

## **Roehampton Garden Society**

### **AGM November 2021**

#### **Chair's Report**

Last year we were unable to have a real AGM so were not able to welcome our new President, Fleur Anderson to our meeting. This year she will be with us and has kindly agreed to present the prizes. It has been lovely to see her at both the Summer and Autumn shows meeting members and gamely participating in the auctions.

What has the RGS achieved over the last year? The communal area on site 3 is now fully operational and used a lot. We had an official opening ceremony on 7<sup>th</sup> August with Valerie Minifie cutting the ribbon. She knew Sonia Sawyer, whose legacy to the RGS made the project possible. She also knew Daphne Dare who gave us money to install the toilets on both sites. Valerie was able to give us some insight into the lives of these two generous ladies. Kate Hunt also knew Sonia and Daphne so was able to add to the biographies which she shared with those at the party. It was a very happy event celebrating the rewards of monetary donations, as well as all the time members have given, together with their expertise. Vivien Fowler, who worked as a professional designer, not only conceptualised the project but has vigilantly continued to maintain the area keeping it looking so lovely. She also did most of the horrible job of washing the stone chippings - it is a wet, heavy unpleasant job! The lovely result is there for all to see and such a wonderful facility to be able to enjoy. Jackie Savage has also worked tirelessly to source materials and furnishings and to ensure the work was done. Greg Willcox has done a lot of the construction work, in particular the raised beds using old pallets, and the lovely cushions were made by Sylvia Willcox. We all owe a big thank you to these people.

Now we have power on site 3 we have our own shredder in its own posh shed alongside the new trading sheds. John Ireland has been training site 3 plot holders on its use so we are hoping there will be less green waste to be taken at the November rubbish collection. Many thanks to John for agreeing to do so many Sunday training sessions. Many thanks also to Charles Held and his

merry band of volunteers, Gerrard Ryan and Mick Mosol, who laid the concrete base for the sheds. Charles also led the volunteers laying the stone pathway down to the communal shed.

Heather Harrison has continued to tend and beautify the pathway to the back gate on site 3. She has put down some gravel to make the path less slippery and therefore safer as well as planting the beds either side of the pathway to make a charming area. Many thanks to Heather.

The communal area on site 2 is now fully functional as well. The shed was repaired by Alan Strowger so the floor and walls are good and solid now. It was painted and prettied up by Carol Martinez and Georgina O'Reilly. Lee Fennel made the raised beds, again from pallets, minimising costs as well as reusing good timber. With power going into the shed it is now possible to make a cuppa whenever you like. Many thanks to all those who have contributed to making the communal area so pleasant. There have been improvements around the back of the toilet shed mainly done by Catherine Maunsell-Bower, creating a pathway where there was previously just a heap of rubbish rotting the shed.

The new water system on site 3 was finally connected up by Thames Water in April this year. It is fully operational and the old system decommissioned. It is wonderful to have so many more water points and generous dipping tanks that fill automatically. Thank you Patrick Crawford for all the chasing up this project involved and to the Council for funding the upgrade.

What about plans for next year? Patrick Crawford has led a small team looking to have a new lease with the Council that makes RGS independent. The plan is for us to have a 30 year full repairing lease at a peppercorn rent. Catherine Maunsell-Bower has been researching the best corporate charity structure that would suit RGS managing the allotments. There has been new legislation that allows Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies (CCBS) to be formed. It specifically mentions allotments as being a suitable society. Thank you Catherine for looking into this and other options too.

A change has been drafted in the 'Offering Plots to let' document. The role

and process for managing Plot Holder Partners (PHPs) has been reviewed by the Site Secretaries and Chair. There was a concern that there may be some plots exclusively being worked by a PHP and there may be an expectation that the PHP may inherit the plot thus circumventing the waiting list. The suggested wording to address this issue is presented as an addendum to this report.

We have only one change with the committee this year. During the summer Brenna Lattimore and family returned to her home country, Canada. Thanks to her for making a contribution to the committee, in particular for organising the 'Plant Walk and Talk' event this year. 20 members joined Roy Vickery, a very knowledgeable botanist, who gave a lot of insight into old folk lore about weeds (weeds - what weeds!) he found on site 2. We wish Brenna all the best to her and her family.

The RGS is very fortunate in having such a stable and able committee who generously give their time. It is very good indeed to Chair such a competent, supportive and excellent team. Nothing would happen without them. The site secretaries do a demanding job as does Carol Martinez who organises the shows and puts the Bulletins together. Jean Crawford manages the RGS website of which we can be very proud. The membership list is fastidiously kept by Robert Linton and Dorcas Johnson has kept our accounts immaculately and ensured the bills were paid. The stores are stocked and managed by Gill Tamsett, Greg Willcox and Jackie Savage. Waiting for deliveries that never arrive has been a huge trial this year, but somehow the stores have been stocked. Jackie has managed the waiting list and RGS email in her usual super responsive and organised way. I owe her a personal big 'thank you' as she has continued to be a stalwart support to me in her role as Vice Chair. We all owe a huge thank you to all the committee members. However, it is important not to forget that jobs crop up from time to time and given that we have such an amazing array of able, resourceful members, jobs get done and problems are solved. This all makes for a very strong community which can aspire to continue to develop with a bonding passion for gardening and enjoying our wonderful allotments.

**Helen Finch**

**November 2021**

## **Addendum**

### **Draft change to the 'Offering Plots to Let' guidance document.**

The role and process for managing Plot Holder Partners (PHPs) has been reviewed by the Site Secretaries and Chair. There was a concern that there may be some plots exclusively being worked by a PHP and there may be an expectation that the PHP may inherit the plot thus circumventing the waiting list. The following wording addresses these problems:

The purpose of a PHP is to assist/support a plot holder (tenant). A tenant must not use a PHP to exclusively cultivate their plot long term i.e. sub let it. A PHP must be an Associate member or Member of RGS.

If The PHP does not share the same household as the Plot Holder he/she must be on the Primary Waiting List and therefore resident in Wandsworth. A PHP has to work their way up the waiting list and will not be permitted to inherit the plot which they partner until they reach the top of the list.