

HAA COMMITTEE REPORTS FOR AGM 18 MARCH 2023

All AGM papers can be downloaded from the March 2023 AGM section of HAA website at www.highgate-allotments.org/documents (scroll down)

Contacts with Tenants and Probationers

HAA maintains an email list for sending out information to tenants and probationers. Requests for email addresses to be added or removed from this list should be sent to highgateallotments@outlook.com. HAA's website at 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 Minutes of Committee and Annual General Meetings.

Financial Report *Hinchee Hung*

See [file](#) on HAA website for Calendar year 2022 Profit and Loss Account, with comparison figures for 2021, 2020 and 2019.

Plot Lettings *Maggy Meade-King*

16 plots were re-let in calendar year 2022 and 9 so far in 2023. Of these, three probationers subsequently gave up their plot, and 12 have passed their probation and become fully-fledged tenants. As per Haringey policy, we have split 10-pole plots in two when they become free.

Shed Shop *Sara Jolly*

The Shed Shop is now open every Sunday from 12 noon to 2pm, with occasional additional times advertised as required. In addition to paying by cash, tenants and probationers may now pay directly to the HAA Trading Account using a smartphone with banking app: HAA account details are on the Shop counter.

Defibrillator *Sally Jones*

The Committee has decided to buy an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for the allotment site. This is a portable life-saving device that can give a casualty's heart an electric shock, when it has stopped beating normally in a sudden cardiac arrest. By using a defibrillator before an ambulance arrives, you can significantly increase someone's chance of survival.

Research has been undertaken, and advice sought, and a fully automatic model has now been selected. We will advise tenants and probationers when the defibrillator has been installed. It will be kept in an unlocked cabinet attached to the Shed Shop. It would be helpful if all tenants and probationers watched the four-minute St John Ambulance training film on [this link](#) by the time the machine is installed. We will recirculate the link at that time.

Probationer Support *Dan Hackett*

There have been 14 changeovers of plot holders during the year since the last AGM, of whom 10 are still on their three-month probation. My contribution is to help new plot holders who might need advice, on what will work for them and help identify what they are finding in terms of vegetation and soil mainly. What do they want to grow? How to prioritise their efforts? Information is available in the HAA Newsletter, on the HAA website, and in books, magazines, seed catalogues etc.

But in practice, an on the spot visit is one of the main ways to welcome a new plot holder to start out. My name and contact details are given out by our lettings officer and several of the 'incumbents' have indeed contacted me and we have met by arrangement at their new plots, but of course, not all.

I intend to put a card on the Shed Shop noticeboard to encourage plotholders in general, not just probationers, to ask or rather share their aims and observations. This overlaps with all sides of environmental concerns -about pests and diseases and soils, as well as observations and provisions for wildlife. We want everyone to remain friendly and feel rewarded by their time in this beautiful spot, keeping it and ourselves as healthy as possible.

Tool Sharpening & Equipment Hire *Rita Drobner and Hinchee Hung*

Two sharpening sessions for hand tools like shears, secateurs and loppers were popular, and future sessions for tool care will be advertised in the HAA email newsletter.

Motorised tools such as mowers, strimmers and wood chippers continued to be hired out at low cost to cover the equipment maintenance and fuel. Tool hire needs advance booking, for example through the dedicated email address haaequipment@outlook.com.

Biodiversity *Rita Drobner*

The committee aims to promote biodiversity on the allotment site by providing more spaces supportive of wildlife.

In 2022 a cordon was planted alongside the new tool and equipment container. This pollinator-friendly border with native flowers and shrubs has started to settle in its first year.

Log piles frame the wildlife border along the south-east boundary.

The communal orchard behind the shop had a hedgehog-friendly overwintering shelter built in the north-west corner. "Dead hedging" has supplemented the existing hazel coppice to protect the steep embankment behind the shop. The hawthorn hedge has been widened with dogwood and beech.

With the help of the pupils from the Highgate Primary and Blanche Neville Schools, a small wetland has been dug out in the middle of the orchard, providing waterholes for pond life.

For 2023 the committee plans to promote rainwater capture, starting with harvesting the water from the Shed Shop roof.

Haringey Allotment Forum *Geoff Kembell-Cook*

Quarterly HAF meetings restarted in October 2022. Information exchange and discussions take place with reps from across all the Haringey allotment sites. HAF helps to monitor problems and formulate policies on allotment management across the Borough, with direct access to Council managers and our dedicated Allotment Coordinator: currently documents covering expected plot cultivation levels and use of co-workers are being finalised ready for circulation.

Site Secretary *Geoff Kembell-Cook*

Rent Invoices for 2023

As many of you will know, despite the Haringey Council Allotment service providing accurate information on plots and ploholders, the Invoicing arm of Council issued a significant number of incorrect invoices in February 2023, and in some cases tenants have received no invoice at all. Correcting all of the errors has caused much confusion, disruption and additional work for our loyal Allotment Coordinator. If you have received an incorrect invoice, or no invoice at all – and have not already informed me – please get in touch at highgateallotments@outlook.com. However all tenants should be reassured that correct invoices will be issued in the coming weeks, and repayments for incorrect paid invoices will be made. Please make me aware of any "reminder letters" from Council – these are sent out automatically: do not fret that you may be in danger of loss of plot due to non-payment. If in doubt, contact me, not Haringey Council, and I will pass on your concerns.

Plot Inspections in 2023

In the past we had twice-yearly plot inspections by Haringey Council: these were suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, and we had a single formal inspection in May 2022. It is now proposed to return to the programme of two annual inspections, the first around late spring and the second around late summer. In advance of the first inspection, a new "Cultivation" document agreed by the Haringey Allotment Forum will be issued by Haringey Council and circulated to all tenants across the borough: this seeks to make expected levels of cultivation much clearer than it has been in the past.

Allotments Waiting List

Our Waiting List was closed to new applicants in May 2021 with over 250 on the list. Since the last AGM, as a result of plots being vacated but also of some "waitlisters" no longer wanting a plot, moved away etc., the number waiting has come down to 210. Currently the waiting time for those now at the top has reduced a little from five years to a little over four years. The situation is monitored in order to decide when it may be sensible to reopen to fresh applicants.

Major Tree Work

Recently Haringey Council funded a large team of tree surgeons for a full week: the stand of mature plane trees lining the full length of the site to the east (largely adjoining Gaskell Road) were lifted, on our side by 4 metres and on the Gaskell Road back garden side by 6 metres. This will improve greatly the shading of residents' gardens and also reduce leaf and twig drop on the plots adjoining the site lane.

Security

Occasional reports of petty thefts (such as tools) from plots reinforce the advice that tenants should not leave anything of significant value on their plot.
