



Sue Harding's digging is paying off. She has lots of land prepared on the plot she took over last October.

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

Spring clean reminders

- Please check you have:
- A clear path all round your plot.
 - No obstacles, or sharp bits of metal lurking for someone to trip or fall on.
 - Covered all water butts and troughs.
 - Only hoarded stuff you will use.

It's a Dis

Reading Clean Up

As part of RESCUE weekend, we get two skips at the main site in return for general clear up duties. Chapel Hill cleared up so well at RESCUE 2008 that they do not need a skip this year. Main site volunteers will tackle Armour Hill. Can you spare half an hour to help? Saturday or Sunday afternoon around 4.30pm to 5.30pm. For more information see www.readingrescue.org

The skips are available for use from Friday morning. Surplus junk left by the skips will be taken away by extra RBC dustcart visits over the weekend.

- Please do not misuse the skips:
- No BANNED substances.
 - No green waste or stones.
 - Add NOTHING after Sunday 4.00 pm (when the skips are 'topped off').

TAS Swap Shop

Use the swap area next to the Skips for useful things that someone might want? Leftovers will be placed in the skip on Sunday afternoon.

Waiting List

This time last year 35 families were waiting, now there are 51 on the list. Many others who want plots never even register. Anyone who wants a plot should get in contact. People should not be put off, the list does move... and who knows, more land might be released for letting...

There are no KOG (accessible) vacancies; but tell anyone who might be interested about the adapted beds, vacancies turn up quite frequently.

Reading Council released more than 50 new plots at Scours Lane at the new year to try to meet some of the demand for plots. All were taken by mid February.

Grass cutting

The committee are looking for quotes to cut the major paths. Peter Andrews has done an excellent job, but others too are welcome to apply. If you have a mower, please contact Jenny or any committee member for details ASAP.

Plot Holders Committee 2008/2009						
Chair	John Butt	AA1a	9416944			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasurer	Ken Phillips	AB14				
Committee	William Macphee	AA20	Kate Jones	AB9a	Ross Drean	AB22
	Richard Buckingham	AB11	David Griffiths	PB10	Wendy Levey	AB5a
			Colin Robinson	AA20	Mick Geater	CH



Vegetable Plants

An excellent selection will be available from White Tower Nursery, Aldermaston when the weather is suitable for planting. Phone 9712123 to check availability and prices. They give a discount to members of Tilehurst Allotments Society.

Collins Hardware in Pangbourne give a discount to Tilehurst Horticultural society membership card holders.

Committee Notes

Water will be turned on when the danger of frost is over.

Your committee have:

Planned what to do when interest on TAS savings drops from £400 to £80 per year. We will maintain current levels of spending, and aim to increase fund raising, whilst keeping the situation under review.

Arranged to remind Reading and Tilehurst Parish Councils of their duty to provide allotments for residents.

Decided to have stalls at two shows in Tilehurst in 2009: the Hospital Fete on Saturday **13th June** and the Residents Association Tilehurst Show on Saturday **29th August**. We will sell plants, flowers and produce at both. Note the dates and grow a few extra plants. We need to spread the work so please offer to lend a hand.

Decided to hold a second BBQ on Saturday **11th July**. Put the date in your diary now. Families welcome, more details later.

Pigeons Prefer Traditional Greens



Spare Land?

If you can't use all your plot please tell Oliver or Jenny. We could rent out your other half. No one wants the weeds to get a hold.

Traffic

Please be considerate and drive really slowly (5 mph) on the site and in Polsted Road, or park elsewhere and walk onto the site.

Beekeeping and the Tilehurst Allotments

As some of you are aware, two National Beehives were introduced to the allotments last year and a small apiary set up in the southwest corner. The bees, which are currently wintering over, were collected locally from gardens during the swarming season. A person's need to see them re-housed has been our gain! There is much in the press currently about their plight and it is up to conscientious gardeners to nurture them to safeguard their future as pollinators of your crops!

The Beekeeper's calendar starts in the autumn when the bees are prepared for winter. They must have sufficient stores, 50lbs or so, of honey to have a good chance of survival. The bees are quite dormant in the winter, only flying on really warm days, and rely on these stores. In the early spring the queen starts to expand her brood and builds up the colony. The rate of expansion will depend on the availability of nectar. The beekeeper will be keeping a close eye on things (weekly inspections) to ensure they have sufficient space and plenty of combs in which to store honey. The population of bees will peak in the summer. The main honey harvest is taken in the summer and the amount depends entirely on the season and the availability of nectar and pollen.

There are many myths about beekeeping and they unfortunately can be perpetuated by prejudice and lack of knowledge. Common myths revolve around the colour of your clothes (blue) and that they readily sting; all of which are quite untrue. In fact as allotmenters we are surrounded by bees all the time whilst they go about their business for mutual benefit. They only sting as a last resort when they are threatened in some way as they die shortly after.

Manure

Mrs Drayton 9572379, and Tim Metcalfe 9428001 deliver well-rotted muck (check price when you phone).

Several local stables let you bag up muck and take it away for free, but it may take some time to rot down.

Compost your green waste, add cardboard too but not bread or any cooked food, we do not want rats!

Do you know what a honey bee looks like? Many don't and they are often confused with a bumble bee or even a wasp.



Look out for the information sheet on the notice board and familiarise yourself.

So what do honey bees like? Well they are fussy and will go for the plants offering the most pollen or the strongest nectar. They go mainly for single flowering plants (not the complex hybrids which are often sterile), vegetables, fruit, beans, mint and flowering herbs. I noticed that borage, was very popular last year. The options though are endless.

What are the dos and don'ts with bees? Just common sense really...

- Don't approach the hives especially during the middle of the day in the summer. It's busier than Heathrow!
- If you see anything unusual in the bee activity especially in April or May contact me and I will investigate.
- If you do find yourself in close proximity of a bee, be calm and avoid flapping your arms.
- If you do happen to be stung then quickly remove the sting by scraping away with your finger nail and treat with antihistamine cream. If you feel unwell, which very few do, seek medical advice.

Any questions? Just ask when you see me, the bee suit gives me away!



Martin Moore
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A member of the
Reading and
District
Beekeeping
Association