

# North Hainault Allotment Holders Association & Protection Society Ltd

## Spring Newsletter

May 2010

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

*Welcome to our Spring newsletter*

*I think the last issue got a bit rambly, so I was planning to keep it short this time. Besides there'll be more to report in the summer and I'm hoping for a bumper crop of scarecrows to visit. Let me know if you have anything you'd like to include. Thanks, Diane*

Both sites are full with waiting lists and over the winter we have completed a wide range of maintenance tasks so that the appearance of the sites has largely improved. Nevertheless, there is always outstanding work to be undertaken and we invite **all plot-holders** to participate in that work in the interests of the Society and fellow members.

### Revised Council Allotment Leases

Revised leases have been under consideration throughout the Borough for some time and exploratory meetings have recently taken place. Council officials have provided us with a draft set of responsibilities for consideration and a copy is attached for your perusal and feedback. We would appreciate your comments as soon as possible in order that we can convey your thoughts in this matter to Council officers when we next meet.

### Security and Thefts

Despite some considerable expense in terms of anti-theft measures, the New North Road site has again been subjected to both theft and criminal damage since the New Year, with the result that our insurance arrangements have been substantially impaired. We can only do our best to maintain security on our sites and that means ensuring that the gates are securely locked at all times.

### Paths

It is the individual responsibility of plot-holders to ensure that their paths are properly maintained, that the grass is regularly cut and that no form of rubbish or debris is dumped thereon. Please be mindful of others and their personal safety.

### Inside this issue

- Leases
- Thefts – again!
- Paths
- Local site news
- Draft council responsibilities

### Contacts

#### Management committee

Chair	David Sevant
Secretary	Ken Coe
Treasurer	Norman Hagger

#### New North Road

Plot Lettings Sec	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.*

### Trading Huts

*Open Sundays 10 – 12*

Pop in and see what we've got this week, pick up some ideas and have a chat.

See you there!

# What's on my patch?

## Tomswood Hill/Fulwell Avenue

Best wishes to everybody for the new season and a special warm welcome to the many new allotmenters on our Fulwell Avenue site. Despite horrendous winter conditions, the newcomers have already started work on their plots, making them their own.

**Tidiness:** Every plot should be kept in a good condition but, keeping the whole site tidy (including the car park!) is also a priority. I will remind everybody that any unwanted material on their plot is their responsibility

**Plot numbers:** plots must be easily identified by a number displayed in a prominent way. If unsure, your plot number can be found on your membership card.

**Plastic bags:** Please don't use plastic bags as flags to deter pigeons. Pigeons do not care, they will munch regardless and the site becomes very unsightly indeed. Pigeons are a real nuisance and if somebody has an answer ..... no, not pigeon pies!

**Water:** water is extremely expensive and we all share the cost whether we use water or not. Some of us barely use any, while others spend hours watering when it really is not needed. Think hard about it, we truly do not want to be placed in a position where we have to increase the annual rent simply because of the irresponsible activities of a few selfish individuals.

**Vandalism:** Unfortunately, even through the awful weather conditions, vandals have been active on our site. Nobody likes vandals but for a newcomer it can be a devastating feeling if their plots are damaged in any way. Please don't imagine that you are being targeted, what happens is mindless and random. Keep your eyes open and report any incidents to the management. (See the poster displayed at the hut.) My email address is [annelevant@gmail.com](mailto:annelevant@gmail.com). Please feel free to email me, I will always respond.

**Rubbish:** Please do not bring any form of rubbish or household material onto the sites for burning. The local authority make very good provision for the disposal of household refuse, paper and cardboard. Just take it to your nearest re-cycling centre or to the council depot in Chigwell Road.

**All green waste is your responsibility to compost or remove as you see fit.** If you have too much to cope with, it can be taken to the Sunday collection point at the Fulwell Cross council car park or to the depot on Chigwell Road. A weekly home collection of green waste is also available from April to October.

It's been great seeing just how busy the site has been over recent weeks with everyone getting on with the new season. Keep up the good work!

Anne

## New North Road

Plot-holders here will be aware of the hard work undertaken by Brian Watkins and a few hardy souls who battled against the worst winter conditions to install our new fence and I am sure you will agree that it was well worth the effort. The cost of materials was met by the Society and we must express our sincerest thanks to all of those plotholders who gave their time and efforts to complete this and other works. Repairs to the toilet doors have also been completed, the leaky Trading Hut roof remedied, and the water meter cover have been replaced with something much lighter and more manageable.

That being said the local vandals decided they would make sure we knew that they could still get in and rampaged about the plots causing mindless damage to many sheds. I could not contact all affected as some damage was not apparent and some occupants had not provided me with their contact numbers. To my knowledge nothing was removed from the allotment – just thrown about. If you have found something that has been dumped please bring it into the trading hut so we can return it to its rightful owner. Some things that have been reported missing are hand tools, forks and a radio. Theft is a crime, please report it. The local safer neighbourhood team are desperate that you do so. If you do not report it to the police, when they arrest a suspect, your crime cannot be taken into consideration and consequently they have to release them without charge.

The earlier theft of our machinery was a major set back – just when the site was beginning to look good. In the meantime, there is no certainty that the stolen machinery will be replaced so we will all have to do that much more to keep the site looking tidy. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that you are required to maintain the paths surrounding your plot in good order and free from any obstruction (you are responsible for the path on the left hand side of your plot as you look at it from the main path). This includes the front 2 feet of your plot. This means strimmed – not using weed killer. You all signed in agreement to do this when you renewed your rental. Failure to abide by this MAY result in the TERMINATION of your rental.

The weather was unkind at the beginning of the year which put us all back in our preparation. However, you should have by now made a substantial effort on preparing your plot for the coming season. There are two or three plots that are causing concern. Potatoes and onions should be well on their way and your diary should make time for a weekly weeding patrol. There is a waiting list of people keen to take over unused plots. Remember USE IT OR LOSE IT. You will only receive one warning letter if you fail to cultivate your plot, after which the committee will terminate your rental.

We still have some potatoes and onions so if you have any space to spare come and see us you may bag a bargain.

We have started to have raffles in the trading hut. This is to help raise funds to hire skips as the council have limited us to one a year. Please support us.

Brian, Jim and I look forward to seeing you in the trading hut and on site.

Happy allotmenting and as Bruce Forsythe says, Keep weeding. (or is it dancing? I can never remember).

Wendy



## Garden Plot / Car Park

There has been little to do on the Garden over the winter so I have been concentrating my efforts on helping to clear the car park instead. Many thanks to Ziggy, David, Steve, Keith, Keith, Hicra and their families on our clearance day, and also to Anne for her regular collection of rubbish blown over the fence. Together we filled a 12 yard skip, burnt a great deal of wood and green waste, removed 12 large sacks of recyclables (mainly beer cans!) and were left at the end with a heap of soil and rotted green waste.

Recent finds have included: microwave oven, armchairs, garden recliner, electric fan, electric light fittings, window blind, vehicle parts, lino, Tesco trolley, bag of clothes, a bag of crockery and for some strange reason lots of bags of beer cans and nappies combined. Some of this was dumped over the fence, but most of it was too far from the fence for that excuse.

We were planning to hire a digger to move the heap out of the way, but are concerned about damaging the slow worms at that end of the site. Instead we are moving it slowly but surely by hand. It is a long job, so please bear with us while it is completed – and it will be completed. David has a list of people willing to help with this. In the meantime, if you could toss a spadeful or two of this soil onto the bank each time you go past, that would be great help. Somebody kindly donated us a pile of topsoil and bricks, so if you want to take any of that for your plot, you are more than welcome! (That'll create another car park space if you want a further incentive.)

Back to the garden, I forgot to repair the nest box, so that at the moment it is not in use. However, Robins have nested and reared babies in the laurel instead. I will repair the box and hopefully the blue tits will try again later.

I need to dig over part of the original main bed as nothing seems to be doing well in it. Even the mallow has died! It is full of ant nests and is generally rock hard so it needs a heavy dose of compost, so please don't expect a big fashion show from that bed soon. The new rectangular bed near the back is also a little erratic, with patches where nothing seems to do well, so if you have any ideas what I can do to rectify that I would love to have a chat with you. In the meantime, the wallflowers have struggled bravely on through the winter and are beginning to look quite good, so I have mixed in petunias around them so that as one batch dies off another is ready to take over. Hopefully it will look quite good. In the meantime, thank goodness for forget-me-nots!

Diane

p.s. Yes I know I said I'd keep it short but.....



Don't forget!

You are no longer allowed to use any product containing sodium chlorate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Societies**

The role of the allotment society is to plan, maintain, administer and manage their site including promoting the interest of plot holders, letting plots, advising on tenancy roles and ensuring they are followed and collecting and administering rents.

- Clean and maintain toilets.
- To pay all rent, rates, taxes, utilities, water and insurance bills.
- No animals or livestock shall be kept on site.
- To maintain all hedges forming part or adjoining the allotment site and keep them trimmed and pruned as necessary.
- No fruit or other trees to be planted on an allocated plot.
- No fires, fireworks or barbeques unless in a controlled environment and only at specified times and with the written consent of the authorised at the discretion of the council as per the allotment rules.
- Not to erect any building on the site or structure on the site larger than a garden shed ( we need to state the size of the shed which is already in the new allotment rules).
- No to affix or exhibit on external walls or fences of the property any placard, advert, poster or signs, unless approved by the council as per the allotment rules.
- On a quarterly basis, provide the council with full and accurate information as to the amount of lettable plots.
- The site not to be used for any other purposes than cultivation and this is at the council's discretion.
- No carpet allowed on site for covering weeds.
- Remove to the local council tip or any approved waste centre any waste, debris or rubbish discovered, found or produced by the allotments.
- Maintain all pathways and other uncultivated areas.
- Maintain and empty any rubbish bins on site.
- Provide us with occupancy statistics on a quarterly basis.
- Maintain names and addresses of the members of the society.
- To appoint a delegated person to attend a training course / workshop to advise and guide on storage of liquids / fertilisers etc.
- To ensure all allotment plots have clear numbers, which corresponds with the site plan

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Council**

- Provide one skip per year at our cost – any additional skips must be paid for by the society.
- Quarterly meetings with Parks Development Officer.
- Support from Officers to work with them to develop funding bids for capital investment.
- Information on each site on Redbridge i / Parks Development.
- Advice from Nature Conservation Rangers.
- Contribution to the Parks Development Newsletter.
- Attend allotment forum.