

barnet allotment federation

NEWS & NOTES – November 2016

Please send any page contributions, news or events for News and Notes and/or the Federation website to barnetallotmentfederation@gmail.com

Committee

Angela Davey, who joined the committee earlier this year, has had to stand down for personal reasons. We are pleased to announce that Belinda Constable a member of the Friern Barnet Central association, has agreed to be co-opted in her place.

Stella Winskell-Moore

Stella's funeral took place on October 31. It was attended by many of her allotmenting friends, including five committee members and several people from the societies. Her long time partner and, since July, her husband, Roy Sharland played a piece of music he had written in her memory – it may be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3EOSIYMbvg.

The Federation made a donation of £50 to the Marie Curie Hospice in Hampstead, where Stella spent her last few weeks. Others wishing to donate may do so via the website at mariecurie.org.uk/donate. At the quiz night on December 12, we shall be seeking homes for a number of Stella's houseplants, which Roy does not want to keep, in exchange for a donation to Marie Curie

Site and plot competitions – prize giving 2016

On 17 October we held our prize giving, and we welcomed Cllr Brian Salinger, the vice-chair of Barnet's Environment Committee, to present the trophies and certificates to the winners. There was an increase in site and plot entries this year and it is hoped even more will enter next summer. Details of the winners and photos of the prize giving may be found using the links at barnetallotments.org.uk/siteandplotcomp.php.

At the start of proceedings, Hushang Balyuzi gave a tribute to Stella, mentioning particularly all the work she put into running the competitions each year – we will all miss her so very much. The team who stepped up to take over the running of the competition were thanked as were all the individual competitors and societies.

Annual Survey

Thanks to all those who returned the annual survey forms. We have analysed, anonymised and summarised the information provided and the result is available on the website at barnetallotments.org.uk/files/annualsurvey/analysis_2016_redacted.pdf

Independent examiner of annual accounts

The annual accounts of all societies must be audited or examined by an independent person who is reasonably believed by the society's committee to have the requisite ability and practical experience to carry out a competent examination of the accounts. In practice, not all societies have their accounts audited or examined – the annual survey showed that in 2015/16, 11 out of 37 did not. It is believed that one reason for this has been the difficulty in finding someone to do the job.

We are therefore pleased to inform you that Jane Healey, the treasurer at the North Finchley Allotment Society (Glebelands) has offered to act as an independent examiner for societies who need one. She is a qualified book-keeper and works full-time as a financial manager so is familiar with all that is required. She may be contacted at northfinchleyallotmentsociety@gmail.com.

However, since it is unrealistic to ask one person to act as an independent examiner for many societies, we should like, in line with the Federation's philosophy of mutual assistance, to establish a pool of people who could offer their services in this way. So, if your society's treasurer, for example, has benefited from an examiner from another society, then we would suggest that he/she in return might offer to be included in the pool. Would anyone prepared to volunteer their name for inclusion in the pool, please let us know?

Meeting with Barnet

Afsaneh Nia, Richard King and Hushang Balyuzi met Tracy Sawyer and Martin Thompson of Barnet Council on October 19. It would appear that Barnet have completed, or are about to complete, the work on sites to

which they were committed by the leases. There remain a couple property issues which are moving slowly because they involve legal and property services.

Regarding outstanding tree work, Tracy has given up on the Council's tree section and their contractors and has retained an arboricultural contractor direct. She hopes to have all the work finished by the end of November.

We raised once again the issue of inadequate lagging of standpipes. The council continues to maintain that they have little recourse against the contractors who lagged the standpipes, particularly since the water company engineers said they were content with the work when the sites were re-inspected. So they consider it to be a 'job done' and have no plans to commission further work. A couple of sites have apparently found that winding white or silver duct tape around the lagging helps to prevent damage and similarly sturdy sheet material of the same colours may do the same job.

Martin apologised for providing us with incomplete information about the number of societies that sent their annual returns to the council, which led us to sending societies a misleading email.

We have set a provisional date of December 7 for our next meeting, so once again if you have matters you wish us to raise, please send them to richardking101@aol.com.

Appeal for website technical support

The person who provided technical support for our website is no longer able to do so. While it is still possible for us to continue to edit the site and add new material, we cannot make major changes to its appearance and/or organisation. We are therefore looking for someone with website experience, including the use of PHP and SQL, to act as the technical manager. Could you ask around in your societies to see if there is anyone who fits the bill who would be prepared to undertake the role on a voluntary basis?

Break-in

We have been told by the Golders Green Allotment Association that their Hospital Fields site was broken into on November 5 and all the sheds were opened. Many societies, including Golders Green, recommend that nothing of value be kept in sheds and that, since most shed doors and padlocks are not sufficiently substantial to resist crowbars, they be left unlocked to avoid damage to sheds by intruders. Alternatively, if valuable equipment is kept in a shed, its windows should be curtained and the doors and windows should be secured to at least a domestic standard. If there have been break-ins to any of your sites, please let us know.

Postal deliveries to allotment sites

We know of at least one society that has had problems with arranging for post to be delivered to their site. We would therefore be grateful if you could let us know whether Royal Mail delivers to your site.

Standpipes

Societies that are dissatisfied with their standpipes and who have deep pockets might consider replacing them with this product www.standpipes.com/product-information/48b7cb988425c/ALT12 as a long term solution.

Beanpole event

As in previous years The Woodland Trust is holding a beanpole cutting event at their Belhus Chase site. It is on December 14. The person to contact for more information is Derek Wright who is running the events, his email is: derek@thejerkysack.co.uk.

Mill Hill Garden & Allotment Society Annual Weekend Outing - 2017

Mill Hill Allotments have a few places available for their annual weekend outing from June 16th to 19th. See www.barnetallotments.org.uk/files/misc/MHGAS%202017.weekend%20outing.cricketstthomas.pdf.

Dates for your diaries

Workshop – the Future Role of the Federation – Monday November 21 – Rathbone Pavilion

Quiz night and social - December 12 2015 – Rathbone Pavilion

AGM and speaker– February 27 (NB **not** the traditional third Monday) – Rathbone Pavilion

Contact details for the Federation are on the website at barnetallotments.org.uk/contacts

Previous issues of Notes and News are available on the website at barnetallotments.org.uk/notes