

In Touch



A Newsletter from the
Hart Allotments Association

Issue 1

March 2012

Welcome to the new style Newsletter!



**The story so
far.....**

**Sally Martin, the new Chairperson
gives an update on the good and bad
news.**

Back in the Autumn we got the bad news that the long awaited allotments which were promised on the Hitches Lane site were not to be. New plans had been submitted to extend Calthorpe Park School, by knocking down the Hart Leisure Centre and building a new leisure centre across the road on Hitches Lane as part of the next phase of the Edenbrook development - on the proposed allotment site. Much work had been put into business plans for the allotments and pulling out at this late stage caused much consternation. However, an alternative site near to Junction 4a was proposed which the committee have been considering to see if it is appropriate.

There may be good news on the horizon -
read Pam's update inside for details!

The good news for Church Crookham, is that there are plans to have allotments on the old QEII barracks development site.

At the AGM in November some of the existing members of the HAA indicated their intention to step down and other volunteers were asked to step in. New members of the Hart Allotment Association were elected. I was elected as the new chairperson, along with a new treasurer and secretary. Pam the existing secretary agreed to continue as the membership secretary to ensure a smooth hand over and, as she has now moved house, has resigned from the committee. The new line up to represent your interests is on the back page.

Since the AGM we've been lobbying Councilors, and in February we had a meeting with Adam Green the Grounds and Countryside Manager, Hart District Council to talk about allotment provision where we learned that an alternative site on Hitches Lane might be back on the horizon. This is by no means certain so in the meantime we are pushing on with developments for the proposed site near to Junction 4a. See inside for details.

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Fleet

Possible site near Junction 4a

There is a possible site near Junction 4A of the motorway which belongs to Hart District Council. They are willing to lease us this site and are also prepared to help turn the area into allotments. A project plan is underway, and the site has advantages, it is a good size and the soil looks good, but there are also issues with it, notably security and its relative isolation. In a visit by the committee in December we were disappointed to find an area of the centre covered by standing water, so drainage would be necessary if we were to go ahead.

Possible Hitches Lane site

After a meeting with the Project Manager for this site, he has come back with new information that a site may (and the operative word is 'may') become available in the Hitches Lane area. It appears that Berkeley Homes are due to put in a new application for houses in July and there is a push from the Council for the agreement to include the provision of allotments. **This means that by August we should know if a site on Hitches Lane will be available again.** However, the planning application is only in the early stages.

There would be definite advantages to the Hitches Lane site if we can get it – accessibility, less isolation, more security and probably lower set up costs.

It seems likely that only one of these two sites will go ahead. We need your input regarding which location you would prefer.

Church Crookham

Allotments are definitely included in the QEB development, and plans for their implementation are being put into action by the Parish Council. But when they will become available is still unclear and up to the developer. The Parish Council intend to use the old Hart District Council waiting list to offer these allotments to people, but it will only be to people within the Parish boundary. To find out more about these allotments, please contact the Church Crookham Parish Council.

Yateley

There are allotments in the proposed new Clarks Farm Development, Reading Road Yateley. We do not know how many there will be yet, and the planning application is yet to be finally approved, but it looks likely to go ahead. The allotments will be run by Yateley Town Council and their waiting list was part of the old Hart District Council list. If any of you want to ensure you are on their list, contact Yateley Town Council directly to check.

Many of you who have expressed an interest in the Junction 4A site may now consider whether you would prefer to have an allotment on this new Yateley site, if it goes ahead. If you have put your name down for a Junction 4A site and plan to switch – please let us know.

Update by Pam Forey.



Waiting Lists

Pam, the retiring Membership Secretary talks about the Waiting Lists

Hart council have handed over the responsibility of the waiting list to HAA. The Council have advised that they will not be taking any new names on to the list, but will be referring them to the HAA.

We haven't been in touch with you recently because we were not clear as to whether the HAA had a mandate to contact members on the list. The position has now been clarified (in relation to data protection etc.) and we are now contacting all those on the list to establish continued interest in the sites.

What we need from you

Do you still want an allotment? We need guidance from our Fleet members – do we plan for Junction 4A or push for Hitches Lane? I know some of you have already said you are interested in Junction 4A. Does this new information change anything? Do our Yateley members feel they will lose out if we go for Hitches Lane? Please let us know your views, we can only make decisions on how to proceed if we have information from you.

Please be advised that if we do not hear back from you, we will assume that you do not wish to remain on the waiting list.



Finance Matters!

Dave the new Treasurer talks about Finances

Although there is still uncertainty as to the allotment site for the Fleet area, the Council have previously said that they will help with some of the *set up costs*. We are told that as land in this area is at a great premium, these days the Hart Council cannot afford to subsidise the sites in the future.

Some of you may be thinking that the price of an allotment would be approx £10 - £20 per annum in line with others that we may have heard of locally and nationally. However, with *new* allotments we are told that the price will need to be **substantially higher**. The final figure will be dependant upon the needs for the actual site (water, fencing etc.) and what we can get in grants. We'd be interested to hear your views as to whether the price will influence your decision as to whether you wish to continue to be on the list and what you would be prepared to pay. We'd also like to know *what* size of allotment you would like. Please complete the questionnaire.

HAA Finances

Sending updates through the post costs HAA money. Would you be prepared to pay a subscription in the future? Let us know!

HAA Committee Members

Sally Martin - Chairperson

Dave Bell - Treasurer

Sylvia Cresswell - Secretary.



Web whizzo wanted!

Some of you may have noticed that not much is happening on our website. This is because it was run by the previous chairman, who set it up and had the knowledge on how to run it.

However the new committee have limited experience so we urgently need someone to set up and run a new website. If any of you out there can help please get in touch. We need you!

Thanks

Our thanks go to Allan Barker, Matthew Chambers, Russell Hunt and Pam Forey for their hard work on the committee in getting us to this point. It's much appreciated.

Can we contact you by e-mail in the future ?

With postage costs set to rise again it costs a fraction of the cost to keep you updated by e-mail. Please complete the e-mail section of the form.

The next planned Newsletter will be September (when hopefully the situation regarding Hitches lane will be clearer).



New Newsletter

Sylvia our new Secretary has been busy organising meetings etc. and has been involved with pulling together the Committee's input for the production of our new style newsletter.

If you have any feedback or want to contact us e-mail the Secretary on sylv.HAA@gmail.com

Questionnaire

If you have elected to have communication sent to you by e-mail, please complete the Word document and e-mail it back to sylv.HAA@gmail.com. Alternatively you can post it back to us. Please return the completed questionnaires to us by the **end of March - thanks.**

Local News

Can't wait for an allotment? If you want to get digging, why not consider the 'Grow with Hart' scheme where you can either be paired to a person who isn't using their garden or volunteer to work as part of a team to help sort out a 'person-in-need's garden. Contact Guy Clayton, Garden Share Devel. Officer on 07920 820009 e-mail guy@hartvolaction.org.uk.