

**FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**  
**78<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3**  
**7.30 PM Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

## **Chairman's Report 2018**

### **Introduction**

We are holding our AGM in the Finchley Lawn Tennis Club, Clubhouse at Brent Way by kind permission of the Tennis Club Committee; many thanks to Elain Wright for organising this for us again.

This Report will be sent to all members prior to the meeting and questions will be answered at the meeting. Election of the Committees will take place at the meeting as usual; in the future an electronic ballot may be held instead. All other papers will be sent out by email to members prior to the meeting or be available on the website or by application to the Committee. This should shorten the AGM business considerably allowing time for a short talk and the "Social".

We have had a very successful 2018 from all points of view; completing projects and staging successful events and outings. We have won prizes for our allotment sites and have contributed to charity and the community in general. We continue to be members of The National Allotments Society (NSALG). We are affiliated members of the RHS and obtained insurance by the NFU through the RHS. We are also members of the Barnet Allotment Federation (BAF).

Water bills were high this year as we had a very hot and dry summer and there were no water restrictions. We have never had such high costs for services. We have not raised allotment rentals or service charges this year, in view of our healthy bank balance, but if these costs continue to rise we will need to reconsider this in the future.

You may notice that the use of poles has been superseded by square meters in your bills this year. This is a process of modernisation and should not cause much difference in your charges. It may be that your bill may have increased or decreased slightly, this will be due to the change to measurement from "poles" to square meters.

This year at our AGM we will have our inaugural FHS Garden Lecture given by James Robbins entitled "Diversity of Crops and why that Matters". We hope that this encourages people to come.

### **1. Committees**

*The General Committee* has met regularly throughout the year. The Membership of the General Committee consists The Chairman, (Claudine Fear), Treasurer, (Chris Ouseley), Membership Secretary, (Christine Williams), Newsletter Editor, (Jo Cuttall), Website Manager, (Judy Woollett), Security Officer, (Tony Ingram), Allotment Secretaries, (June Brookes, Gordon Road), (Elaine Wright , Brent Way) and (Penny Igoe, Nethercourt Avenue). Chris Ouseley has settled comfortably into the Treasurer's role; it took a very long time for Barclays bank to accept him as a signatory but this has now been resolved. Penny Igoe has

taken over from Janine Limberg and now represents the Nethercourt Avenue Allotments. Tony Ingram has been making every effort to communicate with Barnet Council to implement the fence replacement along Dollis Road but progress is very slow. Thanks to all who have served on this Committee in 2018.

*The Allotments Committee* has met several times in 2018. Chaired by June Brookes, Committee members were, Rosa Baden-Powell, Mark Hanslip, Philip Cuttall, Maureen Gaythwaite, Felicity Nock and John Hale. Nomination forms were not received in time for the election so Maureen Gaythwaite and John Hale were co-opted onto the Committee. Mark Hanslip is Mower Manager and is in charge of organising mower maintenance keeping them serviced and repaired. We are still experiencing misuse of the mowers at Gordon Road which proves very costly; we urge everyone who uses them and is unsure if they are using them correctly to consult Mark who will be happy to show you the correct way to do so. New stronger wheelbarrows are now available at Gordon Road and will shortly be available at Brent Way; thanks to Phil Cuttall who trialed these. We thank all who continue to serve on this Committee.

## **2. Completed Projects in 2018**

*The tarmac at Gordon Road:* This was being further damaged by lorries delivering compost to Gordon Road. The hump by the main gate was removed and all damaged tarmac was replaced by Linkway and cost £2520 inc VAT.

*Wheelbarrows for Gordon Road:* Six new heavy duty wheelbarrows were purchased for Gordon Road.

*Mower for Brent Way:* A new Honda mulching mower was purchased for Brent Way.

*Eco Loo at Gordon Road Serviced:* The annual pumping out of the Eco toilet has been carried out.

## **3. Projects for 2019 and the Future**

*Gordon Road PAT testing:* All electrical equipment is being PAT tested.

*Replacing the polytunnel canopy at Gordon Road:* The canopy on the polytunnel has deteriorated to such an extent that it will need to be replaced this year; dates have been arranged to carry out this project in early June after the Plant Sale. A work party will be needed over two weekends to complete this work. A trench will need to be dug around the existing polytunnel and the canopy stretched over the structure after removal of the old canopy.

It will be replaced like-with-like for the present but, total replacement and extension of the current structure with a disabled accessible greenhouse is under consideration. Plans would need to be drawn and grants applied for to achieve this project. Realisation of such a project would afford a suitable place for training of young and old of all abilities in the practice of horticulture and propagation of plants. This would be a major community project.

*Renovation of the heated Greenhouse next to the Green Room:* This is underway and should be completed before this AGM takes place in time for the 2019 plant sale. The work has been carried out by Terry Burling and other members of the allotments. Many thanks to Terry and all who have been and are helping to complete this project.

*Placing wire mesh over all the water butts:* Covering the water butts with wire mesh at Gordon Road to prevent leaves and animals from getting in has nearly been completed. Elaine Wright and Claudine Fear hope to finish this before the Plant Sale in 2019.

*Fence replacement along Dollis Road:* In 2017 Liz Thomson, Felicity Nock and Philip Cuttall were successful in their application for a grant of £5000 from Barnet Council to complete the fencing project at Gordon Road to extend the palisade fence along Dollis Road and around the corner of Gordon Road. The current fence is in very poor repair and does not afford us much protection. Financial constraints mean that we will have to implement any fencing upgrade in two phases, starting with Dollis Road and continuing into Gordon Road when further funds can be secured. Tony Ingram consulted with Barnet Council and established that any form of fence above 1m in height would require Planning Consent and even replacement like with like would require Council approval. An application was submitted to erect a palisade fence 2.4m high, along both boundaries. We are still in discussion with Barnet Planning Department even though the fence along Dollis Road has been agreed in principle. The Council continue to put various obstacles in the way, now requiring a further tree report, before work can proceed. Tony Ingram has attempted to contact the Council department on many occasions, often not receiving any response or to be met with another obstacle. Ironically, we cannot proceed without Council approval seeing as it is the Council who provided us with the grant. The monies are ring fenced in the accounts.

We will need to apply for further grants if we want to carry out any other major projects.

These projects include:

*Continuation of the fence along Gordon Road:* Planning permission should be sought prior to grant application to replace this fence with an approved fence type, preferably similar to the palisade fencing we hope to have on Dollis Road. Replacement of the Gate for a more secure structure could be included in this.

*Replacing the structure on the Piggery:* In 2017 the disabled access to the Piggery project, paid for by the Tesco Bags of Help award, was completed. However, we should now be considering replacing the shelter and continuing the hard standing to replace the grass and the surfacing under the tarpaulin for more stable flooring. We could continue to cover the shelter with a tarpaulin and repair the uprights from time to time, or to replace the whole structure with something more solid and with a permanent translucent roof. For the time being, at least, we will continue to cover the present structure with tarpaulin and replace it as required. A heavier structure would be required to accommodate a permanent roof. Thanks to all involved for their continuing efforts to improve this most important facility for our community.

*Electricity supply to the Log Cabin at Gordon Road:* An electricity supply would be needed to make the log cabin into a more useable space for holding meetings and talks throughout the year. We will need to seek estimates to carry out the extension of the existing electricity cables and will require a grant application for money, eventually to carry out the work. This is not a high priority project at present.

*Other:* General improvements to all three sites that have been approved by the General Committee.

Brent way:

- Paving by the entrance gate.
- Three new wheelbarrows.

- Paint for the shed

Gordon Road:

- New fridge freezer for Green Room to replace the one that failed the PAT test.
- Refurbishment of heated greenhouse next to Green Room. (underway)
- Canopy over the barbeque
- Shelving in the Trading Hut
- New Mower

Nethercourt Avenue:

- Demarcation fence for the allotment plots. This would require planning permission.

## 4. Accounts

Thanks to Chris Ouseley who, produced the accounts for independent examination. His work as Treasurer this year has been invaluable and we are most grateful to him for this. We thank Jane Healy for examining the accounts. We hope that she will agree to examine them again in 2019.

## 5. Allotments Sites

### Vacancies and waiting lists

There were very few vacant plots this year on any of the three sites.

At Gordon Road there were no vacant plots but there were four vacant raised beds There were about 8 people on the waiting list.

Brent Way had no vacancies in 2018 and there were about 10 on the waiting list.

Nethercourt Avenue had no vacancies and two on the waiting list.

### Prizes 2018

Gordon Road obtained first place in the competition for best large plot in Barnet in 2018. Mrs Fung Wan obtained highly commended in the "Plot holder" category. Nethercourt Avenue second prize in the small plot category and Brent Way won third prize in the same category.

### Deliveries

London Waste Ltd has discontinued delivery of free compost. Wood chip is still delivered to us on an ad hoc basis to Gordon Road. This can be collected from Gordon Road by the plot holders at Nethercourt Avenue and Brent Way. Thanks to Eric Hess for organising the delivery of wood chip. Manure and bales of straw can be ordered for plot holders at Gordon Road on request with payment directly to Chris Ouseley, thanks to him for organising this. Manure is delivered and placed as near as possible to the plot holders who ordered it. This must be removed from the paths within 8 days of delivery and no residual manure should be left on the paths. Bales of straw are delivered to the parking area near the Trading Hut for collection by those who ordered it.

## 6. Trading Hut

The Trading Hut was open throughout from March to September in 2018 and volunteers serving in the shop every Sunday. We had an excellent year of trading, a small profit was made. Thank you to Helen Skelton for

organising the rota and to everyone who volunteered. The Trading Hut is open and will open every weekend throughout the season in 2019. Our thanks go to both June Brookes and Helen Skelton for continuing to keep the Trading Hut operational. We still need someone to help with the management of the Trading Hut. We are fortunate to have this excellent facility; it is a great way to meet members of the Society and affords us an ideal venue to discuss gardening issues and provision for all of our gardening needs. Please come forward if you feel you can help in any way in this activity.

## **7. Raised Beds**

As part of the raised beds project we continue to have Southover Partnership School and Moss Hall Nursery School tending the school beds. All the school raised beds were occupied in 2018; however, the Southover beds have been rather neglected in the past few years; we will review the situation at the end of 2019 for some improvement. It isn't fair to the plot holders who, out of interest for the site, try to keep them in order. Having been fully occupied in 2017, there were four ordinary raised beds vacant in 2018. These were tended by plot holders with an allotment nearby or covered with plastic to keep them under control.

## **8. Bees 2018**

It was the best year we have had at Gordon Road for bees and honey production. Once the "Beast from the East" was over, the weather stayed fine right through to October. A small issue was the lack of water in the summer months when the bees were drinking water from the water troughs. Some anxiety was caused to the bee keepers when pesticide was sprayed around some of the troughs. Fortunately there were no long term effects and firm instructions not to spray any pesticide near water troughs were issued to all plot holders.

The honey taken off in July was exceptionally fine and the sales of Honey at the NGS day broke our record. At the end of July there was an outbreak of American Foul Brood within 5 miles of the allotments and 11 colonies had to be destroyed in an affected Apiary nearby. This virus is so potent that if detected in a colony the whole hive with all its content has to be destroyed. Fortunately the hives at Gordon Road were not affected but, as this virus can persist for 8 years, we have been asked to be vigilant when we inspect.

The hives were routinely medicated for Varroa at the beginning of September but, as the weather was so hot, the bees continued to bring in nectar and to produce honey. This honey could not be extracted to sell but the upside was that the bees had a good store of food for the winter.

Many thanks to Louis Zweig who has done sterling work establishing the Apiaries and implementing the protocols; she has now resigned as overall Apiary manager and Chris Ouseley has taken her place for 2019. Fortunately, she continues to keep bees on Apiary 2.

## **9. Wildlife Plot**

Volunteers are currently looking after the wildlife plot on an ad-hoc basis since Lesley resigned from this position. This is an important part of the allotment and our ethos in supporting local wildlife. Updates are no longer being placed on the website. We would like someone to come forward and help manage this invaluable amenity on our site. The apple trees need attention. Thanks to Eric Hess for his help in continuing to maintain the wildlife plot.

## **10. FHS Newsletter, Website, and other Social Media**

Thanks to Jo Cuttall for continuing to edit the Society Newsletter, The Grapevine, providing a very colourful and informative quarterly read. Thanks too to everyone who has contributed to this publication. Jo

welcomes any suggestions for articles from readers. Copies of the latest edition are available in the Green Room at Gordon Road; Winkworth Estate Agents print the hard copy of this for us and continue to support us and all of our events. Back copies can be found on the FHS website. In future it is intended to distribute the Grapevine with Mailchimp; this should be a more successful way of distributing the Newsletter.

Thanks to Judy Woollett who continues to manage the website. Felicity Nock continues to manage the Facebook account with input from Judy Woollett who posts the social events. The Twitter account is managed by Felicity Nock who is occasionally assisted by James Robbins and Lesley Ludlow who re-tweet related issues. The input to Social Media is quite complex but we encourage everyone to use it and to contribute to it. Please let Judy know if you have a garden related blog that you would like to link to our website.

## 11. Outings

In 2018 we had two well supported garden visits to Hidcote Manor and Kiftsgate Court gardens in June and to RHS Wisley in September. Both of these trips were well supported by our members and guests. We were blessed with good weather on both trips. Judy Woollett organised and wrote about the trip to Hidcote Manor and Kiftsgate Court in the Summer Grapevine; many thanks to her for organising this splendid outing. The Wisley outing coincided with the Flower Show and was a most enjoyable trip too; many thanks to June Brookes who organised this outing.

## 12. Events

### Plant Sale and National Garden Scheme (NGS) Day

The Plant Sale in May and the NGS Open Garden in August were again both very well attended. We raised about £4000 net at the Plant Sale to contribute to the Society funds. We donated £700 to the NGS charities from the proceeds of the entrance fee, raffle and the sale of produce; a smaller amount was collected for the Society. We are fortunate in having our own in-house recorder choir, led by Jennie Ableman, who performed at the NGS charity event. I extend a big vote of thanks to all who helped to make both of these events so successful.

### Other Events

### Community Meetings (formerly “Have Your Say Meetings”) 2018:

Have Your Say meetings held in April and July 2018 were reported in The Grapevine and the minutes for both meetings are on the website.

*The Summer Barbeque* was organised by June Brookes. Cooking the food was again expertly done by Stewart Wan and Jimmy Chan, who were helped by their wives Fung Wan and Jade Chan. Many savoury and sweet dishes also were contributed by those who attended.

*The Bonfire Party* was most successful and took place in November. Thanks to Tony Ingram who made his splendid pumpkin soup, baked potatoes, coleslaw and mulled wine; enjoyed by all whilst standing around the roaring bonfire.

*The Christmas Social* was organised by June Brookes and Claudine Fear.

Thanks to everyone who organised these and all who attended helping to make these events successful.

### 13. Membership and Benefits for Members

We had about 132 members 98 of which were plot holders

We continue to have a concessionary 10% discount off plants at Finchley Nurseries for all FHS members. Sutton's seeds give 50% discount on seeds and 15% off any other items when you order giving the unique FHS discount code. Through the National Society for Allotments and Leisure Gardens (NSALG) we can purchase seeds from Kings.

There are three tickets for two people each to visit any RHS garden with 30% off the entrance fee. Any member of the FHS can borrow these tickets from Chris Ouseley and return them to him once they have used them. These can be used for as many visits as required in the year of issue. Please do take advantage of them.

### 14. Our President

Catherine Schmitt has kindly agreed to remain as President of the FHS for the coming year. She continues to be a stalwart in organisation and giving invaluable advice on the plant sale, on horticulture in general and on perennials in particular.

### 15. Obituary

It was with great sadness that we heard about the passing of Austin Kirwan. He loved his allotment at Gordon Road with a passion and would be seen coming in with his faithful dog and tending his plot with minute detail. He would pop into the Green room to make his tea and always had a friendly word. He will be greatly missed. We extend our sincere condolences to his family.

### 16. Conclusion

#### Thanks

A big thank you to everyone who works so hard to keep all three allotment sites in good order and doing all the behind the scenes jobs that go unnoticed until they are not done! This will certainly be as important in the coming year as it has always been.

#### Forthcoming events

We are currently preparing for the Plant Sale taking place on the Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May and Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May (Bank Holiday weekend).

*Community Meetings* are planned for 2019; the first one should take place in April, dates to be announced. At least two weeks notice will be given, of the date, the time and the place, prior to a meeting, on the website, by email, in The Grapevine and on the notice boards on all three sites

We will continue to have our usual Social Events at intervals throughout the year, the Summer Barbeque, Bonfire Night Party and Christmas Social.

There is a proposed new event for 2019. In addition to our usual members' events at Gordon Road we propose an additional Craft Day to be held in the summer, the date to be announced.

#### Outings for 2019

We are delighted to announce that we will be going to Pashley Manor and Great Dixter on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019. This is already proving popular and places are going fast. We will also be planning a trip to an RHS garden

later in the year. All of our visits and events are announced on our website, by email, on the notice boards, and in the Newsletter, as and when they have been organised. We also post the events and outings of Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hampstead Horticultural Societies on our website, so please do check it regularly for interesting meetings and outings.

### **New Members**

We welcome any new members and hope they take advantage of and enjoy all the benefits that the FHS can provide. We need more people to volunteer for the Committees and to help with the day to day running of our Society to keep it vibrant and fresh. We welcome Kisharon School who have taken on a raised bed for 2019.

### **Final Statement**

We are entering our 78<sup>th</sup> year of gardening in Finchley. We continue to promote our Society and hope that we can further publicise our events and activities to the people of Finchley and contribute even more to the community promoting our ethos of friendliness to the environment and community spirit.