



Alan Slade with his chickens

## 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

**Please give Jenny the URN number for any site crime you report.**

**Inform Stephanie of any wind damage to trees on site.**

## No News

**T**here has been no application to build on any of the Charity's land. The charity has not updated its website to include a report of its activities in 2012.

## Xmas Lock-out

**A**ll gates (pedestrian and vehicle) will be locked from sundown on Christmas Eve, until sundown on Christmas Day, so pick your sprouts before.

## Water

**O**n 1<sup>st</sup> December we expect both water supplies on the main site will be turned off until 1<sup>st</sup> March. Please do not turn it on again, even for a short time.

## Rent

**F**ollowing the new tenancy agreement the Trustees will tell us by the end of June how much they rent they will charge for plots from the end of September. This change in previous arrangements was possible because our allotment site is a private (non-statutory) site and so is not covered by allotment law.

# Iris

## AGM

**O**ur AGM saw the re-election of our officers and one new face on the committee. Iris Geater strengthens the team and will help particularly in representing the interests of Chapel Hill tenants.

**T**he Charity explained that after Chapel Hill tenants had decided whether to take up the offer of replacement plots there would be no further delay in letting vacant plots. The committee believe that it is reasonable to expect all plots vacant on 1<sup>st</sup> October should be let by 1<sup>st</sup> December, so allowing new tenants to get cultivating and obtain reasonable value for their twelve months rent.

**A**fter the backlog has been cleared we expect the waiting list to be in low single figures. Since newly vacated plots should be let within a month we do not plan to cover plots with cardboard again.

## Plot Holders Committee 2013/2014

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



## Committee news

Apples

Your Committee plan to:

- Monitor allotment rent levels.
- Continue to support Chapel Hill tenants.
- Work to improve the main site.
- Ensure all tenants have their own copy of the tenancy agreement.
- Keep plot holders informed and involved in issues that will concern them.

## Rubbish

Please take your rubbish home, or to the tip yourself.

Your rubbish is your problem even if it was left on your plot by a previous tenant. There is NO dumping area on site and there are NO RBC rubbish collections from the site.

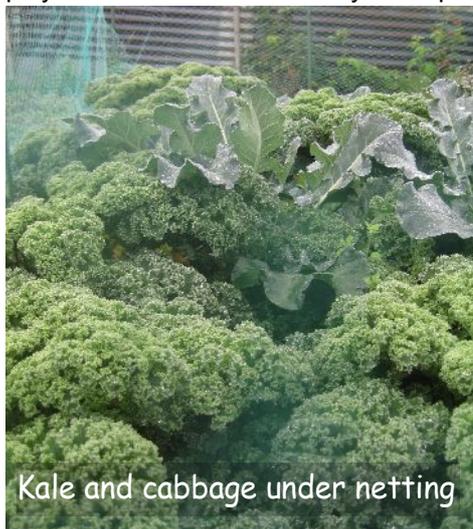
Compost as much as you can. All green and woody plant material will rot so providing free soil improver for minimal effort.

Use stones and hard-core to build up potentially dangerous gaps, or make paths and drainage channels.

Don't save up rubbish. Everyone recycles and re-uses as much as they can, but there is always stuff to get rid of. We don't have skips to take heavy rubbish in the spring, so why not use the winter to get rid of stuff steadily.

## TAS On TV?

A four part TV series on food from seed to plate fronted by Adam Henson and Nigel Slater is starting on BBC1 at 8pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November. If the editor's cutting knife permits you will see some tomatoes grown in a polytunnel on the main site by a couple



Kale and cabbage under netting

## Tilehurst Horticultural Association

THA talks are a feature of the winter months; free and open to all they are popular and worth going to. The October talk on looking after the soil and growing good crops was unexpectedly stimulating and more controversial than anything Jenny had been to for years. Whilst the theme was to look after the soil, increase humus and care for the wildlife in the soil there was heated discussion at the end! The speaker recommended a strategy of no digging at all. Instead, hoeing and leaving the be-headed weeds in situ. Not composting them. No manure but lots of mulch; the speaker used about 8cm depth of straw. All this makes giving the seasonal advice in this dig it - do your winter digging, buy manure, etc. rather tricky.

Look out for the notices or at the THA website ([tilehurstha.btck.co.uk](http://tilehurstha.btck.co.uk)) to see what is coming up. You may also spot plans to enter the Newbury show - members are invited to grow for a stall at the 2014 show in September. It sounds fun and there will lots of opportunities to learn from experienced exhibitors.

## Christmas Chips

RBC will once again collect Christmas trees from the car-park and return the chippings for use on paths on our site. Help yourself. See notices in the press or on the car-park gate about collection dates.

## Improve your Soil

Buy manure to improve both heavy and fast-draining soil types. We have both on the main site. Plot-holders have used two regular suppliers:

Mrs Dayton (9572379)

Tim Metcalfe (9428001)

Both deliver well rotted manure. Check the price when you phone .

Use your own compost, dig it in. It improves soil texture for hungry crops and raises soil levels. Any heap of green waste will compost. You can speed it up by adding the pigeon litter available on site. If you can transport it, you can collect mixed straw and horse manure from many stables.

## Other Jobs

Clear brambles, there should be a clear path round every full size plot.

Check your plot number, is it visible? Does it need repainting? If you don't have one, make one!

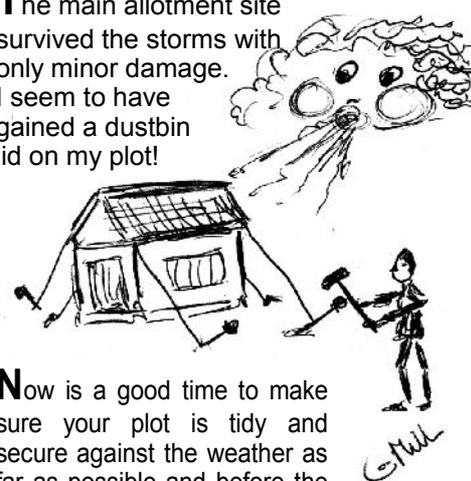
## Digging in Manure



## Chairman' Chat

The allotment AGM was the liveliest I've ever been to! The debate about the loss of plots at Chapel Hill was passionate. TPLC received a petition (400\* signatures collected in 2 months) of asking for short term tenancies on this site until planning permission had been granted. Despite this and the unanimous view of plot holders at the meeting, the Charity shows no signs of reversing their decision. Objections will follow when/if they submit a planning application to RBC.

The main allotment site survived the storms with only minor damage. I seem to have gained a dustbin lid on my plot!



Now is a good time to make sure your plot is tidy and secure against the weather as far as possible and before the next Health and Safety visit due soon. Don't forget to order your manure and get it in before the ground freezes. December is a good time to sort out those packets of seeds, gaze at catalogues and think of seed potatoes arriving in January.

Various tenants have reduced their plot sizes or moved plots this autumn. Good news is that at the end of October and beginning of November, Stephanie reported she was looking to rent out the remaining available plots. So far she has only let five plots, but is planning further letting events to fill the remaining vacancies: nine plots and one ground height accessible plot. If you are on the waiting list, you could contact Jenny to clarify your situation.

Meanwhile, baton down the hatches and enjoy Xmas when it comes!

Richard