

# barnet allotment federation

## NEWS & NOTES – April 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 – April 2016

Richard King, Afsaneh Gia and Hushang Balyuzi met Tracy Sawyer of Barnet Council on Wednesday 13th April 2016 to discuss allotment issues, notably those outstanding from the previous meeting in January. 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*

The last of the essential repairs contained in the schedules of condition should be dealt with by the end of May. Tracy, with the contractor, will be visiting the sites that still have tarmac work to be done in the next week or so. The impression gained was that Tracy's scheduling of the various outstanding jobs seemed more urgent and explicit than in the past. While it is inadvisable, given the history of these matters, to be too optimistic it does seem that the finishing line is now in site, albeit about 14 months later than required by the leases.

#### *Water standpipes*

Even though societies turn off their water over the winter, and hence there is no real need for lagging of standpipes, the water companies insist that it is done and to a satisfactory standard, failing which they may impose substantial fines. It is therefore important that lagging be maintained at such a standard. At the previous meeting, the reports from several societies that the lagging fitted to their standpipes has been damaged by birds or animals were discussed. The council believed it had little recourse to the contractors who did the work, since water company engineers had said they were content with the work when the sites were re-inspected. Since then further sites have reported similar damage, so the question was raised again stressing that, although water companies had been satisfied, it would appear that the lagging provided could not be considered to be fit for purpose if it had to be replaced every year or so.

Tracy said that she would try to make a case for the council to remedy the defects to lagging if she is provided with information about the sites affected and the number of badly lagged standpipes. ***If your site is one of these***, please let Richard King ([richardking101@aol.com](mailto:richardking101@aol.com)) know, stating the total number of standpipes and of these how many have damaged lagging that requires repair.

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

This is advanced warning that the society's annual reports to the council, which are required by our leases, should be submitted by the end of July. At the meeting we were told that five societies had still not sent their annual reports for last year, and one for the previous year.

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

### Rules for incorporated societies

At the last members meeting, we reported that we were looking at the possibility of producing model rules for allotment societies to use if they wished to become incorporated as a cooperative society (formerly known as an industrial and provident society). During the discussion, we were asked why we had not considered the alternative of societies incorporating as a company limited by guarantee (CLG), which appeared to offer certain advantages. So, having duly considered, we recognise that the CLG structure might indeed be more suitable, and hence we plan to produce a model CLG constitution and accompanying advice. We are hoping to publish them in May.

### **Opportunity to visit other sites**

Site visits are a great way to get fresh inspiration, to find out how other committees are managing common issues and to get practical tips. Two sites have kindly agreed to host site visits this May, as in the details below.

This invite is extended to all your committee members. To help manage numbers please email the BAF Vice Chair ([vicechair@barnetallotments.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@barnetallotments.org.uk)) by 30 April, letting us know who will attend.

*Cat Hill, East Barnet, EN4 8HP - Saturday 7th May 10.30am-12pm*

- Site tour
- Followed by a chat with committee members
- The committee have offered to speak about: managing social events, site security and tenancy management

*Hatley Close, Friern Barnet Central, N11 3LA - Sunday 15th May, 11am-1pm*

- Site tour, including viewing new hut and plant sale
- Followed by a chat with committee members
- The committee have offered to speak about: managing neglected plots/waiting lists, how they manage their trading, and how they manage member engagement

### **Wisley trip**

35 people from 10 sites enjoyed the trip to Wisley on 19 April. It was a good chance to see one of the best RHS gardens and to visit their spring plant fair. Thanks to Sally Gran of Friern Barnet Central and Kirstie Burgin for arranging it. We intend to organise further trips, so please let the committee know if you have ideas for where we might go.

### **Speakers' Panel**

From time to time we are asked by outside bodies whether we can provide someone to speak to them on horticultural or gardening matters. When approached, we ask around to see if we can find an appropriate and willing volunteer. A recent example is that of Anita Gracie of Lawrence Street who has agreed to give the monthly evening talk for the community on June 21 at Osidge Library, in Brunswick Park Road. It is entitled *Grow your Own Veg: food for the Soul as well as the body*. If any of the societies that have sites in the neighbourhood would like to attend the talk in order to make themselves known to the community or to advertise their sites, please contact Anita at [anitagracie@talk21.com](mailto:anitagracie@talk21.com).

To make it easier to deal with enquiries in the future, we are considering producing a central register of allotment society members who would be interested in giving such talks. If you or any of your members would be willing to be included in the register, please send their names and contact details to [chair@barnetallotments.org.uk](mailto:chair@barnetallotments.org.uk), together with topics on which they could speak.

### **Annual survey**

The Federation's annual survey was circulated to societies on March 3, with a closing date for returning it of April 22. It was followed by a reminder on April 11, since as of that date only four returns had been received. If your society has not yet replied, we would be grateful if it would do so by the deadline.

### **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)