

Bill and Iris brave a bitter east wind on a sunny February day to get on with some chores on their plot



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July shock! Rethink needed!

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Poor's Land Trustees

News from our land lord

It is Dis

RESCUE

Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th March is R.E.S.C.U.E. This is the annual clear-up weekend. We expect two skips to arrive on Friday. One will go in the car-park and one on the Polsted Rd track. You can use them as soon as they arrive. Surplus junk (broken glass, etc.) left by the skips on Saturday and Sunday morning will be taken away by extra RBC dustcart visits.

Make use of this once a year opportunity. You can have a good tidy up with minimum hassle. The clean-up is important in our efforts to keep our site tidy.

Please don't use the skips for stuff that costs extra for disposal. For example asbestos sheets or electric goods. If these get hidden in the skip RBC get fined and we may never get free skips again.

Please be really careful to make sure the skips are not left too full **after Sunday lunch time**

Hosepipe bans?

We escaped a ban last year, but the omens are not good. Please plan now to keep on growing even if we get a ban. Ideas include:

- Collecting all the rainwater from your shed roofs with water butts
- Enrich the soil with water-retaining compost and manure.
- Cover the soil with water-retaining mulch (surface stones, straw, plastic or newspaper help)
- Study your plot, if you have some waterlogged areas, use them for thirsty crops.

What can you suggest?

Grass Cutting

The committee are looking for quotes to cut the major paths. Peter Andrews did an excellent job last year, but others are welcome to tender. Peter will not be offended. If you are interested in doing the job once per month (April-Sept) please contact John Kirton or Jenny Cottee (9452692) asap. You need to have a mower, and possibly a strimmer.

Plot Holders Committee 2005/2006

Chair	David Griffiths	PB10	9421141			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasure	Richard Scott	PD2	9421900			
Committee	William Macphee	AA20	Bob Marshall	PB3	Gill Mills	PC9
	John Kirton	PA3	Richard Buckingham	AB11	Ken Phillips	AB14
	John Carpenter	AA19			Kim Pierpoint	AB18

Seasonal Reminders Finance

We are just coming up to a really busy time: lots of things will need sowing when the soil warms up in March or April.

Remember to keep sowing for succession so you have a choice of veg. all year round. Many of us are trying to remember this since there is no longer the easy way to deal with gluts at the Farmers Market.

Collins in Pangbourne or the White House Nursery at Aldermaston (54 varieties) have been recommended in the past for seed potatoes. They offer good quality at reasonable prices.

No Weeding

Take a look at plot AA20 or ask William and Joan Macphee how to stop weeding and still grow excellent crops. They have been using woven plastic mesh (and lots of muck) for years. They plant through holes in the mesh and do no hoeing or weeding. It works.

Free Chips

Help yourself to the chippings in the car-park. Chips are good for mopping up muddy paths. They can be used as a mulch as long you top up the Nitrogen. You might also keep it to make compost for acid loving plants like blueberries.

Farmyard Manure

Manure is good for soil. Mrs Drayton 9572379, and Tim Metcalffe 9428001 both deliver well-rotted muck (check price when you phone). There are also several stables locally which will let you come to bag up some muck and take it away for free-but this may need stacking for some time to rot down.

Waiting List

There are roughly ten families on the list. It is sad to see people give up their plots, perhaps as circumstances change, but it keeps the queue moving. We expect most on the list to get plots by the winter. If you know anyone who wants a plot, tell them to contact Jenny to get their name down asap. Lots of our applicants are making contact through the website.

Your committee put almost all we have (£7,500) away in a high yield six month deposit bond in January. Now we have packed up the Farmers' market, we hope to be able to live off the interest from this. Modestly supplemented by other fundraising activities, for example, Tilehurst Village Show.)

Tilehurst Village Show

The organisers of Tilehurst Village Show are breaking with tradition. This year it will be on **15th July** (not June as usual, due to some football events abroad) Our committee are relying sales from our stall at the show to fill gaps in our budget. We will need to re-think. The usual stand-by of runner bean and tomato plants will not sell that late. We hope to sell herb plants-mostly ordinary ones like mint, and parsley but exotics too.

Please think what you can raise for sale at this time, we aim to raise £100 from our stall; this will be quite tricky. If you have any brain waves please pass them on.



Chipped Xmas Trees

Health and Safety

After the recent inspections Mr Jenks remarked that the site is in reasonable good order. There are some minor issues with uneven paths, and of course all the broken greenhouse glass is worrying (particularly to the owner whose property has been damaged) but generally all well looked after and the land is well worked.

Site Security

Police advice remains to keep property safely locked away/out of sight and avoid using glass for greenhouses. We can't keep offenders out due to the many holes in the boundary fences, so must use other means to make life difficult for anti-social nuisances.

News from the Trustees of the Tilehurst Poor's land Charity which owns your allotment garden.

1. **Gates.** Quotations are being sought for repairing and resiting the Armour Hill gate, to make access easier. The aim is to keep this and the Polsted Rd. vehicular gates locked, but as you know, allotment holders may have a key for a returnable deposit. Good notice will be given before the Armour Hill gate is locked. There are no plans to lock pedestrian gates at present. This matter may be discussed at the Society's A.G.M.

2. **The Trustees** are proposing a revision of the tenancy agreement. The major changes are likely to be:

a) "Tenants shall be mindful of the health and safety of themselves and others, and keep to any health and safety guidelines or instructions..."

b) Animals may no longer be kept on the sites, and dogs, except guide dogs, may not be brought onto the sites.

3. **Tenants** are reminded that they should:

a) Keep their plot and the surrounding area tidy, with paths clear.

b) Number their allotments.

c) Report theft from or damage on the sites to the Charity's representative (through the Society's officers, if convenient).

Oliver Jenks 3 February 2006

Web Site

Allotment news is on the web site. The minutes of committee meetings are also there. If you have ideas about extra pages, send a message Talking of time, please be patient. It takes a bit of time for the Dig It to come on screen. Wait, it will arrive eventually.

Water

Bob Marshall is i/c turning on the water when the danger from frost has passed. Please be patient-speak to a committee member to pass on any requests. On no account turn on the water yourself.

