Dunchurch Allotment Association



By Paul Sanders

Allotment members in Dunchurch are pleased to welcome nine new allotmenteers this season.

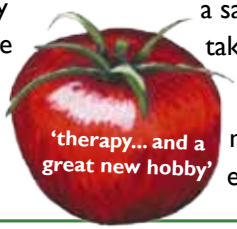
A decade ago, they would most likely have all been men. Times have changed and the new batch of allotment holders are overwhelmingly women. Membership of Dunchurch Allotment Association is edging towards equal numbers of male and female, with a waiting list predominantly made up of women. The likelihood is that female allotment holders will outnumber male in the near future.



This is not just a local phenomenon; a recent study carried out by Imperial College London found of the 682 sites in London, over 60% of the plots were held by women.



In times gone by, the allotment was largely the preserve of working men who were there primarily to produce food for the family table. In recent times allotmenteering has become more of a recreational activity than a budgeting necessity. The recent female members of the allotments at Dunchurch give a variety of reasons for taking on a plot – for some it's teaching children about food and gardening, for others it's concern for the planet and reducing food miles and for many, it's a place to retreat to, where they can work, relax and exercise in an outdoor environment.



Spring is probably the busiest time of the year for vegetable gardeners; preparing the beds, nurturing seedlings and adapting to wide swings in weather. For the new gardener, it's a time when lots of helpful advice will be freely offered – which seeds to sow, when to plant and how far apart. Enthusiastically, the hundreds of seeds in the packet will all have been planted and the experienced gardeners will nod and with wry smiles note the abundance of seedling lettuces emerging on the new plot, knowing very soon they will be offered a salad bonanza to take home.





It can be confidently said, allotments are all about sharing stories, experience and produce.