

LEYTONSTONE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION AT RODING FARM - JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

A funny old Spring.

Just like every Spring it was a season of contrasts – too wet, then too dry and then too cold – are we never satisfied? I thought it was only ‘our’ problem until I visited Superbloom, the replanting of the moat at the Tower of London – well worth a visit but even they, with their boundless resources and professional gardeners, have had their problems. The odd bare patch, and that after a couple of attempts at resowing. Now I don’t feel so bad.



Committee Update

Since the last Newsletter in April, we have held a couple of face to face Committee Meetings.

Our focus has continued on four main projects:-

- 1) Water supply – we are researching the cost and practicality of replacing the main water pipe from the water meter outside the main gate to all site dip tanks to improve the re-fill rate, which we know is an issue on hot summer days and at weekends. We have obtained a ‘first quote’ which is ridiculously expensive and so are in contact with our billing agent Castle Water and Thames Water to see if we can obtain a more sensible solution. No work would take place until after the water is turned off in the Autumn.
- 2) Portacabin and car park areas – we have commenced the upgrading and improvement of the Portacabin and area around it to make an area where members can sit and gather in greater comfort. The benches have been moved and it is planned to create some raised beds to better define the area.
- 3) Toilet facilities – quality and cleanliness of the toilets is an ‘issue’. We have changed the supplier and significantly increased the frequency of cleaning. We will review this temporary solution whilst continuing to investigate the feasibility of more sustainable ‘composting’ toilets.
- 4) Drainage – in some areas the drainage ditches across the site have ‘silted up’ and been ‘filled in’. We will look at plan of digging out and re-instatement in some areas and simple ‘scouring’ elsewhere.

Dip Tanks – a gentle reminder

Dip tanks are located across the site to enable members to water their plots using a watering can or bucket. Hose pipes and water pumps are not permitted to be used to extract water from the tanks and their use is against the site rules. Water is a very expensive and scarce resource which costs the Association a significant percentage of our annual budget, and when tanks are completely emptied in this way there is no water available for others to use. Obviously, if you are lucky enough to have a ground water well on your plot you are permitted to use a pump and hose to extract this water as it affects no one else and is free.

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The Lane

You may have noticed the trees and bushes along entry lane have been pruned back from the road. This was necessary to secure the latest manure delivery as the driver had stated he would not be returning with further deliveries unless this was done. So, whilst the lane was perfectly passable this was a not a risk worth taking. A grateful thanks go to Lukas Pottas and a team of helpers including Colin and Trevor, although it should be noted the 'lions share' of the work was carried out by Lukas. Thanks Lukas.



Please Don't be Shy

It would help no end in navigating the site, if members would add their Plot Number to their plot. The more creative and artistic the effort the more likely you are to win the competition for best plot number to be awarded at the Annual Show. The more artistic and creative the better. 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 invoices.



Dates for the diary

- **Annual Flower and Vegetable Show – Sunday 4th September –** a similar date to last year to maximise the summer harvest whilst avoiding the late summer bank holiday. Do think of coming along and entering. Its always an enjoyable day.



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- **Wanstead Festival – Sunday 18th September** – we would really like to enter a stand as it is a very enjoyable event and a good money earner for the Association. A number of the Committee are away on well-earned holidays so we need volunteers to help with set-up, running and take down of the stand. Please contact the Secretary on email laharodingfarm@gmail.com if you would like to help.



Discounted Seeds from Dobies

There is still plenty of 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) Although we have just passed the Summer Solstice there is still plenty of time to sow seeds. The soil is warm and salad crops – spring onions, lettuce, spinach, beetroot, rocket – grow quickly and produce a fine harvest.
- 2) Autumn vegetables especially brassicas – cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower – should be planted out to their final positions. It's a little too late to sow seed, but young plants are readily available at the garden centre and online. Just ensure they are covered with nets to stop the pigeons from destroying them.
- 3) Early potatoes should be ready to harvest – they taste best when young and small. Salad and maincrop varieties will be starting to flower – and this is the point to give them a good watering – once a week is fine – and they will help to swell the tubers ready for harvesting later once the foliage starts to yellow and die down. I always harvest at this point. If left in the ground the tubers are most likely to suffer slug damage.
- 4) Soft fruit – strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries – will be fruiting now and should be harvested as they ripen.
- 5) If you are a flower grower some of the taller varieties of dahlia, and chrysanthemum will need support and benefit from staking.
- 6) Climbing beans of all sorts should be making good progress up the supports and as the flowers set will benefit from a bucket or two of water to help fill out the pods.
- 7) And finally, our old friend the courgette should be getting into their stride – pick them as soon as you can – the smaller the better – there will always be more on their way!

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