

BALGA Newsletter – Summer 2013

**News
Flash**

According to the calendar, summer is almost here, and the BHS Summer show is only six weeks away (13 July). I hope you are all ready for it!

Issue No 5

Allotment Shop

Chris Burgon is maintaining good stocks at the shop, so pop in next Sunday between 10 am and 12 noon for your needs. We sold off some of our stock of potatoes on the BHS plant stall at the Festival Market, but still have some left at reduced prices if you have not yet planted yours.

Membership

Membership numbers have now passed 170. However, we need a few more to beat last year, so if you have not yet joined, please pop into the shop on a Sunday Morning and pick up your membership card (and pay your £5).

BALGA Barbeque

The committee has agreed that this year's BBQ will be held at Clothall Road site on Sunday 8th September, starting at 12 noon. As last year, the committee will provide barbeques and charcoal, and members are invited to bring their own food to barbeque and drinks. Last year we turned out about 30 members, so let's see if we can beat it this year! Martin Luker has promised to clear the spare plot so that there is room to set up our tables and chairs.

Compost

There are supplies of brown bin compost at each site, at 50p per wheelbarrow load. Please remember to pay at the allotment shop, otherwise we cannot buy any more! Earlier there was a delivery of horse manure at North Road, which went quite quickly. We are trying to get more, especially for Clothall Road. If anyone has a contact who has farmyard manure to clear, please tell Mick or Martin.

Self-Management

We met with NHDC in April, and agreed to target completion of the 2 leases in August. We met again on 29 May, and have pretty much reached agreement for North Road, but have hit a major problem for Clothall Road. Herts County Council, the site owners, will give us a 25 year lease, but it has 2 break clauses. At any time they could give us 12 months' notice to vacate, and they could give only 3 months if they want it for building, roads or sewer pipes etc. We have said this is unacceptable, and are trying to persuade them to remove the clauses. If we cannot, we will not go with North Road either, following the motion agreed at our AGM. Watch this space! We are hoping to get help from our Councillors!

North Road

Track and Car Park

We have obtained quotes for the improvement of the track and car park, and have discussed with NHDC who pays! Once again we are hoping for help from our Councillors.

Thefts at North Road

A number of thefts have occurred recently at North Road. All plot holders are requested to be vigilant, and to report suspicious behaviour to their site rep and the police.

Scaffold Boards

Because it took so long to get the money in, Phil has had to ask for orders in advance. A new order has arrived, and there are currently boards available at both sites. However, from now on it is pay first, and then take the boards. They are still £4 for a 13ft board. Please put money in an envelope with your name and the number of boards, and hand to a committee member or the allotment shop.

Scrap metal

The scrap metal at North Road has now gone, but there are a couple of concrete fence posts left. If you want them, please take them!

Best Kept Allotment

Competition

The competition will be run along the same lines as last year, with a team of 3 judges from North Road drawing up a short list of best plots on Clothall Road, and a team of 3 from Clothall Road drawing up a short list at North Road. All plots will be judged in this first round, so there is no need to enter! Jo Tofts, who judged last year, will then visit the shortlisted plots, and make her decisions. First round judging will take place in the second half of June, and final judging will be around mid July. Plot holders who make the shortlist will be told, so that they have a chance of a tidy up before the final round.

BHS Benefits

The committees of BHS and BALGA are working on a reciprocal agreement, so that members can share benefits. BALGA members will get BHS subsidised rates on coach trips, and BHS members will be able to use our shop.

Website

Michael Gearing has agreed to maintain our website until we can find a volunteer to take on the post of website manager. We are still looking for anyone interested. The site is www.our-shed.co.uk/ and it is shared with BHS.

Working Parties

2 working parties have been held at North Road to weed the hedge, and to plant extra shrubs and trees. Also Friends of Baldock Green Spaces have started to build a "dead hedge" on our boundary with Ivel Springs.

If we delivered this it is because we do not have your email address. If you have one, please send a message to Phil (phil@charsley.org.uk) with your name.