



## Growing Opportunities

Help us reduce waiting times for plots

Most members are probably aware that the Committee has been looking at various options to try and reduce the length of time members are having to wait for a plot – a particularly long wait in N16.

Thanks to an impassioned AGM plea from our Vice-chair, we now have a volunteer 'development coordinator' to investigate potential additional allotment land in the borough. If you spot any disused land in Hackney which could be converted into a valuable growing plot, send as much information as possible to our development coordinator who can be contacted via the link on our website ([development@hackneyallotments.org.uk](mailto:development@hackneyallotments.org.uk)).

Research so far indicates that in order to make a success of this, HAS may need to consider setting up some sort of sub-group to work together as the council seems more open to community involvement projects than to handing over any precious land for 'private' allotments.

### ON OTHER FRONTS:

Some months ago the manager of the Beecholme Estate Allotment contacted us to say she was looking for volunteers to help her regenerate a neglected site. This would essentially be on a communal basis (though with a few beds for individual use). An email was sent to waiting list members inviting them to get in touch directly interested. Unfortunately the response was not overwhelming.

We were also contacted by a local housing association which owns a lot of street level properties in the borough. They're looking for volunteers to help tenants, for example elderly people, who can't manage their gardens. Emails have again been going out to the waiting list, but with nil response so far from the top 40 members mailed.

Members will not lose their waiting list place if they participate in either of these schemes.



## WEEDKILLERS

When deciding how to deal with your weeds, think carefully before using weedkillers.

Digging up or smothering with sheet mulch is a better way to deal with most weeds.

If it's absolutely necessary to use weedkiller, use one that doesn't persist in the soil, like glyphosate, which is de-activated when it reaches the soil, and the weeds can be composted. Some weedkillers persist in the soil for up to two years, and should be avoided on allotments. (Anything that is labelled 'prevents re-invasion' or 'residual,' eg. 'Path Clear.')

When using weedkiller is the only way, for example with an invasive weed like Japanese Knotweed, or where bindweed is coming from under a concrete path, buy a glyphosate weedkiller that can be painted onto specific plants using the supplied applicator. Avoid spraying, as this can damage other plants, including those of your neighbours. For a larger area, use a dedicated fine watering can. If you're having to use weedkiller near the border of your neighbour's allotment, please discuss it with them first.

There is an organic weedkiller on the market. I don't know how effective it is, but it is non-poisonous. Look on <http://mistral.ie/details.php?code=R5002>. For general articles about weedkillers, see the RHS website ([www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)).

## NOTICEBOARD

### DRUG PARAPHERNALIA ALERT

*If anyone should come across blue plastic bags containing brown paper bags holding used needles etc. DO NOT touch, but phone Peter on 07985692886.*

*He is the Hackney specialist in safe disposal of them and will pick them up within the hour.*

### 30% OFF ORGANIC SEED ORDER

Sarah Kissack will be making a group order on behalf of the HAS, which means members making orders will receive a discount of up to 30%. Collection will be from Sarah, tel 020 8800 0942 or 07754 095062. See [www.organiccatalogue.com](http://www.organiccatalogue.com) or phone 0845 130 1304 for paper catalogue, and email your orders to [sarah.kissack@uwclub.net](mailto:sarah.kissack@uwclub.net) by the end of January.

# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD 6TH OCTOBER 2010 ST MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTRE N16

**PRESENT:** Jon Fuller (President), Penny Miller (Chair), Henrietta Soames (Vice-chair and St Kilda's site representative), Jackie Breakwell (Treasurer), June Lancaster (Secretary and Church Walk site representative), Joss Bany (committee member), Guy Dehn, Jack Eldon, Annie Wilson, Philip Turner, Emily Mytton, Simon Hughes (site representatives) and approximately 40 members

**APOLOGIES:** received from Jessica Datta, Pat Corrigan, Philip Pearson and Martin Klurowicz

## MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the AGM 2010 were agreed as accurate and there were no matters arising.

The president opened by welcoming everyone to the meeting and reporting briefly on his own successful growing year with the exception of late developing tomatoes due to the wet August.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Jackie Breakwell presented the statement of accounts and reported that expenditure had exceeded income. The reduction in income was almost wholly due to the reduction in interest rates. One notable item of expenditure was the purchase of a laptop for the secretary for the management of the 'Windows' based membership records. Forthcoming tree work, particularly at Aden Terrace, is likely to have an adverse impact on the Society's finances in future years.

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The chair's report, delivered by Henrietta Soames, noted that just 9 of the Society's plots had been re-let during the year and that 6 neglected plot letters had been issued. With a waiting list of 147 it was imperative that those members fortunate enough to have a plot managed it with due care and those that couldn't cope should consider surrendering their plots. It was emphasised that the Society is run on a purely voluntary basis and committee members needed to be provided with support from the general membership. This was particularly the case with the secretary's workload, the search for new plots and the recent initiative to work with a local housing association in the management of the gardens of their street properties.

## SPECIFIC SITE REPORTS

### Aden Terrace

It's been a good year with plots being generally well tended and also quite productive. I would have liked to have completed more tree work ... but only achieved a small amount. A quiet year!

### Church Walk

After a slow start due to the cold winter, it's been one of the best years I can remember in

terms of plot maintenance and productivity. The site as a whole was looking fantastic during the summer...

### Leaside

All the plots are looking good - lots of late crops coming through - maybe down to the harsh winter and wet August? Middle tap still leaks but has been looked at by Joss and needs more attention.

### Overbury Street

We've had a good year, no major problems apart from a recurring lock issue which is hopefully sorted now. We've let two plots (which is 25% of what's available), with one going back on the market due to illness - we're sad to see the plothead go as she did a fantastic job with it!

### Queensbridge Road

A patchy year at Hackney's smallest site. Despite the cold winter, spring was very productive. Cabbages, chard and purple sprouting were all abundant, enjoying more light thanks to some tree pruning. However, summer was difficult, and the lack of water supply caused problems in June and July when the water butts ran dry. One of the 3 plots is currently being re-let and we look forward to a new neighbour in the near future.

### St Kildas

All OK but fox problems. Henrietta is trying chilli flakes with some success so far.

### Spring Hill

The most exciting development at Springhill this year has been the introduction of bees to the site on the initiative of plot holder, David Harradine. David took a course in beekeeping at Hackney City Farm and set up his first hive on the roof of the site shed in early summer. Plot holders have welcomed the bees with enthusiasm and there has been a lot of interest in their progress. To date they are doing very well and have been spotted roving far and wide over the marshes. David is settling them in for the winter and we all hope they will survive. No honey has been collected this year but we are looking forward to sampling it in 2011. Plans to build changing rooms for rugby

and other players on the sports field have progressed very slowly so there have been no Springhill stakeholders meetings in the last year. Jessica previously attended these with the hope that we might be able to expand our site as part of this project. The planning application for the changing rooms has recently been validated, however, and will go to the council's planning subcommittee in October. We have been informed that stakeholder meetings will resume after a decision has been made.

There has been little change in plot holders and, in general, it has been a stable year. There were some thefts from plots over the summer and we do not know how intruders got in but these seem to have stopped in recent months. We have bought three shiny red wheelbarrows. Thanks to Guray who produced a map of the site with plot holders' names giving our 41 plot holders no excuses for not knowing their neighbours. Thanks to Emily for arranging for compost to be delivered and, after many months, for managing to get hold of keys for the main gate.

We have plans for a clear up weekend with a skip (30-31 October) which will include tidying up some compost bins, removing rubbish and an opportunity for plot holders to get together.

### **Springdale Road**

All plots are being worked at Springdale and we've had a successful growing season. The warm sunny Spring led to a bumper soft fruit harvest and the light levels have been improved by our neighbours cutting back their trees. Foxes spreading rubbish have been the only unwelcome visitors since the fencing was put up.

### **Spring Lane**

Two new ploholders joined site; New hand pump installed - now much improved water supply. Tree work - two large willow branches dropped (one across plots) but removed quickly by Parks dept. Drama of rat in shed (departed). Japanese Knotweed at north end of site currently under control with glyphosate.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Various methods of deterring foxes were discussed.

Arising from the Chair's report Sarah Kissack offered to provide some support to the secretary, Liz Anderson offered to help liaise with the housing association regarding the management of street property gardens and Julia Clarke offered to collate research into potential new sites.

The tree roots by the gate at the west end of Aden Terrace are causing problems and large trees in the vicinity are shading plots. The Hackney Council tree officer has offered advice but the Society will have to pay for any tree works. Item to be included on the agenda of the next committee meeting.

Thefts of crops have been reported. The general view was that biological control – pyracantha and similar – was the only answer.

The length of the waiting list was discussed with the need to vigorously apply the neglected plot policy to ensure fairness to waiting members. At a later point it was confirmed that the waiting list will remain closed for the present.

The lack of a proper water system at Spring Lane was raised. Agreed that this should be an item for the next committee meeting.

A representative from a local bee-keeping association (and waiting list member) asked about the possibility of keeping hives on allotment sites. It was suggested that an article on this subject be submitted for the next newsletter.

The meeting closed at about 9pm.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Penny Miller** - pmsrink@yahoo.com - was re-elected as Chairperson.  
**Henrietta Soames** - 8809 4725 - was re-elected as Vice-chair.  
**June Lancaster** - secretary@hackneyallotments.org.uk - was re-elected as Secretary.  
**Jackie Breakwell** - 7249 2051 - was re-elected as Treasurer.  
**Maggie Henton and Bob Geater** were re-elected as auditors.  
**Amanda Scope** - ascope@mac.com - was re-appointed as Newsletter editor.  
**Joss Bany** was re-elected as Committee member without portfolio.

### **SITE REPRESENTATIVES**

**Aden Terrace:** Vikki Yapp - 7923 1816 - vikkiyapp@hotmail.com - was elected..  
**Church Walk:** June Lancaster - 7254 5756 - june.lancaster@rubicon-benefit.com - was re-elected.  
**Leaside Road:** Guy Dehn and Diana Whitworth - dianawhitworth@aol.com - were re-elected and Jack Eldon - 8806 7246 - eldon.kerr@blueyonder.co.uk - was elected.  
**Overbury Street:** Anna Harding - anna@modrex.com - and Amanda Scope - ascope@mac.com - were re-elected.  
**Queensbridge Road:** Phillip Turner - pturner@ahmm.co.uk - was re-elected.  
**Spring Hill:** Jessica Datta - j.datta@blueyonder.co.uk - Phillip Pearson - philip.pearson@blueyonder.co.uk - and Emily Mytton - emilymytton@yahoo.com - were re-elected .  
**Spring Lane:** Simon Hughes - samphire66@yahoo.co.uk - was re-elected.  
**Springdale Road:** Annie Wilson - 7254 0972 - vellalawilson@yahoo.com - was re-elected  
**St Kilda's Road:** Henrietta Soames - 8809 4725 - was re-elected.

The appointment of newsletter editor, additional committee member and site representatives all to be ratified at the next committee meeting.

The president and members acknowledged the important work of committee members & site representatives during the year.



## Plot Awards 2010

Plot inspections were held in July; criteria for the awards were variety of produce, creativity, productivity and most improvement. Congratulations to the winners!

### Best plots

**ADEN TERRACE**  
**Bronwen Lloyd-Jones**  
plot 14

**E5/E8 SMALL SITES**  
**Ranjit Saha**  
plot 3 Queensbridge Road

**N16 SMALL SITES**  
**Deborah Jefferies**  
plot 5 Church Walk

**LEASIDE ROAD**  
**Ian Dick**  
plot 11

**SPRING LANE**  
**Christine Turner**  
plot 18

**SPRING HILL**  
**David Harradine**  
plot 25

### Best effort by a new plotholder

**N16 SITES**  
**Pat O'Leary**  
plot 1 Aden Terrace

**E5/E8 SMALL SITES**  
**Aimee Snell**  
plot 8 Leaside Road

### Most improved

**N16 SITES**  
**Vikki Yapp**  
plot 19 Aden Terrace



## SOWING CALENDAR

[www.realseeds.co.uk](http://www.realseeds.co.uk)

### FEBRUARY

#### IN TRAYS OR POTS

Round seeded (as opposed to wrinkle seeded) peas, as well as winter salads and oriental greens, to plant under a cloche or mini-tunnel outside in March

#### IN TRAYS OR POTS SOMEWHERE WARM

*(germinator/warm airing cupboard etc).* They will need warmth & light to grow on

► Tomatoes, peppers and aubergines

#### IN A POLYTUNNEL OR GREENHOUSE

► Winter salads and oriental greens (mizuna, mibuna, mustard greens, pak choi, mispoona, komatsuna, winter varieties of lettuce, land cress)  
► Sow carrots in the tunnel for an early crop

### MARCH

... depending on the year, the soil may be starting to warm up by mid March, and by April the main spring sowings should be getting under way

#### OUTSIDE *(depending on weather and soil conditions)*

► Root crops including the first sowings of beetroot, turnips, carrots & parsnips  
► Mangetout, podding peas & broad beans - although these often do better in pots/trays  
► The first sowings of summer salads including lettuces, endive, cress, rocket, radishes  
► Brassica crops for eating this summer & into the winter - kale, summer and (early) winter cabbages, brussels sprouts, purple sprouting broccoli, calabrese and cauliflowers  
► Swiss chard & leaf beet  
► Leeks  
► Radishes and spring onions

#### IN TRAYS OR POTS

If you have slug or weed problems, then you may find all of the brassica crops, leeks and salads do better started in trays/modules and then planted out when they are better able to withstand them. Similarly broad beans and peas may have to be started indoors if you have trouble with mice

#### IN TRAYS OR POTS SOMEWHERE WARM

*(germinator/warm airing cupboard etc).* Bear in mind that they will need warmth & light to grow on  
► Courgettes, squashes,

cucumbers and melons (not too early, or they will get too large before the weather is good enough for them to go outside)  
► Tomatoes, peppers and aubergines, ideally by the end of March  
► Celery/celeriac (again need heat to germinate)

#### IN A POLYTUNNEL MINI-TUNNEL, GREENHOUSE OR CLOCHE DIRECT INTO THE BORDER

► Summer salads  
► French beans for an early crop  
► Herbs including basil, coriander & parsley