

# Barnes Horticultural and Allotment Society

## Chair's annual review 2022

### A warm welcome

To all the new members who have joined the Allotment Society over the past year and welcome also to everyone else.

For the newer members – the Society that you joined is responsible for the day to day running of the allotments on behalf of Richmond Council and organises events such as the Open Day & Annual Show – as well as a host of other activities that support and benefit the allotment community.

If you have any ideas about other events or activities that might be popular with other plot holders then please let us know.

I'd like to thank all the Committee and numerous other plot holder volunteers for their time and hard work over the past year. As a team we aim to keep the 5 East Sheen sites running as smoothly as we are able. We are always looking for fresh ideas and new people who can help us on our journey – so if you think that you might be able to contribute in any way – please let your site rep know, or contact me directly. We would be very pleased to hear from you.

One of the Society's activities that I'm most proud of is our monthly newsletter, produced by Rachel Walker. It really is a well-researched and informative document, with links to a host of relevant and interesting sites and articles. I know that other allotment groups in the Borough of Richmond also read our Newsletter for inspiration.

### Transitioning back to some sort of normality.....

Although Covid is still around and mainly in a milder variant, we are thankfully getting back to relatively normal daily/weekly routines, notwithstanding working from home and working from the allotment!

In May, we were able to hold our 1st Open Day for 3 years. Despite the rain it was well attended and both the Tea & Cakes Stall along with the Plant Stall organised by Matthew Spratt, did exceptionally well.

The Shed's income has bounced back and will probably be even more in demand since the unfortunate closure of our local garden centre Adrian Hall. Our continued thanks to Mark Gourlay the Shed Manager, all the volunteers who work there at weekends and to Katie Lee for organising the volunteers Shed rota. Please remember that the Shed is one of the benefits of joining the Allotment Society, so if you are a lapsed member, please renew your membership anytime at the Shed.

Most members now pay by Direct Debit, saving the requirement to fill in a renewal form each year, and this year we have 137 members paying this way (up from 116 the previous year).

Last October we were approached by ITV who wanted to use the Hertford Allotments as a location for their Christmas loneliness appeal. We were of course happy to oblige and you may even have seen a few familiar faces as 'extras' in the final video. We were also delighted with the £500 donation to the Society for facilitating the day.

The demand for allotments continues to outstrip their availability. The waiting lists managed by Richmond Council for the 5 sites in East Sheen are still closed whilst we work through the 6-year backlog. This past year we welcomed about 16 new plot holders to our sites. and I would like to particularly thank our Allotment Secretary Helen Lawrence for her time showing and re-letting vacant plots.

The Council are continuing with their Spring and Autumn plot inspections and if neglected or uncultivated plots are not brought up to standard after a polite nudge, the Council will be issuing termination of tenancy notices to those plot holders. You have been warned!

We continue to organise collections of non compostable woody waste when required. The Council contractors have struggled though to deal with the amount of waste deposited at the Hertford gate collection area. Hopefully this will be dealt with before too long. I know this is a service in great demand since the bonfire ban a few years ago.

We owe a big thank you to Richard Blackwell who has a plot on Priory, for arranging now regular Friday bulk deliveries of mulch/compost from Richmond Park. The regular deliveries (until the supply is depleted) has meant that there has been plenty to go round as long as everyone takes only one barrow load each time.

Like with farmers, the weather is never quite right for allotmenters! It's either too wet/cold/hot or dry – but at least this year the dry conditions have meant very few problems with tomato blight! It is also good to note those crops or flowers that performed well even with the lack of water as the general advice is that we are more likely to see similar conditions over the coming years.

At this year's AGM I'd like you to consider voting on giving to Charity again as we did last year.

FiSH, Mind, Dose of Nature and Glass Door Homeless Charity are local charities whom we have supported in the past, but please feel free to suggest any others for consideration at the AGM.

On 11th September we held our Annual Show. It was amazing to see the quality and variety of produce that plot holders have been able to grow this hot dry summer. Huge congratulations to Janet Lavender for winning both the Best Showperson of the Year Cup and Best Overall Plot Cup and to Melanie and Andrew Hall for winning the Best Newcomer Cup.

If you would like to suggest new classes/categories to be included in next year's show, please let us know.

Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time to making this day fun for all.

## Committee Vacancies & Changes

Our joint treasures for over 10 years have decided to stand down at this year's AGM. We are very grateful for the all the generous support Sophie and Alastair have given the Society over this time.

Michael French who has held many treasurer roles since retiring, has offered to stand for election as Treasurer at the AGM.

We have a vacant position of Events Manager. This role covers our 2 main events of Open Day and the Annual Show (for which we have many supporting volunteers) but we are keen to also introduce smaller events of specific interest to members. If you would like to know more about this role, please let me know.

We also have a vacancy for a Minutes Secretary.

We are still looking for another plot holder to help Helen Lawrence as Joint Allotment Secretary. This is a very interesting role and Helen will be very happy to let you know more about it, if you feel you could help share this role.

All other committee members are standing for re-election at the AGM

Best wishes

John Padgett

Chair BHAS (East Sheen Allotments)