

THE URBAN JUNGLE

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

Issue 20 - December 2010

Introduction

As I write this I can't believe that Christmas is fast approaching. What a topsy-turvy year we have had weatherwise. We are wondering whether, come Christmas day, we will be able to dig our parsnips out of the ground. In spite of the weather it has been a very active year for our Society as I think you will realise when you read Trevor's feedback reports. But first let's deal with the important issue of the AGM.

The 2011 AGM

The AGM will be held on Monday 31st January at Fairfield Hall, Windsor Close, Northwood Hills. There are going to be some additional attractions this year – even more reason for you to attend! The schedule will be as follows:-

The doors will open at 6.30pm

Refreshments and a raffle will be arranged and organised by Rosemary and Michael Lawer available from opening time until 6.55pm. Any profits will go to the Society.

Adrian will arrange a slide show featuring the allotment year, (hopefully covering the BBQ, trench and loo construction, etc.) for members arriving early.

Vlad has kindly offered to allow starter plot members copies of his earlier rotation plans as examples. These will be available at the meeting.

Adrian has disks of archive gardening books which are on sale now and which will also be available at the meeting.

The meeting will commence at 7pm. The agenda is enclosed.

Welcome To

In the middle of the site, Delroy has taken over one of Harry's plots. At the end, near the paddock, Colin, Sandra and Ray are slowly bringing back to life an area of abandoned waste. Meanwhile, on the Starter Plots, the first takers are now moving on to "real" plots. Julie and Matt have already worked wonders on their new plot at the end of the Starter Plots, while Barbara and Sandra & Nigel will be moving on any moment now. At various points during the summer Rose, Mary, John and Andrew have taken on other Starter Plots. There is now a waiting list to take on other plots as they become vacant, so look out for new faces.

The Summer of 2010 (Trevor)

I'll certainly remember it for the rather topsy-turvy weather and for the huge gluts of fruit. But I'll mainly remember it for all the events which we became involved in! Angela has already reported in a previous newsletter on the Northwood Hills Fun Day and the school visits from Hillside School, and of course the Big One was the Centenary BBQ. But we have also been involved with Harlyn School

In June, we were invited to run a plant stall at their Summer Fayre. Despite never having run one before, of course we agreed. Thanks to the efforts of lots of members - and to Billie & Ray, who organised the collection and delivery - we managed to have a huge range of plants to display and sell and were one of the busier stalls. And again, thanks to the many volunteers who manned the stall: Ines & Ewan, Jenny & Bob, Norma, Renate, both Barbaras, Joe and Ted. We gained plenty of interest, several additions to the waiting list and made a profit of £60 for the Society's funds! (And once again, our gazebo proved a good buy - this time to shelter us from the sun!)

Then a few weeks later, Harlyn's Gardening Club made their annual visit to the site as their end-of-term "treat". Hopefully, events like this can become a regular feature: the children were as enthusiastic as they were knowledgeable, as befits the gardeners of the future!



The Centenary BBQ (Trevor)

What a way to celebrate the Centenary of the Society! The grand opening of our new composting toilet, funded by The Big Lottery, and the first recorded social event in the Society's history! Over 150 tickets were sold and I think everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One of the marked features in the many photographs I've seen has been the smiling faces; and the feedback from both members and guests has been extremely positive.

The opening was performed by the former Mayor of Hillingdon, Jill Rhodes, who thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and didn't want to leave; she has since written a very kind letter of appreciation. We also invited our landlords, the Trustees of Ruislip Combined Charity; local Councillors; representatives of Northwood Hills Residents' Association and the newly-formed Chamber of Commerce; the Hillingdon Allotment & Horticultural Federation; the Community Police; and, of course, the Big Lottery Fund in the person of Alison Rowe, the London Head. Establishing links with all of these bodies is important for the future of our site, both politically and financially.

But the real benefit has been in the way everyone has pulled together. Tickets were sold, furniture appeared, food was produced and cooked, the whole site was mown and weeded and - most importantly - everything was tidied away afterwards. So a big thank you to all those involved: far too many to mention you all by name, although special thanks must go to Ines & Sue for organising and preparing the food, and to Joe & his family and to Kevin & Adam for cooking and serving it.

Researching and applying for the Big Lottery Grant has taken eighteen months. It was awarded not because allotments are the "in" thing, or because they took pity on us, but because of the efforts we had already made to rejuvenate the site and the efforts we were making to come together as a community and to reach out into the wider one. We've already made history! Let's keep doing it!

Email Addresses – a Plea!

Most members have given us their email addresses, although a few don't seem to work. If you have email but haven't received anything from Joel Street Allotments in the past month or so, then please get in touch with us at: www.joelstreetallotments@tiscali.co.uk

We will not pass on this information - not even the Committee have a list of emails - and all communication is either one-to-one or sent as "blind copy", so there is no danger of your email becoming public property. But it is a very cheap and efficient way for us to communicate with you: to send Newsletters; to warn you of things like blight; to advise you of offers and to sort out any problems you may have. Thank you.

And finally

I have noticed that some crops grow well on our allotments and some not so well. For instance all varieties of red potatoes seem to do better than white varieties. Likewise, autumn raspberries seem to do better than the summer varieties. If you have noticed that some varieties of vegetable grow better than others, please let us know so that we can pass on the information to others.

Well it only remains for me to say that I hope you all enjoy your Christmas holidays and that we will all have a very good gardening year in 2011. See you all at the AGM.

Jenny Jessup

PS Have you heard the one about the two snowmen standing in the garden? One said to the other "can you smell carrots?"