

BAF Horticultural Show 2016

The annual horticultural show was held in the Pavilion at Rathbone Allotments on Saturday 20th August.

Because ill health prevented Stella Winskell-Moore, who had organised the show in past years, from doing so this year, Isobel Exell and Afsaneh Gia stepped into the breach. They were aided by other committee members and volunteers from the societies, and advised remotely by texts from Stella.

The volunteers and members of Rathbone allotments were busy the day before setting up the tables, registering exhibitors and recording entries while plot holders laid out their fruit flowers and vegetables ready for judging the next day.

On the day Nicholas Angelo of Middlesex Federation of Horticultural Judges, assessed the fruit, flowers and vegetables, while Elizabeth Newton judged the entries in the domestic division.

After the marks had been calculated and prize winners nominated, Hushang Balyuzi, chair of the Federation presented the cups and certificates to the prize winners. The afternoon concluded with an auction of donated produce. A list of the overall winners in the various classes is available on the website via the link at barnetalotments.org.uk/hortishow.php.

We had a good number of entries, but the exhibitor numbers were down by two this year. Only nine societies were represented, so for the future we need to find ways of promoting the show more widely. The lack of produce to enter because of the weather was another factor, although the entries we had were quite spectacular in some cases.

We ended up breaking even financially, but this was only achievable because of the takings from the auction and the generosity of all the winners among the helpers and those from Fursby Avenue who donated their prize money.

Several changes are planned for next year in terms of division classes and a small working group will get together to see how we might increase the level of entries, improve on the administrative side of things and ensure our entry fees cover the prize money.

In conclusion, it was a successful event that was greatly enjoyed by the competitors, the organisers and the helpers. For this we give thanks to Isobel and Afsaneh and all the volunteers, to Rathbone for use of their pavilion and to Robert and Elizabeth Newton who once again committed a great deal of their time to make the running of event go as smoothly as possible. Thanks are also due to Janice Codling and Collette McMenamin from Brook Farm Allotments who set up a splendid display of produce and photographs in the entrance to welcome visitors.