



Pitshanger Allotments Conservation Association

Dear Plotholder,

I'd like to begin by welcoming the new plot holders who have joined us since last September and hope they are enjoying their plots. Unlike last year we had a fairly dry winter with few flooding problems and the warm weather in the spring got the growing season off to a good start. There seems to have been a good crop of soft fruit with strawberries, gooseberries, blackcurrants and other berries doing well so far this year. Vegetables are generally looking good with lots of peas and beans and potatoes doing well on many plots.

After fifteen months without a break-in unfortunately we had two in quick succession at the end of March and in early April. The PAGS trading hut was broken into as well as the storage shed behind. Although a number of tools and implements were taken from these and tenants sheds on the site, the thieves appear to have only taken small items they were easily able to carry away. We reported the incidents to the police but as we expected they have been unable to recover any of the stolen items. The police safer neighbourhood team do patrol the site and it's thanks to them and our own vigilance that there haven't been more incidents of theft. Robert Reynolds and Charles Vaughan Jones repaired the damage to the trading hut and made it secure very quickly. We've also had the damaged perimeter fence repaired where the thieves broke in. However we're still sorting out the insurance claim with our insurers as repairs and replacing stolen items will cost the Association over £1000, of which we should be able to claim back nearly £700.

We applied for a grant to the City Bridge Trust to help us with reconstructing the site access road, but were turned down as they no longer make grants for capital expenditure for site improvements. So we are now looking at possible lottery funding of up to £10,000 to help us. Any other ideas on grant funding sources would be greatly appreciated! Ealing Council have connected drainage from the park along our southern boundary into the central and western drainage ditches that run through our site and connect into the river. In return the Council are looking at helping us to improve the site drainage by connecting up the existing drain outfall on the eastern side of the site under the footpath which runs along our northern site boundary and out to the River Brent, subject to funding.

We're pleased to say that we had the hedge layered by a professional hedge layer along the southern boundary in January and that the hedge is now thickening up nicely, which should help to improve security along this boundary. We've also taken down the chestnut paling along the park side of this boundary and with the new footpath that the Council have laid this boundary looks much more presentable.

Responsibility for looking after the site compost toilet has been taken over by Doig Simmonds, with help from Robert Reynolds, Tom Lafferty and Pasquale Marro. The last time I looked in there it was spotless, but if you have any concerns about the condition of the toilet please let us know.

We had a successful event – a 'Seedling Swap' on Sunday 17 May, thanks to Edith Rambure Lambert and Monica Booth, who organised it and provided coffee, tea and delicious cakes. The site produce show and barbecue last September also proved very successful. We were lucky to have two external judges, Karen Jacks, the PCA chair, and Sue Hulme, a local gardener. The Ludski-Lees were the overall winners, with Charles Vaughan-Jones second and the Hamills, who've had their plots for only a short time, third. Chantelle, our events organiser last year, has offered to help with the produce show again this year together with a late summer barbecue, which will be held on 6 September. Look out for more information on

the noticeboard. Although we didn't have a stall at North Ealing School fete this year, we were able to supply them with several trays of pelargoniums and tomato plants thanks to Anne Bishop and Antonio Ruomori.

Stefan Jasinski is progressing our new website, which we hope to have ready in the autumn. Special thanks also to Robert Reynolds and all those who have helped him in the trading hut again this year. Please support the trading hut by buying your seeds, tools and garden products there. If we don't use the hut then Robert won't be able to keep it going.

One sad event this year was the death of Tishi Kohli, a long standing tenant with several plots on the site. He died in March and a funeral service was held at Mortlake Crematorium. A good number of plotholders who'd known him for many years went to the service along with his close relatives and many from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), of which he was a member and stalwart supporter. He had asked for a very simple service with no speeches and we all listened to beautiful Indian ragas that he had chosen. His cheerful presence and helpfulness will be much missed.

Finally the Annual General Meeting this year will be held on Thursday 24 September at the Brentham Club. It is your chance to have your say about the way that the Association is run. But do please remember that the Committee are volunteers giving up their time to run the Association. You can offer resolutions for changes to be made in the site management. These have to be notified to us and supported by another association member. You may also feel that you or another plot holder should be on the Committee. Your nominations should be sent in and need to be supported by one other association member as well as yourself. If recommending a person other than yourself please make sure they agree to stand! Resolutions and nominations should be with us by Monday 14 September. We look forward to seeing you all at the AGM and have a productive summer on your plots.

July 2015

Just a brief update to the above report I wrote in July. Several PACA members in addition to Tishi Kohli died this last year – Mark Whittaker, Pam George and Jerzy Kozlowski; our condolences to their families. Most recently Ruth Simmonds also died. Ruth was part of our allotment community for more than forty years, serving on the PAGS Hut Committee and providing constant and much appreciated support to PACA. She will be sorely missed by all of us who knew her and our thoughts and sympathy are with her husband Doig.

On a lighter note we had a successful Late Summer show and picnic on 6 September. The judges were John Bird, the new PCA chairman and Brian Field, our former PACA chairman who has two plots on the site. Elizabeth Cave was the overall winner, Sylvia Pagoon won the prize for the best plot and Coky Giedroyc's dahlia was judged the best in show. Congratulations to all winners and entrants for showing their produce, jams and preserves, and photos. Many thanks to Chantelle Ludski for organising it so well once again and to the judges for giving us their time. One visitor to the show complimented us on the good community spirit on the site.

Finally the new PACA website, which Stefan Jasinski has designed and set up for us, will shortly be on line and can be seen by visiting www.pitshangerallotments.org. If you have any thoughts and comments on the layout and information on the website please let us know.

David Housego – Chairman

September 2015