

# Annual Report 2021- 22

## **What we did since last year's AGM**

There were several activities we committed to at last year's AGM in our future plans.

## **Events and Fundraising**

The first was developing a vibrant programme of activities in the Barn, against which we can put a definite tick. The monthly Sunday lunches and Wednesday cafés are now well established, and proving a popular part of allotment life.

The Sunday lunches are preceded by a discussion group/talk; some months the focus is on jobs for your plot that month (thanks to Juliet for facilitating these discussions and Bruno and others for contributing their knowledge), and other months we've invited a plot-holder to talk on a particular topic. In the past year Tessa Bull ran a practical yoga for gardeners session, Robert Henebury gave a talk on health and safety on the allotment, Gary Sycamore showed us how to (try and) make as good compost as he does, and Esther Coles gave a fascinating talk, the first of a series on beekeeping through the seasons, including a honey tasting.

A particular highlight was the willow weaving workshops in March. These proved so popular that we managed to get Linda Limeaux, the tutor, to repeat the one day workshop over three days. Participants made some beautiful supports for climbing plants, which can be admired around the site. Our thanks to Amy Gardiner Gibson for helping to organise this.

Our Barn events are a great way for plot-holders to share knowledge, acquire new skills, and meet new people. Over the summer months it has been a lovely sight to see groups of plot-holders enjoying delicious food and conversation at the tables and chairs around Plot 15. And in the colder months the wood-burning stove has been a great attraction. These events also help raise money for the site. In September we donated the takings from the Sunday lunch to the local food bank.

Other events included the ever popular Winter Warmer in December (the first in-person one in three years – hurray) at which we raised over £800, and the annual plant sale in May, which raised £1,300, half of which, as in previous years, we donated to the Harington Scheme. Our cider makers continue to make good use of surplus apples on the site, and other surplus produce donated by plot-holders is collected from outside the Barn by the Hornsey Food Bank.

The communal plot 15 has, with the help of volunteers blossomed into a lovely space where people meet and chat and eat and play cards. It's looked after by volunteers who put their name down for a particular month in the year and then as part of a team, organise themselves around watering, weeding, pruning etc. We would really welcome more volunteers to this project.

We are always keen to hear suggestions for new activities/events, and for offers of help (for example making soup or a cake, volunteering to join the Plot 15 maintenance rota, or helping to organise and run an event). If you can help please get in touch with the committee at [info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk](mailto:info@shepherdshillallotments.co.uk)

## **Maintenance**

The other focus in our plans for the year was maintenance. The committee agreed a programme of work for pruning trees that are overhanging plots along the site boundary and causing problems. This work has been ongoing during the past year and is continuing.

In October we employed a contractor to undertake much needed repair works to both the Montenotte gate and Wood Vale roadways. Prior to this, the in-house maintenance team (Ian and Garry) used their ingenious investigative skills to tackle the problem of water flooding the Wood Vale track.

We have continued to make ad-hoc improvements to boundary fencing where there is an obvious security issue. Quotes to upgrade sections of fencing have proved prohibitively expensive, and Haringey have declined to offer any additional financial support.

Outstanding work from last year's plan includes investigating the possibility of installing a composting toilet, and carrying out a full assessment of what repairs are needed to ensure the structural integrity and safety of the trading shed. These items will be rolled over to our 22/23 plans.

## **Lettings and waiting List**

There were 13 lettings during the year since the last AGM. We welcome all those new plot holders to the Association.

We continued our policy of opening the waiting list at the beginning of the year to allow the same number of applicants onto the list as lettings made in the previous year. This meant that in January 10 people were added to the list.

Some people have dropped off the list, but it remains at 113 (this includes 28 people who have reached the top of the list but were not ready to take a plot at that time). The people currently being offered plots have had a 6 year wait and this is extending all the time.

## **Trading Shed**

### *The Stock*

With the lifting of Covid restrictions purchasing stock for the Trading Shed has become easier. However, due to the various world economic problems prices have continued to rise.

We are no longer stocking compost that contains peat and instead have extra stock of sand for people to mix with the peat free compost to make suitable seed compost.

Seeds have not sold as well as expected and we have a lot still in stock so before ordering any new seeds in January we are going to leave a copy of the Kings Seed catalogue in the Trading Shed and ask allotment holders to look through it or look on the website at <https://www.kingsseeds.com/home> and indicate any they would like to have by filling in the details on a sheet we will provide. We obtain seeds at a discount price.

The Spring Potato and Onion order has gone in for Potato Day in February 2023.

Liz Denver, Trading Shed Co-Manager

### *The Staffing*

As ever we are eternally grateful to the volunteers who serve in the Shed every Sunday from Feb-October and every other Sunday from Nov-January. And many of these and other plot holders have also pitched up to help with the unloading of deliveries. We have NEVER had to close. Of course the Shed, like all good things on the Site, wouldn't exist without volunteers.

As you'll have noticed, there's a card reader now which makes things a lot simpler.

Annie Griffiths, Trading Shed co-manager