

Plan your 2012 celebrations

National Allotments Week is a celebration of the British allotment movement throughout the UK

National Allotments Week exists to highlight how brilliant allotments are. They not only bring communities together, provide space for growing and fresh air for individuals and families alike, but they benefit wildlife and help to keep our cities breathing. It's an opportunity for those with plots to show off their hours of hard work while those without allotments to put pressure on local authorities to supply further plots.

Unfortunately allotments are under threat. Each year the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Limited supports hundreds of allotments holders who are fighting off proposals from landlords to dispose of

their allotment land; and in 2011 alone, we worked on 14 Section 8 Orders, ensuring the majority of these sites were protected through the law. In a recent survey of our members 74% said it was the threat of losing their plots to land developers that worried them most about the future of allotments.

Did you know that if all the allotments in the UK were added together, they would cover 58 Hyde Parks? Just imagine what would happen to our ecosystem if this land was lost to developers - billions of insects and animals would be wiped out, the risk of flooding in towns and cities would increase and air pollution would intensify - not to mention the

detrimental impact it would have on people's health and wellbeing.

So to celebrate this year's National Allotments Week, we are asking everyone to show their love for allotments by either holding or attending a 'Party on the Plot' because if we don't shout about them, then who will.

To register for this year's National Allotments Week (open to all) and to receive your free publicity guide email natsoc@nsalg.org.uk or call 01536 266 576. For more information and ideas, click on the National Allotments Week 'tab' at www.nsalg.org.uk.

It's never too early to start planning. The event in 2012 will be held from August 6 - 12.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOSEPIPE BAN

Several Water companies have announced a Hosepipe Ban since 5th April 2012 and though it's been the wettest April for over 100 years much more rain is needed to fill depleted groundwater stocks. Sadly this rain wasn't available during the last two winters when groundwater levels are usually replenished. Rain during the summer months is largely taken by plant growth and evaporation. May is also set to see lots of rain, though the water companies are still expecting to keep hosepipe bans in places for much of this year.

WAITING LIST

Since its closure in June 2008, numbers of people on the waiting list have fallen from 300 to 127. The decision to close the list had been taken with regret but we simply could not keep up with demand. We were also concerned that we were continuing to accept membership fees from residents who have little hope of renting an allotment for many years to come. The Society is continuing to lobby the Council for more allotment provision in the borough, and members and others seeking an allotment in Hackney are encouraged to add their weight to this demand.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD 5TH OCTOBER 2011 AT ST MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTRE, N16

PRESENT:

Penny Miller (chair), **June Lancaster** (secretary and Church Walk site rep), **Jackie Breakwell** (treasurer), **Jessica Datta** (Spring Hill site rep and minute taker), **Vikki Yapp** (Aden Terrace rep), **Jack Eldon** (Leaside site rep), **Philip Turner** (Queensbridge Road site rep) and approximately **35 members**.

APOLOGIES: Henrietta Soames, Diana Whitworth, Philip Pearson, Jon Fuller, Sue Fairbrother, Anna Dixon, Chris Bowler and John Slade

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the 2010 AGM were agreed as a true record.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Penny Miller reported that there were around 150,000 people in Hackney, living in 100,000 households, and there were only 125 allotments. The waiting list of 300 has been closed to new applicants for three years and so the only way to meet demand is to increase the number of sites available. She suggested members put pressure on Hackney council to increase provision. The allotment society began 32 years ago in

response to an officer in the planning department who asked for suggestions from residents to make use of local pieces of land. There is pressure on land for building and it is thought that the council now favours community access garden projects rather than allotments. The history of allotments goes back to the time of Elizabeth I when common land was enclosed. Despite the difficulty of finding land for allotments, the National Trust has recently created 1000 allotments on their land although unfortunately none in Hackney. The Community Right to Reclaim Land is a new right to request to bring publicly owned vacant or under-used land into use. A government database of sites is available for searching. This might be a mechanism for identifying potential new allotment sites.

Regarding neglected plot letters, eight have been sent out in the last year representing around six percent of plot holders. The chair asked those who were having difficulties working their plots because of, for example, ill health or caring responsibilities to contact site reps or committee members.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Jackie Breakwell reported that expenditure was lower than last year but that expenditure still exceeded income by a small amount. Income (from rent and dues) was slightly lowered as the waiting list has shortened. In response to a question, she reported that the total rent to Hackney council was £560 per year. Leases run to approximately 2016.

A member reported on the new Eastern Curve Garden in Dalston which is community run and which should act as an incentive to develop new growing projects.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Penny Miller was re-elected as Chairperson
(*prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell*)
Henrietta Soames was re-elected as Vice-chair

(*prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell*)

Nancy Korman was elected as Secretary
(*prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jackie Breakwell*)

Sarah Kissack was elected as Treasurer
(*prop: June Lancaster; sec: Jessica Datta*)

Amanda Scope was re-elected as Newsletter Editor
(*prop: June Lancaster; sec: Penny Miller*)

Maggie Henton was re-elected as Auditor
(*prop: Jessica Datta; sec: June Lancaster*)

Bob Geater was re-elected as Auditor
(*prop: Jackie Breakwell; sec: June Lancaster*)

Joss Bany was re-elected as an additional committee member
(*prop: Philip Turner; sec: Eugene Clerkin*)

SITE REPRESENTATIVES

Aden Terrace: Vikki Yapp was re-elected

Church Walk: Merel Reinick was elected

Leaside: Diana Whitworth, Ian Dick and Jack Eldon were (re-)elected

Overbury Street: Anna Harding and Amanda Scope were re-elected

Springdale Road: Annie Wilson was re-elected

Spring Hill: Jessica Datta, Philip Pearson and Jason Cole were (re-)elected

Spring Lane: Simon Hughes was re-elected

St Kilda's Road: Henrietta Soames was re-elected

Queensbridge Road: Philip Turner was re-elected

The chair thanked Emily Mytton (Spring Hill) and June Lancaster (Church Walk), site reps who were standing down, for their contribution over the last year.

BEST PLOT AWARDS

for winners pls see p3 of this newsletter

ITEMS RAISED BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Neglected plot policy – this issue is already under discussion by the committee which will report to members when decisions have been made.

Spring Hill – a member has asked for Spring Hill to become an organic site. The chair has asked him to survey Spring Hill plot holders on their views.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Questions from the floor:

A member asked after the bees at Spring Hill. Jessica Datta reported that they had safely survived last year's cold winter and, despite having swarmed, were thriving.

A plot holder asked how many people are currently on the waiting list. There are 127.

Suggestions were made for improving site security. These included raising the height of fences, planting prickly shrubs around perimeters and putting up signs deterring entry.

The chair thanked officers June Lancaster and Jackie Breakwell, who are both standing down from the committee, for their contribution to the society. Presents and applause were given.



SITE VISITS AND PLOT AWARDS 2012

Annual site visits will take place at the end of June in order to award prizes for best plots. The criteria are creativity, variety of crops, most improved and productivity. Other factors include tidiness of verges, reasonable control of weeds and overall attractiveness of the plot. As well as deciding on the awards, failing plots will be taken note of. The results will be announced at the AGM.



Plot Awards 2011

Congratulations to the winners of last year's plot awards

ADEN TERRACE

Christine Hathway
and Sean Meany
plot 24

SPRING LANE

Justine Armatage
and Charlie
plot 10

LEASIDE

G. Saha
plot 1

SPRING HILL

Andrea Sinclair
plot 17b
and Claire Tyler
plot 22

N16 SMALL SITES

Maggie Wilkinson
Church Walk
plot 6

E5 AND E8 SMALL SITES

Annie Blackmore
and Patrick Spence
Overbury Street
plot 4



HAS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR

Penny Miller -
pmsrink@yahoo.com

VICE CHAIR

Henrietta Soames -
8809 4725

SECRETARY

Nancy Korman -
secretary@
hackneyallotments.org.uk

TREASURER

Sarah Kissack -
sarah.kissack@uwclub.net

SITE

REPRESENTATIVES

ADEN TERRACE

Vikki Yapp - 7923 1816

CHURCH WALK

Merel Reinick -
merel@btinternet.com

LEASIDE ROAD

Ian Dick -
ian.dick@lineone.net,
Diana Whitworth -
dianawhitworth@aol.
com, and Jack Eldon -
8806 7246

OVERBURY STREET

Anna Harding -
anna@modrex.com, and
Amanda Scope -
ascope@mac.com

QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD

Phillip Turner -
pturner@ahmm.co.uk

SPRING HILL

Jessica Datta -
j.datta@blueyonder.co.uk,
Phillip Pearson -
phillip.pearson@
blueyonder.co.uk, and
Jason Cole -
jason.cole@phonecoop.
coop

SPRING LANE

Simon Hughes -
samphire66@yahoo.co.uk

SPRINGDALE ROAD

Annie Wilson -
7254 0972 -
vellalawilson@yahoo.com

ST KILDA'S ROAD

Henrietta Soames -
8809 4725

SOWING CALENDAR

www.realseeds.co.uk

JUNE

... still time to sow most of the summer crops, although starting to get a bit late for courgettes, squashes & cucumbers. From the middle of the month start to sow crops for autumn and winter.

OUTSIDE

- French and runner beans
- Root crops including carrots, beetroot, turnips, and also swedes for winter
- Herbs including parsley, coriander
- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- Keep sowing salads, after the middle of the month including oriental salads
- Fennel, Sweetcorn

IN TRAYS OR POTS SOMEWHERE WARM

- (*germinator/warm airing cupboard etc.*)
- Courgettes, squashes, cucumbers and melons

IN A POLYTUNNEL OR GREENHOUSE

- Basil & coriander
- Plant out summer crops started indoors

JULY/AUGUST

Hopefully you'll be having lots of sunshine, but enough rain to keep things growing. Don't forget to keep sowing over the summer, there are lots of things to put in now that will keep your garden productive over the winter and into next year.

OUTSIDE

- Dwarf french beans in warmer areas only
- Last sowings of root crops including carrots, beetroot, turnips (July)
- Winter radishes and swedes
- Swiss chard & leaf beet
- Oriental greens and turnip greens
- Lettuce, moving over to winter varieties by late August, rocket, cress and salad radishes
- Fennel
- Spring cabbage (from late July)
- Bunching and spring onions

IN A POLYTUNNEL OR GREENHOUSE

- Coriander
- Salads, particularly in later summer as other crops finish and you have space available.