

HW&DAA NEWSLETTER

Editor: Heather Jenne hjenne@blueyonder.co.uk 0117 973 3451 Date: September 2011
Correspondence to : Registered Office, 2 Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol BS3 2JT

HWDAAs web site: www.hwdaa.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held at the Store, Alderman Moores Site, on Thursday 19th January 2012, commencing 7.30 pm sharp.

AGENDA

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21st January 2011 [proposers and seconders from those attending that meeting]
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2011
5. To vote on the Audit of the September 2011 accounts
6. To approve the September 2011 accounts
7. Notice of Plot Rents with effect from the 1st October 2012, as notified in this Newsletter
8. Election of Officers
9. Any Other Business

Chairman's comments

Plot Rents for the year 2011 - 2012

The Committee has decided not to increase plot rents for the coming year. Therefore rents for the year 1st Oct 2011 - 30th Sept 2012 will remain :-

Large Plots = £50
Medium Plots = £40
Small Plots = £30

(Bristol City Council allotment rents for the same year will be £63.50, £47, £31.50 respectively)

Your bill is enclosed with this newsletter. **Payments are due on 1st October 2011. Please read it carefully for full details of how to pay.** If you have not paid by 31st October 2011 you will be sent a reminder together with an administrative surcharge of £5.

IMPORTANT if the amount due + surcharge payment has not been received by the Treasurer by the 14th of November 2011, your Tenancy will, without exceptions, be automatically terminated and your plot re-let.

Plot Rent Discounts

Where a tenant is eligible for a HwDAA long service discount, as well as a Council discount on the grounds of personal financial circumstances, the latter will be applied to the balance of rent

after the Association discount. Eg.- 25 years tenancy attracts 50% discount and 50% discount from Council results in net rental payable of 25%.

Plot Rents for the year 2012 – 2013

The Committee hereby gives notice that the proposed rents for the following year (1st Oct 2012 - 30th September 2013) **may** have to increase, but will go to no more than a maximum of:-

Large Plots = £60
Medium Plots = £47
Small Plots = £33

We will do our very best to keep increases below these figures but it will depend on expenses, and it is very difficult to forecast these so far in advance. The amount of profit from the Association Stores is a key factor in keeping down our rents so, for this reason, and because items are very competitively priced, please do come in and browse around.

Expenses

Members should be aware that the cost of our metered water rose dramatically over the past year, though this was partly due to the very dry weather at a major seed sowing time. Do remember that establishing plants respond to lack of water by putting down deeper roots and this will encourage them to find nutrients over a bigger area of soil, and will be better for the soil structure and soil life. So, within reason, don't cosset them with too much watering!

We are still hoping to acquire more land to enable more people to come off our massive Waiting List. If successful, it will inevitably lead to expenditure on security and land clearance/preparation, sheds and water supply. Since at least two opportunities are adjacent to White City, we arranged the new water supply there with that in mind.

Water systems

As reported in previous newsletters, a new water system + automatic dip tanks have been installed on White City - to the delight of the tenants.

A similar system, to be paid for out of HwDAA funds, is due to be installed on 2 more sites this autumn - The Meadows and Bower Ashton. We then hope to install new water systems on KL1 and KL2 in 2012, and Alderman Moores in 2013

Allotment Successes

We are delighted that **Bristol City Council** have awarded prizes to two of our ploholders:-

Best Kept Allotment Plot in the whole of Bristol to **Christopher Walsh** Plot 11A, Kennel Lodge 2

Best Ecological Plot in the whole of Bristol to **Phil Cass** Plot 75, Alderman Moores

We are also delighted to announce the following HwDAA awards, which will be presented at the Association AGM at Alderman Moores Stores on 19th January 2012. The (external) judges went round the plots in July and expressed their pleasure at the high standards on all of our sites. Well done everyone!

Harry Green Shield for the Best Kept Plot - **Christopher Walsh** Plot 11A, Kennel Lodge

Eric Grimes Cup for the Best First Year Plot - **Colin Postlethwaite** Plot 142B Alderman Moores

First Year Plot Commendations went to :-

Bower Ashton

Mrs Chris Chapman --Plot 9B

Ms Maria Clarke - Plot 34A

Mr Terry Day - Plot 38A

Kennel Lodge 1

Ms Sheelagh Boyd - Plot 57A

Ms Jenny Maddern - Plot 67

The Meadows

Mr George Moulder – Plot 7B

Ms Ginetta Martinez – Plot 18B

White City

Dr Lesley Bruce – Plot 8

Mrs Julia Cartlidge - Plot 42A

Miss Pat Rogers - Plot 43B

Ms Sian Evans - Plot 67

Alderman Moores

Mrs Katheren Clark - Plot 41B

Mr Michael How - Plot 61A

Mr Sam Leach - Plot 140A

Mr Daniel Monks - Plot 272

Memberships

The Association has now joined the National Vegetable Society: a very useful source of advice for members, see the magazine on the AM Stores library shelf. They provide the panel for the annual 'Any Questions' evening.

We are also a group member of the Royal Horticultural Society. This is another source of advice - through its magazine *The Garden* (copies kept on AM Stores library shelf - Sept issue reports on a trial of 32 courgette varieties), and through responses to individual email queries [*I have used this - a horticultural expert answered*

and was very helpful – Ed]. There are also a few reduced price tickets to RHS shows available (contact our Secretary)

Security

There have been several thefts on different sites in broad daylight over the summer. We are doing our best to improve fence security but a determined and athletic youth may find a way in.

Points to note:

1. If you do not recognise someone, ask them from which plot they come. (and if you are asked this, please do not take offence!)
2. If you are not satisfied with their answer, do NOT otherwise accost them but note their appearance (maybe using your phone camera discreetly even if it is only a back view) and the time.
3. If they leave the site, note precisely where.
4. Report to your Site Rep or any other Committee member (phone numbers on notice board/gate)
5. If you are a victim of theft, please report it to police (you will need to get an incident number if you want to claim on your insurance)
6. Lock all car doors and keep windows closed. Have nothing valuable on display.
7. Keep keys/handbags near to hand. It's tempting fate to leave them visible in an open shed at the other end of the plot
8. Do NOT leave valuable items such as trimmers or rotovators in the shed overnight.
9. Don't give the gate code to other people (except regular trusted helpers). If you have got someone delivering manure, or helping with a one-off job, for example, you should be there to let that person in.

Bonfires

Although bonfires and incinerators may be used from the 1st of November to the 31st of March, it is vital that they are controlled. For the benefit of new tenants I will repeat the rules:-

1. Most items can be composted. If you can, compost it. Do not burn it. Take home infected material that should not go on the compost heap, and dispose of it as domestic waste.
2. Never have a fire that produces substantial smoke. Wet and green waste is OUT! Dry out woody material under a cover. (if you have access to a shredder, shreds of woody material, eg fruit bush prunings, make fantastic compost because of their high carbon content)
3. Never leave a fire of any sort unattended. If you have to leave the plot before the fire is finished, it MUST be extinguished before you go. Rake over the embers and soak them. Remove combustible material.

4. Before lighting a fire, ensure that the wind will not send smoke over neighbouring properties, roads or tenants (who could be asthmatics!). If your smoke causes an annoyance to neighbouring properties (washing and people) you could face a law suit and the loss of your plot. If it causes a traffic hazard, you could be liable for a fine up to £1000.

5. Remember that winds can be capricious. What appears safe one minute can be dangerous the next! Have a water container handy.

6. **THINK - Do you really need that fire!!!**

Taking over a Plot

Ordinarily the ONLY way you can take on a plot is through having come to the top of the waiting list maintained by the Plots Secretary, and then having been accepted as capable of maintaining it (having visited the plot with the site rep and discussed the time and effort involved). This applies to family and friends, even if they have been actively assisting in the cultivation, so helpers who want their own plot should put their names down on the waiting list asap.

Special concessions may be made in the event of the death of the Tenant; but, even here, the surviving spouse / partner would have to convince the committee that they had been active on the plot over a long time and that they were able to put in the time and effort necessary in the absence of the deceased.

Under no circumstances may the Tenant legally pass the tenancy to another. Anyone who takes over a plot without going through the Plots Secretary will face immediate eviction.

Tenancies are NOT granted to families or groups - only to one named individual. It is only the Tenant who gets communications from the committee and potentially qualifies for discounts. The Tenancy Agreement signed at the beginning of the tenancy is an important document as it sets out a list of the Tenant's responsibilities and rights.

Membership Cards

New laminated Membership Cards (with name and plot number) will be issued with this Newsletter. They will replace the thin cardboard ones which are becoming very worn.

Remember that you can get a discount at the Riverside Garden Centre on plants (only, not seeds or tools) and from Brandon Tool Hire in Hotwells, on production of your card.

Beekeeping

Because of an increase in requests to place

beehives on HwDAA sites, we have drawn up a Beekeeping Policy, which is available in full on our Web Site. All those wishing to keep bees on our sites must have prior written Committee approval. The policy covers positioning of hives (so the flightline rises above neighbouring plots), the beekeeper's competence level, obtaining new colonies from a strain with a gentle temperament, maintenance of the colony, etc. All good stuff – interesting reading for non-beekeepers as well!

Tenants are reminded that beehives are located on some allotments, and should therefore take due precautions – eg staying clear of hives, especially when the beekeeper is at work. Anyone at risk from bee venom is advised to carry necessary first aid items (eg anti-histamine spray, EpiPen) .

**All Sites (except Bower Ashton)
YOUR NEW GATE CODE is on
your Bill and will come into effect
at Midday, Tuesday
1st November 2011
LOOK AT YOUR BILL**

In Memorium

As many of you will be aware, we have lost a much loved member; Eric Grimes, with his wry sense of humour and disarming smile. He was very involved with the Association in many and various ways over the years and nothing was too much trouble for him.

Years ago, when plots were difficult to let, Eric was Plots Secretary and marketed the delights of gardening and growing your own produce. He was also instrumental in seeking funds to buy machinery for recovering derelict plots.

He was a brilliant pianist who you might have heard tinkling the electronic ivories at allotment events. He helped in AM stores most Wednesdays – in his own inimitable helpful and persuasive way!

After a packed and colourful funeral service, the mourners were entertained by two of the bands with which he played

Eric was particularly supportive of those just starting out, so the Committee has decided to provide a cup in his name for the best First Year plot holder. A plaque for Eric is now on the seat by Alderman Moores stores, which he provided in memory of his late wife May who was such an incredible gardener.

Bob Franks

From your Editor

Mulch and Manure

As you harvest your crops, you might be thinking about covering the bare soil - for weed control and soil enrichment. Covering will also protect the soil surface by stopping heavy rain smashing the clay particles into a solid surface layer (not a good thing because future rain runs off instead of soaking in, and the soil below is less aerated). You'll find that mulched soil is in better condition in the Spring when you start sowing seeds.

What with? Almost anything that covers the soil will control weeds to some extent, so black plastic can be a 'mulch' because it excludes light and stops annual weed seeds germinating. But it's unsightly and doesn't do much else.

To get the additional benefit of soil enrichment it's better to use some kind of organic material, eg home made compost, bought in manure, spent mushroom compost, leaf mould, etc. If you add organic matter to the soil, you encourage earthworms, improve soil structure and improve the soil's water-holding capacity during drier weather (next year!). Up to you whether you dig it in in the Spring, or follow no-dig principles...

There's also the option of 'green manures' ie planting bare earth with quick growing plants that you can dig into the soil later and which give the weeds a run for their money in the meantime. See website (Tips and Advice menu – green manures)

Where from? Bags of compost are available in the Association stores and, if you want large quantities, can be brought round to your plot on the trailer. The HwDAA website (tips and advice menu - manure supplies) gives details of places where you can buy in manure and unbagged compost in large quantities.

How thick? Small weed seeds will be unable to germinate with an inch layer, but larger seeds, eg goosegrass, will come through that, so 2 - 4 inches is better if you've got the stuff. But perennial weeds such as creeping thistle, couch grass, dandelion, ground elder and nettle, will not be deterred by mulch, as they have reserves of energy in their underground roots and will be able to grow their way through to the light. There's no short cut unfortunately - they need to be dug out properly before putting down mulch.

Tomato Glut – Tomato Sauces

The great thing about tomato sauces is that when you have a glut (and lots of other things to do) they are easy to prepare and freeze. And then available to use in a whole host of dishes later on.

Passata is just lightly cooked, sieved, tomatoes.. Wash and chop your tomatoes. Put them in a saucepan (with optional splash of olive oil). On a low heat, stirring gently, allow the tomatoes to warm and soften. You can help them by squashing them down with a wooden spoon. Once they become a sloshy sauce - you will see that the flesh comes off the skins - take them off the heat and cool off a bit (just for safety). Pass the mixture through a sieve leaving the skins and seeds behind. It is thicker than tomato juice but thinner than a puree.

Fresh Tomato Sauce Chop 2 lbs tomatoes and put in a saucepan with 2 tbsp olive oil, 2 crushed garlic cloves, grated zest of 1 lemon, and chopped oregano / thyme to taste. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 30 mins. Add 2 tbsp chopped basil, salt and pepper to taste, and a little sugar if it's too sharp. Simmer, uncovered, for a further 20 – 30 mins until the sauce is thickened.

Rich Tomato Sauce. Melt 2 oz butter in a saucepan, add 1 finely chopped onion, 2 cloves crushed garlic and cook till softened (about 8 mins). Add 2 lbs vine-ripened, full-flavoured, chopped tomatoes, 3 tbsp sun-dried tomato paste, herbs (basil, oregano, thyme) + salt + pepper to taste. Simmer, uncovered, over a low heat for 30 - 60 mins, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is the thickness and pulpiness you like. (if you want to make the sauce thick quickly, skin and de-seed the tomatoes before adding them)

Herbal infusions from common allotment plants

Fennel seed – a stimulant (it's suggested that you chew the seeds during boring meetings and long public talks).
Sage leaves – a tonic to strengthen and enliven the body, especially good for older folk.

Thyme leaves – a soothing drink to help sleeplessness
Mint leaves – helps indigestion “brings up the belches a treat”

Comfrey – soothes the bowels, “said to work like magic in cases of diarrhoea”

dried Couch grass roots – promotes quiet sleep, helps give a good complexion

Lavender leaves – relieves extreme fatigue and acute physical exhaustion – but you are cautioned to drink it only in small quantities

Nettle leaves – soothes rheumatic joints “the arthyrick's helper”

Lime blossom – a tonic and good for high blood pressure

Rosemary leaves – circulatory and nervine stimulant

Rosemary with Hibiscus – aphrodisiac

Horseradish root – tones and strengthens the liver and increases flow of bile

A health warning: although compiled with the help of knowledgeable herb growers, this is intended to be for your slightly amused interest and not a substitute for advice from a qualified herbalist !