

Ealing Allotments Partnership AGM, 6th March 2018

Ealing Council's Update

Site Management

The past year has seen yet another increase in sites being managed by volunteers. For all council sites in operation, 98% of tenants are now managed by volunteer site managers or local associations. This is a huge credit to the willingness and passion of the allotment community and particularly those who commit their valuable time volunteering. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who have helped to ensure allotments are managed proactively and consistently. It is a testament to how important the opportunity is to grow your own fruit and veg, get out in the fresh air and be involved within a social environment.

Rules review

The Council and the EAP committee will be reviewing the rules again this year to ensure they continue to stay relevant. A few areas are likely to be focused on, such as bonfires, however if you have any suggestions can I ask you advise your volunteer site manager/association as we look to have an updated set of rules in place for October 2018.

Funding

Ward Forum was a very successful funding source for allotments in 2017 and will hopefully continue in 2018. Some of the funds end up being matched either by mainstream revenue from the Council or external grants, so if you have any ideas I would recommend contacting your volunteer site manager/association and your local councillors. On a related note, the council budget for allotment infrastructure is unchanged for 2018/19 so we will again be asking volunteer site managers/associations for any recommendations of repairs/improvements. Rent for 2018 remains unchanged, however there is likely to be a moderate increase of 3-5% in 2019.

For larger ideas, which may have a wider impact it is likely that the 4th edition of Transform Your Space may be a useful opportunity to explore. A date for submissions has not yet been determined, however given the successful progress that has been taking shape at the Horsenden Grape and Honey Farm there is likely a good precedent set for community use of space for food growing. Any ideas can be started on the website Bubble (<http://www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/>) in anticipation of potential funding opportunities.

Achievements in 2017

There are some good successes from 2017, that should be highlighted:

- Ascott Allotments won the London in Bloom Allotment of the Year award
- Ealing Council was awarded the Biodiversity Award of which allotments, but also food growing opportunities outside of allotment sites and volunteering featured heavily.
- The Parks department is delighted to continue support towards the Ealing in Bloom campaign for 2018, which always see a high participation level from allotment tenants and sites.

A thank you to all of those that have contributed towards the EAP newsletters this year. It seemed to be a bumper year for contributions and great way of showing off the wonderful work you all do.

Thank you to Joe and the rest of the committee for their commitment to continuously improving the way in which allotments are provided and managed in Ealing.

The Future

Although there were delays to the cricket development, we are at the final stages of preparation for the new allotment site at Popesfield. Fencing has been installed and we are now awaiting the installation of a water meter before installing water tanks and contacting keen people already on the waiting list.

We are looking to continue the successful steps that have been made in providing more opportunities for access and education of food growing within the Borough. For those that are keen to get more involved in your local area, please do get in touch.

Kind regards,

Chris Welsh, Parks Operations Manager