

# barnet allotment federation

## NEWS & NOTES – March 2015

Please send any page contributions, news or events for News and Notes and/or the Federation website to [barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com](mailto:barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com)

### Meeting with Barnet – January 2015

On behalf of the Federation, Richard King and Hushang Balyuzi met with Barnet Greenspaces, represented by Jenny Warren and Oluwatoyin Adeleye-Abiodun, on January 27 2015. The topics covered included the essential works to which the council is committed by the terms of the societies' leases and other particular matters where individual societies were in discussions with the council. This report is based on agreed detailed notes of the meeting.

#### *Essential works*

A costed bid for funding made in December having been successful, contractors had been appointed to undertake the essential works. A first draft of a schedule for the works showed completion by the middle of February. It covered all the required works but the estimated completion dates were felt to be over-optimistic, and it was noted that there could be practical benefits to delaying the start of works, such as tarmacing, until the weather was better. It was agreed that all works will be completed by the end of April, which is just one month later than the deadline of April 1 2015 to which the council was committed by most leases. A revised schedule was sent to the Federation in February; it shows all works to be completed by the end of April, except the tarmacing which might not be completed until mid-May. A copy of the schedule is circulated with these News and Notes, and printed copies will be available at the March 16 meeting.

#### *Water inspections*

They should have been completed by February 8. Any society that has not been inspected should notify Oluwatoyin. Societies are also asked to tell her of any feedback they have had from the water companies about the result of the inspections and to copy to her any paperwork the companies gave them. It appears that, while there are a few site specific issues, the water companies are in general only requiring that standpipes be lagged and that there be check valves to prevent back-siphoning, either on individual taps or at the point of entry of the supply.

#### *Tree works*

These are in the hands of Barnet's trees people not Greenspaces and all should have been completed, but it is unclear as to whether all the work has in fact been done. Any society that considers that tree works remain outstanding should inform Oluwatoyin.

#### *Land and lease issues*

The progress on particular matters relating to specific sites was discussed. Richard has written to the societies concerned to update them. Greenspaces will ask property colleagues to send monthly updates to the societies.

#### *Returning adjacent statutory allotment land*

Three or four sites have expressed an interest in having adjacent statutory allotment land, which had been taken out of cultivation, returned to them and added to their leases. Since these are complicated issues that will take time to resolve, they will be addressed once the essential works programme and some other property issues have been completed.

#### *Other matters*

- There have been problems communicating with some societies because they have changed their contact details since they submitted their annual returns last summer. If this is the case for your society, please notify Oluwatoyin.
- Greenspaces will continue to keep the Federation informed of the ongoing activities.
- Greenspaces will provide regular progress reports to societies.
- Jenny Warren is now on maternity leave, so all communications with Greenspaces should be via Oluwatoyin. Apparently any emails sent to Jenny will not be forwarded.

## Website

The problem which prevented access to the website in January has been resolved. Dave Taylor, who created and has maintained the original website, has entered into a contract with the Federation to move it to a modern platform and to add a substantial amount of new material written by committee members. When completed, Federation officers themselves will be able to change and update the site as and when required, thus providing a much more responsive service to members.

## Subscriptions

At the AGM in February, it was agreed to keep the subscription unchanged for 2015 at 50p per society member. Subscription forms and instructions on payment were included with the AGM papers. If your society has not paid and requires a copy of the form, please email to [barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com](mailto:barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com).

## Sources of supply and useful information

As part of the work on the new website, we have updated the paper which lists suppliers and contractors that have offered their services to the Federation or which members have used and have recommended. It is not yet quite complete but many changes have been made. In due course, the final version will appear on the website but, in the meantime, if anyone would like a copy of the draft, please email to [barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com](mailto:barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com).

## TV stars sought

The following enquiry has been sent on to us by the Eastern Region Secretary of the National Allotment Society:

*"I work for a TV production company called Liberty Bell where we're developing a new series about Britain's relationship with the weather. We're on the hunt for a cross-section of people whose lives are dependent on or strongly affected by our frequently maddening and wholly unreliable climate ... and of course allotments were one of the first things to spring to mind!*

*I'd love to talk to any of your members who might be interested in appearing in a pilot we'll be filming over the next two to three weeks. In particular I'd like to hear from anyone who works on their allotment as a "double act" – a husband and wife, father and son, or mother and daughter combo. Or even best friends – there's no template for what we're looking for.*

*The idea is that every week we will feature a number of people across the country as they reflect on what the weather has been up to and how it is affecting their lives. We're not after dramatic, life-changing stories or extreme weather events – rather, we're interested in the minor frustrations and small triumphs of allotment life.*

*I'd be happy to answer any questions you or your members have about the series, which is being made by Liberty Bell (<http://www.libertybell.tv>). Please feel free to pass on my email address and my direct line: [020 7598 7257](tel:02075987257) – if anyone calls I'll call straight back.*

*Thanks very much indeed for your time and help.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Nick Angel  
(Director)"*

**Contact details** are on the website at <http://www.barnetallotments.org.uk/contact.php>