

B.A.G.S. Newsletter

Brentham Allotments and Gardens Society

No.43

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This year's Summer Social, held on Saturday 8th July, went off extremely well. Particularly satisfying as at one stage our planning appeared to have gone badly astray. We discovered that Framfield allotments in Hanwell, who normally hire out their marquee, tables and chairs to us, needed them for their own Social that they had inadvertently scheduled for the same weekend. Fortunately, our Treasurer John Human had the brainwave (and the contacts) that allowed us to come to an alternative arrangement with St. Barnabas church in Pitshanger

Lane. Crisis over, until we discovered that the large van that we usually use to pick up the marquees etc., was no longer available. This time, Igor kindly stepped in the breach, and we were back on track. Just as well, as the weather on the day was hot and sunny and the marquees were a god-send (no pun intended) we had an excellent turnout and all the tables and chairs were also definitely needed.

This year's Social had a definite Portugese flavour with Jose Reis-Brittes and Antonio Pascoal supervising the barbecuing of sardines, ribs and chicken, Carlos and Margaride Silva preparing suckling pig and Fatima Pascoal providing a traditional bean casserole. Add to this the countless other dishes and desserts contributed by too many tenants to mention – all adding up to a veritable feast!

Special thanks go to Ann Salaun, who co-ordinated much of the catering and spent most of her afternoon organizing either the serving of the food or the clearing and washing-up of plates. They also go to Crystal Te Moananui-Squares who both arranged games for the children and acted as our official photographer. A selection of her photos are shown opposite and more can be found on the newsletter page of the BAGS website at <http://www.brentham-allotments.org.uk>

Other Site Matters

There are a number of matters that always arise around this time of year. The first, and most important, is "Seeding Weeds". We are all having the same problem – the weeds are growing faster than we can get rid of them. The Allotment Rules say that they need to be kept under control; partly for your own sake – "one year's seeds means seven years weeds" – but more importantly for the sake of your neighbours. Don't wait for a formal complaint from the Site Manager or a Non-Cultivation Order from the Council – both of which have already been issued to some of the more blatant cases.

Two other related matters are the state of paths and the failure to clear up fallen fruit. Both are causes of extreme annoyance to the

tenants of neighbouring plots. The maintenance of the shared paths between neighbouring plots is the joint responsibility of both tenants. Not easy if you have a lazy neighbour. You can complain to the Site Manager if that it is the case but as it only takes a few minutes to trim a grass path – and we have a petrol trimmer that you are very welcome to borrow – the easiest thing is to just get on with it and trim the path regardless. At least this saves you from the seeding weeds that grow there! Failure to clear away your fallen fruit is equally anti-social, it encourages wasp infestation, spreads plant diseases such as brown rot. It also signals that you are not interested in the fruit on the tree. Don't complain if it subsequently disappears!

Turning to other less-contentious matters; the composting toilets are now pretty nearly set-up thanks to the efforts of Chris Noble on the basic construction; Donald Power on the wiring of the electrics and Antonio Pascoal on the plumbing. Still some work to be done on the approach paths and flowerbed but hopefully that will be completed soon. We have separate male and female toilets. As with the main toilets, the intention is to keep the "Ladies" locked and issue either keys or use a combination lock. For those unfamiliar with the working of composting toilets, the essential feature is the separation of liquid and solid waste. You can check out how this is achieved for yourself and notices will be put up in the toilets if you are still in doubt. The important thing is that the breakdown of the solid waste, with added sawdust, is then essentially odourless.

As has often been pointed out the relatively smooth running of the Brentham site, the stocking and manning of the Trading Hut, much of the maintenance and development of site infrastructure and the site Social programme are all based on the work of volunteers. Much, but far from all, of this work is carried out by members of the BAGS Committee. We are always looking for volunteers to join the Committee. If you are interested in exploring this possibility have a word with Tessa Kostrzewa the Committee Chair.

Dates for Your Diary

BAGS – AGM – 12.15 pm Sunday 8th October

Annual Rent Collection – Trading Hut 10 -12 on Sundays 8th, 15th and 22nd October

Equally important for those who don't enjoy Committee work, there are a large number of jobs that we urgently need volunteers for. For example, following the retirement of Joy Davitt from her role as the main creator and guardian of the car park flowerbeds, we urgently need volunteers to take responsibility for their upkeep. There are a wide range of other jobs from helping to organize working parties, to simply walking around some of the further reaches of the site noting things that need to be looked into or fixed before small problems escalate into something bigger. So, if you are willing to help out on a more informal basis have a quiet word with Patrick Williams the Site Manager.

Chicken Co-operative vacancy: The co-operative is seeking a new member – contact Tessa for details please

Last but not least, the BAGS-AGM and annual rent payment are fast approaching. The AGM will be on 8th October – starting at 12.15 sharp. If there are matters that you feel should be discussed at the AGM, please talk to Tessa so that they can be included in the agenda. The annual rent collection will be 10-12 on Sundays 8th, 15th and 22nd October. Rents are the same as last year. As we are a Locally Managed site, the Council will not be sending around rent notices. However, BAGS has a complete list of tenants and the rents due, so if you have forgotten how much you pay, we can look it up on the day. If anybody is thinking of not renewing this year, it would be greatly appreciated if you could inform the Site Manager as soon as possible.