



For the first time as DigIt editor, I was unable to find anyone willing to feature on the front page. This is the only person I found on the whole site! Gill's cartoon says it all. Ed.

## 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

**B**ees Martin Moore 0772 9620286

### Vandalism

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

**T**he landlord's agent, Stephanie Keighley, can be contacted on 0789 979 8335  
 Email tpic@talktalk.net

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

**I**nform Stephanie of any wind damage to trees on site.

**G**oogle "ngs Chapel Hill Tilehurst" to find Iris and Micheal Geater's garden, a new addition to the National Gardens Scheme.

# DigIt

## RESCUE

**F**riday 14<sup>th</sup> and **S**aturday 15<sup>th</sup> March is our annual clear up event. Working at our own risk, there is NO Insurance cover, we leave stuff in the car park, sorted into the right plastic bags. Then on Saturday the council remove the bags for re-cycling or land fill. There will be one final collection early on Sunday morning, we do not know when, so NO RUBBISH should be left on Sunday.

**N**o Parking. The car park cannot be used for parking that weekend. This is to ensure that the collection vehicles do not damage any cars. It also means that rubbish is not missed.

Please:  
**C**ollect unwanted allotment stuff and take it to the car park on Friday and Saturday.

**S**ort piles of metals, wood, general rubbish, dangerous waste, etc. following the guidance notices:  
 Put stuff in the plastic bags supplied.

orange for general landfill and transparent for re-cyclable stuff.  
**N**O green (compostable) waste  
**N**O stones/hard-core.  
 Don't use green bags.

**E**nsure stuff is manageable so it can be lifted by ONE PERSON into the collecting vehicles.

**B**e alert and deter strangers from dumping any stuff.

**T**here are no on-site rubbish collections on any other days. Take your rubbish home (especially after you have cleaned out your shed!). The single bin is left for odd items of litter and dealt with by a kind volunteer.

## Waiting List

**A**ll plots on the site were let by the end of January. We all hope that we never again have such a long gap for everyone. Thank you Stephanie for doing the work.

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

## Trustees Site Inspection

Our Landlord, The Tilehurst Poores' Lands Trustees will be conducting another of their regular site inspections on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April. They will check H&S matters and that people are following the lease conditions.

Be ready. Check 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 will use!
- A path all round the whole plot.

Your plot is your responsibility, no matter what it was like when you took over. Please show you are making steady progress and improvements. No one expects miracles overnight.

## Get Gardening

Spring is approaching, but the land is very wet. Be cautious about sowing seeds, you can lose the lot if they rot before germinating. Notice when the weeds start growing and follow what they do.

Many plots are too wet to stand on, in attempting to work you compact the soil. But these are ideal conditions to clear out brambles and self seeded ash and sycamore. Now is a good time to clear out any wild corners that remain.

Let Jenny or Stephanie know immediately if you have problems that prevent you keeping up with allotment tasks. Your plot should show signs of being cared for. Do not let things get out of hand. If you cannot cope please let us know in good time.

White Tower Nursery, Aldermaston give us discounts on their good quality **seed potatoes** (in now) and **vegetable plants** available throughout the season. Phone 9712123 to check availability.

Collins in Pangbourne give us a discount on seeds and garden tools. See our web site for details of other discounts. [TilehurstAllotments.co.uk](http://TilehurstAllotments.co.uk)

Mrs Drayton 9572379, delivers well-rotted muck.



Broad Beans

## Rent

You have probably noticed that our rent has increased dramatically over the past few years. The table below shows rent for plots on the Tilehurst Poores Lands site since 2008. The 'reduced' rate for a half plot for a plot holder mainly dependent on state benefits has doubled in five years.

	full	reduced	half	reduced
Oct 08	£36	£26	£21	£16
Oct 09 RPI 2.0%	+11% £40	+8% £28	+14% £24	+13% £18
Oct 10 RPI 4.1%	+10% £44	+25% £35	+13% £27	+17% £21
Oct 11 RPI 4.1%	+7% £47	+0% £35	+7% £29	+10% £23
Oct 12 RPI 2.5%	+17% £55	+14% £40	+21% £35	+22% £28
Oct 13 RPI 2.0%	+16% £64	+18% £47	+14% £40	+14% £32
Oct 14	£ ?	£ ?	£ ?	£ ?
Increase since 2008	78%	81%	90%	100%

TPLC kog plots have been £10 a year for every year in the above table.

The current rents for equivalent plots on Reading Council allotments are:

Resident	full	half	kog
Outside Reading	£67.70	£33.50	£6.77
Inside Borough	£60.90	£30.45	£6.09
Reduced	£10.60	£5.30	£1.06

TPLC reduced rents apply to people 'mainly dependent' on state benefits RBC reductions apply to 'all' receiving state benefits.

Your committee think the rent levels generally have risen too much and that particularly the rents for half plots need attention. Rents charged for half plots should be held at current levels and the reduction to people mainly reliant on state benefits should be increased.

## Planning

Reading Borough Council have just started a new planning cycle. They are making lists of sites which are suitable for development, and sites which should be retained as open space. Your committee think that the allotments should be on the 'open space' list.

The Chapel Hill site needs to be nominated as open space. Your committee encourage all allotment holders to send in their view, especially to say that they think that Chapel Hill allotments should be saved as open space.

Write to: LDF Planning Team, RBC,  
Level 8, Civic Centre, RG1 7TD

Or email: [LDF@reading.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@reading.gov.uk)

Do this before 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014

For more information, see:

[www.reading.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.reading.gov.uk/localplan)

## TAS General Meeting

We will hold a general meeting in the Village Hall, Victoria Rd on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 7.30pm.

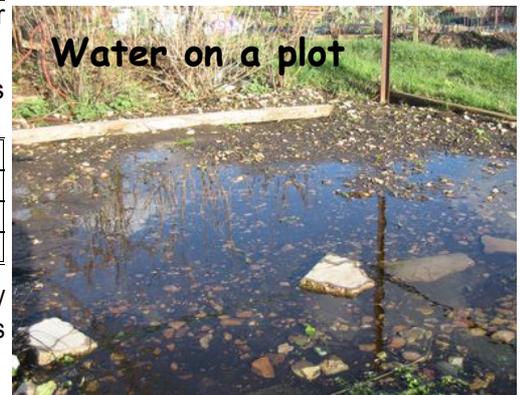
The agenda will include:

- Management of the allotments sites, for example, avoiding winter frost damage and safe tree maintenance.
- Emergency arrangements.
- Letting plots.
- Flooding.
- Chapel Hill site.

Please come and have your say.

## Fund raising ideas?

We will have a stall at the Hospital Show on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June** on the Victoria Recreation Ground. We need lots to sell at our annual fund-raising occasion: shrubs, flowers, garden produce, veg plant seedlings. Please note the date and think of us when you sow seeds/pot things on etc.



Water on a plot

## Chairman's Chat

Looking back to February 2013 I pondered "Writing this on yet another wet and soggy day I wonder if we'll beat 2012 when 128% of annual rain fell?". Well, January 2014 has surpassed itself by being the wettest month since records began. I have occasionally seen the yellow disc in the sky but wonder if it hasn't been 'photo shopped' in to give us some hope? At least there won't be a hose pipe ban this year. (Are you sure? Ed.)

It's all too wet to be trampling on the plots yet. I contented myself with a recent visit to White Tower nursery to collect our seed potatoes, onions, shallots, and broad bean seeds. At least I can look forward to watching the potatoes chitting! Nature does have it's way of letting the crops catch up, and I had a recent unexpected surprise of some very early and delicious radishes which had self seeded in the poly tunnel.

Yours in wellingtons,

Richard