

THE URBAN JUNGLE

The Newsletter of the Ruislip-Northwood Co-operative Small Holding and Allotment Society Limited

Issue 05 - March 2008

Introduction

It is Sunday; it is pouring with rain and it is blowing a gale, so I thought that I would finish off this newsletter – the first one for 2008. It is only March and I'm already panicking about all the gardening I haven't done! I think it is still too cold to sow my parsnips and my shallots haven't gone in yet – but that was because they were delivered late from the supplier. Enough of my ramblings – there is quite a lot of news, (mainly Committee business this time), to give you, so I had better get on. Please pay particular attention to the item headed "Newsletter Distribution". We are keen to get this newsletter circulated to as many members as possible so please help us to achieve this.

The AGM – A Brief Report

The AGM which was held in February was well attended. The Officers and Committee members were elected and Angela (our chairman) gave thanks and a small presentation to the retiring Officers.

There was a brief progress report on the various activities which were undertaken in 2007 – the new gate, the car park and the machinery store among them. Looking to the future, the Committee is investigating the possibility that it can apply for funding for some capital projects. If you have a view as to what are the priorities for any such investment, please make your thoughts known to a Committee member.

Plot Maintenance

It is good to see that many members have already been putting in a lot of work on their plots. I think the site looks better than I have ever seen it. Mind you I wasn't around in its glory days! For the first time for a few years we now have a waiting list. This, combined with the fact that our landlord has indicated to us he expects to see the plots being cultivated, means that the Committee will expect to see signs of activity on all let plots. Please note: it is against the terms and conditions of the Society to remove topsoil from the site and this includes topsoil attached to weeds. Weeds should be composted on site. If you have a plot, but are aware that you will not be able to work it for a while, say because of illness, please let someone know so that the Committee do not think that you are no longer interested in your plot.

Site Maintenance

As I have already said, it is good to see that people are improving the appearance of their plots and the site. As you will all know, our allotments are "privately" owned so the members (unfortunately!) have to undertake many of the jobs that the council would do for council owned allotments. For instance we have to maintain and pay for the water system, maintain the boundary hedge, cut the grass on the paths and keep the site secure and tidy, etc. On Sunday 2 March, (Mothering Sunday!), Cherry and Rachel organised a one hour session to start clearing rubbish from under the boundary hedge. Six of us, Cherry, Rachel, Ted, Nina, Mike and I turned up to see what we could do. We found some amazing things both under, and in, the hedge. However I think Rachel wins the prize for the best find – a large, fire extinguisher! I thought the idea of a working party limited to one hour was good – I didn't feel that I was being taken away from working on my plot for too long. The other really nice thing was the thanks we got from some of the members of the public who were walking past. More one hour working parties will be planned and advertised, please make an effort if you can, to help.

Pallets

Thanks go to Ines and her family for procuring several lorry loads of pallets and persuading the builder to deliver them to the site. If you didn't manage to get some from the pile, (we were out of luck!), sorry but they were all taken by the weekend before the powers that be were able to let all our members know about them. Hopefully this may not be the only delivery, but those pallets still left in the car park are to close gaps in the hedge, so please do not remove them

Society Terms and Conditions

The Committee will soon be issuing a set of the Society's terms and conditions. As these have been out of print for a little while, some members will not have received their copies. In line with other allotment sites in the country, we are asking all members to sign two copies of an agreement which embodies a summary of the terms and conditions. One copy of this agreement will be for the society's records, the other will be for the members' own records. Trevor is the person who is dealing with this, so please see him if you are on site.

Car Park - Update

The good news is that the new gate to the car park should arrive in the next couple of weeks (and the portable loo has been removed!) Members may be asked to move their cars while the car park area is made good. Please co-operate if you are asked to do this..

Equipment

Most Committee members have a key to the equipment shed. They will try to ensure that someone is "on duty" to lend out equipment on weekend mornings; other times by arrangement. The person who is on duty will have their name on the door of the machinery shed. Please note that all equipment must be signed out and signed back in, and is used at your own risk.

Water

If you have ever wondered why we do not allow hose pipes and soak hoses and why we keep turning the water off, it is because we are trying to keep the water rates bill manageable. The water system, which has been turned off over the winter, has recently been checked for leaks and is reckoned to be in good shape. The water will be turned on as the weather dictates. If you notice any leaks or damage to the tanks / floats, please report the problem immediately; the mobile contact number to use can be found on the notice board just inside the gates.

What No Recipe!

Raj has sent me sent a recipe for cauliflower, potato and pea curry, (thanks Raj), so you might like to plan to grow these ingredients on your plot. I'm sorry I haven't got room to include this this time, so watch out for it in the next newsletter. I also hope to include a list of useful web sites.

And Finally - Newsletter Distribution

We would like to get these newsletters seen by as many of our members as possible, so we are going to try a three pronged attack. Firstly we are going to try to email this to as many people as possible so, if you are able and prepared to receive this by email, please let Trevor and Angela know at email address: joelstreetallotments@fiscali.co.uk. Secondly, in a moment of madness, Cherry and Rachel said that they would get on their bikes and would deliver newsletters to some of the folk who live nearby. Lastly we will still make some copies of the newsletter available at the site. Hopefully this will mean that more of you get to read these.

Jenny Jessup