



Addison Gardens Allotments SUMMER NEWSLETTER No. 10 September 2011

Dear Members,

After a long and very cold winter the spring and early summer weather was very warm and especially dry. So much so, that we had to water plots much more than usual to ensure that a reasonable crop was obtained and hence our water bill (which is based on metered readings) is quite high - £480 to date. Fortunately the rains over the past few months reduced the need to water. A benefit of the very hot spring appears to have been a really abundant crop of soft fruits, apples, pears, plums etc. The bees on our site have been doing a really good pollination job!

We have recently had a committee meeting and the minutes will be placed on our website at www.agaa.org.uk (page- 'association documents'). Please take time to read these and other items of interest on our website. However, I would like to briefly outline a few of the items we discussed so that you are all aware of our plans.

(a) The Summer BBQ will be held on the lawn behind the upper field car park on Sunday 4 September at 4pm. The cooking facilities and tea, soft drinks etc will be provided but please bring your own meat and produce to cook, and alcohol if you wish. This is a great opportunity to meet other ploholders to chat about the season, to involve children and to enjoy our lovely allotments together in (hopefully) the late summer sunshine. It may also be possible to look at the chickens (two ploholders have them) and at the beehives on the lower field. It would be great if anyone could help set up the gazebo and tables and the BBQ's an hour beforehand, and also to help with the cooking. Please let Ian or myself know if you can help.

(b) Work party dates have been set for two weekends in October – 8/9th and 15/16th (once most of the harvesting work has finished) to carry out the following tasks:

- cutting back brambles etc in various areas and clearing undergrowth around the toilet
- filling in potholes etc on the upper field driveway and laying scalplings (hard surface) in front of the parking area on the upper field
- maintenance/ improvement of all common pathways
- clearing rubbish from the woodland and other common areas. A skip will be provided for this purpose and for ploholders to remove any non-biodegradable rubbish (including tyres) from their plots. This is a one-off provision and it is not intended to be provided again.
- collecting and gathering unwanted timber into a set location, prior to building a bonfire at the beginning of November.

This will involve a fair amount of work, but if everyone pitches in when they are able then we should be able to achieve good progress. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided, although thermoses of boiling water will be useful!

- (c) **The annual bonfire party will be held on Friday 4th of November** on the lower field to coincide with the Kingston Council firework display at Kingsmeadow. This was a great success last year (the rains held off until we had finished) with over 60 people attending. We hope this year will be just as much fun!
- (d) Although most plots have been worked well during this year, there are a few that are giving rise for some concern. As you are aware, the allotment rules (see website) state that if you have taken on your plot in the past year then at least 50% of your plot(s) should be properly cultivated by the end of the first year of a tenancy. As most plotholders have had their plots from January 2009 then at least 75% must be cultivated by the end of this year. The Committee will be walking around plots in early September to make an assessment of those that are likely to fall short of this standard. In such cases we will contact the plotholders to discuss what they can do to rectify the situation. We understand that there may be personal circumstances where a plotholder falls short of the required standard and we will view the circumstances sympathetically. **However, we now have over 60 people on the waiting list who are keen to cultivate a plot and it is simply not fair to have plots that are not properly worked, unless there are particular and temporary reasons for this.** The committee will arrange a meeting on the relevant allotment plot(s) to discuss the problem with the plotholder. These plotholders will not be sent a renewal invoice in October and unless an agreement can be reached with them in respect of the state of their plots they will not be offered a renewal of their tenancy.
- (e) In the light of this long waiting list and pressure on plots the Committee would also be grateful if anyone considering not intending to renew their tenancy for next year could inform Joan McConn as soon as possible and preferably by the end of the month. Also members with a full sized plot (i.e. two half plots) and who are struggling to maintain it in cultivation may like to consider whether they would be find it easier and be happier with just a single plot. Again if anyone is in this situation could they please let Joan know.

Remember that you will find copies of the latest NASLG magazine `Allotment and Leisure Gardener` to borrow in the two communal sheds. There are many useful and interesting articles in the magazine.

I wish everyone an enjoyable and productive harvesting season.

Karol Smal
Chairman

On behalf of the AGAA Committee