

LEYTONSTONE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION AT RODING FARM - AUGUST 2022 NEWSLETTER

Record Breaking Weather

Since the last newsletter in June it has been non stop records with temperatures twice hitting 38 to 40 degrees centigrade or 100 to 104 degrees in 'old money'. Although technically some rain has fallen it has been hardly enough to 'wet the pavements' and certainly nothing like sufficient to help the vegetables and fruit swell. It has been a constant battle to keep plants alive with regular watering an essential past time. Despite that many plots are looking splendid and a credit to those responsible for looking after them. Focussed and effective watering is the key – it's much most effective to water the plant directly around its roots with a good dose of water every two or three days rather than a general sprinkle the soil every day. Please remember hose pipes must not be used unless you happen to have a well on your plot.

And what a contrast to July last year!



July 2021



July 2022

Committee Update

Once again, the Committee has met 'face to face' on a couple of occasions.

Our focus has continued with four main projects: -

- 1) Water supply – understandable this topic was a source of much discussion. We were considering a major upgrade of the water supply from the water meter outside the main gate to all site dip tanks to improve the re-fill rate. We have contacted Thames Water to establish the supply into our water meter and have been advised it is a 15mm pipe providing water at 9 litres per minute at 1 bar of pressure. This is the same specification as provided to a domestic house. The current feed from the water meter onto site is a similar 15mm bore. So, unless we can persuade Thames Water to provide us with a more commercial level supply there is no benefit to replacing the current pipes feeding the dip tanks. We know in the current economic climate this is not a priority for Thames Water and were it to be possible at some point in the future the work would need to be funded by the association. Therefore, the only immediate practical solution is to install some more 'dip tanks', which we will do. This will increase the storage capacity on site, although we know this will reduce the 'fill rate' on busy days. However, as it is the only practical solution available to us we have decided it is still worth it.

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- 2) Portacabin and car park areas – upgrading and improvement of the Portacabin and the area around it to make a shady seating area for members is complete and the benches seem to be used much more regularly than previously. Raised beds have been created to better define the area and herbs planted.
- 3) Toilet facilities – we are continuing to monitor quality and cleanliness of the toilets. We reviewed a paper covering solutions used on other allotment sites including ‘composting and septic tank’ toilets. Unfortunately, both options would not work on our site for two reasons 1) the site floods and therefore Thames Water/the council would oppose any installation for fear it would pollute the water courses and 2) other societies highlighted it was essential to have a reliable system for regular cleaning and maintenance which we do not have. This issue is at the heart of some of our current provider issues. So, we will continue to monitor the Euroloos service, whilst exploring other provider possibilities at the same time.
- 4) Drainage – in some areas the drainage ditches across the site have ‘silted up’ and been ‘filled in’. We are looking at plan of digging out and re-instatement in some areas and simple ‘scouring’ elsewhere.

Bee Aware

We are delighted to welcome a new hive of bees on site. We always have ‘wild bees’ buzzing around and pollinating our fruit and vegetables, but it's great to have our own hive once again. If you want to help them thrive then planting a few flowers around your plot will bring them in and be much appreciated. ‘Simple’ single flowers are best for bees – daisies, lavender, comfrey or borage are particular favourites. Dobies and Kings Seeds have an excellent seed mix which you can sow in the Spring. Obviously, you should take care around bees but provided you leave them alone and certainly don't fuss them you should be fine. Anyone allergic to bees should always carry with them their own protection and medication in case of stings.



The Annual Flower and Vegetable Show – Sunday 4th September

Please come along if you can – it's a very relaxed and fun day, so don't be afraid to enter – you never know you might win ‘best in show’ as some ‘first timers’ have in previous years. If you are not sure there is lots of help and advice ‘on the day’. Or just come along with a picnic and glass of something.

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Don't forget

The plot number competition is in full swing. There is a major prize to be awarded to the most creative and artistic at the Annual Show. Judges will be walking around the site on Friday 2nd September so make sure your effort is clear and visible to see. For those who don't know their number there is a site map in the Portacabin and they are included in the annual membership and plot rental renewal invoice.

Discounted Seeds from Dobies

There is still time to purchase and sow seeds this year – use the code SUGD1204Z – if you want to enjoy the discount the Association has arranged with Dobies – order 'online' at <https://www.dobies.co.uk/>

Topical tips and Cultivation Advice

- 1) Watering – as mentioned earlier water the roots of plants which are fruiting to ensure you get a crop. Soft fruit such as strawberries, blackberries only need an occasional water, say once a week if the season is over for them just to keep them alive. Perpetual varieties will require water two or three times a week if you want the flowers to set and strawberries to appear. Root vegetables – carrots, parsnips etc and brassicas – cabbages, broccoli, cauliflowers will need water a couple of times a week to help them swell and grow.
- 2) There is still time to sow seeds. Salad crops – spring onions, lettuce, spinach, radish, rocket – grow quickly and will produce a fine harvest. Oriental greens such as pak choi grow well in the cooler late summer months and can still be sown from seed.
- 3) Autumn/winter vegetables especially brassicas – cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower – should be planted out to their final positions.
- 4) Main crop potatoes should be ready to harvest once the foliage starts to yellow and die down. Even in this dry summer if left in the ground the tubers are more likely to suffer slug damage. So, dig them up and store them in a cool, dry and dark place.
- 5) Dahlias should be flowering well and chrysanthemums will be not far behind. Both need staking and dead heading of flowers past their best.
- 6) Climbing beans of all sorts should be growing well and need regular harvesting unless you are planning to save them as dried beans for the winter. All will benefit from a bucket or two of water to help set the flowers and fill out the pods.
- 7) Courgettes and cucumbers have grown well this year – pick them regularly – the smaller the better – there are always more on their way. I have lots should anyone want some !

Finally ...

If you have any suggestions, or concerns regarding the site please do not hesitate to contact a committee member – please remember we are all volunteers, not paid employees – so offers of help as well as suggestions for improvement are needed if we are to action your great ideas.

LAHA Committee