

# North Hainault Allotment Holders Association & Protection Society Ltd

## Spring Newsletter

March 2011

Registered office: 31b Tomswood Hill, Barkingside, Essex IG6 2HL FSA ref 9792

### **ALLOTMENT LEASES**

**New leases for both NNR and Tomswood will be signed very shortly thereby extending our tenancy of both sites until 28 September 2020.**

The Society will be required to adhere to a number of conditions which will include greater responsibility in terms of the condition of the sites, in particular, the need to maintain all plots in good order and avoid any unnecessary build up of waste or debris of any kind; all plot-holders will need to be mindful of this requirement and ensure that their individual plots are properly maintained. The lease similarly requires that carpets are not to be used as a means of weed control and that whilst bonfires will still be permitted they must be under the control of the plot-holder and essentially during daylight hours. There is, of course, a strong need to be considerate to other plot-holders and to our immediate neighbours in particular.

Members of the committee will continue to communicate with the local authority allotment officers on a regular basis and will attend a minimum of four allotment forum meetings per year when various issues can be discussed at length.

Rents will be subject to annual review and will almost inevitably rise in accordance with upward variations in line with the published All Items Index of Retail Prices; this will take place during late September of each year. Needless to state, the committee will always endeavour to maintain our rents at an acceptably modest level and with that in mind I would ask all members to be mindful of their personal responsibilities in terms of careful control of their plots and surroundings. Our finances will also benefit from your custom in the site shops where most of what you require on your allotments can be acquired at very competitive prices.

Copies of the leases will be made available to all members who wish to secure a personal copy for their own interest.

*With very best wishes for the new season, David Sevant, Chairman*

*Welcome again after a rotten winter.*

*The shops are open again after their mid-winter rest and the supplies of potatoes, onions, shallots and garlic are flying off the shelves, so please pop along soon if you have not already done so to secure your stock.*

*I must confess that this year I have been a bit of a fair weather plot holder – seen regularly during the spring till autumn but lesser spotted in the winter. It is with great shame that I creep in to see how many others have got a step ahead and already have immaculate plots and also how busy our stewards are while I am hibernating. As well as dealing with changes of plot holders and helping in the shop, both sites have recently filled large skips with rubbish and Anne has been busy planting pyrocanthus along the fence by Fulwell Avenue to deter those who hop over to help themselves.*

*I doff my cap to you all! So, let's get off to a good start and trust the weather is kinder to us this year. In the meantime, please pass on news for the next edition, so that it has more news and less waffle. Thanks!*

*Your Editor, Diane*

# News from the AGM

This year's AGM on November 13th was well attended, so thank you for all those that came along to join us and to Norman, Eileen and John who provided the cakes. They were delicious thank you.

It has been an eventful year with high occupancy. We have lost three long standing members through ill health but there are plenty waiting for a chance to take their place. We welcomed the addition of Stephen King from New North Road site to the committee. Stephen has been a great help in assisting the Team there. Terry agreed to continue his grass-cutting duties, but made a plea for assistance, so if you think you can help him out, please get in touch with him or David about this.

The 2008/9 accounts were very healthy, but in 2009/10 we incurred several large expenditures on security and replacing stolen goods, and this, together with the continuing clearance at both sites, means that we made a loss of £8446, leaving the Society with shareholders' funds of £28,566. We will need to make sure that our costs are kept in check this winter, while we await news of what is likely to happen to our rents under the new leases.

Our Secretary Ken, has two important anniversaries coming up. He will be 90 years old in April and we wish him our best for then, but also he has been on our committee for 25 years!

## Who are You?

One item that was raised by the New North Road Team, was that of identification of visitors. It is quite common to send along a friend to tend to a plot while on holiday, and several of you now rent your plots as a shared concern with a friend or relative, and that is fine. However, there have been recent instances where helpers have caused a considerable nuisance and the plot holder has not been available to verify the identity of these helpers or to keep them in check. We also have a small number of visitors whose only intent is to pilfer our produce but who masquerade as visiting a friend on a plot.



*We would like to remind everybody that the behaviour of all those who attend on your behalf are your responsibility and their misbehaviour can lose you your plot if no action is taken by you about it.*

But how do we know which plot the miscreants belong to? By deduction, dear Watson, which can be time consuming. It was suggested at the AGM that some form of id be carried by all persons entering the site.. Membership cards are not always carried and the presence of a valid key says merely that you are or have been a plot holder with the Society. This caused a lively discussion, so a decision was held over until our next committee meeting to give us a chance to poll a wider number of plot-holders than those present and to look into the possibilities. Ideas so far include:

- A key fob with the plot number on it – also helps when we find keys lost in the grass or in the lock!
- A smaller more portable membership card – marked with the year and plot number.
- Mandatory carrying of the original membership card by whoever is on the site.

We would appreciate your feedback please by 30 April 2011 to help us decide what to do. Thank you.

## Washing in the water butts

There was a heartfelt plea from a member who has noticed that some plot holders have been washing their tools in the water butts, instead of taking out a bucket full to do it. We use this water to wash our produce too, and this contaminates the water so please stop!



# What's on my patch?

## Tomswood Hill

The site is now fully occupied, many plot-holders have begun preparing for the growing season and those that are resisting the 'urge' to expose themselves to the elements need to think about braving the inclement weather. It's really a question of making sure that you are fully prepared to take advantage of the hopefully imminent change in soil temperature (or so I'm informed).

Thames Water have recently inspected our water supply, pipes and tanks with the result that we are instructed to remove all threaded taps, those that enable the attachment of hosepipes, or remove the threaded part of the spouts. We have also to ensure that the level of water held in the tanks does not reach the point where it can be 'sucked back' into the supply. This means that each of the tanks must be punctured to ensure that the water cannot reach a level where this can occur.

I hope that plot-holders will have a very successful and safe growing year and that we will be free from some of the more frustrating problems such as vandalism which have been increasing over the past few years.

Please remember that the allotment is open on Sunday mornings between 10:00 and 12:00.

*Anne*

## Garden Plot

Not much to say except that the wallflowers are doing well as are the weeds! My crop of mixed annuals produced a good display on the back bed last summer and I plan to do extend this to the front bed this year. Now if I could just tackle the remains of the trellis....

Also, please any snippets for the newsletter would be gratefully appreciated. *Diane*



## Contacts

### Management committee

Chair	David Sevant
Secretary	Ken Coe
Treasurer	Norman Hagger

### New North Road

Plot Lettings	Wendy Rowe
Plot Stewards	Wendy Rowe Brian Watkins Jim Smith

### Tomswood Hill

Plot Lettings Sec	Anne Sevant
Plot Stewards	Terry Byrne Norman Hagger
Garden Plot & newsletter	Diane Meakin

*These numbers are provided for Society use only.*

# New North Road

The time has come the walrus said

To talk of many things,  
Of planning plots,  
And planting seeds,  
like cabbages from Kings.

Our new range of seeds is now in store and ready for you to buy and get planting. Potatoes are ready to go at our usual competitive prices – you will not buy cheaper than ours! We have mushroom compost for sale, the best for either plots or pots. We are open every Sunday from 10am until 12 noon; if you need anything from the shop during the week, just speak to Brian Jim Steve or Wendy who, if not engaged in hard work on their own plot, will assist you. (Do not expect them to stop what they are doing immediately.)

A funny thing happened to me in January. Whilst helping me on my plot, my son in law was pushing the wheelbarrow up the path, his foot slipped off onto the next plot. The ground, having been well prepared was soft and extremely wet from the deluge of snow and rain in preceding weeks. His leg disappeared into the ground right up to his thigh! It was definitely a you've been framed moment (only no camera available!) I could not help him because I was doubled up with tears of laughter. Luckily my daughter was able to pull him out after a good five minutes. However, although hilarious, (you did have to be there!) it got me thinking about safety on the allotment. If we hadn't been with him I wondered how he would have got out. Please if you are going to the allotment; try to take a mobile phone with you in case of difficulties. Always let someone know where you are and when you are likely to return. If ever there is an emergency on your plot and you have to dial 999 for assistance, tell the operator that the allotment site is opposite number 267 New North Road, Hainault. They will not be able to locate you if you just say the allotment in New North Road.

There have been a number of petty thefts from the site. Don't keep anything of value in your shed and try to get by without a lock – it causes less damage when 'they' come looking for kit to steal. I was quite upset when relocating to a different plot I found that some of my property which had taken some time to move had been 'liberated' within a week of relocating it. The common explanation came from others to whom I told my tale was that others probably didn't know the plot I had moved to was occupied. In the interests of good relationships I would like to make it very clear to all on the site, that when a plot is vacated it does not mean that it is open season to loot anything left on it. Unless permission has been obtained from the leaving tenant or the plot secretary, who is the only person in a position to know whether a plot has been reallocated or not, nothing may be taken from a plot that is not yours. It is theft!

When I did relocate I found my new plot to be covered in rubbish. Not only tin cans, plastic bottles, discarded plastic bags, a broken rusty tea trolley, layers of rotten carpet but a whole host of items that were obviously taken to the plot because 'they might come in handy'. They hadn't! They have just been left on the plot to rust or rot. Can we please adopt a new saying on our site? Before you bring anything over just stop and think: do I really need it? What could it be useful for? and Will I ever use it? There are two or three plots that are a cause for concern in so much that if the current plot holders left; there would be an enormous amount of rubbish for somebody to clear. Please have a look around your plot and have a spring clean. Take away what you have stockpiled and never used. If you haven't needed it over the last year, then odds on you will never use it.

Some structures on the site are an eyesore and cause complaints, if yours is one please deal with it before you have to be told.

Please take responsibility for the paths directly in front and to the sides of your plot. You signed an agreement to do so when you renewed your rental.

Can we have some scarecrows this year?

Thanks, as ever, to the committee members who work hard on our site.

Wendy

