

Newburgh Orchard Gardens Association

A brief history

There has been an allotment site in use at Newburgh since 1936. At that time there was a large Linoleum factory in the town which employed most of the townsfolk and many who were "lured-in" from Dundee and Perth. The factory owner had housing built for staff at York Place, which is the allotments site area, garages were also built for staff and the allotment land was given to them.

1978.

The firm went into receivership and the factory was closed, the houses were sold, (mainly to the staff). Fife Council bought the land and left it to revert to wilderness. However the allotments were and still are in use, gardeners have come and gone in that time.

Summer of 2000.

Rumours started regarding the imminent sale of the "Old factory land" which includes the allotment site. This was confirmed in the local press a few days later. Two days later an article about the decline in allotments nationally appeared in the same newspaper.

I traced the author - Judy Wilkinson, (S.A G.S.) and she advised on the steps I should take to save the allotments site.

I spoke to some of the people working the "plots" and initially was met with, "well what can we do about it" and "ahm ower auld tae fecht them noo." (in fairness he was 84).

I thought, if its only me, we've nae chance.

Hope.

About a week later I was approached by two lady gardeners who felt we should at least try to save the allotments.

Plan of Action.

I took Judy's advice and contacted both Harry Gunn and Ray Nixon, for their help we will always be grateful, and for whatever reason my contact with Harry increased.

Steps

- (i) formed a committee.
- (ii) called a meeting of all interested gardeners
- (iii) Formed our Association
- (iv) . Delegated various tasks to members willing to carry them out
- (v) Contacted and met with local Councillor (a number of times)
- (vi) Contacted and met with local community (a number of times)
- (vii) Contacted Fife Council Estates Department (many time)
- (viii). Built up a history of the site (copy sent to all members)
- (xi) Held regular meetings to keep all informed

Fife Council.

Fife Council stated that the plan was to sell-off the land and that they had not been aware of the allotments in use all these years. They also said that Newburgh was not only in need of more housing but also Leisure facilities. At last I agreed with the Council, - he (the Council Rep.) was pleased we agreed until I asked him why, if we are short of Leisure facilities, do they want to sell-off an allotment site which is up and running at no cost to them, provides 9 members of the community with a leisure pursuit suitable for male and female, young and not so young, and their families benefit.? It is healthy and environmentally friendly ad infinitum.

Outcome.

After much deliberating, Fife Council decided that we could lease the site over a ten year period.

Things we found helpful.

- (i) Liaise with people who have been over the course
- (ii) Deal in facts
- (iii) No need to fight-bawl-shout.(no-one listens to that)
- (iv) Accept that not all will be for you (even though they say they are)
- (v) Listen to others (Even if you disagree)

Again thanks to S.A.G.S. Members for all their sound advice and support.

Danny McGinley
Newburgh
1 8-02-2002