

THE URBAN JUNGLE

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

Issue 16 - March 2010

Introduction

Here is our first newsletter for 2010. I have got a lot of information to get onto two pages, so I will get straight on with it.

Welcome to

There have been a lot of developments on the plots near the car park. The first plot has been divided between John and Gerry, while behind them, Bernard's old plot has been taken by Lynne, who also has a small plot further down the path. The next plot down has been divided between Dan and Andy and, taking the plot next to Billie, is Ray. Further down the site, on the cross path, Rachel and Cherry's old plot has been taken by Jo and behind her is Khan. (You will be relieved to know that you don't have to remember all these changes – Trevor is going to produce an allotment plan, as he did last year.)

Feedback from the AGM (Trevor)

The AGM was well attended - no snow this year! Angela reported on what had happened in 2009 and Mike presented a summary of our finances for that year.

Your Committee for 2010 was elected: Chairman - Angela Dixon, Secretary - Trevor Dixon, Treasurer - Barbara Cumbers, Committee Members - Linda Brown, Jenny Clark, Robert Clark, Ted Linney, Joe Meenagh and Ines Uriarte. Joe and Ted will be acting as site managers, while Jenny is minuting secretary.

In addition, we are grateful to Jenny, for editing this newsletter; Cathy for offering to see to the King's Seeds order again this year; Joan for volunteering to organise the Swap Table and Marian for delivering Newsletters to those in the HA6 area without e-mail. (We still need someone to do the same for those in HA5.)

March Working Parties (Angela)

(Working Parties have taken place on all four Sunday mornings throughout March. The objective was to dig a central drainage trench. Angela has given a full report on the first working party. An update on the other three working parties will appear in the May newsletter.)

I always feel slightly apprehensive when I arrive (usually early) at the first Working Party of the year, in case of bad weather, or there aren't enough of us, or enough tools. I needn't have worried though, you all turned up, armed with spades and secateurs and worked like Trojans! I am always amazed by how much you have achieved at the end of a session; it really gave us all a buzz, especially when we saw that first trickle of water flowing downhill!

Thanks to the following members; Robert and Graham, Richard and Penny, Joe and Ted (Site Managers) John and his son Anthony, Alan, Barbara (Treasurer), Kevin, Adam, Trevor, Jimmy, Matthew and Gerry, we managed to dig a 2'x 2' trench from the crosspath up to Robert's plot and clear a path through Jimmy's plot and another from the car park down as far as Mike and Jenny's plot. This leaves 3 intervening plots where the route has been filled in over the years. The exciting news is, the new section is flowing nicely! Trevor and I think we could raise some funds by charging for a look. Well done to all you diggers!

A number of you have been keen enough to start drainage trenches on your own plots, but there is a danger of just creating a sump, as the water has nowhere to go. We have to tackle the site drainage corporately and not piecemeal. Wouldn't it be a brilliant celebration of the Society's Centenary year to finish this project?

The lie of the land on this site slopes mainly E/W and, in some places, in other directions as well. We are all on a steep learning curve here! In spite of the severe winter, the central trench, which is the lowest line of our field, has drawn off some of the surface water from the paddock by the machine shed, relieving flooding on many of the lower plots. We hope by continuing this central trench up as far as the car park it will prove of similar benefit to other plots. It is therefore very important that those of you who have reported flooding on your own plot join one of our subsequent Trench Working Parties. Just think, you will be part of an historical achievement!

Working Parties, together with the newsletter, have played a significant part in making this Society a Community. The Committee gets to know you, you get to know us and you get to know each other. Most importantly, we learn your concerns and can often resolve them face to face. We all get to know what's going on.....

Harlyn School Summer Fete

At the end of June this local school is having a summer fete. Our society has been offered the opportunity to have a stall and we are considering taking them up on this. Apart from giving us the opportunity to promote our site in our centenary year, we would be able to sell any donated excess produce and plants. The plants would not necessarily have to be vegetable plants, they could be annual flowers and perennials. However to do this successfully we would need volunteers, both to supply plants and produce and to help out on the day. Please let a member of the committee know if you would be prepared to help with this.

100 Not Out - The Society's Centenary

This summer, the Society is 100 years old. We are planning to mount a small exhibition in Northwood Hills Library, but at the AGM it was suggested that we organise a social event - perhaps a BBQ - for members. In a rash moment, Joe & Ines offered to co-ordinate a sub-committee to organise this. If you would like to help, please see either of them, or e-mail.

If you have any photographs, site records or just site memories that you are prepared to share, and that you think might be of interest to the wider public, please let Trevor and Angela know so that they can consider using them for the library exhibition.

Swap Table

Just a reminder that we are running our "Swap table" scheme again this year. Joan Evans has kindly agreed to organise it for us. For those who are new to our site, the scheme works as follows. Many people find that they grow too many plants for their own needs, but are loathe to throw away the excess. There is a table on the main path down by the machine shed. Any spare plants can be left here so that other allotmenters can use them. If you take any plants, please return any empty pots / trays etc. to the swap table, for the owners to retrieve. (Note: this year I have some unopened seed packets which I do not want – I will be leaving these on the swap table.)

Notice Boards

Those of you who have plots on the main path now have a new notice board, which Joe has kindly fixed to the door of the machine shed. You will no longer have to walk to the car park for information if you enter by the main gate.

Machinery

A Rotavator has been donated to the Society, but needs to be checked over before it is ready for loan. Only two of the mowers are working. At the next meeting the Committee will discuss the terms and times that machines will be available for members to use.

Robert has agreed to take charge of the machine shed this year to help Ted. Thanks for this.

Membership

All available plots are now taken and there is a waiting list. There are three starter plots still available for novices to allotment gardening. There is no waiting list for these.

An Appeal

One of our members (Eddie) has a spade but no handle! He particularly wants a LONG handle. Does anyone have a long handle they do not want, or do they know any suppliers of long spade handles. Please let Eddie know if you can help.

And finally

The next newsletter will be published in May. It will include feedback on the other March working parties, the annual Blightwatch article, and information about any lottery funding. Anyone can submit articles for publication. Please let me have any information you would like included in the next newsletter by early May. Thank you.

Jenny Jessup