

HAA COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR AGM 11 OCTOBER 2018

Financial Reports

Graham Laurie

See separate papers for formal calendar year 2017 Accounts, plus a summary of income and expenditure for the first half of 2018.

HAA Plot Lettings Report

Maggy Meade-King

There have been 19 new lettings since the last AGM, all the result of voluntary terminations, usually because people are no longer able to look after a plot or have moved away. Of these, 13 have been approved for a full tenancy and one set of prospective tenants decided allotments were not for them. We currently have five probationers.

We try to offer new tenants all the support we can, as it is in everyone's interest that they succeed, so please offer a friendly hand to new neighbours. Tenants taking a sensible approach to giving up plots they can no longer manage (or maybe splitting large plots) has meant that – although we have a waiting list of over 100 – people are generally waiting less than two years for a plot.

Shed Shop Volunteers

Maggy Meade-King

A team of volunteers have been assisting Jim in the Shop on Saturdays. We could do with more so that it is not too much of a commitment for anyone. Please talk to one of the Committee at the AGM if you are interested.

HAA Site Secretary Report

Geoff Kemball-Cook

Reorganisation of Haringey Allotment Administration and Tenancy Rent Rises

The promised reorganisation of the Haringey Allotment service, suggested and supported by the Haringey Allotment Forum, has finally taken place. We are no longer served part-time by Parks and Trees officers but by a new full-time Allotment Coordinator: this post has been created with sole responsibility for administration and inspections of all Haringey allotment sites, and has been fully funded thanks to our 75% rental increases. The new Coordinator has been appointed and will start work in November.

As part of the package Site Associations will also receive a significant uplift of up to 100% to their annual Repairs and Maintenance allocation from Haringey, so returning some of the monies raised to tenants' own sites. For Highgate this has meant an uplift from £966pa in 2017 to £2006pa in 2018 which will enable us to continue with site improvements.

Plot Inspections 2018 and 2019

We were expecting two inspections in 2018 but due to staff shortages in the Parks and Trees Dept at Haringey Council there have been no formal plot inspections since the last AGM. We expect our next formal plot inspections with the Allotment Coordinator in April 2019. It is reasonable to predict that after 18 months without inspection, the new Allotment Coordinator will expect to see very tidy plots ready to burst into life.

Waiting List

During the 12 months since the last AGM, 45 entries (the same number as last year) have been added to our waiting list, which now stands at around 100 entries. Currently the waiting time for those at the top is still just less than two years, but this is likely to rise during 2019. This short waiting time is a testament to Maggy's efficiency in running the lettings process.

Equipment Hire

HAA own the following petrol-powered equipment, which are all available for hire by arrangement: a Stihl strimmer, two Mountfield mowers and a domestic shredder (suitable for smaller tree prunings).

Rubbish Removal – Skip Weekend

We had a very successful Skip Weekend, whereby HAA committee collected appropriate donations from tenants in return for offloading their rubbish, and we covered over two-thirds of our costs. We are likely to do this again in the future.

Communications with HAA Membership

Hilary Laurie and Jack Humphrey

There are about 160 subscribers on the HAA Mailchimp email list: newsletters and other shorter news items have been sent out during the year. Members have supported fellow tenants in a number of ways and helped out in the Shed Shop, as well as enjoying our annual barbecue and plant swap. We continue to be a friendly and welcoming gardening community!

HAA's website at <https://www.highgate-allotments.org/> is accessible to all tenants and gives a variety of useful information, particularly on the Documents page, including information sheets, forms and Committee Minutes.

HAA also runs its own closed Facebook group. You can find us here: <https://goo.gl/fCw7Dy>

HAA Probationer Support Report

Dan Hackett

Each vacant plot as it comes up has a different profile. I make contact first by email and view the plots with Maggy or the prospective tenants and hand out advice according to the circumstances. In total 13 probationers have been approved for tenancy since the last AGM, with just one pair of probationers who did not take up the challenge.

Environment Report

Dan Hackett

In the Newsletters I have advised on use of fertilisers, manures and composts, when and how to prune fruit trees and related issues. Newsletters are available to download on our website's Documents page here: <https://www.highgate-allotments.org/documents/>

HAA Compost and Chippings Report

Geoff Kemball-Cook

Compost Deliveries

Tenants have benefited from several deliveries of free Eco-Compost, plus a very generous continuing supply of Thompson's rotted horse manure.

Chippings

These continue to be supplied without notice and free of charge by local tree surgeons, as and when they are working in our immediate area.

HAA Site Security and Maintenance Report

Angelo Guarino and Geoff Kemball-Cook

Security

The main item of note was the break-in and mass theft of power tools from some 20 locked sheds (including the Shed Shop) in January 2018. Following a site visit from the Metropolitan Police we are keeping security measures under review, but we are restricted from certain fairly obvious further measures by the lack of mains power on site. Tenants are advised that it is impossible to make the site perfectly secure and it is unwise to leave valuable tools in sheds on site: such tools are unlikely to be covered by your insurance policy away from your own residential property and Haringey Council's insurance does not cover them either. Regrettably battery-operated power tools and mowers/trimmers are readily re-sellable and so are likely targets.

Maintenance

No single item of major expenditure has been made since the last AGM, rather a number of small improvements and purchases have been funded in order to benefit tenants. Details of these can be found in the 2017 Accounts under "Expenses" and ancillary documents covering the first half of 2018.

Haringey Allotment Forum Representative Report

Geoff Kemball-Cook

I have attended two of the four open HAF meetings, but possibly more importantly I am a member of the HAF Steering Group which met five times during the last 12 months. The main issues hammered out in cooperation with Haringey Council were the setting up of the new Allotment Coordinator post, and more recently the development of the new increased Repairs and Maintenance grants, which Haringey have adopted without modification.