

## *Blondin Site Profile*

**Blondin Allotments is the second in our series of profiles of Ealing allotment sites. A very successful and innovative site located in Northfields.**

*Behind the houses on the east side of Boston Manor Road, and south of the Heathrow branch of the Piccadilly line, are Blondin Allotments.*

*It's quite a big site with over a hundred plots, varying in size from four poles to twelve. Back in the post war period the site was twice the size, but due to a lack of interest in growing your own in the sixties and seventies, much of the site fell into disuse, so half of the land became the Blondin Park Nature Reserve.*



*Blondin in the Winter .....  
..... and in the Summer*

*Traditionally allotment sites have managers who carry out routine maintenance work and keep an eye on who is and isn't working their plots on behalf of the council. But in 2000 the plot-holders at Blondin formed an Allotment Association to take over the responsibilities of the manager and the running of our site.*

*The fledgling association initially had trouble with some plot-holders who were resistant to change. But then the association applied for, and managed to secure, external funding to improve paths and provide essential amenities, and plot-holders started to see the benefits of the new way of working.*

*Each autumn we hold an AGM and vote in a committee. The committee is responsible for allotment admin, site inspections, letting plots and collecting rents. The committee holds monthly meetings to discuss how things are going and plan for the future.*

*Alongside the rent that tenants pay to the council, plot-holders pay a small sum each year (currently £5 each) to the Allotment Association. This pays for things like strimmers, a rotavator, petrol, materials for maintenance tasks, skip hire, printing and postage for newsletters etc. We also receive a percentage of the rents we collect back from the council, which adds to our funding.*

*Three times a year the committee organises a Sunday workday and plot-holders get together to do plot measuring, path clearing, litter picking and other necessary tasks. We follow this with a barbecue and social get together.*

*At the back of the site, next to the Northfields tube depot fence, we have an old shipping container. This is where we store our barbecue and workday essentials, communal tools etc, and, next to the container, and the envy of allotments throughout the land, is our state of the art composting toilet with disabled access.*

*We have a wonderful range of ages, experience and ethnic backgrounds at Blondin. Walking around the site you meet plot-holders from every continent, people who are totally new to growing and some who have been growing fruit and vegetables for more than fifty years. And, as in every cross section of society there are sociable people and some of us who like to be left alone to get on with their digging.*

*All our plots are currently let and there are over 40 people on our waiting list.*

*If more self-management is introduced throughout Ealing we don't feel that it should affect Blondin particularly, as the plot-holders, through our Allotment Association and their committee, already take on a lot of responsibility for day to day admin and maintenance of the site.*

*Roger Sealey,  
Blondin Allotment Association*