



AGM and Self Management

The EAP-AGM, held on March 7th at the Polygon, St Mary's Church South Ealing Road, went off very successfully with 70-80 tenants attending – a full house. The minutes of the meeting, together with the annual reports of the Chairman, Treasurer and Ealing Allotments Manager can all be accessed by clicking on [AGM](#) or going to the EAP website at the address given above. The AGM was followed by the always popular “Gardeners Question Time Session” involving local gardening experts. The highlight of the evening, however, was undoubtedly the talk on “Self Management – the Pitshanger Experience” given by Doig Simmonds; particularly timely in the light of Ealing Council's plans to change the system of allotment management for Council allotments foreshadowed in Stephen Cole's Allotments Manager report.

To access a summary of the talk and the ensuing discussion click on [self management](#) or go to the EAP website. Expect to hear a lot more on this topic over the next year. Currently, nobody – including the Council itself – seems to know exactly what is planned but one thing that is very clear is that we as a community need to be discussing this issue with Council Officers well before plans are finalised. It is in nobody's interests to let things go right down to the wire as happened with the recent controversy about allotment rent increases!

For more information about self-management of allotments go to:

Allotments Regeneration Initiative (ARI):

http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari/documents/Other_ARI_factsheets/gardenersincharge2011.pdf

National Society of allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG):

<http://www.nsalg.org.uk/uploads/article459/Notes%20on%20self-management.pdf>

Ealing Transition Community Garden



The Ealing Transition Community Garden has been going strong for two years now and is just about to start its third season of growing. The garden was started by a group of volunteers who wanted to learn about growing and sustainability, teach others the same and develop a sense of community. The group got agreement from the council allotments manager to use two disused 5-pole plots on the under-utilised Village Park allotments in South Ealing.

The project has been run without funding by making use of freecycling, recycling and donations of old tools and spare seeds and seedlings from volunteers and friends. The beds have been edged with old floorboards, a greenhouse (shown below) has been built from windows that were being replaced and the shed was donated by someone who was 'upsizing'. A small steering group runs the garden – planning the planting, planning events and being there on work days, which are held on alternating Saturday and Sunday mornings, weekly (summer) or fortnightly (winter), as well as Wednesday evenings during the summer. Anyone can drop in during the work days, to help out with whatever tasks needs to be done – digging, weeding, sowing, harvesting – and take home a share of whatever has been harvested.

With the site manager having gone awol, and half the plots on the site untenanted and overgrown, the group offered to take over management of the Village Park allotment site in Autumn 2011. The untenanted 5-pole plots have been split in half and are let out as mini-plots – a manageable and undaunting size for new allotmenters. Those that make a success of it and feel that they need more space will get the opportunity to have another 2.5 pole plot when one becomes free. And the result? The last plot is in the process of being let out, and all the rest are being actively prepared for the coming season. In just four months, the site has undergone a transformation from having about half the plots with knee-high grass to all plots being worked.



Not content to rest on its laurels, members of the group have also set up a community orchard and edible garden in the Lammas enclosure, are in the process of planting an orchard in Acton and setting up a community beehive in West Ealing, and provide support to the kitchen garden in Walpole Park.

For more information about the garden and ways to contact the group if you'd like to get involved, go to their blog at: <http://ealingtransitioncommunitygarden.wordpress.com>
For more information about Ealing Transition, visit: <http://ealingtransition.org>

Appeal for Help Rescuing Neglected Allotments

Along similar lines, the charity “Green Corridor” is on the search for help in turning a neglected allotment in Manor Way, Southall into a productive community growing space. This charity is a new one to us but according to the Ealing Gazette – which provides a lot of snippets of interesting information on allotment issues - “aims to create a small oasis in Southall that can be used to deliver land based activities to young people and the community”. Volunteers are needed to make the project a reality. If you are interested in finding out more, they have a website click on [Green Corridor](#)

Ealing in Bloom

Garden competitions organised by the Acton, Southall and Ealing Boroughs date back to the 1930’s. They were suspended during the war years but revived after the war. They ceased altogether, however, when the Boroughs merged in 1965. The “Ealing In Bloom” competition started in 1984 and was initially organised by the Ealing Council Parks Department. The competition has now enjoyed twenty seven very successful years and winners of awards are spread all around the borough. Ealing also always does very well in the wider “London In Bloom” competition – involving Parks, Gardening, Trees, Allotments, Open Spaces and Sports Fields: all green issues that improve the quality of our lives.



*Nigel Sumner Chairman of Ealing
in Bloom Committee*

A formal independent “Ealing in Bloom” committee was established in 1989 – to better reflect the importance of such a prestigious competition and co-ordinate the appeal to both the Business community and residents of the borough. This committee has representation from local businessmen/women, local organisations and former winners and, although the committee is independent, it enjoys the full support of the Council. Cllr. Nigel Sumner has been involved in the Competition since 1988 - initially as Deputy Chairman but since 1999 as Chairman. He is particularly impressed by the involvement of schools in the competition – and is a champion of the Outdoor Classroom and keen to encourage all children to enjoy growing plants and learning about the Natural Environment.

The annual “Ealing in Bloom” competition is divided into categories ranging from single balconies through individual allotment plots of different sizes to entire allotment sites, and entrants come from all over the borough. Judging is carried out in early June and late July, to ensure maximum coverage, by a team of both amateur and professional judges. They never cease to be amazed at the skill and ingenuity of Ealing’s amateur gardeners. The highlight of the competition is the Presentation of Awards by the Committee’s President, the Mayor of Ealing. The Annual Presentation Ceremony takes place at the Victoria Hall, Ealing Town Hall, in September. The Ealing In Bloom competition was once again very successful in 2011. All the final entries were of a very high standard and the judges were extremely impressed. For this year’s application forms e-mail ealinginbloom@gmail.com

The Allotment Show is back – after last year’s hiccup!!



Allotment holders Lynne Casey and Elaine Hagan will be organising this year’s show. The format will be the same as in earlier years.

Please do enter! It's open to every allotment holder and there is a category for everyone from fruit and vegetables to jams, cakes, wines, bread and flowers as well as categories for children.

Lynne and Elaine will be updating everyone as it gets nearer the time and will be putting together a blog where you can download the Brochure of Rules and Schedule, as well as some printed versions for those who cannot access a computer.

It will be lots of fun to enter and great to come and have a look around at some of the fantastic produce grown on our allotments. There will be tea and cakes for sale at the show and a raffle - so make an afternoon of it.

So put the details Saturday 8th of September at the Polygon, St. Marys Church, South Ealing Road in your diary and start planning what to enter!

Around the Associations

Goldsmiths Site sold from under Tenants’ feet

For many years the Acton Gardening Association (AGA) has run the 12 plot allotment site behind the almshouses on Churchfield Road, Acton. The almshouses and the allotment land, were originally given to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths for the benefit of the people of Acton in the mid-1600’s by Mr Perryn, a blacksmith from Bromyard in Herefordshire, who rose to be an alderman of the City of London. The land which is separated from the almshouses by long wall protected by a Conservation Order, however, was sold on to Golden Lands Ltd about six or more years ago.

There was, and still is, no vehicular access to the site and there is a covenant ruling out change of use. An attempt, three years ago, by Golden Lands to drive a road into the site to give it access was fought off in a legal battle with the help of Angie Bray (now the local MP) and the Council. AGA recently found out that the allotment land was to be sold on yet again but only by a fluke. They had just spent £2,100 on having a new fence and gate put in and on the last day of the work a photographer arrived and said he needed to take pictures of the land as it was up for auction. AGA informed the Shaa Residents Association, made up of the owners of the houses overlooking the allotments, of the planned auction. They then decided to form a consortium and bid for the allotment land with AGA indicating its willingness to buy a share if the consortium was successful. The recommended price from the auctioneer was £35,000. In the event, the site of under an acre with no access or planning permissions, went for a staggering £155,000 - bought by a local entrepreneur, whom AGA has yet to hear from.

Fortunately, one of AGA's plot holders is a property barrister and is helping with advice and hopefully the matter is far from over.

Community Payback help out at Blondin

Blondin Allotments has been a semi self-managed site for over ten years - a committee of plot holders is elected each year. They have tasked themselves to collect the rents on behalf of the Council, to help maintain the site and even present an award for the best plot for a newcomer who has been there 5 years or less.

Unfortunately, they inherited a number of problems including plot holders who had been on the site for over 30 years who had developed their own antisocial habits. They are now dealing with the repercussions of such an individual who has been evicted for not working his plot in addition to dumping rubbish. The plot became a fortress with plastic netting being used as a demarcation line. A big shed construction had been built and it was within this that the items shown in the picture below were found. The Blondin Allotment Committee, with the help of Community Payback, have quite a task on their hands but aim to be able to get the rubbish cleared over four weekends. Keith Massey, Chair of the association said "we are very grateful to the Community Payback team who came in on Sunday to help us. They filled the skip for us in under an hour, something that would have taken us half a day to do and have offered to come back each week until the job is done". With a waiting list of over sixty people it should not be too long before several plots can be re-let.



Photograph courtesy of James Graham

Framfield has a pig!

Cecil the pig has taken up residence at Framfield; a sure-fire attraction for school visits. Ducks have returned to their wildlife pond for a second year and they have yet another grant! £1000 from Team London (mayor of London's scheme) – for roof and guttering repairs to their kitchen and paving their new meeting area.

Keep up to date by checking out "Latest News" on the EAP website and signing up for the EAP newsletter using the "Contact Us" link