

# North Hainault Allotment Holders Association & Protection Society Ltd

## Summer Newsletter

August 2009

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

*Welcome to our Summer newsletter*

*Summer? Well I suppose this weather pattern of a hot May/June and damp July/August has been around for a few years now so we ought to be used to it. At least we don't have to water the plot at the moment!*

### Renewals

Rents will be due on 1<sup>st</sup> October; renewal advices will be issued during early/mid September. If you have been thinking about swapping your plot for something smaller or extending into another, please let your Site Stewards know as soon as you can. Both sites are now full with waiting lists, and we cannot accommodate these requests if we are not made aware of them at an early and convenient date.

### Don't forget.....

....now that all the plots have been let, the crops on those plots are the property of the new plotholder. We've all got used to there being 'spare' trees and fruit bushes around that are available for scrumping, but they're not spare anymore, so hands off! Similarly, if you spot neighbours popping over the fence to help themselves, please let us know without delay; our local police are always on the look-out!

### Trading Hut News

I am very pleased to report that the shops have been doing well this year, so thank you to all our patrons for your valuable support. We aim to maintain our popular lines at the most advantageous prices. To do this, we try to buy in bulk. If there is a particular product that you want, but can't see on our shelves, please ask us about it. We keep a 'wish list' in our order book to record these items and if your product is one that others will use and that we can buy at a good price we will add it to the list.

We also have clearance racks on a regular basis, so pop in and see what's happening this week.

We are in the process of deciding on the seed and seed potato varieties to be ordered for next season, so please give us your feedback as soon as possible.

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## Parking

Our car parks are busier now, so please take care to park sensibly. At New North Road the access to the path has occasionally been blocked, causing unnecessary delay when an ambulance had to be called to the site. I know it's a small car park, but please keep this clear.



## Volunteers? I thought the council ran allotments?

Many thanks to those of you who have offered your services after our plea for help last year. With so many new faces on site, I thought it was a good time to remind everyone how the site is managed.

The majority of allotment sites in Redbridge are run directly by the council and use council employees/contractors to undertake the maintenance of the main paths and plumbing. Their rents are set centrally across all sites regardless of size or condition. Some allotments sites are run by societies who rent the land from the council and deal with all management and essential maintenance themselves using their own volunteers and contractors or council services where appropriate. These societies set their own tenant rents with the aim of covering their costs and protecting the interests of their members. Both directly let and society run sites have representatives at the Redbridge Allotment Forum meetings where we discuss matters relating to all sites in Redbridge and where we benefit from an opportunity to exchange ideas.

NHAA occupy two allotment sites, one at Fullwell Avenue (Tomswood Hill) and the other at New North Road. We keep costs down by careful maintenance and management and by employing the invaluable skills and services of plot-holder volunteers where possible. There is a management committee with representatives of both sites that meets monthly to discuss progress and issues on the sites. . All allotment holders are welcome to pass requests, ideas and criticism to the committee for discussion throughout the year and especially at our AGM in November.

## Scarecrows and inspiration

We still haven't had a volunteer for running a competition, but I saw that a scarecrow has appeared on Fulwell Avenue, so I had a wander round both sites with my camera. I've slotted photos in this issue and I hope you like them. Well done – great ideas!

I was very impressed with what I saw when I walked around. If you normally go only to your plot and back please take the time to have a look and see what else is going on. You can pick up some great ideas. I especially love the pebble path at Tomswood, the giant corn at New North and the multicoloured rows you find all over the site.



Stephen Evans plot 10, NNR

# What's on my patch?

## New North Road

I can't believe how time has flown this year and how the weeds have grown and continue to flourish when we take the odd week off for a holiday. By now, you are probably harvesting the fruits (and vegetables) of your efforts and isn't that what it is all about? The taste, the freshness and knowing that you have nurtured what you have on your plate from seed! Delicious!

It is disappointing to see that although all are rented, a number of plots remain un-worked this year. I totally understand those who have unforeseen circumstances thrust upon them, but for a few it seems that the task was just too much and they have left the plot to grow weeds rather than contacting to admit it was a mistake to take it on in the first place.

The committee have now decided, that plots that haven't been worked over the last year will not be re-rented to the current occupiers (don't rush out to dig – its too late!), but will be let out for next season to those heading the waiting list, who it is hoped, will have the time and commitment to clear and cultivate their plots.

I must remind all plot holders that you are expected to keep your paths tidy. Many are failing in this respect and it does make the whole site look uncared for. We have strimmers and lawnmowers for hire – it doesn't take long and looks so much nicer after, as well as making your personal access easier.

A lot of time is taken up by the continuing debate regarding water and its use. Before I lead off on one again, I must bring the latest quarterly Thames Water bill at New North Road to your notice. It was £1093.67. This was ten times that incurred by our colleagues at Tomswood. Watering with some has become obsessive – doing so even after days of heavy rain. The use of hosepipes is frowned upon. If you must use them, then only before 9am and after 5pm and even then, primarily to fill your water butts to assist your hand watering. Under no circumstances may hosepipes be left on while you go off to do other things. If our water usage is not lowered to more reasonable levels, then your yearly rental will inevitably rise. Unfortunately the actions of a few, as ever, impact on the majority.

Some plot holders have reported the appearance of blight again this year on tomatoes and potatoes. A good spraying with an anti fungal agent such as Bordeaux mixture will help protect young plants. Remember that if it strikes you, you should remove the blighted plants and burn them, preferably off site.

Bordeaux mixture and other fungicidal agents are stocked in our shops.

Finally, I would like to thank Brian and Jim for their continued hard work around the allotment. Also, thanks to Irfan for helping out in the shop on Sundays. He has gone to Turkey for a couple of months but we hope we can entice him back to help us again when he returns.

Enjoy your allotment.

Wendy



## Tomswood Hill/Fullwell Avenue

We have welcomed many new plot-holders this year and most have made a substantial contribution to the society and to the site. Established plot-holders continue to use their best endeavours in a wide variety of ways and the site is showing real signs of improvement.

However I need to clarify a few points:

### **Car park:**

A disgrace, that's for sure. It appears that there is some confusion as to how to dispose of rubbish despite clear rules about this in the last newsletter. If you are an established plot-holder, your rubbish is your responsibility, not something for the management team to deal with. There is just one exception to this rule and that is where some plots have been left in poor condition for several years and have been let to new plot-holders. Only in those circumstances do we consider it reasonable that, **by arrangement**, those new plot-holders should be permitted to deposit old carpets and other unwanted debris on the car park. Metal can be stored for re-cycling as can litter that finds its way over the perimeter fences (in this case in bags please).

**Under no circumstances should vegetable matter of any kind be dumped in the car park. It is your responsibility and yours to compost. If you do not compost then the London Borough of Redbridge operates an efficient green waste collection service from outside your home so take it home with you. Alternatively you can take your green waste to Fullwell Cross Car Park on Sunday mornings/afternoons during the Summer months when a collection service is available. A word of warning; do not 'dump' any material whatsoever at Fullwell Cross Car Park, it is an offence and can attract a substantial fine or even a custodial sentence in certain circumstances.**

Skips are available through the local authority and whilst the allotments officer has been extremely helpful in the past and supplied skips free of charge; that level of generosity cannot continue forever. The London Borough of Redbridge has a major financial struggle on its hands and we must play our part in minimising that problem to the very best of our ability.

**Please, help us keep the car park tidy and safe to use.**

**The old saying 'dirt attracts dirt' seems too true in our case.**

### **Water:**

The water we use is metered and **very** expensive. Leaks cost a lot of money and we have made every effort to undertake repairs as soon as we are advised of the problem, however caused. Both vandalism and plot-holder carelessness are the principal causes of damage to the water supply and whilst there is little that we can do in cases of vandalism, we urge you to take care when digging close to the pipes; please therefore make yourself fully aware of the position of the pipes and that simple act should reduce the number of occasions on which the water supply needs to be turned off at the main.

**Now, the other problem, not widespread but significant: over watering.**

Over watering is practised by quite a few people and although they have been spoken to, they think they can get away with it if they come early or late and that we will not notice. What do I think of it? Not printable. **The fact is that we all have to pay for the selfish methods of a few.** Should this continue, should we start to impose 'on the spot' fines? Is this what you want?

**Paths:**

There should be a clear path on the left-hand side of your plot and it is your responsibility to keep it clear. We deal with the main paths on your behalf. Sometimes there will be branches growing across coming from the neighbour's plot. Either speak to your neighbour about it, or, if you prefer, ask me to do this.

When you plant a small fruit tree, try and visualise how far it will spread or accept it will have to be cut back to keep paths clear.

**Rents:**

Rents have to be paid on time. Neither I, nor any other members of the committee wish to have to become debt collectors. If there is no contact within fourteen days after the date when the rent is due, your tenancy may be terminated. Non-compliance is not an option.

*Anne*



## Tomswood Memorial Garden

I'm making really good progress here. The new paths are now laid, a bench installed and the new beds are being filled as and when I get inspiration. This year I filled the new rectangular bed with summer bedding with mixed results. Some geraniums didn't get going but the black eyed susan, bizzy lizzies and verbena did well so my bands of colour haven't really worked out, but hey, I'm learning! Note for next year, use more tobacco plants.

The good news is that the clematis, roses and most of the perennials are doing really well and the hollyhocks have been spectacular. I was a bit ruthless and trimmed back the mallow which had got far too big, but it didn't recover. I've transplanted a neighbour's hebe into it's spot but it doesn't look very healthy either, so that bed is looking a bit bedraggled. Hmm. On another bed I seem to have sprouted several baby yuccas, so if you know how best to deal with these, please get in touch. Similarly, if anyone has tips of dealing with ants nests I'd be very grateful as I seem to have an awful lot of them! These new beds have proved to be much more weed ridden than the others so it's been a real challenge to keep on top of it all. If anyone would like to help me with the garden you would be more than welcome, whether on the odd occasion or on an 'adopt a bed' system, I'm open to all offers.

I haven't forgotten the children with planning this. I hear that some of our younger members enjoy running around the new path and I hope they've spotted the spectacular flowers on the sempervivum in the planters. The bird box had a very active family of blue tits which was a joy to watch. We also have plenty of sage, curry and thyme for cooking and lavender for sniffing. Try the new chocolate mint, but please be careful of the new variegated Rue as it comes with a warning to avoid touching the leaves on a sunny day. I read that after I'd been running my fingers through a larger specimen on a hot summer's day and commenting how soft the leaves were. I suffered no ill effects, but you have been warned.

Just a couple of plots along from me, and one path over, is Anne's wildlife area, which she and Eileen have been keeping in trim. Eileen has planted a really nice border of wildflowers along one side and we've seen several good caterpillars on it. Well done to both of them.

Many thanks to those of you who have left me plants and seeds and to the committee and other members who have been very supportive of what I am trying to do.

Come along and see what's occurring.



*Diane*

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## Contacts

### Management committee

David Sevant	Chair
Ken Coe	Secretary
Norman Hagger	Treasurer

### 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