



Apologies for the delay in publication, we normally try to get the winter edition out closer to New Year. The delay has been occasioned by two significant factors.

The first of these is that we have been waiting to see if EAP would be in a better position to let you know how the Council intends to reorganise the management of its allotments following the loss of its Allotments Manager. The autumn period with rent collection and the necessity of organising the switching-off of the allotment water systems to avoid possible freeze damage has brought the whole problem sharply into focus. EAP representatives had preliminary discussions with Council Officers aimed at identifying where the major problems lie just before Christmas. The Council, not surprisingly given the current cuts in Local Government Grants, is keen to shift the emphasis of allotment management from a central to a more local basis with individual sites taking more responsibility for their day-to-day running. It is heartening to report that Council Officers appear to recognise that any such changes will require the support and co-operation of site managers and local allotment associations. However, exactly what this might involve in practice still remains to be decided.

The second reason for delay is that it allows us to bring you the good news that Ealing has been nominated as one of the three finalists in the Large City category of the RHS “Britain-in-Bloom” competition. Most of you will be aware of our local Ealing-in-Bloom competition and the fact that EAP is a strong supporter of allotment sites entering under the Allotments Category. You may be less aware that competitions like Ealing-in-Bloom underpin wider competitions such as London-in-Bloom and Britain-in-Bloom. Ealing’s nomination to the finals of Britain-in-Bloom reflects its success, for the second year running, in winning an impressive series of awards in the London-in-Bloom competition. This year, Walpole Park in central Ealing was awarded gold in the large park category, Litten Nature Reserve in Greenford was overall winner and awarded gold, and Southfields Recreation Ground silver gilt, in the small conservation area category, while St Mary’s churchyard in South



Ealing won silver and was overall winner in the churchyard of the year category. Based on these successes, Ealing Council was awarded the prestigious gold status for the borough's overall impact in terms of its horticulture, environmental management and community participation.

In this year's Britain-in-Bloom competition, Ealing will be up against other towns and cities including the likes of Wigan. The judging fortnight will run from 1-12 August 2016. There is clearly going to be a great deal of interest focussed in the coming year on Ealing's "green credentials" so how about entering your allotment site in this year's Ealing-in-Bloom competition? Details of how to enter will appear in the Spring newsletter.

AGM 2016

EAP-AGM

*EAP will be holding its AGM at 7.30 p.m. Tuesday, March 8th
in the Polygon, St Mary's Church, South Ealing Road, W5 5RH*

Followed by Guest Speaker

Julie Riehl – Capital Growth Organisation

“London's Food Growing Network”

and

a presentation by Dunster House on

Composting Toilets for Allotments

Refreshments will be available

The AGM evening is a chance to get together with new and old friends to discuss things of common interest. As usual, we shall try to keep the formal aspects of the AGM as brief as possible. Julie Riehl who helps run the Regent's Park allotments will be talking on various aspects of food growing in a city environment and Samson Masih and Marcus Vaughan from Dunster House will be talking and answering questions regarding the provision of composting toilets on allotment sites.



Site Profile



Jubilee Allotments in Perivale were established as part of the 1930's expansion of London suburbs. Named after the George V Jubilee of 1935, the allotments are surrounded by houses built around that time on Jubilee Road, George V Way and Bilton Road.

Until recently, we had several members who worked plots for over sixty years. Sadly, time takes a toll. Their friendship and knowledge will be missed. We are, however, blessed with new blood

and are looking for more. The majority of languages heard in Perivale are represented; we are a very mixed community.

One of our many challenges is that the allotment and entrances are not visible from the street unless you know where to look. Until the recent appointment of a site manager there was also no point of contact apart from the council. There are 90 plots of varying sizes, the majority about 5 poles. While we have more than 40 active members, some 15 plots remain unused plus a further 5 currently being cleaned up. Our lack of visibility to the local community has meant that finding takers for the vacancies has proved difficult. We are, however, planning a local publicity campaign and we hope that 2016 will see an improvement in recruitment and provide an opportunity to bring some of our vacant plots back into use.

The members prove themselves successful in cultivating a wide range of fruit, vegetables and flowers. In addition, bees, chickens and geese are cared for on site. We don't seem to need annual competitions as our gardeners take obvious pride in their results. While we are not blessed with conveniences like toilets or a society hut, there are mains water butts near most plots. An added attraction is the existence of the Jubilee Allotment Gardens Society (JAGS) which provides access to lawn mowers, strimmers and rotavators for a nominal annual subscription to cover petrol and maintenance.

Summer of 2015 saw a concerted effort by several members to tidy up rubbish left on derelict plots and close to the surrounding fence. Over a tonne of metal, wood and plastic was collected most of which has been recycled by site members or the council. A considerable amount of rubbish was uncovered during council work to replace 100 meters of fencing and the main gates. This work was most welcome, providing a higher and more robust fence which discourages further dumping and unauthorised access. Some plots need rebuilding with organic matter to raise the planting level, improve soil and mitigate



flooding on the clay pan. During this winter we shall be improving selected plots in the hope of attracting new members.

Site Manager, Michael Bunyan

(07500 921 318 (work) or 020 8997 1497 (home), Email: jubilee.allotments.perivale@gmail.com)

The Challenge & Headstart Project at Horsenden Allotments

The Challenge is a leading UK Charity aimed at building a more integrated society. Last August a group of Challenge young people volunteered at Horsenden Allotments for three consecutive days. The participants were taking part in our programme Headstart; funded by the Heathrow Community Fund. The scheme encourages young people to complete sixteen hours of volunteering to gain a part-time job interview with companies such as New Look & Starbucks.



The project at Horsenden's Whitton Place site was three days long, which meant the volunteers could complete all sixteen hours with one partner across consecutive days. Joseph Mangar, the site manager put together a schedule for this time that meant tasks could be seen through from start to finish, giving the young people a sense of achievement once complete. The Heathrow Community Fund donated £400 to Horsenden Allotments for leading on the event and providing all resources and equipment.

During the project, the young people were responsible for helping with furniture renovation, painting, sowing, planting, clearing and much more. They were split into pairs and given tasks that they could take ownership over. As well as this, they all had a chance to visit the bee apiary, taste real honey, pick blackberries and learn about fruit and veg cultivation. The site provided lunch for the young people each day, and on the last day put on a bbq for the group and other friends of the allotments.

The Challenge participants worked with the allotment volunteers to complete the gardening tasks, learning from their experience. The mentor said interaction was natural, with the generations clearly enjoying each other's company. One young person told us '*I learnt something new and enjoyed the amazing company*' due to everyone being so helpful and welcoming.

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.

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The young people were full of enthusiasm for the project, even turning up an hour early some mornings to ensure they had enough time to complete their jobs. When asked what they enjoyed, these were just a few of their great comments; *'the sense of community', 'meeting new people and getting to know the experience of gardening', 'everything; the people, the whole allotment, learning new things, our mentor etc'*.



One volunteer who attended the project has autism and his mum showed some concern in how he would integrate himself into the group. Through the support Joseph and all other allotment members gave he had a fantastic time. His mum told us *'He really enjoyed his two days and he wants to have an outdoor job now. He would be happy to do more volunteering'*. Along with this young person, other participants also showed interest in coming back to give further time, which is praise to their experience.



The Challenge and Headstart were proud to work in great partnership with Horsenden Allotment and hopes to do so again in the future. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who helped support the three days of volunteering, with special thanks to Joseph for all his time put into planning and delivering this opportunity.

Sammi Efford –Graduate Assistant Programme Manager; The Challenge

Notes from Carbery

Summer on Carbery was declared officially over when the fox, whom we had lovingly nurtured back from the dead (see Carbery Site Profile in the autumn newsletter), resumed his normal behaviour and, once again, wrenched the solar fountain from its watery home in my pond and distributed the remains in the raspberry patch. While the promise of winter showed in other people's immaculate soldierly rows of glistening firm Brussels sprouts, by the time it came to gather mine for Christmas lunch they in contrast had been reduced to

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lacy labyrinths by little chaps who took up residence under cover of darkness. Christmas euphoria has now passed and the carcass of the unfortunate turkey has been traditionally (Yorkshire style) skewered on a pole and installed horizontally, high across the top of my rose arch: out of reach of cats and foxes, but available for the poor ravenous birds to reduce to a bleached shadow of its former self,

It's now time to face the coming year. As the wood chip pile by the main gate diminishes, some good fairy has put the remainder onto the path that runs the length of the allotment. This path is normally reduced to a chocolaty quagmire, by the winter and it becomes a spectator sport to see who can stay upright the longest. The water is turned off and we are left with just a bin full, here and there, to use very sparingly. It always seems that it is at precisely this time, when the dirty job of hauling something slimy out of a corner, or reorganising the compost heap, seems to jump to the top of the 'to do' list, that one ends up walking about looking like the creature from the black lagoon, dirty wet hands hanging limply in despair, with not a drop of water to wash it all off.



An update on the turkey! Yesterday, as I was pottering about on my plot, something caught my eye. There, slowly and carefully, like an expert mountaineer, a young grey and white cat climbed vertically, among the twisted branches of willow and prickly rose, finding one foothold, then a tentative soft paw reaching slowly for the next, until, at last, he reached the horizontal turkey-bearing pole - six feet from the ground. He then began to tip-toe, like a tightrope walker, to where the

turkey hung and stood, balancing on the narrow pole, trying to nibble what he could. The best bits were out of reach, underneath. He, nevertheless, was in seventh heaven, eyes half closed in anticipation of spending a few hours in this impossible position, close to the object of his affection. At this moment, I intervened. At first, he seemed to be in such a trance-like state, that he was deaf to my voice, until I clapped my hands. Then, he very casually went into descent mode. First going head-first down the side of the arch. Then, thinking better of it, he turned and reversed, tail out, bottom out, legs akimbo, among the painfully sharp thorns and spikes, until he reached terra firma when he slowly walked off, to sit on a box by my shed washing his paw and gazing casually about him, as if the past few minutes had never happened.

Diana Crawshaw



Around the Associations

Brentham



On a bright October afternoon, 24 eager Beavers and their leaders from the 16th Ealing (St. Barnabas) group paid their first visit to Brentham allotments. After a short welcoming introduction, they divided into four groups each taking turns to look at different aspects of the plots.

The first group watched the harvesting of butternut squash, weighed and measured them and then compared them to other types of squash and pumpkins. They also looked at a wildlife pond and used the magnifying glasses that they had brought with them to check out the “mini-beasts” lurking under stones and logs. The second group visited the hens on a nearby plot where a plot holder answered questions about what they ate, how they were looked after and why one had a purple bottom (it needed medicine because it had been bullied). The third and fourth group had spotter sheets and walked along the main path identifying as many fruit, vegetables and flowers as they could and looked at the trading hut, manure pit and the woodchip pile.

For some it was an opportunity to show off their knowledge, for others it was a chance to learn where their food came from and how it was grown. After 45 minutes, it was time to head back to St. Barnabas. All agreed it was an enjoyable visit and their leader (Heather) said that they would be making a scarecrow for us. It is hoped that a smaller group of would-be gardeners will be back in the spring to grow some food of their own to earn their gardening badge.

Jane Fernley and Crystal Te-Moananui-Squares

Horsenden Sites

We had a very successful Christmas Drinks at our Whitton Place site for all Horsenden Allotment and Garden Association (HAAGA) members, with at least double the number of 'festive fellows' that came last year. The trading hut looked suitably seasonal - after a call out for any spare Xmas decorations that could be borrowed - and our summer pergola had

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a winter hat of a tarpaulin plus a patio heater so it was a perfect extension when the hut started to fill with numbers. The food contributions table was creaking under all the home cooked delights that people so generously made an effort to bring. Upon arrival everyone was greeted with a warming cup of homemade onion soup (allotment grown of course) or spiced mulled wine (or both). A cheeky tippie of rhubarb vodka did the rounds (allotment grown again) and brought a rosy glow to chilly cheeks! Our newly erected toilet got its first visitors (only finished the day before - it's amazing what a deadline can do)... we all agreed it was a success all round.



With the help of funding from the North Greenford Ward Forum, we are now the proud owners of new composting toilets at our main Horsenden site. This will finally enable us to open up our community projects to both younger and older local residents. Our previous spider-ridden, pitch-black (no windows) facility - was just not suitable. We purchased our new acquisitions from Dunster House dunsterhouse.co.uk/wpc-ecocomposting-toilet - and even though we only have one up at the moment it's a much nicer, well lit, more civilised place to venture into in that time of need!! If anyone is thinking of buying a toilet for their site and would like to pop along to check ours out, it's on our Whitton Place site - adjacent to 415 Whitton Avenue East - Sundays 10-12 is a good time to visit.

Our volunteers dates start again in March - first Saturday of the month for 2 hours (again 10:00 - 12.00). For the first few months, we are going to be focusing on creating a communal area for the plot holders on our larger Whitton Drive site to enjoy. Since we've created a more sociable area at our Whitton Place site we have noticed that the tenants on our other two sites, that are lacking this kind of facility, tend to just cultivate their plots and then go, without chatting much to other allotmenters. There are plans to put in a toilet (long overdue), a shelter and some seating at Whitton Drive. Fingers crossed this will help encourage new people to take up empty plots and create more pleasant places to visit and work. If it's a success, we'll eventually do the same at our smallest site as well.

Milly Mills

Framfield

Events: We had our bonfire party back in November, which was well attended by plot holders and neighbours. This provided a good excuse to clear up the site and add all the old pallets and tree prunings to the fire.

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Fundraising: We're currently raising funds to provide nest boxes and bird feeders for our community areas and to distribute to plot holders to encourage more wildlife onto Framfield. These will also provide additional attractions for our visitors from local schools and community groups. We've entered our project into Ealing's Greenredeem scheme and would welcome support from other allotmenters! To learn more about Greendeem, and how to donate any spare points earned by recycling, go to <https://www.greenredeem.co.uk/index.php>

We've also entered the project into the Waitrose 'green token' scheme. Waitrose in West Ealing share out £1000 a month between three local projects, depending on the number of votes each project receives. Every time you shop there you receive a token to use to vote. Our project is due in the next month or two - again any votes appreciated. This is a great scheme - we've used it a few times in the past and it has proved a very useful way of boosting our funds. It's easy to apply for, and there is no complicated admin/follow-up needed.

Hilary Jayne