



NEWSLETTER

Season's Greetings to all our members.

We are now entering the relatively quiet time in the Allotment year. Crops have been harvested, manure dug in, just the planning and seed buying to do in the warmth of our homes. 2018 has been challenging weather wise, starting with a long drawn out winter followed by the destructive force of flooding and then the hot and dry Summer baking the soil. Peppers and chillies loved it but roots crops suffered. Despite all this Birmingham's Allotment sites continue to thrive! Well done to all those hardworking Association volunteers and plot holders. Here's looking forward to yet another successful year, hopefully not as challenging!

GOODBYE NIKKI AND WELCOME BERNIE!

A new era is about to start. At the end of December Nicola Bradley will no longer be our Allotments Officer. She will be missed. We all appreciate the hard work and dedication she has given to the Allotments in Birmingham over the last 17 years, going "above and beyond".

The BDAC extends a warm welcome to Bernie who has been working for the Allotments since the beginning of October. She will have three months of working closely with Nikki to prepare her for the role before officially becoming, our Allotment Officer on 1st January 2019.

Message from Bernie on page two

Dates for your diary

Executive meetings are held at the Guild Guide Headquarters, Trefoil House, Brownsea Drive, B1 1QL
Meetings starts at 7 p.m.

Monday January 7th
Monday February 4th
Monday March 4th

If you wish to attend any meeting as an observer please contact
Clive Birch



Fantastic fencing from Walmley Ash!

"Walmley Ash Allotment plot holders were hit by a series of shed raids and petty thefts at the beginning of 2018, so they decided to look at improving the security of the site.

The committee decided to apply for a grant from the Big National Lottery Fund and were successful in being given £10,000.

With this money and also a generous grant from the Birmingham Council they were able to replace the 60-year-old fencing, which was overgrown and collapsing along its length, with a new two-metre-high palisade fence stretching over 100 metres bordering the railway embankment.

The new fence is a real deterrent and makes the plots safer and the site more attractive.

Half Yearly Meeting

Thank you for all those who were able to spare the time to attend the meeting at Bordesley Green. It was a good meeting and well attended. Councillor Sharon Thompson was due to attend, but sends her apologies. When travelling to the site she wasn't able to locate the entrance despite asking local residents. Unfortunately, a lot of our sites, including Bordesley Green, are hidden away off the main road, whilst this might make us more private, it also can make us invisible, creating a challenge for Associations trying to publicise plots and encourage new plot holders.

We discussed the problems that Associations have been having with Water Plus. You will all have realised that they are charging us for full return to sewers despite most of our water being used for irrigation. This is very unfair. On contacting water Plus recently, I was informed that the following address is a direct contact to the department whose role is to deal with such enquiries-keyaccountmanagement@water-plus.co.uk hopefully by the time you read this newsletter I will have received a response from my enquiry, please feel free use this address yourselves. Nikki is hopeful that at long last there maybe some movement towards solving this issue but please continue to put some pressure on Water Plus.

We also discussed the frustratingly slow progress of getting site maintenance through the Flo Pickering Fund. Landscape Practice Group, the Council department responsible for managing the works, was given a list of the most urgent jobs early in the year. Recently they stated that work will start on the first site in March 2019, this means that it is taking twelve months to process just one request. This is unacceptable. Work is urgently needed on many allotment sites across the city. Nikki is working hard with her managers to find solutions enabling the process to speed up, hopefully this will improve next year. We will keep you posted.

A HELLO from Bernie

Hello everyone, I'm Bernadette Wilson (usually known as Bernie) and I'll be the new Allotments Officer for Birmingham City Council following Nikki's departure at the end of December, which is a fab act to follow.

Nikki and I have been working closely together since the beginning of September so I've already experienced the very busy rent period and am now launching into the reminders period and learning everything else that an Allotment Officer does, which is rather exciting.

What brings me here? I've worked for BCC for 20 years, 18 of which were spent being an admin manager in Education, but a recent restructure saw many staff, including me, losing their jobs. Whilst looking at other roles in the Council I came across an internal ad for a lateral move to Allotments. Nikki wanted to go and I wanted to stay so we swapped places, which is working out really well. We are both moving on to something completely different, Nikki to setting up her own cake business and me moving to another Directorate looking after the allotment service – never be afraid of change I say.

My hubby has an allotment plot so I do appreciate the hard work that everyone puts into producing all that lovely veg, along with the weeds which grow regardless of draught or flood.

It was wonderful to meet some of you at the BDAC half yearly meeting recently and I'm looking forward to working with the BDAC and yourselves for the good of allotments across Birmingham.

Bernie

THORNBIDGE AVENUE COMMEMORATES THE ARMISTICE

On the 11th November Thornbridge Allotments opened its doors for the 100th armistice remembrance service, in the Private William Richards Memorial Garden.

On a fine, but cold, morning approximately 50 people, plot holders and members of the public attended the service which was conducted by Andy Poyner, former chairman, the Last Post and Reveille were performed by Bob Thompson from The Bournville Brass Band, who travelled from Wolverhampton for the service.

After the 2 minutes silence 6 year old Evan Jones, a plot holders grandson, laid the wreath followed by others who wanted to place crosses at the memorial.

After the service everyone enjoyed a welcome tea or coffee and chat amongst friends, the service was, once again, very popular with local residents who joined us to pay their respects.

Our thanks to those who organised, and also everyone who attended, a fitting service for Remembrance Sunday. *Sent in by-Thornbridge Avenue Allotments Association*



LONGMEADOW CRESCENT FUNDRAISING

The Association at Longmeadow Allotments have been busy fundraising. Congratulations to them for raising £160 for Macmillan Nurses. They also held a Curry Night that raised £120 for the Association.

ALLOTMENT HISTORY

Read this account from 1918 sent in by Stuart Guest, Tennial Lane Allotments.

The following is from an article in the Birmingham Mail, Thursday August 1st 1918.

“A boy of thirteen was charged at Birmingham’s Children’s Court to-day with wilfully damaging crops on an allotment in Tennial Road, belonging to Mr John Lennox Fleetwood, Wentworth Road, Harborne.

Chief inspector Chadwick met the boy in Tennial road about 8.30 on the evening of July 22 carrying a bag containing freshly picked broad beans, carrots and potatoes, and the police officer arrested him.

The boy who had been in trouble before, was sent to a reformatory school for five years.”



A New Polytunnel at Quinton!

A tenant on our site he was not always able to get to his plot every day and found that a polytunnel didn't work for him, so very kindly donated it to the Association be used on our communal plot.

We organised a working morning and even though the weather was awful ten stalwarts turned up, which was enough for us to position ourselves around the structure and move it, just a few hundred yards to its new home.

Next season tenants will be able to rent a space in there.

Quinton Allotments Association

Web links

If any Association would like a link to their website in the BDAC website please email your web address to Executive member, Mark Hanson using the following address: markhansonbdac@gmail.com. And he will install the link for you.

From time to time we have prospective plot holders visit our site and make plot requests the link will help you publicise your site.

To contact the BDAC

Chairman: Clive Birch phone 0121 354 1512 e-mail: clivebirch@blueyonder.co.uk
Secretary: Barbara Smith phone 07746062410 e-mail bdac.allotments@gmail.com
Assistant Secretary: Anne Murphy phone 0121 449 7340

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