

Highgate Allotments Association Newsletter

May 2016

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Happy Summer Gardening Everyone

Welcome to all the new tenants and probationers on our site

We have welcomed eight new probationers to our site since January and would like to thank all our new ploholders for their positive attitude and good neighbourliness. Their effective plot cultivation and development have made many of us raise our game and contributed to the visible improvement in the site overall.

News from the Shed

Jim's Spring Shed Sale was a great success and he has appreciated the support from other ploholders. If anyone would like to help out in the shop on a regular or irregular basis, please contact Maggy via the email address at the end of the newsletter.

We now have a smart new shed roof and new timbers to remedy the problems with damp, spotted during the shed clear out. Manure, compost and a number of other useful items are available to buy.

120th anniversary celebrations

All tenants and family/friends are invited to the Highgate Allotments 120th Anniversary Barbecue Party from **12 noon - 4pm on Sunday, 3rd July**, which will take place at the revamped BBQ Area opposite the Site Shed. We're having a BYO BBQ - so bring your burgers, veggies and favourite drinks, and our expert team will be on hand to cook for you!

Plus, we'll be holding our first-ever allotment Plant and Seed Swap - and don't worry if you haven't got anything to swap, as plants will also be available to buy, with all the proceeds going to the Harington Scheme (Highgate's brilliant gardening charity, which trains and offers development opportunities for young people with learning difficulties.)

There will also be a surprise contribution on the day from Highgate Primary School, and we'll be displaying the vintage Highgate Allotment Association's prizewinner's silverware for the first time in decades!

So please put the date in your diary - and join us for an anniversary party that's been 120 years in the making!

The BBQ area

Thanks to the efforts of David, Simon, Geoff, Tim, Hilary, Graham, Angelo, Matt and Maggy, we now have a smart barbecue area for our celebratory party (and no doubt much other pleasant socialising). Grass seed has been planted over part of the area and there will be low maintenance, ornamental planting at the back. There will also be a bench and table (discarded by The Bull) thanks to Karen and her family who carried them down to the allotments.

The Spring Plot Inspection

This was carried out on the 13th April by Dick Tomlinson, the recently appointed Haringey Allotment Officer – he is an experienced allotmenteer with a plot at Alexandra Palace. He was accompanied by members of the HAA Committee. The purpose of the inspection by Haringey is to see that plots are being maintained in accordance with the tenancy agreement and to take appropriate action where necessary. HAA committee members alerted the allotment officer where it was known that a tenant was having temporary problems due to ill health. Sixteen Non Compliance Notices (NCNs) were issued to plot holders for non cultivation. Those tenants were given 28 days to carry out necessary work before a 2nd inspection.

Paying your rent

A number of tenants have recently been issued a non compliance notice by Haringey Council for non payment of rent. We have raised this with Haringey and they are investigating the problem. In the meantime, here are their tips to avoid problems in the future.

1. If you have not received an invoice by the end of February (the invoices are issued in January) always check with Haringey Allotment Enquiries. In accordance with the tenancy agreement the onus remains with the tenant to ensure the rent is paid.
2. Make sure that when paying your bill on line that you are paying into the correct account as it has happened that a payment has been made in error to the wrong account e.g. a council tax account.
3. When making a payment use the correct Haringey invoice reference number – the 10 digit invoice number and not the 6 digit account number.

Free hop plant

Sarah Mokone is offering her mature hop plant to anyone who would like it. Please contact her on saramokone@gmail.com

Free compost delivery

The next delivery of free eco-compost from the Council will take place **between 8 and 10 am on Friday, 3 June**. Plotholders are asked to restrict themselves to 10 barrow loads or less, to ensure that there is enough for those who are unable to get down to the allotments until the weekend.

There is also a Haringey eco-compost giveaway session at Down Lane Park Staff Depot, Park View Road, N17 on **Saturday 21 May between 9am and 12pm**. You will need to bring our own strong bags and shovels.

Rubbish collection

Unfortunately as so many people ignored the instructions on rubbish collection, the Committee had to arrange at very short notice a private collection of all the large, unbagged items left by plotholders. This was at considerable expense to the Association. As a result, it is with regret that we have stopped the Council collections in order to avoid this happening again. In future, it will be the responsibility of plotholders to remove rubbish from their plots.

No Parking on the allotments site

Please note there is no parking on the site, with two exceptions:

1. Those with a blue, disabled badge clearly displayed
2. For loading or unloading – vehicles must be moved off site as soon as possible and gates must be kept locked at all times.

HAA wheelbarrows

Plotholders will have noticed we now have some smart new wheelbarrows – please return them to the shed immediately when you have taken a load to your plot – they are for all to use and should not be kept on plots.

Children's parties

Plotholders are requested to let a member of the Committee know if they plan to bring a party of children to the site. The Allotments are not a suitable environment for large groups of children who may wander off into other plots and potentially encounter dangerous hazards like glass and gardening implements.

Use of noisy machinery and alternatives

We have received a plea for plotholders to kindly refrain from using noisy machinery, such as strimmers and rotavators, after 12 noon, especially at the weekend, as a courtesy to neighbours who are hoping for a peaceful afternoon amidst the sound of bird song.

Here are Dan Hackett's suggestions for more effective ways to control weeds:

- Push mowers are a quicker and quieter way to keep grass paths in order.
- Weeds spread by underground rhizomes (like bindweed, marestails, couch grass and creeping thistle) need digging out. Barriers and temporary black polythene covers may help. Rotavators make matters worse by chopping and spreading the propagules.
- If you take the top off weeds spread by windborne seed (e.g. docks, thistles, dandelions, groundsel, teasel, chickweed, bittercress etc), they will most likely send up a new flowers and seedheads. Their green

parts and roots will take nutrients and light away from crops so they, too need digging up.

PS re ponds: Plotholders with ponds will have noticed that they are now teeming with life. If you don't have one, you might like to consider putting one in, as they are great wildlife habitats and the frogs and toads are enthusiastic predators of slugs and snails.

This newsletter has been produced by the Highgate Allotments Association Committee. You can contact anyone on the Committee via highgateallotments@outlook.com and read the latest Committee minutes (once approved by next Committee meeting) at <http://www.highgate-allotments.org/documents/>

Committee responsibilities are as follows:

Committee Chair: rotated among members of the Committee
Site Secretary: Simon Hewitt
Association Honorary Chair and Shed Shop Manager: Jim Greenhill
Committee Secretary: Hilary Laurie
Lettings Officer: Karen Fitzsimon
Waiting List Manager/Haringey Forum rep: Geoffrey Kemball-Cook
Membership Secretary and newsletter: Maggy Meade-King
Probationer Support Officer: Dan Hackett
Site Security and Maintenance Manager: Angelo Guarino
Compost and chippings deliveries + Rubbish Removal: David Gittings
120th Anniversary Celebration Co-ordinator: Marc Haynes

The minutes of our meetings and many other useful documents –about the running of the allotments (inc application forms) - as well as some inspiring photos - are available on our website: <http://www.highgate-allotments.org> .

Please let us know if you didn't receive this email directly but would like to do so in future.

Please print this for any neighbours who don't have email.