

## **IMPROVEMENTS AT BURNSIDE AND VINERY ROAD 2011-19**

*This is a summary of a document sent to the City Council in summer 2019. It is an update on all the changes and improvements at Burnside and Vinery which have taken place over recent years, thanks to the dedication of the site managers, the joint committee, and volunteers on both sites.*

### **Administrative**

- Growing waiting lists are being managed, partly by reducing plot size allocated to newcomers
- Site maps are kept up to date and have been digitized
- Regular site surveys take place at both sites
- The Society now has an online bank account to simplify payments
- There are noticeboards at both sites to inform tenants of events etc
- Our new and improved website, launched in 2016, is always up to date with relevant dates, information, documents, hints and tips, and photographs of events
- The constitution and rules have been brought up to date in the last year

### **Development Activities**

- Composting toilets have been installed at both sites; at Vinery in 2014, and at Burnside in 2017
- Volunteering days, which regularly attract about 10% of ploholders, keep both sites in good order. A number of individuals also volunteer on a regular basis to cut grass, weed, and clean the toilets
- Substantial work has gone into removing rubbish, derelict sheds, asbestos, overgrown trees etc from both sites, much of this undertaken by the site managers and volunteers
- The number of water troughs has been increased on both sites; leaks have been repaired; and the troughs are kept clean and in good order
- Both sites host small libraries of books about fruit and veg growing for tenants to borrow
- Security at both sites has been improved, with improved gates and locks
- The Burnside Store, which is run by volunteers and open to tenants from both sites, now has much improved electrical services and lighting
- The Trevor Taylor Pavilion at Vinery was rededicated in March 2019 with a blue plaque honouring Trevor's service to the Society
- Vinery ploholders have created a series of videos to encourage less experienced tenants [these are on the website]

### **Sustainability and Biodiversity:**

- Many tons of soil improver have been brought onto both sites in recent years
- Customised incinerators – 'Burn Bins' – have been installed on both sites for the safe and quick disposal of non-compostable plant waste

- Wood chips are regularly sourced from the cutting back of trees and are available to tenants for free at both sites as a mulch, for pathways etc
- Both sites allow access for surveys of flora and fauna, such as a student survey of amphibians and reptiles at Burnside and a recent Cambridge Natural History Society survey of flora at Vinery
- Vinery has a communal composting facility
- Burnside has a community orchard with heritage varieties of apples and pears; and three beekeepers keep hives in a woodland area of Burnside

### **Community Support**

- At Burnside a plot is let to a community group for adults with special needs
- The Friends of Cherry Hinton Brook house their tools in the Burnside Store
- At Vinery a plot is let for organised activities for the children of the school next door

### **Social activities**

- Annual bbqs and summer parties are held at both sites
- Kitchen facilities in the Vinery Pavilion allow tenants to make themselves refreshments
- At the Burnside Store, refreshments are available during Store opening hours and on volunteering days
- Burnside has a picnic area with upcycled furniture for general use and for use at social events;
- Regular gatherings are held for the children of Burnside tenants to encourage friendship and interest in gardening matters

Penny Henderson, Chair, July 2019