

# *B.A.G.S. Newsletter*

*Brentham Allotments and Gardens Society*

No. 40

August 2016

## SUMMER SOCIAL



Brentham Allotments Summer Social was held this year on Sunday the 10th of July. It was a great success despite the rain earlier in the day which thankfully held off for the duration. The social was organised by the committee - fronted yet again by the wonderful Ann Salaun - and boasted an amazing array of delicious foods including a suckling pig cooked by Margarida and Carlos Silva which went so fast that Carlos, who was slightly delayed, didn't get any! We were also lucky to wish Margarida a 'Happy Birthday' and enjoy the beautiful cake she had baked for the occasion. The raffle (organised by the ever helpful Ann) was again very popular with many prizes kindly donated by members of the allotment and local shops, there were many happy winners. We held an alphabet trail for the children involving finding things on the allotment beginning with every letter of the alphabet. The kids, some quite young did really well, filling in all the letters and claiming their rewards. This year's social, as in past years, was a brilliant way of coming together to share our allotments, meet our neighbours and spend the afternoon. The committee would like to thank all who came and contributed such yummy food- You all made the day really special- We look forward to the next year's Social.

*Site Appearance:* The site as a whole is looking better than it has for many years. Much of this is due to the efforts of Antonio Pascoal who has taken on responsibility for mowing the main paths and communal areas and Carlos Silva who has put a lot of work into strimming and rotavating

vacant plots. Their efforts are greatly appreciated but don't forget your responsibilities for keeping your own plots and paths in good order. One of the main problems that we have suffered over the years is the number of neglected plots covered with seeding weeds. We are tackling this in two ways. In appropriate cases, we are tightening up on the application of the Council non-cultivation rules and people are being asked to choose between cultivating their plot or eviction – Use it or Lose it!. In other cases, where incoming tenants are struggling to get on top of previously neglected plots, we are trying to arrange a clearing of the plot and where necessary help with covering part of the plot with black plastic to suppress weed growth while the new tenant concentrates on the uncovered area. Starting a new plot is hard work. Don't forget that some help and friendly advice from neighbours is usually much appreciated.

*Site Security:* We have recently had a raid with many sheds opened. Initial reports suggest that comparatively little was taken and that the intruders were after food/drink items and petrol (fuel) - all suggestive of rough sleepers rather than an organised gang - but very annoying, particularly if it is your freshly harvested crops that disappear! Thankfully, so far this year, there have been no major raids targeting metal and machinery of the type that we have suffered over recent years but don't relax your guard and don't leave anything of value such as rotavators or strimmers in your shed. The main problem this year has been a rash of small scale petty thieving. Hardly, a week has gone by without a report of something missing. Again it is possibly the work of rough sleepers climbing over our gates but there are a number of features that suggest an internal culprit. A pattern is beginning to emerge and it would be helpful if you could inform me as site manager of any thefts that occur or any suspicious activity that you have noticed. I have recently received a report of women harvesting crops either late or very early in the day from plots that are definitely not theirs. Unfortunately, they were not challenged. If in doubt a polite query just to check that the person knows the name of the plot holder would definitely be in order and not resented by people who have been asked to pick produce for friends who are away on holiday..

*Current Projects:* Work on improving the second main path is progressing slowly mainly because of difficulties in sourcing the road scrapings/crushed concrete that we need. Hopefully, this will soon be sorted out and there will then be a call for all hands to help with the relaying of the path. Plans for the installation of two composting toilets close to the site of the old shelter near the side-gate that we removed earlier in the year are progressing. The area where they will be located has been cleared and the next step will be to construct a concrete base for the toilets to stand on and install a couple of raised beds to improve the look of the area.

*Rubbish:* The Council's attitude to helping with the clearing of rubbish from the site may be changing. They have indicated a willingness to collect bagged and sorted rubbish. Don't hold your breath. We have already asked for a test run – it didn't materialise. We will keep trying and report back!

### *Beavers allotment update*



Following the success of the first visit of the Beavers to the allotments last autumn, BAGS has allocated the use of a half plot to the 16th Ealing (St Barnabas) Beavers troupe to encourage and inspire the younger generation to become hands on gardeners earning their gardening badges in the process. The unveiling of the plot was carried out with great excitement which even the driving rain could not contain. Since then, the Beavers have made full use of their new plot, planting squash, potatoes, strawberries and wild flowers, visiting often to tend their patch. Recently they paid a visit to Fabiola Barahona, one of the sites beekeepers, to learn all about the practice of bee keeping and the importance of providing a healthy eco system to maintain the bee population.

**Know of anybody – new tenants etc. - who doesn't know about the BAGS newsletter and might appreciate receiving e-mail copies of the newsletter and news updates? Pass on the message that all they need to do is contact Patrick Williams on plot 107 or via the "Contact Us" facility site website at [www.brentham-allotments.org.uk](http://www.brentham-allotments.org.uk)**