

Alers Road Leisure Gardens Association Spring Newsletter – February 2021

Chairman:	Adrian Hawthorne	Plots 94B/99
Secretary/Treasurer:	John Hollands	Plots 62/110

Message from our Chairman – I hope everyone has been keeping safe and well. It is unlikely that we will be able to hold our AGM in early April, so maybe in September, if restrictions allow.

I would like to welcome Debra and Richard Collins to the committee. Debra is to take on the role of Secretary from John Hollands, whilst John will continue in his role as Treasurer. This will be effective from 1 March. I am sure everyone will give Debra and Richard their full support.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank John for his many years of service as Secretary and I am sure we are all appreciative of his hard work and endeavours over the years. Luckily for us he will still be on hand on the committee and in his Horticultural Society role in the site shop.

Debra Collins Our New Secretary – I just want to say hi to everyone and introduce myself to people who do not know me. I am happy to take on the role of Secretary for the association, and thank John for his time explaining the duties and doing a very efficient handover as well, so hopefully things will continue to run smoothly. I am grateful John will still be available for me to ask for help and advice.

I currently still work full time for the NHS, my husband Richard has offered to help me and support me in the role of Secretary and is therefore joining the committee. Richard has had an allotment on the site for about 10 years now, we took a second plot for me about 4 years ago. We both enjoy working on the plots and seeing the vegetable and fruit grow. Our family certainly enjoy eating all our crops. I look forward to meeting more members at meetings and around the site.

Annual General Meeting – As you are aware we didn't hold an AGM last year due to the lock-down, and as the situation is currently we are not planning an AGM in March/April as we normally would. Last year we issued notes on the previous year's activities along with a copy of the Annual Accounts. I suggest we do the same again this year to ensure ploholders are kept in touch with the Association's situation. We kindly ask that the existing Committee Members continue in their role until we are able to hold an AGM – hopefully in the Autumn.

Association's Email – We making changes to the Association's email. Please see the attached document for the details.

Cultivation Surveys – As I'm sure you are aware as part of our Licence Agreement with Bexley Council we are obliged to carryout regular Cultivation Surveys. This is where an inspection of all plots is made to ensure that ploholders are meeting the level of Cultivation as required by their Tenancy Agreement. Other things are also taken into consideration during the survey such as inappropriate items on the plot, the maintenance of paths and general

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tidiness. Failure meet the cultivation requirements of the Tenancy Agreement may lead to the tenancy being terminated. Due to the Covid situation, no surveys were undertaken during 2020 as it was appreciated that although the site was open throughout, some vulnerable ploholders were advised to stay at home. Bexley Council have now issued a statement indicating that the Covid situation should not affect the cultivation of plots:

“Bexley Council fully appreciates that Covid19 has affected a lot of people in many ways. At the initial lockdown in March 2020 the Government recognised (and still does) that allotment gardening is an ideal opportunity to socially distance, exercise, improve one’s mental and physical wellbeing as well as utilising the land for its purpose of growing fresh fruit and vegetables.”

As such a Cultivation Survey will be undertaken during **Week Commencing 22nd March**. Previous Newsletters have asked any ploholder who feels they would not be able to achieve the required level of cultivation to contact the Committee. No ploholder has been in contact, so it is assumed everyone is striving to ensure their plot is within the Tenancy Agreement cultivation limits.

Main Gate – Should be locked at all times except Sunday AM. However, there are other times when the gate does need to remain open – Deliveries to the Shop; Delivery of Machinery; Visitors to site. If this is the case there will be a notice on the gate asking for the gates to be left open. If this is place please leave the gates open – they will be closed when the delivery has been completed.

Water Supply – As you’re aware we have had problems with leaking Water Tanks, and efforts are being made to correct these problems while the site water supply is turned off. Once the supply is turned on, please be extra vigilant and report any apparent leaks or dampness around the tanks to a Committee member. As always, please make sure you collect any rainfall by fitting guttering and water butts to any structure on the plot. If you haven’t already – you’ll be surprised by how much water can be collected from a relatively small area. We are striving to address the perennial problem of shortage of water, particularly at the top of the site. This has been hampered by the unavailability of new galvanised water tanks. We are exploring other options but it’s unlikely that proposed changes will be in place before the water is turned back on.

Bonfires – Are banned from 31st March. Please ensure you don’t light fires after this date. May I remind you that there are Bonfire Guidelines that are posted on the Website and on the Notice Board. Do have respect for our neighbours and follow the guidelines.

Finally –. This is my last Newsletter before I hand over to Debra, our new Secretary. I’ll ensure that Debra gets full support in her new role as I’m sure everyone else will. Let’s hope that Spring blooms soon and we can start to enjoy the growing season.

Best Regards *John*