



Ray and Lin Kays take their cabbage stalks home to put in their green bin

Waiting List

20 people are waiting for plots.

Spring

Some weeds are growing, that's always a sign that germination has started. But some land is very wet, so be cautious about sowing seeds. You can lose the lot if they rot before germinating.

Emergency Contacts

Water

Polsted Rd supply: William Macphee
 29 Armour Road 0118 9414873
 Armour Hill supply: Rod Mills
 5 Wendover Way 0778 9765652
 Chapel Hill supply: Michael Geater
 0776 8902634 or 0118 9420767

Bees Martin Moore 0772 9620286

Vandalism

POLICE for EVERY incident: call 101
Call 999 for trouble in progress

The landlord's agent,
 Stephanie Keighley,
 can be contacted on 0789 979 8335

Electronic Dig It

Many thanks to all who receive dig it electronically. It saves cash and time. However don't feel any pressure, if you want to go back to paper, that's OK too.

It's Digging

RESCUE:

Friday 23rd and Saturday 23rd March is our annual clear up event on the main site. Working at our own risk (as usual) that is **NO Insurance cover**, we clear up on Friday and Saturday, making tidy piles of rubbish in the car park. On Saturday the council remove it for recycling/land fill. **NO RUBBISH** should be left after Saturday.

In the past there has been damage to a car and piles of rubbish not spotted behind a parked car. To avoid such problems there is **NO PARKING** in the CAR PARK that weekend.

Please:

- Collect allotment stuff and take it to **the car park** on Friday and Saturday.
- Sort piles of metals/wood and general rubbish, dangerous waste. etc **following the notices exactly.**
- **NO GREEN (compostable) WASTE** or stones/hard-core.
- Ensure other stuff can be loaded by **ONE PERSON** into the collecting vehicles.

- Please bag the stuff as per instructions using the transparent and orange bags provided.
- **NO PARKING** in the car park 10-5 Saturday or Sunday 10-1.00pm
- Be alert and deter strangers from dumping any stuff.
- Help keep the car park tidy.

Trustees Site Inspection

This will be soon. They will check H&S **and** that people are following the lease conditions. Please see you have:

- No obstacles, sharp bits of metal or steep or concealed changes of level lurking for someone to trip or fall on.
- Covered all water butts and troughs.
- Only kept stuff you know you will use!
- A path all round the whole plot.

Even if it was like it when you took over, your plot is your responsibility. Please show you are making steady progress and improvements; no one expects miracles overnight.

Plot Holders Committee 2012/2013

Chair	Richard Buckingham	PD13	07738 003057			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasurer	Karen Fidler	PB12				
Committee	William Macphee	PC2	Kate Jones	AB9a	Mick Geater	CH
	Colin Robinson	AA20	David Griffiths	PB10	Ken Phillips	AB14

Rent

The Trustees have not yet announced next year's allotment rents.

Wood Chips

Keep helping yourself to the chips in the car park. They are very useful for mopping up slippery paths.



Wood Chips

Wanted

Peter Ringrow is looking for a shed. Call 0118 957 3238 or email PRingrow@ValeWest.com

Spare garden tools? Some keen gardeners need them. Let Jenny know and she will make sure they go to a good home.

Digging: A plot-holder who has just started cancer treatment is looking for some help with digging. If you have some spare time and would like some pocket money, please contact TAS to be put in touch.

Garden course

If you are waiting for a plot you may be interested in an 8 session course for novice gardeners starting 16th March on Saturday afternoons 2-4pm (2 week break for Easter) at Southcote run by Food4Families (£90) Note, this is not restricted to people on the waiting list, anyone can sign up by contacting Dave Richards on 0118 9586692 or email dave@risc.org.uk

Seeds and Plants

Members of the Horticultural Society can get a discount from Collins in Pangbourne if they show their membership card.

TAS members get a discount from White Tower Nurseries, just this side of Aldermaston. Show them Dig It or say you are a member of Tilehurst Allotments Society. They stock an excellent selection of vegetables ready for planting out.

See our website for details of discount seeds; whilst it is too early to report on quality and germination, members say they seem very good value and service is efficient.

Car park

Old stagers will remember how we enlarged the car-park a decade ago. We paid for a man with a digger and lots of hoggin. We raised the cash painfully, over years by, for example, selling surplus of leeks at 10p each. Even so the car park gets crowded as weather improves. If you use it please park tidily. On no account dump stuff around the edges. There are NO DUMPING AREAS anywhere on the site.

Committee news

Your committee are seeking advice from many sources about how best to tackle flooded plots. This is likely to be a major project. We aim for a way of routing surplus surface water either to the stream in the withies, or for safe storage.

If you have suffered flooding problems, please keep in touch and talk with plot-holders of neighbouring plots. The best you can do for your own plot is to raise the level of your cultivated plot by adding compost and other organic matter. Grow thirsty crops in the worst areas, and dig drainage ditches.

Water will be turned on again in March after some repairs to taps have been completed. To avoid waste please do not try to turn it on yourself. Please report any problems (see over for contact numbers) immediately, it is much better to get lots of messages than none.

Please let Jenny or Stephanie know immediately if you have problems cultivating your plot. It should be showing signs of preparation and cultivation by now. Don't let things get out of hand, if you cannot cope please let us know.



Leeks in the snow

Traffic

Please restrict your speed to walking pace, that's 5mph or less on Polsted Road and on site.



Soil

Good soil holds the moisture but is not 'claggy'. It is the reward for persistence and hard work. You need to look after the texture of the soil more than worrying about 'feeding' it. Add compost and manure.

Green waste, including most weeds makes excellent compost. Add newspaper or cardboard if you have a lot of green stuff. Mrs Drayton 0118 9572379 and Tim Metcalffe 0118 9428001 deliver well rotted manure.

Chairman's Chat

Writing this on yet another wet and soggy day I wonder if we'll beat 2012 when 128% of annual rain fell? It was the wettest year in England since 1910, with the wettest April and June ever. Bizarrely we started with a previously dry autumn and winter and the driest ever March led to a hosepipe ban - and then look what happened!

On Radio 2's Jeremy Vine show it was debated that so much water has leached goodness from the soil leaving veg less tasty. Terry Walton the allotmenteer from The Valleys says dig in plenty of organic matter now, and all should recover next year.

Joining Tilehurst Horticultural Association helps you to get some cheap local gardening and allotment supplies. They have trading sheds in Gratwicke Road and Oaktree Road. Your membership card gets discounts of 5 - 10% at various local garden centres, and C&G Hardware, thus supporting local traders too. www.tilehurstha.org.uk

The committee is currently looking at various issues on site, including how best to get rid of excess water. If you have any constructive views on drainage please let us know.

Rubbish is a contentious issue. Please make arrangements to take your plastic and carpet rubbish to the tip! No one else does it for you. Green waste should be composted on your plot.

At least we can watch our seed potatoes chitting and pot up some onion bulbs until the rain stops. Stay dry and good luck for the new growing season.

Richard