

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 38

September 2014

AGM, SEED SWOP & BBQ

On Saturday 11th October we will hold our AGM at 11:00 in the Shop car park. Do come along to the AGM to consider next year's activities and facilities. We will discuss how we operate our Open Days, the Shop and how we can encourage participation in our community. The Chair report for 2014 accompanies this newsletter.

It will be followed by a seed swap. There will be old seed favourites and some new ones to take away and try. If you have spare seeds bring them along for others to try.

We will also have a free barbeque for tenants and their families after the AGM.

AUTUMN FESTIVAL

We cancelled the Autumn Festival because a sequence of events took place that meant that the tenants who make the event happen could no longer work for and support the event. For more detail please see the Council Liaison section below.

NEW - BUSHY PARK ALLOTMENTS WEBSITE!

After a number of requests we have now set up a website. The main purpose of the website is as a service to plot holders to keep them informed and to enable them to respond with any comments or suggestions regarding the allotments. We hope it will provide a useful forum for debate and discussion.

At present the site is in a trial form and you can visit it at www.bushyparkallotments.org.uk, but you won't find it on Google yet. As well as providing information on upcoming events you will also find our advice notes, contact details for the committee, an archive of previous newsletters and committee minutes plus a gallery of photographs and links to other helpful websites. We are keen to get the website right to help you as much as possible, so please visit it and let us know what you think.

We are very grateful to plot holder Yung Chi for setting up the website and to Vicky Philips for helping populate it. It will be administered by our secretary, Robin Hewitt, who promises to try to keep it up-to-date!

HOUSEKEEPING

CAR PARKING

We have car parks at each end of the site for general use. The car parking along the track through the site is permitted providing it is off the track and actually within the plot. It is for the principal use of that plot holder who has reduced their plot size to provide the parking space. Short term use to load or unload is acceptable but if it is not your plot you should not park your vehicle on it if you do not have the plot holder's permission. You should use the main car parks for the duration of your stay.

THEFTS

There have been a number of thefts of produce such as garlic and fruit. This is very distressing for those tenants who have been tending their crops all year to enjoy their harvest.

Please report any thefts to the Council Allotments Officer using the CONTACT THE ALLOTMENT OFFICER on the website and give Pete Lewis the details of the theft, produce stolen, plot number and date/time as closely as possible. Please also let a Committee member know what has happened. The Park Police have made some patrols but they are not frequent.

If you witness a theft, please report it to the Council or a Committee member, with as much detail as possible. If a tenant or a tenant's guest is found stealing, the Council will take action.

COUNCIL LIAISON

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Council took action on a complaint by one tenant against two other tenants without consulting The BPAA Committee for their information and input. This consultation had been the established procedure. The complaint was unfounded and the Council's actions precipitated responses by tenants who felt that the community spirit that they had worked to establish was compromised.

The Committee held a General Meeting on 30th August to discuss the issues which was attended by 32 tenants. The notes of the meeting are attached with this newsletter.

Committee representatives held a meeting with the Council officers and the outcome was: -

- The BPAA Committee will review how car parking is managed at Bushy Park and report back to the Council with their findings.

- To avoid any future repeats of these events the BPAA Committee expect to be consulted on all complaints received by the Council.
- All incidents that occur on site in future are to be reported by the BPAA Committee to the Council to enable a balanced approach to the joint management of the site and any incidents that occur.

The Committee will monitor the re-establishment of the relationship with the Council. As a start we will resume showing vacant plots to prospective new tenants during October.

INSPECTIONS

The Plot Inspections are now completed and as a result: -

17 plots have been given up for re-letting
 7 more plots have had their tenancies terminated and are expected to be re-let
 16 plots are on the watch list

We are now keeping a photograph record of the plots on the watch list. These plots do not get the extent of work that the Council requires and that a plot deserves. This is something that other allotment sites in the Borough do as a matter of course and will demonstrate to the Allotment Officer that there has been little or no activity on a plot over the year. It is difficult to understand why tenants pay for plots that are not producing food for them and provide them with healthy exercise and also mental relaxation!

VOLUNTEER DAY

There are several jobs around the site that would benefit from communal input. A general clean-up of rubbish and some more work on the track are candidates for action. The Committee will organise a Volunteer Day in November and we look forward to your support in committing an hour or two of communal effort for everyone's benefit.

PESTS

GREEN SHIELD BUG (Nezara viridula)

Keep an eye out for these pests which arrived this century from southern Europe and which are now getting established.

You will find them on raspberry plants in late spring but as the summer progresses they head for the climbing beans. The young bugs are tiny, about a millimetre across and often occur in groups, they are predominantly black and white at this stage. As they grow they have more green colour and end up completely green as shown in the photos below. They are about a centimetre long when fully grown and seem to like being in the sun.

There numbers can increase very quickly, I have regularly found 30 or more on my beans. If you are growing beans, such as borlotti beans, to dry for soups and stews they are a real problem. They are sap suckers and they bore into the developing green pods and damage the beans as they develop rendering the beans useless. If it is damp fungal attack resulting from the bug damage causes the whole pod to rot. Please keep an eye out for them and destroy them if you see them. I lost half my butter bean crop to them the first year they were active because I was late taking action.



Immature southern green shield bugs



Adult green shield bug, note all green colour

PARAKEETS

You will have seen the parakeets attacking fruit trees. Now they are varying their diet. I had some maturing borlotti beans above head height at the tops of the plants and when I went to harvest them all that remained was a neatly severed stub to the pod. No debris on the ground and only taken at the tops of the plants so not rodents!

A cover of the fine green netting has preserved what remains of the crop. Be warned for next year if your coloured beans are easily accessible to the parakeets.

RODENTS

Rodent numbers are increasing and there has been a lot of damage to sweetcorn. We will ask the Council to control them and reduce the numbers.

<p>Phil Iddison - Chair</p> <p>Bushy Park Allotments Association Committee</p>	<p><u>patsy.iddison@gmail.com</u></p> <p>Please email if you want to go on the newsletter mailing list or wish to contact the Committee or have suggestions/contributions for the newsletter.</p>