

Melissa and Chris picking caterpillars off their cabbages

Emergency Contacts

Water
 Polsted Rd supply: Mark Digweed
 52 Armour Hill 0791 9166700
 Armour Hill supply: Rod Mills
 5 Wendover Way 0778 9765652

Vandalism
 RBC Antisocial Behaviour line:
 0845 605 2222
 POLICE for EVERY incident:
 0845 8 505 505

Call 999 for trouble in progress
 The landlord's agent, Oliver Jenks,
 can be contacted On 9428186

AGM 7:30pm Thurs 2nd Oct
 Tilehurst Village Hall,
 Victoria Road.

All plot-holders from both sites and all on the waiting list are very welcome at our AGM. Please come, talk about how things are going and give a steer to future plans. We sit in a circle; everyone has a chance to speak. There is a raffle and an interval with refreshments; you can pay your rent, get a gate-key, and chat with friends.

It's Dis

Chairman's report

This has been a year of consolidation following the success of Keep On Gardening in 2007, which continues to be fully occupied and giving pleasure to many.

I am pleased to report that, with very few exceptions, every plot-holder has made a determined effort to cultivate their patch and heed the simple but necessary guidelines regarding health and safety. I thank you for your cooperation, but we cannot rest on our onions – when over 40 applicants are still waiting to join.

Security has been improved so there is less vandalism but criminal dumping of rubbish by non-tenants still gives us cause for concern. Please be vigilant.

Our finances are in good order mainly due to record income from the Tilehurst Show; our thanks are due to Ken Phillips, treasurer, and Julia Cottee acting as honorary auditor for the excellent results printed elsewhere in this news letter.

I have enjoyed being your Chairman of course, made many new friends, but most of all been impressed both individually and collectively by your committee. They, like myself, are volunteers who give tirelessly of their time and continue to suggest and implement new ideas for the benefit of us all. Finally I thank especially your Secretary, Jenny Cottee, without whom the society would be lacking in both expertise and common sense, and in conjunction with David Griffiths, the Editor, produces our regular newsletter which is widely read.

Outgoing Plot Holders Committee 2007/2008

Note: All the committee positions are up for election every year. We need nominations, there will be a chance to step forward during the interval

Chair	John Butt	AA1a	9421141			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasurer	Ken Phillips	AB14			Kate Jones	AB9a
Committee	William Macphee	AA20	Wendy Levey	AB5a	Ross Drean	AB22
	David Griffiths	PB10	Richard		Alan Clark	PD2
	Colin Robinson	AA20	Buckingham	AB11	Mick Geater	CH

Paying your rent

The Charity sent this Dig It enclosed with your rent letter. Your rent should be paid at the beginning of October. You can pay in three ways:

- by post,
- in person at the AGM (2nd October)
- on the main allotment site in the morning of Saturday 4th October (check your rent letter for the time).

The charity will be increasing the rent next year. Here is a summary:

	Due 30 Sep 2008	Due 30 Sep 2009
Full plot	£36	£40
Full plot - reduced	£26	£28
Half plot	£21	£24
Half plot - reduced	£16	£18
KOG bed	£10	£10
KOG bed - reduced	£9	£10

Reduced rates only apply to people living in Reading Borough (RG30) or the Parishes of Holybrook, Theale or Tilehurst. Eligible tenants are those whose main income is from State Benefits or Pension. The reduced rate is for one plot, any more will be charged at the full rate.

Please pay promptly, or let Oliver know if you will be stopping, don't leave him guessing. We want all plots let quickly so weeds don't take over before a new tenant can get cracking.

If you are finding the work a bit much you could drop down to half a plot. Many people find it is a good way of keeping on a hobby that is becoming burdensome. Please do not let land lie fallow 'just in case'; this can cause nuisance to others and the land could be better used.

Any Questions?

Questions for the Trustees to answer at the AGM must be handed in before the meeting. Please give them to Jenny to pass on, or hand directly to Oliver Jenks.



This news letter was prepared by the plot holders committee.
Web site: www.reading-city.net/tilehurstallotments/

TILEHURST ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 2 October 2008 7.30-9.00pm

Tilehurst Village Hall, Victoria Road

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introduction** John Butt
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of AGM (27 Sept 2007)**
3. **Report from the Chair** John Butt
4. **Treasurers Report** Ken Phillips Discussion about financial issues and accounts for year ending 30th June 2008.
5. **Reports from the Charity** Oliver Jenks

Interval (Tea and a chance to chat or pay your rent)

6. **Discussion** of Site Issues and priorities for the next year, including security, locking gates, wood chips, etc.
7. **Elections** for Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to 9 members of the executive committee. Appointment of auditor.
8. **Raffle**

Close of Meeting



TILEHURST ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2008

Income		Expenditure	
Poor's Trust	£65.00	Site Maintenance	£247.04
Tilehurst Village Show 2008	£285.10	Admin AGM	£31.68
Miscellaneous sales	88.13	Dig It copying	£97.30
Raffles	£99.20	Room Hire	£18.00
Dividend	£2.00	Website Costs	£43.91
Bank Interest	£416.04	Miscellaneous costs	£36.57
(Normal Trading) Total	£955.47	(Normal Trading) Total	£474.50
Keep on Gardening Plot Grants	£400.00	KoG Plot Site Costs	£396.02
Grand Total	£1,355.47	Grand Total	£870.52
Balance b/f 30 Jun 2007	£24,525.81		£16,239.87
Net Income/Expenditure 30 Jun 2008	£8,769.89		
Balance as at 30 June 2008 is made up as follows			
Bank accounts	£493.12		
Petty cash	£38.53		
Investments	£8,201.00		
Accrued Income	£173.24		
Accrued expenses	£(136.00)		
Total 30 Jun 2008	£8,769.89		

Ken Phillips Treasurer **Julia Cottee** Auditor.

Editor David Griffiths 9421141

All contributions and letters welcome
email: TilehurstAllotments@hotmail.com

Seasonal reminders THS Show

Autumn is not just for harvesting produce, freezing and making jam. You can sow as well. Plant spinach, lettuce ('winter density' or 'valdor' are good), salad onions and greens to eat in the spring. For early broad beans sow Aqua Dulce in the October. Some people do well with early peas. Garlic needs a long growing season so should be planted in November; plant autumn onion sets for an early crop. Check everything in the Kitchen Garden Calendar (in your folder)

Please be considerate and choose a good time with **autumn bonfires**. Only burn material unsuitable for cold composting (diseased or containing evil weeds like couch grass and bindweed). Don't burn wet stuff, let it dry thoroughly. Plastic must never be burnt.

If you have piles of stuff to get rid of you should a) keep it until RESCUE clean up in March, or b) take it to the civic amenity site yourself. Only small items should be placed in the bins. *There is no dumping area on site.*

Health and Safety

As you tidy up please:

1. Check all your water containers are covered.
2. Move sharp protruding sticks away from paths.
3. Keep the grass paths well cut so the dangers are easily visible (particularly important where there are steep drops). There should be a path all round every plot.

Our police officers

Neighbourhood policing remains problematic. Recruitment difficulties mean our team varies far too much and is still understaffed. However, please keep on being 'crime aware', look after your property and be sensible. Remember, the police decide how much time to spend in different areas of their patch according to how many URN numbers are recorded. Please phone **0845 8505 505** and give the details of **EVERY incident** of theft or criminal damage on our site. The only way to get a URN number is to phone this number (or call in to Castle St.). It is helpful if you also let Jenny or Richard know what has happened (preferably in writing).

Dial 999 if a crime is in progress.

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The Drean family did really well. Ross's carrots set a marker for future competitors.

The Tilehurst Horticultural Society needs our support; make sure you are a member and get supplies of fertilisers from them. Use it or lose it.

Gates

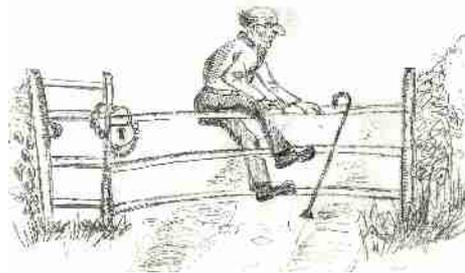
The vehicle gates at Chapel Hill, Armour Hill and Polsted Road have been kept locked since July. The decision to lock the vehicle gates was taken after it was clear that:

1. The gates were being left open on many occasions for long periods without adequate supervision.
2. Building materials were being dumped on site.

The decision caused irritation to many plot-holders, but we got used to it and the clear benefits of improved security.

Unfortunately the recent problems at Armour Hill mean that discussions continue about the best way to proceed. So watch this space... also please keep your eyes open for possible thieves or people dumping building or garden waste etc.

Please remember to leave the pedestrian gates alone. They are only locked on Xmas day. Some plot holders are not good at climbing gates.



Join The Committee?

Your committee meet every two months or so. The whole committee stands down at the AGM; there is plenty of opportunity for new blood. We need many different talents and areas of expertise. Help your society stay healthy, give it a go! New ideas are always welcome.

Committee notes

Our accounts for the year ending 30 June 2008 have been audited.

We did well. Our savings earned £416 interest. All the fund raising efforts were successful thanks to the efforts and generosity of lots of plot holders; for example the income from the Tilehurst Show £296.14 (including the raffle) was a record. It was even up on last years amazing total of £282.00.

Since September...

Our chairman John Butt has got to know lots of plot-holders in all corners of the site, keeping in touch and working hard to ensure two-way communications.

Ken kept an eye on our capital ensuring we get a steady income from our savings.

Liz Ellis secured the future of our web site and maintained it.

Dave handled lots of e-mails from potential plot holders. Many found out about us from the website.

We produced 4 editions of Dig It, keeping in touch, sharing ideas.

We maintained traditional activities (Tilehurst Show, Rescue clear up etc) and two new ones were organized (barbecue and RISC visit) following suggestions at last years AGM.

Richard Buckingham organised the visit to the RISC garden. 12 people visited the allotment-size roof garden in London Street. It was packed with useful and edible plants.

Ross and Jenny Drean organised a fun barbecue afternoon (which was also a financial success) with scarecrow and plot number competitions.

Committee members joined the Trustees and Oliver Jenks on Health and Safety inspections.

We finished the first phase of the Keep on Gardening project and agreed with the Trustees how any future maintenance costs will be met.

Thanks to all who helped with the activities during the year. Your contributions, coming along, lending a hand and supporting- all made for successful events.



All contributions and letters welcome
email: TilehurstAllotments@hotmail.com

Manure

Farmland manure works wonders to improve the soil. The humus helps to retain water in our fast-draining soil. Plot-holders have two suppliers: Mrs Dayton (9572379) and Tim Metcalfe (9428001) both supply well rotted manure.

Some plot holders have found plants with distorted leaves, particularly runner beans, spinach and kale. The RHS Advice Line suggests this damage is likely to have been caused by the use of manure contaminated with hormone-type weed killer. This kind of damage has been widely reported by allotment holders all over the country this year.

The weed killers are used to control docks, thistles and nettles on pasture land and if cattle or horses have grazed on treated pasture, or been fed silage or hay that has been treated, the herbicide can pass through the animals without breaking down and persist in the manure.

The weedkiller in stacked manure may take as long as two years to break down.

If manure containing weed killer residues is spread and mixed with soil the residue levels peak after about three weeks but then the rate of breakdown caused by soil bacteria is much faster, particularly under warm moist conditions. After a few months the residues will have decomposed completely.

The suspect weed killers have now been withdrawn but manure supplies may still be contaminated for some time.

RHS advice is:

- Crops from contaminated plants are safe to eat.
- To avoid further problems scrape off any loose manure around susceptible plants.
- Where you have already spread manure dig over the soil several times in the next few weeks to encourage the breakdown of the weed killer residues.
- Don't use stacked manure unless you let it rot down over several years.

You can find much more information on the RHS website : rhs.org.uk/advice and there are links to the Pesticide Safety Directorate, PSD, and the DowAgroScience website

Times Gone By

Bill Fryer looks back over 30 years

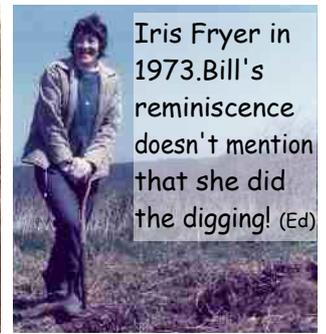
I arrived in Reading late in 1973. My first thought was 'allotment!'. Making enquires, I soon found out that Albert Illsley was the man to talk to. So a visit to Albert in Armour Road was arranged; he advised me that there were no vacancies, but I had already had a walk around the allotments and it was clear to me that there were a lot of overgrown plots available. When I pointed this out to Albert, he asked me to show him one. I had a particular plot in mind, it was covered in every kind of obnoxious weed imaginable, including a blackberry which covered a third of the plot. Albert's immediate reaction, and I didn't blame him, was "You don't want that?" "Give me two weeks" was my reply.

Albert signed me up and gave me the first year rent free, mind you, the pound he would have charged wouldn't have broke the bank, I had been paying £7.50 in London. Two weeks later the plot was clear except for a pile of lovely ash, I had stripped the top off, stacked it, lit a fire in the centre and when it was going covered that. All the couch grass and the rest of the weeds were eventually spread as potash. The only thing I left on the plot was one blackberry, a beauty, it's still there.

Bob, the pig man on a nearby plot, had a huge pile of manure. When I asked if he wanted to get rid of any, he not only told me to help myself, but loaded his lorry a brought a load to my plot. In London we thought we were lucky to get lorry loads of leaves from the council; free manure? I'd arrived in heaven. Bob had no trouble getting rid of his surplus after the first flush of cauliflowers on my plot!

When I started planting up my plot, I got the usual comments, "You don't plant flowers on an allotment", "That greenhouse went last five minutes". I had brought my green house from London where I'd had similar comments. Bought in 1964 from Alton, it has stood the time and weather with out any damage until the start of vandalism in 2006. Hopefully with a bit of patching here and there it, and I, will last a few more years.

Whilst I can hear Mervin whistling I know there is a chance that I too will still get pleasure from my allotment gardening when I am in my nineties.



Waiting list

All plots are let and 48 people are waiting (15 more than this time last year). We expect most will have a plot within 2 years. The queue moves quite fast; some people drop out if they get plots elsewhere or change their mind. Please keep on mentioning your hobby to others; it is an excellent way to keep healthy so it is worth going on the list.

Chapel Hill



Over 30 children from The Little Acorns Nursery School visited Chapel Hill allotments, to learn about different fruits and vegetables, where they come from, and how they are grown. They were lucky enough to try a variety of produce, some which they had never seen or tasted before. The trip involved two visits with children ranging between two and a half and five years old. They were all curious and fascinated and the experienced was deemed a great success.

Summer BBQ

This was a great success and we were lucky with the weather. Thank you to all who helped and for all the lovely food brought along to share.



Winning Scarecrow
Jim Wellford



Winning
Plot Number Sign
Peter Andrew