

# barnet allotment federation

## NEWS & NOTES – February 2016

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 Council – January 2016

Hushang Balyuzi, Gill Saunders and Richard King met Tracy Sawyer of Barnet Council on Wednesday 13th January 2016 to discuss allotment issues, notably those outstanding from the previous meeting in October. Richard King has reported back to those societies who asked for particular points to be raised which were specific to their own sites. The more general points discussed included the following:

#### *Essential repairs*

Nearly all the essential repairs contained in the schedules of condition have now been carried out. The last few (apart from remaining tree works) should be dealt with in the next few weeks. Tracy will be contacting societies who still have tarmac work to be done in the next week or so to arrange a visit with the contractor.

#### *Water standpipes*

Several societies have reported that the lagging fitted to their standpipes has been damaged by birds or animals. The Council believe they have little recourse to the contractors who did the work since water company engineers said they were content with the work when the sites were re-inspected. This being the case, societies will unfortunately have to replace damaged lagging themselves when the need arises - particularly if the water company is going to visit the site. A couple of sites have found that winding white or silver gaffer tape around the lagging helps to prevent damage and similarly sturdy sheet material of the same colours may do the same job.

#### *Trees*

Tracy is meeting her Council colleagues who deal with trees in the next week or so to discuss outstanding work which was either done inadequately by the Council's contractors or not done at all.

#### *Asbestos surveys reports.*

Reports of the asbestos surveys should now have been sent to all societies. If you have not received yours, please let us know.

#### *Annual reports to the Council.*

A few societies have still not sent their annual reports for last year (or in a few cases, the previous year as well) to the Council. This is a requirement of our leases.

*Jenny Warren* has returned from maternity leave but has been assigned to other work until at least July.

*Our next meeting with the Council* is scheduled for mid-April 2016.

### Changing trustees and addresses

It is important that, as well as registering your lease at the Land Registry, you keep the contact addresses up to date and unincorporated associations register a change of trustees with both the Council and the Land Registry. An advice paper *Changing Trustees and Addresses*, which explains how, when and why you should do it was circulated in January and a copy is available from the website at a link from <http://www.barnetallotments.org.uk/selfman.php#Lease>.

### **Andrew Brown**

Andrew Brown, who was formerly employed by the Federation as our support officer has reiterated his generous offer to continue to deal with queries from allotment societies by telephone or e-mail (01509 416 898 [achbrown1946@gmail.com](mailto:achbrown1946@gmail.com)). He has set no deadline to this and expects to remain available as long as you want to ask him questions.

### **ARI factsheets**

The Allotments Regeneration Initiative which ran from 2002 to 2012 produced a comprehensive range of papers on most aspects of allotment management, which constitute a valuable resource for allotment societies. For three years they were available on the website of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, to which we had a link on our website, but they are no longer there. Since we considered that, although some are a little out of date, they should continue to be available, the NAS which now has custody of the papers agreed that we might host them on our website, as a service to our members and the wider allotment community. They are now available at <http://www.barnetallotments.org.uk/ARIfactsheets.php>.

### **Fire safety**

We have recently been approached by the Barnet and Enfield Community Fire Safety Liaison Officer who sent a formal invitation to the Federation requesting a meeting *"to discuss a number of concerns regarding fire safety at the allotments in Barnet, and an opportunity to explore how London Fire Brigade can support you accordingly"*. We have pointed out to him that we are not a supervisory body that can impose rules about fire safety on individual societies but that we would be happy to meet him to discuss how advice could be provided to societies most effectively. At the time of writing, we are awaiting his reply.

### **London Waste Deliveries**

In the last few months, some societies have reported that London Waste, which in the past had delivered compost to their sites, was no longer prepared to do so because of apparent problems of access by their new fleet of larger lorries. In order to establish the extent of the problem, and whether it was so widespread that there might be value in our negotiating collectively with London Waste, we asked societies to complete a short on-line questionnaire.

We would like to thank 27 societies that completed the survey. Of these, only three to which compost had previously been delivered were now being refused for reasons of difficulty of access to the sites from the public highway, rather than problems on the sites themselves. Reasons cited included low branches on trees on the approach road, the state of the approach road and the impossibility of turning on to the approach road without driving on the pavement and encroaching on private property. It would appear that while in the past London Waste's drivers had been prepared to cut corners (literally and metaphorically) they are not willing to do so with the new lorries.

Of the remaining 24 societies that replied, 18 were still getting deliveries and the rest, for a variety of reasons, had never had them. Since it seemed reasonable to assume that the 10 that did not reply to the survey were either not experiencing delivery problems or they do not want to have compost delivered, it is clear that the problem is not widespread but limited to a handful of sites with specific issues.

### **Scrap metal collectors**

If you know of people or companies that will collect separated scrap metals from allotment sites free of charge, could you send us their details? We will then add them to the website.

### **Beekeeping**

Following the formal business at the AGM on February 15, there is to be a talk on the keeping of bees on allotments by Caroline Washington, formerly bee inspector for the whole of London, north of the Thames.

Societies on whose sites bees are kept might be interested in the wealth of information provided by the Barnet and District Beekeepers' Association <http://barnetbeekeepers.org.uk> and the courses they run.

### **Palettes**

The roofing supplier JJ Roofing in Henry Rd, East Barnet is keen to find out whether allotment societies would be interested in the (free) delivery of used palettes. They can be contacted on 0333 700 0000, option 4.

### **Tesco Community Grants**

Money raised from the new 5p charge for plastic bags in Tesco shops is available to community organisations in the form of grants ranging from £8000 to £12000. When first announced, allotments were excluded because projects required unfettered public access. However it has now been announced that the criteria have been extended specifically to include allotments.

This information was circulated early in December 2015 and some societies are known to have applied to be considered for one of the first round of awards. Applications closed in December but there will be further rounds. Information about the scheme and how to apply can be found at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/tescocommunityscheme>.

### **Publicising your society's events**

You are reminded that you can advertise your society's events on the website – see [barnetallotments.org.uk/announcements.php](http://barnetallotments.org.uk/announcements.php).

**Contact details** for the Federation are on the website at [barnetallotments.org.uk/contacts.php](http://barnetallotments.org.uk/contacts.php)