

In Touch



A Newsletter from the
Hart Allotments Association

Issue 2

December 2012

Chairman's chat!



Sally Martin, gives an update on the campaign to get more allotments.

Annual General Meeting

The Hart Allotments Association held its AGM at the Harlington Centre on Saturday 17th November 2012. Here is Sally's Chairman's report.

"As you are probably aware the current committee members took office after the last AGM in November 2011.

So what have we been doing since the last AGM? Let me firstly talk about waiting lists.

The Council had previously handed over to the previous Hart Allotments Association committee the waiting lists (4 in all).

These included the original lists and also those on the 'Interested Parties' list which was presumably set up when the council stopped taking names to go on to the list. One of our first duties was to contact all the people on these lists to see if they still wanted an allotment. As you may recall we sent out a questionnaire asking where, in

an ideal world, people would like to have an allotment if indeed they still wanted one. We also asked the question whether or not people would be prepared to pay a subscription to the HAA. Currently there are 141 people who confirmed that they would still like an allotment in the Hart area.

We've also had several meetings with Councillors, Hart DC officers and external organisations to enable the progress of the allotments in the Hart area. Some allotments already exist in the Hart area such as those in Hartley Wintney. With the change over to parish councils a few years ago, the parishes are now responsible for providing allotments in their areas – many of these have been creating their own waiting

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lists. It would appear that the parishes are being very parochial and are only letting those people

who live in the immediate area have an allotment. This is the case with a new Elvetham Heath allotment site. We have been keeping a watching brief on the development of these allotments. Since plans are also already in hand for allotment sites in Yateley and on the old QEB site in Church Crookham, our focus at our council meetings has been more on the allotments in West Fleet.

We've also been to see **Hart Voluntary Action Group** (HVA) to get advice about how we set ourselves up as a formal organisation. We were initially advised by the Council that in order to lease the land from the Council, we needed to become a Community Interest Company (CIC) and as such we needed Directors to help us. However, after speaking to HVA the advice that we received was that this might not be the best way forward since some other CICs have got caught up in tax matters.

The HVA advised us to become members of the NSAG (National Society of Allotments & Leisure Gardeners Ltd.) as they could give legal advice. So we have now become members of the NSAG. We have had to pay a membership fee. We are paying the minimum subscription at present, however, the rate that we will pay in the future is based on the number of our

future 'members' and we need to provide them with names and addresses of our membership. Other than legal advice and support membership does have other benefits such as reduced rates for seeds and allotment insurance etc.

We contacted the NSAG's legal dept. They advised us that there are a number of ways to set up our organisation, suggesting that we might like to consider becoming a Co-operative (in today's terms an Industrial & Provident Society - IPS), and that if we wanted to do this they would 'sponsor' us to become an IPS. An IPS is set up for the benefit of the members i.e. those who have allotments - rather than the general public. This route is more appropriate for our organisation as it means that if we have a fund raising event, for a new fence for example, then it is the members (allotment holders) who benefit (not the general public).

As members of the NSAG we have access to good model documents (such as model agreements to have with the Council, a model tenancy agreement when we get allotments), and the 'Model Rules for a registered Society'. This is the document that the Association has to sign up to if we want the NSAG to sponsor us when we apply to the Financial Services Association (FSA) to become an IPS. We need to elect a "Management Committee" rather than have Directors who are required for a CIC.

During the year we also asked for volunteers who had expertise with the development of the **website**. I'm pleased

to say that we have a brand new web site - many thanks to Stephen Janaway who has done the lion's share of this.

We've also produced a new style Newsletter – the feedback from this was very positive. Another is due out after the AGM. (Here it is!!!) Let me move on and give you an update of the various proposed allotment sites.

Fleet

Hitches Lane/Edenbrook update (deputyclerk@fleet-tc.gov.uk)

Some of you may recall that we were promised allotments on Hitches Lane under the terms of the Section 106 agreement. This stalled as there was discussion that there would be another phase of building on the Edenbrook estate. We have been in discussions with our contact within the Council to find out the situation.

Previous discussions that we've had mentioned that the access to an alternative site on the Edenbrook estate would be at Pale Lane rather than Hitches Lane.

We understand that the developer will not submit his plans until late February **2013**. That means that confirmation of the land for allotments won't be available until the Council has considered the application in May/June. The good news is that the developer has been told by Cabinet under (approved Policy CS22) that they must

provide 0.75 hectares of land for allotments, turning circle, storage etc. It is hoped that the Council will draft out a couple of ideas for layouts and will bring them to next meeting with the HAA. A date for a site visit will also be arranged when the weather is better and the application has been received. It's all going to plan; just a bit slower than we would like.

..... in the meantime we need to get our policies and other documents ready so we'll be ready when the allotments become available.

So it looks as if there will ultimately be allotments on the Edenbrook estate, but not just yet and probably with the access off Pale Lane.

In the meantime the committee will concentrate on all of the policies required by the Council. These include a Livestock Policy, Sustainability Policy, Buildings and Constructions Policy, Approved Tree List/ Restrictions List, H&S Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy and a Business Plan.

Some of these were in the original proposal that the former members of the HAA created when we thought that we were going to get the allotments on Hitches Lane – so we will use what we can and work on implementing new policies where needed.

At the last AGM we were talking about a proposed site near Junction 4a. We went to see this site and did not think it was suitable due to water problems. However, it could be a last resort.

Fleet (Cont.)

Elvetham Heath (EH)

(Marilyn@elvethamheath.org.uk)

Although progress has been slow the plans for these allotments are now in their final revision stage and planning application will take place over the next few weeks.

The proposed site will be ground between Tunworth Close and Twyford Close.

The estimated date of completion is proposed next spring **2013** - no set date.

18/19 plots may be available averaging 60sqm. Plots will only be offered to EH residents and plot owners will be encouraged to arrive at the sites on foot.

Church Crookham

Crookham Park allotments

(deputyclerk@churchcrookham.org.uk)

From the Deputy clerk for **Church Crookham**, Sally du Gay we have had the information as follows:

“There will be the equivalent of **40** full size plots available for the Church Crookham residents only. This list will take priority over any other list. The proposed site will be bordering the SANG lands on the Church Crookham Park site off Naishes Lane.

The 1st delivery of the plots will be available when 200 dwellings are sold at Crookham

Park. Based on a rough guide of sales of 100 houses per year, the first plots may be available in **2014**.

The plots will be offered in a variety of sizes. As yet the proportion of half /quarter/ mini plots has not yet been agreed. There will also be a limited number of raised plots available.”

The Council intend to contact all Church Crookham residents that are on the Church Crookham waiting list to confirm that they still require an allotment at the Crookham Park site when they become available. If allotments are not fully taken up by Church Crookham residents then they will extend the offer out to surrounding areas such as Ewshot and Crookham village.

Yateley

Swan Lake Allotments

(Alison.blanchard@yateley-tc.gov.uk)

Work is due to start before Christmas on the creation of Yateley's new allotment site. As part of the planning agreement connected to the new housing development on the old Clarks Farm site in Darby Green, Bloor Homes will be setting out an area of land for allotments which will then be passed into the ownership of Yateley Town Council. The Council has been actively seeking a site for some years and has approaching 100 names on a waiting list. The exact number of plots has not yet be finalised but it is anticipated that

they will all be filled by existing members on the waiting list.

HAA have been in contact with the Council so that those that are on the HAA list are catered for.

Other initiatives

Please note that there is still an opportunity to join the 'Grow with Hart' garden share scheme. Contact Guy Clayton on 01252 815652 or Mobile: 07920 820009 or e-mail guy@hartvolaction.org.uk (Leaflets were available at the AGM).

Finance Matters!



At the AGM Dave Bell, (Treasurer) reported on the Association's Finances.

Dave reported that this year we have spent very little. What we have spent has been mostly on stamps, writing to those on the 4 lists that were inherited by the Association, to confirm whether people were still interested in an allotment.

Other expenditure had been website registration and photocopying costs. Dave mentioned that wherever possible we are trying to communicate via e-mail (which costs the committee nothing). Currently there is £1194.48 in the bank.

Dave advised that the original ex gratia grant (received some years ago to help us set up) was our funding source.

Association votes to become a 'Co-operative'



At the AGM Sylvia Cresswell (Secretary) explained the work that had gone on behind the scenes in

researching what type of 'formal' organisation we needed to become in order to lease land from the Council for the allotments in Fleet. At the AGM there was a unanimous vote to become an **Industrial and Provident Society (IPS)**. This is what used to be known as a Co-operative.

Management Committee elected.

When we become an IPS we need to have a Management Committee. The following were elected at the AGM.

President - Cllr Sharyn Wheale

Chairman - Sally Martin

Treasurer - Dave Bell

Secretary - Sylvia Cresswell

In addition the following **committee members** volunteered and were elected. David Fisher, Mikki Hall, Martyn Garvey, Bruce Reece-Russell, Jim Haffrey & Alan Jones.

In all it was decided that a maximum of 10 committee members should be elected, however, these positions may not be filled until needed.

Get your name on your parish waiting list!



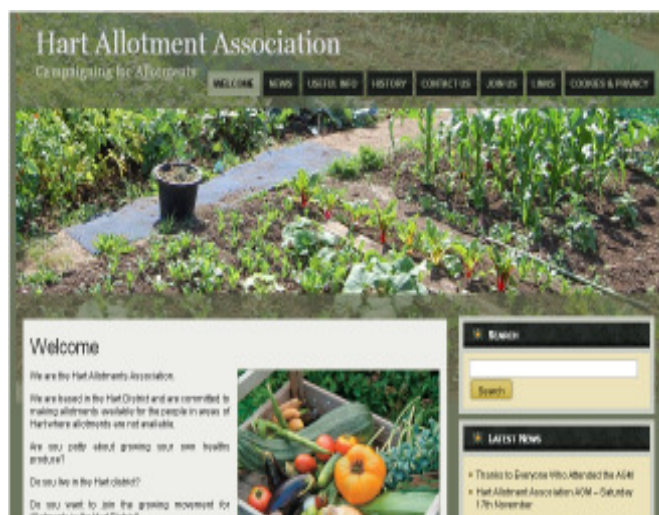
When local parishes were adopted a few years ago Hart District Council (HDC) split up their lists and sent them to the respective parishes (after having apparently checked with folk on the list that this was OK).

As HDC decided that it was not going to keep a waiting list anymore they forwarded all the lists (for all parishes) on to Hart Allotments Association as the land that is envisaged for allotments is owned by HDC. Since then folk have been added to our list. However, if you want an allotment **local to where you live** you need to get on to the local parishes and make sure that you are on their respective lists. Recently we have been in contact with each of the Councils to reconcile our lists. On comparing lists with Yateley Council there were a few recent HAA additions who had to be put to the end of the Yateley list as the way that they hold the list does not indicate the date when going on it - it just lists them in numerical order.

Fleet residents who are on the HAA list already do not need to contact Fleet Parish Council as the HAA are keeping the list for them.

The e-mail contact details for the respective councils are listed under the green headings on pages 3 & 4. **We suggest you contact them by e-mail so that you have a written record.**

New HAA Website www.hart-allotments.org.uk



At the AGM Stephen Janaway showed the new website that had been developed. He explained how it currently works and what we could include in the future. All at the meeting were greatly impressed. Many thanks to Stephen who did most of the development. Thanks also go to Bill Jones who helped in the early stages when we were making decisions regarding an appropriate platform to use for the website.

Why not check it out for lots of useful information. If you have any feedback or want to contact us you can use the 'Contact us' tab on the website or e-mail the Secretary on sylv.HAA@gmail.com

Full details of the AGM are available as a separate document.

Merry Christmas!

Let's hope that you get lots of gardening gifts so that you are ready for your allotment!

