

North Hainault Allotment Holders Association & Protection Society Ltd

Spring Newsletter

March 2008

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

Welcome to our Spring newsletter

As we emerge from hibernation and get back to digging and planting ready for the season ahead, it's time to welcome all our new plot holders and say welcome back to old friends. There's been a few changes to tell you about – some are obvious, others are not and lots of news to impart so I'll get started.

The Editor

Latest Council News

You will have read in the local newspapers that the plan to sell off the allotments has been defeated... this is not quite the case.

We have been given a temporary reprieve while a committee looks at how the Council's building programme is going to be financed. They will be looking at what the Council wants to do and all the sources of money that could be used. Until that committee reports back, all land sale plans have been put on hold. We do not know what they are likely to recommend, but with the opposition that has been put up so far, the Council realises that it has a fight on its hands and needs to come up with a Plan B, fast. In the meantime, we cannot afford to get complacent, we can remind our local councillors that we are still around, we can keep our sites neat and neighbour friendly and we can work to get our vacant plots let - ultimately the best proof that the demand is there.

As an aside, did you know that there is an Allotment Forum, where representatives from all the Redbridge allotment sites, both council run and independent, get together. At the last meeting we were told that the sites overall are 62% let. However, there are two sites that have not been promoted by the council since 2000 and if these are not counted, then lettings are at 85% full.

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Reminder of annual charges

Rent per rod: £2.10 full or
£1.70 reduced

Water per rod: £1.80

Subscription £1

ie a 10 rod plot is £40 pa and
a 5 rod plot is £20.50



Trading Hut News

Our Trading Huts have re-opened for the season with a varied selection of seeds, potatoes and horticultural supplies. They are open on Sundays from 10-12am. We try to offer a good selection and be competitive on prices. If we are not, please let us know so we can sort it out.

Thanks to everyone who helped us unload the deliveries of stock, it was a great help!

You will notice that we are short on onions and shallots at the moment and will get some as soon as we can. Holland is the main source of these and they have been having major problems with fungus this year so most suppliers are short. Please make sure you thoroughly check any supplies you get.

Do you have a neighbour, friend or family member who would benefit from getting their supplies from us? Tell them about the shop and encourage them to become honorary members for just £1 per year.

Site Improvements

You must have noticed that a major tidying up has been going on over the winter months. We were fortunate in that we received some substantial proceeds from the winding up of a company in which the Society held shares. We decided that this money would be best put to use in sorting out some improvements around the sites, including hiring some heavy machinery and several skips to clear empty plots ready for letting. Between us we have filled four skips with rubbish that even we could not re-use or compost. It all looks so much better, so thank you to everyone who has helped with this effort, and let's keep it this way.

Many thanks also to Brian Watkins who replaced the floors and toilets in the toilet blocks during the summer. No longer do you have to check the pipe is still attached or that your feet aren't going to fall through the bottom, it's a nice solid piece of concrete now that nothing will shift. Well done Brian!

Phil Patricks the Allotment Officer visited both sites during March and was very impressed with the improvements we have made.

Departures

Sadly several of our older members left us this year. Two of the most prominent were Trevor Dicker and Donald Davey. Both had been very active members on the Tomswood site and were members of the management committee for many years. You may have seen the posters we put up at the time of their deaths and the article in the Ilford Recorder about 'Dave' Davey and his awards for his produce. Trevor died in August and Donald in January.

AGM

Many thanks to all of you who attended our AGM in November. It was good to see so many of you there and our thanks go to Norman and Eileen Hagger for providing the seasonal refreshments.

Each year, we are required to vote in all the main officers of the committee afresh, sometimes the names change and sometimes they don't. Alan Aldsworth decided not to seek re-election as Chair this year and Ken Coe has asked if he could reduce his commitment. I am relatively new to the Society and did not know how instrumental these two were in saving the Society back in 2000. At this time, the Society was struggling and the Council offered to take over running the sites. Alan, Ken and Norman Hagger agreed to take over the main offices of the Society and with the help of several other volunteers, have kept it going for a further eight years. Without them we may well have lost this open space to the developers back then. Thank you gentlemen!

Now we have a new threat to deal with and a new Chair to direct us. David Sevant is already known to many of you at Tomswood Hill, where he and his wife, Anne, take their turn to run the Trading Hut. David has been our lay auditor for the last few years and knows the Society and its workings very well. He is very active in various local forums and political circles, and his experience in moving among these may be invaluable over the coming months. Many thanks to David for stepping forward for this demanding role.

Ken remains as Secretary. Diane Meakin has agreed to run the newsletter, Anne Sevant and Wendy Rowe have taken over as Plot Secretaries but we still need volunteers to assist in keeping the Society running. Can you help? Call David or Ken if you can.

Contacts

Management committee

David Sevant

Ken Coe

Norman Hagger

New North Road

Plot Lettings Secretary Wendy Rowe

Plot Stewards Wendy Rowe

Brian Watkins

Jim Smith

Garden Plot & newsletter

Tomswood Hill

Anne Sevant

Terry Byrne

Norman Hagger

Diane Meakin

Scrap Metal Collection

We have a local dealer willing to collect our scrap metal. If you have any, please leave it at the car parks and we will call him when there is enough for him to collect – **please do not put it in with the green or general rubbish.**

Manure

We have several local stables delivering manure to both site car parks. Please take what you can and either use it now, or stack it to mature. A tree surgeon has also asked if we would take chippings. We agreed to try one delivery for each site, so let us know if it's useful or not.



Water Policy and other matters

May I remind you that hoses are not allowed on the sites, except where a proven disability has given you exemption, and even then, there are restrictions as to how they may be used. They should also be disconnected when not in use to avoid contamination of the water supply with stagnant water.

Copies of the Society's policy on water use were distributed to all plot holders when they renewed in October 2006. Copies can be picked up in the Trading Hut. Also on this information sheet, are tips on reducing water use, rules on bonfires, maintenance, children and animals on the site.

While on the subject of water, while we have been having to switch off the water at night, Norman walks around and checks all the tanks each day and has noticed that on several occasions, taps have been left open. If you open a tap, please close it off again! Also, despite last year's wet summer, our water bill has increased substantially and we know that although many of you are using it sensibly, some are not and that is not fair.

Iford Recorder

This newspaper has been very supportive of our campaign and has also published several letters on the subject. Please keep the letters rolling in, perhaps with different angles, photos or news items so as not to get stale. They love to hear what we've been up to and it would be good to thank them for their support.



Competition time

Now that our lettings have increased and winter is loosening its grip (ok ok I know that means it'll snow at Easter now!) the sites are buzzing again with activity. We thought it would be a good time to re-instate the horticultural competitions we used to have. There will be prizes for a range of categories to appeal to both the most serious horticulturalist and the most nervous newcomer. I for one fancy having a go at a scarecrow. It's not compulsory and it's supposed to be a lot of fun. **Would you like to organise it?**

What's on my patch?

New North Road

Most of the overgrown plots have been cleared and re-let and we have cleared our waiting list. We now have only three half plots left! The new noticeboards should be keeping you up to date with our activities. The rotten window and door frames on the Trading Hut have now been replaced and we are looking at getting the old Trading Hut brought back into use for storage. All in all, pretty good work folks!

We thought it was very nice that some of our neighbours have taken the time to pop in to say thank you for tidying up the site. Well done everyone who helped with this, it's looking really good.

Unfortunately, the compost heap at the end of the path is being misused. Despite notices to the contrary, some plot holders continue to dump all their waste material at the nearest point to the path and cannot be bothered to throw it over towards the back of the heap. This means that the front margin of the heap gradually advances along the path, blocking access to other member's plots. The members whose plots gradually become inaccessible are then left with the back-breaking task of digging out the results of others lack of consideration, in order to restore the heap to its proper margin. The compost heap is only for bramble roots, perennial weeds and plants that will not compost in plot holders own heaps. Waste material that will not compost down is not to be dumped there at any time. This includes metal, glass or plastic of any shape or form. We now regularly provide the allotment with a skip where glass and plastic can be disposed of safely, and metal left near the front gate will be collected by our friendly scrap man.

Tomswood Hill

Many thanks to the volunteers who cleared our empty plots – in particular Roger Kennedy who manned the mini digger and Anne Sevant who has been litter picking and generally tidying up . We have more to clear here as we have more empty plots to deal with, but so far we are making excellent progress. We were held up by weeks of wet weather when we could neither clear nor burn, but hopefully we'll back up to speed now, getting them ready for use.

With so much goodwill around, it is especially sad to report that rubbish is being dumped on the newly cleared plots and that the pile of bramble for burning was misused and had all sorts of other stuff added to it. We had to spend sometime removing this before we could safely burn. The plots where these rubbish piles are have now been let and will be cleared shortly, so could whoever is still dumping on there please stop! While we had lots of empty plots it was tempting to hide rubbish around the site. We can't do that any more and it is very disheartening to clear a plot only to have it dumped on again.

We will need assistance in removing the large smouldering burn pile that has not reduced as much as we hoped. Please keep an eye out for signs of when this will happen, as we will need several strong people to help with this.

Tomswood Memorial Garden Plot

As part of the clearing up effort, we have cleared the bramble half of the Garden Plot and are almost ready for planting. At the moment, I've got lots of ideas of what I could do with it, but nothing firm. Something simple to maintain and colourful. Certainly I'd like to include a fruit tree or two. If you are good at garden planning or choosing plants, please let me know as I need all the help and advice you can offer. I would like to put in a bench or two and re-instate the arch or an arbour so a source of materials and a help with carpentry would be useful too.... If you see one on a skip that's recoverable, grab it! Thanks, Diane



Reminder

Weed and stump killer ammonium sulphamate (better known as Root Out, Deep Root and Amcide) is being withdrawn from use from 22nd May 2008. Please make sure you use up any stocks of these by then.

Spare plants available

I know we all often swap or share plants and cuttings around, but not everyone is on site at the same time. Two ladies on Tomswood Hill have spare thornless blackberries and Jerusalem artichokes if anyone is interested. Call Diane for their location.

Rusty car trailer available

A previous plot holder left behind a car trailer. It has been moving from plot to plot and I think it's time it had a new home. If you feel you are up to the challenge of repairing it, great it's yours. If not, we'll be adding it to the scrap. It's a sturdy beast and the tyres are good so it would make someone very happy. Is it you? Call Anne.

Top 10 Pests

According to an RHS survey, the top 10 pests for 2007 were:

- Slugs and snails
- The harlequin ladybird – eats aphids and other ladybirds
- Vine weevil
- Joint fourth - Cushion scale and ants
- Rosemary beetle – eats rosemary, sage, thyme, lavender and perovskia
- Berberis sawfly
- Rabbits
- Lily beetle
- Cypress aphid



If you can tear yourself away from your plot for long enough, how about a trip to Spalding?

50th Spalding Tulip Parade - Flower Float Theme 'Thanks for the Memories' - Saturday 3rd May 2008

The **Spalding Tulip Parade** has been held annually since 1959 and is famous for its themed flower floats which are decorated with tulip heads and floral displays. Over 500,000 tulip heads are hand-harvested from local tulip fields and these are then individually pinned on to the floats by up to 150 'float headers' in the two days before the Parade.

The Parade follows a three mile route around the market town of Spalding, and as well as the floats it includes marching bands in colourful costumes, a Carnival Finale and a number of speciality acts. There are over 700 participants in the Parade and it is watched by a roadside audience of up to 100,000 visitors and local residents.

The **50th Parade** will be a celebration of the last five decades of the Tulip Parade with floats depicting sponsors memories over the last 50 years. There will also be additional celebration events and exhibitions in Spalding over Parade weekend as well as '**TulipMania**' events throughout South Lincolnshire and the Fens from mid-April to the end of May.

Updated information regarding the Parade can be found on <http://www.flowerparade.org>