

## *Site Profile*

### *Pitshanger Allotments*

Pitshanger Allotments, run by the Pitshanger Allotments Conservation Association (PACA), occupy a spacious, rural feeling site adjoining the open spaces of Pitshanger Park. Argyle Road with its bus services, whilst offering easy public transport access, is not near enough to intrude upon the peace of our site. For those coming by car, the car park in Pitshanger Park, off Perivale Gardens, is within 50 metres of our main gate. Cars may be brought on site for dropping off purposes only.

We offer 208 plots of varying sizes and an increasing number of these are let as half plots. This option provides a useful introduction to gardening for those short of confidence or time. For less able-bodied tenants, we have five raised beds which enable gardening to be undertaken with less strain to limbs. Our rents of £18 a pole (2016/2017) are collected at the end of September when new keys to the site are also issued.

Since 2001, we have been a fully self-managed site leasing the land from the Borough of Ealing. This independence has meant we have been able to initiate a number of self-funded capital projects. One of the most useful of these was the digging of a borehole to provide a constant supply of water to the site. No hose ban worries here. We have also recently resurfaced sections of our roadway and renewed our drainage system.



Our membership is diverse in age, background and ethnic origin giving rise to a good variety of gardening approaches and crop choice. There has been a notable increase in women as sole plotholders over the last couple of decades. We try to hold at least two social events during the year. Recently these have been a spring coffee morning cum seedling swop and a late summer produce show followed by a picnic. We also encourage members to come up with ideas for alternative social events. The overall winner of our latest produce show, Robert Reynolds, flanked by the show judges is depicted above left: judges -measuring an entry in the tallest sunflower category - are on the right.

Our affairs are run by an elected committee with additional members co-opted for their specific skills. Policy is decided at the AGM held every September and implemented through regular committee meetings throughout the year. A site notice-board, our website and monthly mail shots keep members informed of policy and events. We also

benefit from having a Trading Hut on site which is open to both members and those from outside on Saturday and Sunday mornings from February through to November. Run entirely by a volunteer, the Hut stocks an excellent range of seeds and gardening equipment. It is also a friendly focus for the exchange of news and advice.

Like most sites, we have a waiting list but this has reduced to not much over a year recently. Plots become available to rent to those on the list on a fairly regular basis. We have also initiated a programme of introductory briefing meetings to those newly offered plots or to those near the top of the waiting list. This provides an opportunity for novices to ask questions and to get some insight into what being a plotholder actually involves in terms of commitment.

Information about our history, constitution and rules and how to join us can be found on our website at [www.pitshangerallotments.org](http://www.pitshangerallotments.org).

*David Housego,  
PACA Chair*