

May 2024 Newsletter

Best Kept Allotment 2024

Yes, it's that time of year again! The annual judging for Best Kept Competition will be taking place in June. A small panel of committee members from each site will judge all plots and select the best 10 plots from each site. These selected plots will then be put forward for final judging by independent judges in mid-July who will determine the best plot on each site. Each site winner will receive a prize of £25 voucher to be spent at the Members' Shop. Of these two, the plot gaining the most points will be declared the overall winner and the tenant awarded the Basil Byrant Cup.

Have a look at last year's winners for inspiration.



In addition, a separate independently judged competition will select two Best Newcomers. One from North Road and one from Clothall Road. These awards are for new tenants that started from 1 May 2023 – 30 April 2024. Each Best Newcomer will receive a prize of £10 voucher to be spent at the Members' Shop. The winner of the Clothall Road site will be awarded the Frank Conway Cup and the winner of the North Road site will be awarded the John Gray Cup.

The best newcomers' plots are below



Non-cultivation Inspections

It's that time of year again when we need to conduct checks on all plots, in accordance with the cultivation requirements that are set out in every plot-holder's Tenancy Agreement.

The process is designed to be supportive. i.e. to encourage everyone to actively cultivate their plots where possible. With this in mind, this year BALGA is introducing a 'cultivation improvement plan' for those who may be struggling to maintain their plots and who would welcome specific advice and guidance in order to meet the requirements within the Tenancy Agreement. As previously, BALGA will also take fully into account any genuine extenuating and/or exceptional circumstances - please note that it is helpful for tenants to inform us if this is the case. Please let any member of the committee know as soon as possible if there are factors influencing your ability to maintain your plot.

The criteria have been simplified for 2024 - there is one criterion as follows:

At least 75% of the plot should be in a good state of preparation and/or cultivation and the plot should be reasonably free from weeds and noxious plants

Checks will commence in late May and where appropriate, a written gentle reminder will be issued. Further checks will take place in late June, and again at the end of July. On rare occasions where there is no improvement and no mitigating circumstances, BALGA may unfortunately need to terminate the tenancy, in line with the tenancy agreement requirements. If you are on site when checks are being conducted, please come and chat with the team! **BALGA Committee**

Financial Statement

You will recall that during the recent BALGA AGM, we delegated the approval of the Financial Statement for 2022/2023 to the committee, as it was not ready in time for the meeting. I am pleased to inform you that this process has now been completed and the committee has decided to approve the financial statement and the audited accounts on 19 March 2024. The financial statement was sent to you by email.

Sad news

It is sad to announce the deaths of one current member and two former members of BALGA. Artie Broadbent was a long term tenant at Clothall Road site who recently had gradually withdrawn from his plot due to ill health. Artie's funeral has taken place. Stephen Collins was an Associate Member (non-plot holder), who served on our committee for several years until standing down due to ill health. His funeral has already taken place. We had just heard of the sudden death of Frank Foy also a past Associate Member (non-plot holder), who undertook some useful research for us on the history of Clothall Road site. His funeral has taken place as well Cards have been sent to the families each of them expressing condolences on behalf of BALGA. **Mick**



Members' Shop

The majority of potatoes have sold. However, there is a very limited number of varieties available at a reduced rate of £1.00 per kg. Potato fertiliser available (£2 per kilo).

There have been a number of new tenants recently. Why not get started with some potatoes, so at least you can have something to harvest this year?

Working Parties

A big thank you to the 19 members who joined one or more of three recent work parties on North Road site. The task was to clear and sort the vast amount of worthless items and structures that had been accumulated by a tenant on two half plots for which tenancies had been terminated by Balga under its Non Cultivation Policy. Large amounts of poor condition wood were burnt and the remainder sorted into a huge pile of general waste and a smaller one of scrap metal. The waste was removed by a licensed contractor to be legally disposed of with the metal taken separately. This cost Balga £1656 incl VAT - money that could otherwise have been spent for the benefit of members. Without the commendable efforts of those volunteering jointly giving over 50 hours of their time, and the ability to safely burn the wood on site, this cost would have been considerably greater.

A clearance of any rubbish dumped on either site is obviously a costly process if Balga has to remove it.

Mick Camp (Chairman)



New members and Plot Vacancies

Clothall Road

Clothall Road is fully tenanted

North Road

3 x half plots

3x raised beds

We are continuing to let plots in strict order of the waiting list, which currently stands at over 40 people. Our total membership is now 350 members!

We still have some raised beds at North Road, please email me if you know any who would be interested.

Manure and Ace of Herts

Manure and Ace of Herts has been delivered to both sites. If you still need to make a payment, please use the following details:

Account Name: BALGA Trading

Sort Code: 30-94-30

Account Number: 01618621

No pay, no more delivery

Phil's plants

Phil again grew tomato, pepper and aubergine plants for the shop, and has sold 99 so far. All his tomatoes have been sold, but he has more aubergine and pepper plants, and some celeriac plants which should be in the shop for the next few weeks.



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Thank you for reading, *Miles*

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Members' Group



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