

RAA Newsletter August 2022



Dear Member,

Fire risk due to recent weather conditions

The severe drought and heatwave has put the Rosendale site at a much higher risk of fire than normal. The trees, bushes, sheds and patches of long grass could all contribute to a very serious fire incident. The recent lower temperatures and rainfall may mean that the worst is over ... but it is also quite possible that the dry conditions and fire risk could persist for weeks if not months. To reduce the risk of a serious fire, **can all members and their visitors** please exercise extreme caution and preferably avoid lighting BBQs or candles or lighting any other naked flame on site.

New committee since May 2022

Chair, Louisa Allen; Vice Chair, Adrian Audsley; Treasurer, Rumiya Sharikova; Secretary, Neill Angier; Membership Officers, Pek Choo, Kerima Mohideen; Lettings Officer, Mark Edel-Hunt; Salesforce Officer, Brigid Constantine; Committee member, Sandra Long. Please see photos of these officers displayed on the RAA noticeboard at the main entrance.

RAA stores news

Now back in stock: Strulch, manure (bagged & loose), SylvaGrow peat-free compost, loose compost, 8' & 6' canes, Tomarite. We also have some small bags of sheep's wool (to use as a slug deterrent) and plenty of green manure seeds to sow now. We're only open on Sundays (10.30-12.30) during August.

BBQ Saturday - 4th September mid-day to 6pm

It's been two years since we had our last annual BBQ. Providing there are no further changes due to Covid we will once again hold our annual get-together. We need six volunteers to help us on the day, organise the food preparation, setting up and clearing up. Please contact Pek and Kerima on RAAmembership@gmail.com if you can help.

Surveys – A full plot survey is taking place at the end of September.

Details of the full survey are to follow. However, there will be a focus on safety, both on plots and on the paths around plots. Please help us with the survey process and the survey findings. We need to make the site much safer and more accessible for plot holders, volunteers and visitors.

Annual rent taking - Saturday 1st October to Friday 22nd October

The preferred method will be by online BACS payment with the option of paying by post with a cheque or in person by cash or cheque on a couple of dates to be confirmed. We will contact you by email or post in September with further instructions. Rents must be paid by 31st October to ensure access to the site. If your email has changed since last year, please let us know by emailing brigid.constantine@gmail.com

Rent charges: Whole plot - **£100**; 1¼ plot - **£125**; ¾ plot - **£75**; ½ plot - **£50**; ¼ and T plots - **£25**. Voluntary additional donation **£10**.

If you are likely to have difficulty with paying the full amount in a single instalment, please contact Brigid.

Rent increase explained

The committee has decided that rents need to be increased this year owing to a reduction in income and an increase in expenditure, meaning that this year, for the first time in many years, our income will not cover expenditure. The shortfall this year is likely to be £16,000.

During the last two years, COVID restrictions have meant that our income has reduced substantially as the Community Building could not be let out in the usual way. The committee intends to employ a part-time admin assistant with the aim of maximising the potential income from hall hire, but this will take time to build on the previous level of lets.

Conversely, expenditure on essential maintenance and improvements to the site has increased substantially. These improvements include replacement of the Peabody gate and fencing to improve security; installation of an additional water main to remedy water supply issues at the top of the site; removal of extensive asbestos across the site; tree surgery required by Dulwich Estate's arboriculture consultant; and repairs to dangerous paths. The total amount for site maintenance and improvements in 2020-21 was £6,145. To date in the current year, it is £17,444.

The RAA has built up considerable reserves, which have been drawn on to cover the gap between income and expenditure for the current year. However, there are a number of projects to maintain and improve the site which will need to be paid for largely from reserves in the coming years.

These include improvement to the drainage along the bottom path (£10K); the replacement of the old community hut with a proper workshop to provide a safe and secure space for tool maintenance and repairs (£20K); replacement of the main gates (due to subsidence) (£10K); safety improvements to the Lovelace gates and paths (£10K); further safety improvements to paths (£10K); replacing the deep-water tanks with safer alternatives (£5K); and a new computer for the community hall. In addition, around £8K of our reserves are already ring-fenced against a substantial increase in our rent to Dulwich Estate and we need to keep an amount to cover unexpected contingencies, including inflation.

Our current lease with Dulwich Estate will end in 2025. We cannot be sure that the current lease will be renewed on its current terms and conditions, but we do know that we need to continue to maintain the safety and structure of the site, and without this due diligence, there is no certainty that our lease will

actually be renewed. It will also not be clear until much closer to the time of lease renewal, what rent Dulwich Estate will set.

New Administration Officer

The committee are in the process of preparing a recruitment drive to fill this part-time post. If you would like an informal chat to discuss this position, please contact louisaallen100@aol.com.

Useful links and reminders

Peabody Gate opening times: to bring in/remove larger heavier items. The gate is opened 10am to 12pm on the 1st and 2nd Saturdays each month and the 3rd Thursday. If you want to bring in / remove heavier items on other dates, there is a £10.00 fee for special openings.

Facebook: The Rosendale group is just for our plot-holders and sharers. So, to join go to Rosendale Allotment Association and click the 'Join Group' button.

Dung Ho! is a WhatsApp group to let RAA members know when manure has been delivered to the Peabody Gate. Deliveries are unpredictable so the idea is that whoever spots the delivery first lets others know about it through the app. If you would like to join this group, please reply to this newsletter email.

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