



Joe Baker with his curly Kale

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

Plot Letting Delays

It takes time for plots to be let. It cannot happen overnight. Prior to 1995 the administration was very 'relaxed'. People had to hassle the Clerk for months to be allowed to view a vacant plot and then longer to rent it. Then things improved enormously. It took, at most, ten weeks for all the plots vacated at the end of September to be let. The task did not hang on into the New Year. Lettings later in the year were completed within three weeks.

Currently several plots have been vacant for more than seven months. The two flooded areas and another plot have been held vacant for even longer. When plots are allowed to be vacant for such a long time they become very weedy and harder to rent; some people refuse such plots; even with the incentive of a second year rent-free. Existing plot-holders have the nuisance of vacant plots developing a good cover of dandelions which then spread to nearby plots.

Your society asks the landlord for prompt improvement. We request a letting standard of a maximum of two months delay in letting in the last quarter of the year, and one month at other times.

Friends of RBH Show

The Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Show will on **Saturday 8th June** at the **Victoria Recreation Ground**. We will have a stall at this popular all-day family event with lots to do for all ages. Please help us raise funds for your society at our main fund-raising event. We need customers so tell friends and family about it.

We sell plants that novice or experienced gardeners would like. This includes herbs, vegetables and flower plants. Our produce is always popular - so please bring us some rhubarb, or anything you have. Please drop off any donations at our stall on the Rec any time from 10.00am on the day, or to Jenny's plot (PD5) or 85 Westwood Road before the event.

Can you help on the day? We need people to set up, help on the stall and to clear up. Let Jenny know what you can manage asap. She will sort the rota soon.

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

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Rent

The landlord announced the rent levels from September earlier this year, see below. We note that rents will exceed rents charged by RBC to non-residents.

Allotment Rent per year

	30 th Sept 2012	Due 30 th Sept 2013
Full plot (reduced)	£55 (£40)	£64 (£47)
Half plot (reduced)	£35 (£28)	£40 (£32)
KOG bed (no reduction)	£10	£10

Main Site Tracks & Paths

Peter Andrews is keeping the grass on the main paths in good order in the second of his two-season contract with the Charity. Please help by not throwing stones on the grass areas. (Although we are very pleased with the helpful people who having been making good the deep ruts).

Only the main tracks are mown by Peter. Every plot-holder is responsible for keeping a path all round their plot reasonably trim and level.

Health and Safety

The Trustees held one of their regular inspections earlier this year. They have not reported any general issues to the society, but will have communicated with individuals where necessary. Keep alert for possible hazards.

New plot numbers have appeared, but we need more. Please keep your plot number clear and visible, they are used to report problems to the police and help newbies find their way around.

Site Map

Our Website has splendid new maps of both sites, thanks to Liz. They are really helpful when explaining the location of a plot.

Waiting List

The number of people waiting for a plot appears to be remaining fairly static in spite of the letting delays. Your society keeps an independent record of those waiting. To be 100% certain that the names are getting through please encourage people to contact us asking for a plot as well as asking the Charity.

AGM Date

Our AGM Will be on Thursday 26th September at 7:30p.m.



More From Less

Allotment gardening is evolving. The standard size is now a half plot, 5 rods i.e. 150m² rather than the old 10 rod size. More people are investing time and cash to construct small beds, sometimes, but not always raised. Protecting the soil from compaction is now a priority so gardeners stand on the surrounding paths to tend the beds. The style of growing in long rows has changed to growing blocks of plants, frequently at closer spacing. People aim to grow just enough tasty young vegetables. They try to avoid a glut of tough old monsters. Growing at higher density with smaller gaps between plants is the way to do it. If you are keen to grow this way look out for 'Square Metre Gardening' by Mel Bartholomew at £12.99 You can preview the book by searching on line, or look in the shed on the KOG plot. It is very good.

Flood Discussions

There have been good suggestions and informal discussions about possible schemes to tackle flooding problems. The main issue is how sensible is it to embark on a major scheme when flooding is only occasionally serious. Dig It refers to flooding problems in 1999, 2000 and 2001 but there are no more mentions until last winter. Observation and discussion continue.

KOG Repairs

Your committee have arranged for the crumbling mortar on the KOG beds to be repaired.



White Tower Nursery

It was a great shock to hear of Pete Clemson's untimely death. He was a good friend. There is a memory book if you have particular memories of Pete you wish to share. The best we can do to support Crissy is to keep on shopping at White Tower Nursery, Aldermaston. They have a large selection of vegetable plants.

Top Tips

Use weed-suppressing membranes to save hoeing. Melt holes for your plants in woven plastic membranes to reduce fraying. Use a disposable BBQ to heat an empty tin can.

Grow carrots in containers which are at least 18 inches above the ground. Carrot-fly are low flying beastsies.

Net brassicas to keep the pigeons off. Have you seen Marsden's hinged-lid anti-pigeon frames.

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.

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. Only green waste is acceptable, and even then most of it can be composted.

Good luck for the new growing season.

Richard