

Worthing and District Allotment and Gardens Association 2009 Secretary's Report

The popularity of allotments in Worthing has continued to increase over the past twelve months. Currently there are 986 allotments in the Borough of Worthing, with 99.5% occupancy according to Continental Landscapes who manage the eight sites in Worthing on behalf of the Council. The length of the waiting lists for allotments in Worthing varies from site to site, but on average the current wait for an allotment in Worthing is in excess of two years. Throughout 2009 the association has highlighted at various meetings with the Council the need for more allotments in Worthing, and whilst we acknowledge suitable land in the Borough is difficult to find, we will continue to seek ways in which to make available new allotments and to reduce the waiting list.

This time last year allotment rents were high on the agenda. I am pleased to report that this year the proposed rent increase is relatively small, around 1.5% I believe. The Worthing Borough Council rules and conditions governing the allotments are due to be re-issued early in 2010. The new rules have been a very long time coming, almost ten years so I understand. The association has yet to see a final copy of the new rules, therefore it would be unfair of me to comment, but I would add that the new rules have been discussed on numerous occasions and a good number of our comments and concerns have been addressed. It is also worth my mentioning that all tenants wishing to continue their tenancy in 2010 will be required to sign a new agreement with Worthing Borough Council.

The association currently has just ^{over} under 600 members, which is our highest for a number of years. Our membership secretary, Ken Willo, has now computerised our membership lists and revamped your membership renewal form to include additional information. Ken and I would like to take this opportunity to assure all members that the information held by the association is held securely and meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

All three of the association's stores/shops have operated profitably throughout 2009, and I would like to express the associations thanks to Peter Everett who has worked tirelessly all year in the background to keep all the stores well stocked. On the association's behalf, I would also like to thank both Brian Grumbell (Chesswood), Ian Dunster (West Tarring) and all the helpers who man the stores at weekends. I think it is worth repeating that these stores are the association's main source of income and therefore I would urge all members to support the stores/shops whenever possible.

It never ceases to amaze me the sheer hard work and dedication put in by everyone involved in staging horticultural shows. Our show is no different from many others where there is a small band of helpers who, under Jack Powis' guidance, work tirelessly each year to put on the show, but unfortunately it is the same old faces, and for the show to prosper in future years we need to encourage new volunteers to get involved. This year the Autumn Show was another great success, and our thanks go to everyone who helped both before and on the day, and to those who made cakes for our cake stall.

Our major social function of the year was the Annual Dinner held at the Windsor Hotel in February. There was a good turnout and our thanks go to Jack Powis and Ken Willo who organised the night. The evening included an entertaining quiz and a raffle, which were a great success. Please note next year's Annual Dinner is to be held on Friday 19th February 2010, tickets available from Ken. Trips to Wisley and Ford Waste Water Treatment Works were also organised during the year and well supported.

The Association's web site continues to go from strength to strength. John Nutt is our very able website guru. The website itself is excellent and we have had some very positive feedback from a number of allotment holders. Do take a look if you have access to a computer - www.worthingallotments.co.uk All the newsletters are on the website plus photos and lots of other information.

The Plotholder newsletter seems to be as popular as ever. Dennis Dixon took over as editor of the Plotholder at last years AGM and has done an excellent job during 2009. This year we printed six editions of the Plotholder, all of which were full of useful information and tips for your allotments. Our thanks must go to Margot Hollingdale and her team of helpers who distribute the newsletter. Don't forget if anyone has any items for the newsletters, please pass them on to our editor, Dennis, for inclusion in the next Plotholder.

Finally, I would express my sincere thanks to all those that have helped me during the past year.

Peter Webb

Honorary Secretary
Worthing and District Allotment and Gardens Association