.

The report also focused on the continued expansion and development of the volunteers, with 70 individuals on the land as well as 30 regulars taking part in harvesting, packing, delivery, administration and marketing. Over 2,500 hours have been done by the land volunteers alone.

The Hazelhurst Lane site is on track to be certified organic in March 2013, and partnerships have been established with Valley Park School and the Gleadless Valley Community Forum.

After the presentation of the report group members voted in Heather Hunt to Outreach, Education and Environmental Justice, Alison Hilton as Governance Advisor and Tony Constantino as the Treasurer.

Huw Evans spoke about his plans for the site and there was an illustrated talk by Nick Weir on a similar project in Stroud.

"It was refreshing and inspiring to see how dynamically a CSA can grow and support the community it springs from" said Volunteer Co-Ordinator Stella Hunt.

"He showed us innovative ways in which day by day problems can be overcome".

Volunteering Update by Stella Hunt

October the season of seed saving, weeding, clearing beds and compost heap making...

Nice weather for the time of year; thankfully most volunteer days have been sunny and dry.

Following the AGM we had loads of cakes left over, including C's delicious courgette muffins. While weeding the strawberry patch someone looked up and said:

“Looks like a rain cloud overhead”

“But oh no, there’s a bit of blue sky behind the dark cloud”

“Must be something Carolyn put in the muffins!”

There have been lots of children on the field this Month. Joe came with his wife and 3-year-old twins Billy and Lucas who had a great time being pushed around in the wheelbarrow time after time, and climbing up the compost heap. And eating all the cookies!

Dominic came on Sunday with his mother Lisa, helping to plant out the strawberry runners and pegging down the mypex. Some of the other volunteers took turns playing ball with Dominic, giving mum a chance to help out in the field as well.

And there were School visits!

On Wednesday, October 10th some boys from Carfield Primary School harvested potatoes and leeks and made soup on the field, supervised by Heather and Tim Hirst - great fun was had by everyone.

We clear away the gone to seed lettuces, harvesting seed from those that have set seed. One small handful goes a long way.

Composting them on the next hot heap no 3, we now have a fine row of heaps. Patrick and Connor started the first heap with a 1foot layer of weeds and planting debris in a 7ft square on the mypex. This was followed by a layer of wood chip 1inch thick and then a layer of green waste compost 1inch thick, keeping the whole thing wet with the hose constantly. The heap is built up layer upon layer until it is the height of a man, then covered by a plastic tarpaulin and weighed down with wood.

Pat and Conner are now keen compost heap makers and made another the next day, and two more with the help of Maureen and Nick and Leaf on Sunday.

On the same day we also had a huge delivery of green waste compost in an enormous lorry. The lorry could not make it up the hill so had to let out its cargo, where it was, all over the driveway! This meant we spent nearly the whole day shovelling green waste compost off the driveway. Phew!

Growers Report by Sarah Dance

With the onset of autumn we've started harvesting leeks and cabbages from the field, both of which have done well, despite a battle with hares (eating the young leeks in the spring) and slugs (enjoying the cabbages). In the tunnel now we're harvesting mizuna, chard and lettuce which should go through until the end of the year.

The turn of the season has also meant digging up all the root crops to prevent damage from frost and rot. Swede, celeriac and beetroot have all been stored in a straw clamp, made from a palette base and straw bales. This clamp will provide enough insulation to keep the crops cool and dry through the winter.

We've continued to improve soil structure and fertility with green manures. Wild white clover has been undersown in the tomato bed in the tunnel. The tomato plants are now out, leaving the clover to grow on and be dug back into the bed before spring planting. In the field we've sown rye grass on the area without crops to protect the soil from erosion over the winter. This will be ploughed back into the soil in early spring.

