

FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3
7.30 PM Tuesday 21st March 2017

Chairman's Report 2016

We are here again in the Finchley Lawn Tennis Club, Clubhouse at Brent Way by kind permission of the Tennis Club Committee.

All three sites have had a successful 2016.

1. Committees

The General Committee has met regularly throughout the year and a sub-committee has nearly completed a revision of the Plot Holders' Handbook. We hope to issue this later in the year.

The Allotments Committee has met several times in 2016. Many thanks to Philip Cuttell and Chris Ouseley who organised and installed a new kitchen in the new Tea Hut before the Plant Sale in May. This was deemed a great success by the ladies who organised the sales of tea and cakes to visitors both at the Plant Sale in May and the NGS Open Day in September. This improved facility on the Piggery will continue to be much appreciated in years to come.

New notice boards have been purchased for Gordon Road and for Brent Way as the old ones were no longer fit for purpose.

2. Grants

We have applied for a grant of £5000 from Barnet Council to complete the fencing project at Gordon Road. The plan is to extend the palisade fence along Dollis Road and around the corner of Gordon Road. Special thanks to Liz Thomson, Felicity Nock and Philip Cuttell preparing and presenting this application.

Liz Thomson, Felicity Nock and Philip Cuttell were successful in winning a grant of £10,000 from Tesco Bags of Help to provide safe access for the less able, including wheelchair users, to the Tea Hut on the Piggery from the main drive. A Facebook and a Twitter account were required by Tesco to promote the project so a Media Group was formed to publicise the project. This has been very successful and we hope that the Media Group will continue to thrive in order to publicise and promote our Society in every way. The work on the Piggery has started and should be completed by early April. Philip Cuttell has generously undertaken to add double door access to the Tea Hut for wheelchair access, he has already begun the project and it should also be completed by early April. Terry Burling is completing work to reinforce and recover the shelter on the Piggery, which was damaged in the storm earlier this year. We should be thinking of replacing this in future years when funds are available. Thanks to Philip, Terry and all the others involved for their continuing efforts to improve this most important facility for our community.

3. Projects

At Gordon Road, in this coming year, we would like to continue (as before stated) the palisade fence along Dollis Road if the grant is forthcoming from Barnet. We intend to replace the potting shed next to the large polytunnel as it is now beyond repair. A firm concrete foundation will be required as

FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3
7.30 PM Tuesday 21st March 2017

there is none there at present. The work will include a retaining wall and reinforcement to the path for vehicles that deliver wood chip to the site. We have had quotations for the work and intend to proceed after the Plant Sale. The tarmac is being further damaged by the lorries delivering compost to Gordon Road. We are looking into ways of repairing this as economically as possible. We would also like to run an electricity supply to the Log Cabin near the raised beds at Gordon Road to make it into a useable space for holding meetings and talks throughout the year for all Society Members. We will need to ask for estimates to carry out the extension of the existing electricity cables and will probably require further grant applications for money, eventually to carry out the work.

4. Accounts

Thanks to Liz who has again produced the accounts for independent examination. Her work as Treasurer this year has been invaluable and we are most grateful to her for all of her hard work and sound advice. We thank Jane Healy for examining the accounts and who we hope may agree to examine them next year.

5. Allotments Sites

Vacancies and waiting lists

There were very few vacant plots this year on any of the three sites. There are currently about 20 people on the combined waiting list. There are 2 vacant plots at Gordon Road and one at Nethercourt Avenue; these will be taken up by people on the waiting lists. There are no vacant plots at Brent Way.

Prizes

We won several prizes this year in the 2016 Barnet Allotment Site Competition. Gordon Road won best large allotment site in Barnet, Brent Way won the 2nd best small site and Nethercourt Avenue came third in this category, reversing last year's order. Fursby Avenue again won best small site, but we can't win everything. We also had 2nd best plot which was again awarded to Mrs Fung Wan.

Bees

The beekeepers at Gordon Road did not have the best of years as the spring was too cold and wet, so they got off to a very late start and only about 100 lbs of honey was harvested. The Bee Keepers have taken over a small unused plot on the other side of the Gordon Road site as an experiment and hope that this will be successful. Louis Zweig stays on as Apiary Manager.

6. Trading Hut and Deliveries

We continue to have deliveries of compost and woodchip to Gordon Road and this can be collected from Gordon Road by the plot holders at Nethercourt Avenue and Brent Way. The Trading Hut is available to all members of the FHS. We offer very good value compost and other horticultural products. Perennials are available for sale when the shop is open, on Sunday mornings, in spring and late summer. Our thanks go to both June Brookes and Helen Skelton for keeping the Trading

FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3
7.30 PM Tuesday 21st March 2017

Hut operational. We still need someone to take on the running of the Trading Hut. We are fortunate to have this excellent facility for all of our members. It is a great way to meet members of the Society, and is an opportunity to talk about and to provide for all of our gardening needs. Please do come forward if you feel you can help in any way in this activity

7. FHS Newsletter, Website, Facebook and Twitter (Media)

Thanks to Jo Cuttell for continuing to edit the Society Newsletter, The Grapevine, providing a very enjoyable quarterly read. We are always looking for people to write short articles for the Grapevine and Jo is always happy to have any suggestions from readers. Copies are available in the Green Room at Gordon Road; the hard copy of this is produced by Winkworth Estate Agents, who continue to support us and all of our events. Thanks to Judy Woollett who continues to manage the website. Judy Woollett and James Robbins have set up and manage the Facebook account with Felicity Nock. The Twitter account is managed by James Robbins who is ably assisted by Felicity Nock and Lesley Ludlow.

8. Survey

Lesley Ludlow organised a Survey of all of our members and there were over 40 respondents. It is important to take peoples' suggestions and opinions into account to take the Society forward.

9. 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 raised beds were occupied in 2016.

10. Outings

This year we had successful visits to West Dean in July and another to Wisley, coinciding with their Autumn Flower Show, in September. We are hoping to visit Hyde Hall and Beth Chatto's garden on Saturday 24th June this year. We will share this information with other local gardening and horticultural societies to boost our numbers. We continue to advertise our own trips and event and those of Hampstead Garden Suburb and Hampstead Horticultural Societies on our website, so please do check it regularly for interesting meetings and outings. We would like to have more suggestions from our members of gardens they think would be interesting to visit and any other events they would like us to put on. We announce all visits and events as and when they have been organised on the website, by email on the notice boards, and in the Newsletter.

11. Plant Sale and NGS Day

The Plant Sale in May and the NGS Open Garden in September were both very well attended. We again donated £700 to the NGS charities from the proceeds of the entrance fee, raffle and the sale of produce. We will open again for the NGS this September. A big vote of thanks to all who helped make both of these events so successful.

12. Other Benefits for Society Members

FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3
7.30 PM Tuesday 21st March 2017

The FHS is not only for the plot holders at our three sites but also for members who do not have plots.

We continue to have a concessionary 10% discount off plants at Finchley Nurseries for all FHS members.

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 Liz Thomson and return them to her 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.

Events open to all FHS members in 2016 were the summer barbeque, which was organised by June Brookes. Unfortunately, the bonfire party in November did not take place as the weather was unsuitable; however, thanks to Tony Ingram who had made the soup and baked the potatoes, we hope they did not all go to waste. The Christmas Social was again organised by June Brookes and me. Thanks to those who organised these and all who attended helping to make these events a great success.

13. Wild Life Plot

The wild life plot has been successfully tended by Ray Clarke for some years, but he has now given up his plot at Gordon Road and relinquished this responsibility to Lesley Ludlow. Lesley has had many good ideas to revive the plot and has, with the help of Eric Hess, Felicity Nock and James Robbins sorted out the pond, put in a second pond, planted some new native plants and pruned the fruit trees as well as tidied up the plot. Lesley has written new notices and information sheets for visitors, which will shortly be available in the Green Room and on the website. We are delighted to have Lesley's support for our important home for wildlife.

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

Sadly we lost a longstanding member of over 30 years this year, Ibrahim el Moutawakil who passed away after a long illness on Friday 13th of January this year. He will be missed by all of us who had the privilege to know him. We extend our sincere condolences to Janny and 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. Gordon Road Allotments have the honour of

FINCHLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY
76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FINCHLEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB LONDON N3
7.30 PM Tuesday 21st March 2017

being open for the NGS again on Sunday 10th September. We are currently preparing for the Plant Sale taking place on the Sunday 21st May and Sunday 28th May (Bank Holiday weekend).

Piggery opening

We are hoping to have a grand opening event to celebrate the completion of work on the Piggery. This is yet to be finalised but we hope that it will happen in the summer and we will be seeking volunteers from our members to provide entertainment.

New Members

We welcome our new members and hope they take advantage of and enjoy all the benefits that the FHS can provide. We would like 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.

Final Statement

We are entering our 77th year of gardening in Finchley. We continue to promote our Society and, with the benefit of the Media group, hope that we can further publicise our activities to the people of Finchley'