

2010 Audit

Our first audit for 2010 is on Sunday 23 May. The second is provisionally booked for Sunday September 19th. All plots must be accessible on that day. The site is looking better every year so this job is getting lighter. We were asked at the AGM to give some reminders. Here they are..

Care of plots Members must keep their plots in a reasonable state of cultivation and cultivated to at least 75% of the potential in a proper and husband-like manner. This is taken to mean that it is either in readiness for growing, well stocked with produce (relevant to the time of the year) or being made ready for crops or being prepared for the following season. Some plots are being reclaimed after previous neglect and one season's allowance is generally given for this.

Care of pathways and headlands All plots should have a pathway between them of minimum, of 2 to 2.5ft and managed headlands. Some of the paths got lost in clearing but they are a necessary buffer between plots. Traditionally **each plot-holder managed the path to the left when standing at the shed.** The main things are that members cooperate and keep paths between them managed. The headland is the bit outside your fence and up to the mowed path. **No adjacent plot boundaries can be planted so they shade light or take root space.**

What can be grown Plot holders may grow any kind of vegetables, flowers, soft fruit or herbs. No brambles, blackberries, large trees or very large shrubs are allowed on any allotment and we have a 5 ft fence/ hedging limit. Cultivated blackberries may be grown on headlands next to site paths or on plots 5 ft from boundaries. Fruit trees may be planted only with permission and on dwarf stock and managed at 10ft and at least 5 ft from any boundaries. This generally means: apples grown on rootstocks M27, M9 or M26; pears and quinces on rootstock Quince C; plums grown on rootstocks Pixy and Ferenain; and compact peach cultivars. Fruit trees and bushes should be sited only where they will not create an obstacle or nuisance to others as they grow. Due to pressure for growing land we now limit fruit trees to no more than 30% of a plot holder's total land (by area). Communal plots cannot have permanent planting like fruit trees and bushes. If plot holders do have permission to cultivate a number of trees they must ensure that the surrounding areas are kept weed free and cut to avoid seeding.

Weeds Plot holders must take steps to eradicate pernicious weeds - such as bindweed, thistles, ground elder, golden rod, michaelmas daisies and nettles – and ensure that they do not spread to other plots. Members must not cause a nuisance to other plot holders by allowing weeds to seed.

Rubbish. No rubbish may be dumped on any part of the Association's land. We commend recycling but plots cannot be used to store or accumulate material. The ground is for growing. Unwanted vegetable matter must be burnt or composted on your plot and other rubbish kept in sacks and put in the skip provided from time to time or taken to Redbridge. —Kitchen waste that attracts vermin— e.g. cooked food, meat, – should not be composted.

Wells Plot holders who have a well on their plot are responsible for the safe maintenance of it and for providing and maintaining a strong, raised well surround and cover. New wells may be dug but please notify the committee so we keep their positions logged for safety.

Buildings new or amended sheds, polytunnels, greenhouses must be within size guidelines, have written committee permission and be kept safely maintained.

- **Audits take place twice a year in May and September. We keep records and the audit committee consists of at least 5 committee members. All letters are agreed by the Committee. As the committee is elected annually all members have a chance to influence the management of the site by standing for election.** The main purpose of the audit is to allow all to grow fruit and vegetables successfully. Membership is conditional on keeping the rules and we are all dependent on one another. The holder of a plot which is falling below an acceptable standard is sent either a reminder letter or a further warning if this is not the first time or no action has been taken. The reminders are friendly reminders or query to see if there is a temporary problem. They will identify the problem. Further letters ask members to recognise and rectify problems and usually a time is given for action. For obvious reasons, less time is given during the growing season. All audit letters require action before the next audit to sustain membership. After 3 audit letters or where action is not taken members are issued a final warning.