

THE URBAN JUNGLE

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

Issue 21 - April 2011

Introduction

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011. There is a lot to say, so no space for chat.....

Welcome To

As usual at this time of year, a number of people on our waiting list have been able to take on plots. Near the gate, Andy has taken on part of John & Julie's plot, while further down that path Angela has taken part of Janis' old plot. In the centre of the site, next to Peter, Anett and (another) Peter have each taken a plot, while on the cross path, David has embarked on the task of bringing back into cultivation a derelict area next to the central trench. Christopher has taken the last of the Starter Plots, while next door Maxine has taken the orchard end of Mike & Jenny's plot. There are still a few plots which will become vacant - and plenty of names on our waiting list - so look out for even more new faces over the next couple of months.

And Farewell To

Dennis Cox, who died in January after a long fight against cancer. Dennis has worked on the allotments since he was a small boy in the 1920s and his father was one of the original plot-holders. However the family tradition continues, as his plot is now tended by his daughter, Dawn, and her family.

We are also saying goodbye, (temporarily we hope!), to Janis Thiel who has somewhat reluctantly given up her plot. We hope to see you again Janis, when you have more time to spend allotmenting.

Feedback from the AGM

Appropriately, perhaps, for our 101st AGM, this proved something of a milestone. For a start, we were in the large hall at Fairfield for the first time; we also had a record attendance of nearly fifty members, a dozen more than last year, which was in itself a record. We were also entertained with a slide-show recording the various events of 2010. Many thanks to the members who contributed photographs and, of course, to Adrian who put the presentation together. And especial thanks to Mick and Rosemary, who not only volunteered to provide refreshments, but also organised a raffle which raised nearly £60 for the Society's funds.

The following members were elected to serve on the Committee:

Chairman - Angela Dixon

Secretary - Trevor Dixon

Treasurer - Barbara Cumbers

Site Manager - Michael Barber

Minutes Secretary - Jenny Clark

Committee Members - Linda Brown, Robert Clark, Sue Eddiford, Ines Uriarte, Tim Wood

A number of issues arose, which are dealt with below:

Site Security

There was a long discussion on site security; ironically, a week later, half a dozen sheds had their locks vandalised. Ann Marie Chapman-Bennett, from the Northwood Hills Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team, was present at the meeting and gave valuable advice at the time. She subsequently gave us some more advice – see below. Please note: If you have crops stolen or signs of vandalism, then report it immediately to us by phone or email. If you have property stolen or serious damage, then also report it to the Neighbourhood Police Team. Even if nothing can be done at that moment, we need to build up a picture which may help to prevent a recurrence. The Society works closely with the Police on matters like this.

Following is advice from Ann Marie Chapman-Bennett. Her contact details - Telephone 020 7161 9322

Mobile 07909875007 Email AnnMarieChapman-Bennett@met.police.uk

On The Allotment

Allotments are hard to protect, gardening tools are not cheap, don't make it easy for people to steal them. Get to know your neighbours on the allotment - if they know you, they are more likely to be suspicious if someone else is on your plot. Remember; don't leave expensive equipment on-site if you can avoid it.

The Shed

Fit a good lock on the shed door. A little expense can be money well spent and may help with insurance claims later if the worse does happen. The fittings should be bolted through the shed door and reinforced at



the back with a steel plate. The hasp should have concealed screws. The padlock itself should not be less than 2.5 inches in width and made of hardened steel. The lock should have no less than five pins. A closed shackle type will reduce the risk of the lock being forced. Any locksmith or good DIY shop will advise you on the strongest available. If you already have a small padlock, change it now. It could save you time and money in the future.

Property Marking

The main Crime Prevention purpose of marking your property is to make it less attractive to thieves to steal it in the first place, as they know that if they are caught in possession of it by the Police and the Police can quickly establish it is stolen property, they are in trouble! In addition, the traceable property may be more difficult for them to "cash in" with another criminal or to a willing purchaser of the item.

Although etching/punching your postcode and plot number on property can be very effective it is often not always a practical option so we have other ways of effective Property Marking.

Mark all property such as lawnmowers and hedge trimmers, marking can be done with ultra-violet marker pens, stamping or even with paint. The suggestion is that you mark your property with your plot number and the post code HA6 1NW

Reporting a crime

If you've been the victim of a crime, it's really important to report it. We know that sometimes it's not easy to decide to come forward. But we also know that if no one reports a crime, it's as if it never happened. If no one reports a crime, the criminal is free to commit more crime, damaging more communities and individuals. It's also important to report crime for your own practical purposes, like getting a crime number from the police so that you can make an insurance claim.

When and How do I report a crime?

As soon as you possibly can, giving as much information as possible. For non emergency dial 0300 123 1212 In an emergency dial 999 In an emergency, or if you are facing immediate threat, dial 999 and ask for the police. Your call will be redirected to your local force

BBQ

After such a successful BBQ last summer, there was enthusiasm for repeating the exercise! Watch this space!

Manure

The question also arose of whether the stable manure is now safe to use. The guilty chemical - aminopyralid - is now banned for use in pasture-land, although in fact Tim and Gayle have never used it on their land. The official advice from Dow, the manufacturer, is that if affected manure is dug or rotavated - as opposed to being merely composted - then any residue should have dissipated within three years, ie. by now. Several plot-holders have been using the stable manure for some time and none have reported adverse effects. But the advice still remains to dig it in well and be vigilant for any side-effects. But please, don't use it fresh, as this can cause nitrogen depletion and other problems. Stack it - alone or with other materials - turning frequently to introduce oxygen to help rot it down; and when you use it, dig it in thoroughly rather than using it as a mulch.

A Date for Your Diary - Northwood Hills Fun Day

The Northwood Hills Chamber of Commerce is organising another Fun Day - hopefully with slightly better weather than last year - and we have been asked to run a Plant Sale. The date is Saturday May 7th, and although I did point out that it was a little early in the season, I promised that we would do our best. So - when you are sowing seeds, try to sow a few extra that you can pot up ready for the beginning of May. We were thinking tomatoes, squashes, herbs and the like, but I'm sure you can come up with plenty of other ideas. We'll arrange a collection point nearer the time - keep an eye on the notice boards. And we will be looking for volunteers for the day itself, to set up during the morning, and to run the stand during the afternoon. If you can spare just an hour, it will help. (And we found last year that a regular turn-over of "staff" gave the whole stand a buzz.) Last year - even though we were too late getting involved to be able to sell plants - we received plenty of attention and added a number of names to the waiting list. (Most of whom are now members and receiving this email!) And as the aim of the Chamber of Commerce is to help re-vitalise Northwood Hills as a centre, it's a project well worth supporting.

And Finally

If you would like to see a particular subject covered in the newsletter please let us know, joelstreetallotments@tiscali.co.uk

Jenny Jessup

