



Nigel Turner's grand daughter eating a plum on the Chapel Hill Site

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: Mike Geater
0776 8902634

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
Email tpic@talktalk.net

AGM

7:30pm Thursday
25th September
Tilehurst Village Hall,

All plot-holders from both sites and all on the waiting list are very welcome at our AGM.

It is a

Chairman's report

Cast your minds back to June - what a scorcher! Some very hot weather coupled with long light evenings gave the crops (and weeds!) a great burst of growth. My strawberries were excellent and plentiful this year.



We had great success at the Hospital Fete raising £212.50 for our funds. A very wet start gave way to warm fine weather and a decent crowd. We managed to sell nearly all the produce. Our thanks go to all helpers and contributors.

Speeding in Polsted Road - STOP IT! There are some very young children who can pop out unexpectedly between cars in the nearby houses. Engage crawling speed of 5 MPH please.

As I write just before the Pop Festival we've had some unusually cold weather for August, particularly at night. In the parks a few trees have started shedding

their leaves, but I hope it's not an omen of an early winter.

I recently had a day at Yeo Valley organic garden (home of the dairy product folks) in Somerset. It's well worth the day out. Some lovely gardens, and a fantastic demonstration of composting techniques. What's not to like - especially when rounded off with an afternoon cream tea!

It is with great sadness that we lose our friends from Chapel Hill site this September. As far as we know there are no plans to develop the site so why not continue to gain the rental income from such well cared for allotments? We can only hope it doesn't end up unloved like the Reserved Land.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on Thursday 25 September, and any nominations for new committee members would be particularly welcome!

Richard Buckingham

Outgoing Plot Holders Committee 2013/2014

Note: All the committee positions are up for election every year. We need nominations, there will be a chance to step forward during the interval.

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

AGM

All plot-holders, their families and all on the waiting list are invited to our AGM on **Thursday 25th September** at 7.30pm in Tilehurst Village Hall, Victoria Road.

Plot-holders can pay their rent to the charity's agent, Stephanie Keighley before the meeting or in the interval.

The meeting is a chance to meet up, talk things over and set priorities for the year. You will also hear from the Chairman of the Charity. He asks for any questions in writing by Monday 15th September; email tpic@talktalk.net or pass on via Jenny or any other committee member.

We want all topics of concern to get an airing at the AGM. It is also just nice to meet up with friends and fellow gardeners. Please come.

Join the Committee

The whole committee is up for election every year at the AGM. The committee generally meet about every two months and there are occasional tasks. Your Society needs help and fresh energy to look after the interests of our members and promote allotment gardening locally. Please lend a hand. There are plenty of opportunities.



Bind Weed

TILEHURST ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 25 September 2014 7.30-9.00pm
Tilehurst Village Hall, Victoria Road

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introduction**
2. **Acceptance of Minutes of AGM (26 September 2013)**
3. **Report from the Chair**
4. **Treasurer's Report**
Discussion about financial issues and accounts for year ending 30th June 2014.
5. **Significant events since last AGM**
 - a. Chapel Hill Update
 - b. General Meeting in May
6. **Reports from the Charity and Responses to Questions**
Interval (Tea and a chance to chat or pay your rent)
7. **Discussion** of Site Issues and priorities for the next year, including security, locking gates, fund raising, etc.
8. **Elections** for Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to 9 members of the executive committee. Appointment of accounts scutineer.
9. **Raffle**

Close of Meeting

Treasurer's Report

The Society earned £139.81 more than it spent in the year ending 30th June 2014, a slight improvement on last year's figure. The income was more than last year, largely due to the bank's generous settlement following their administrative error in 2013.

Expenditure on newsletters was more in 2013-14 than last year due to an extra edition, an increase in numbers of copies needed and some increase in printing charges.

Karen Fidler (Treasurer)

TILEHURST ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2014

Income		Expenditure	
Poor's Lands Charity	£60.00	Site Improvements	£0.00
Friends of Berks Hosp Show June 2014	£212.50	Site Maintenance	£0.00
Other (Sale of trays)	£12.00	Admin AGM	£21.60
		Costs relating to Show	£20.00
Raffles	£42.00	Dig It copying	£133.70
Bank Interest	£106.00	Room Hire	£40.00
		Website Costs	£49.67
		Folder Inserts	£27.72
Total	£432.50	Total	£292.69

Net Income/Expenditure 30th June 2014 **£10,188.75**

(Since June 1999)

Balance as at 30 June 2014 is made up as follows

Bank accounts and £9000 Bond	£10,137.38
Petty cash	£20.00
Investments [share in Thames Valley Farmers Market]	£1.00
Accrued income	£85.52
Prepaid expenses	£10.85
Accrued expenses	-£66.00
Total 30th June 2014	£10,188.75

Karen Fidler Treasurer

Our scutineer, Julia Cottee has reviewed the accounts presented above and agrees that they present a true and fair view of the financial activities for the year ending June 2014

Alan Slade next to Rod's sun flower.

Thank you Alan for painting the KoG shed and doing other KoG maintenance jobs



Waiting List

We expect the waiting list will shrink fast. All vacated plots should be passed on to new tenants soon after 1st October; in time for autumn preparation and planting.

If you are on the waiting list please help: **contact Stephanie** if things have changed, say if you do not wish to take up a plot-offer. Tell her how best to contact you; email or phone? We don't want time wasted through wrong details.

The Committee

Provides new plot-holders with a folder of up to date information.

Tries to ensure plots are in good shape for new tenants.

Your Committee does not does not represent individual tenants in dialogue with the land-lord. It does aim to address general matters of concern.

Missing Items

The car park bin lid and the cover to the water trough at the cross roads. Can you find replacements?

KoG Plot Vacancy

A small accessible ground-height plot is available. It comes with a crop of potatoes! Contact Jenny or Stephanie if you are interested.

Learn More About TPLC

The Tilehurst Pools Lands Charity web site <http://www.tilehurstplc.org.uk/> is the place to look. The news section, as DigIt goes to press, does not explain why the last published report and accounts is for 2011. That's over 3 years ago!

Paying your rent

The Charity kindly posted this Dig It along with your rent letter. Please reply promptly; pay your rent, tell Stephanie you are giving up, or have any particular problems.

You can pay in three ways:

- By letter
- In person at the AGM
- On site on Saturday 27th Sep between 10am. and 11am. at the cross roads.

Your letter gives details of your rent for the coming year, where to post your rent payment, and some important safety reminders.

The Trustees rejected the committees request to moderate increases on already high rents. Their decisions are given below.

Summary: Allotment Rent per year

Last year		Due Monday 29 th Sept 2014
£64 (£46)	Full plot (reduced)	£72 (£53)
£40 (£32)	Half plot (reduced)	£45 (£36)
£10	KOG raised bed (no reduction)	£10

Reduced rates only apply to eligible people living in the area of benefit of the Charity, that is Reading (RG30) or the parishes of Holybrook, Theale or Tilehurst. Such tenants will only be charged the reduced rate for one plot. Any more will be charged at the full rate.

The Trustees' policy about taking on a weedy plot is worth remembering. When tenants take on a badly maintained plot and make good progress with it in the first year, the second year is rent-free. Don't forget to remind Stephanie if this applies to you!



Kate Jones

Seed Share?

Do you buy packets of seeds, plant a few, and throw away the rest?

Contact William Macphee, 9414873, 29 Armour Road. w.s.g.macphee@hotmail.co.uk if you would like to join a syndicate to buy and share Seeds.



Closing the Chapel Hill Site

This historic community asset is set to close soon. An area that needs it will lose this amenity. Page 4 tells us what individuals feel about their loss.

Fifteen months ago, the Trustees told Chapel Hill tenants they must leave their plots this September. They hope to sell the land for development, but there is little chance of a successful planning application. The Trustees won't allow the land to be used as allotments in the meantime.

Locals expect unsightly nuisance when the allotment site is vacated. Some rubbish has already arrived. Who will deal with future dumping?

Some Chapel Hill tenants have a new plot elsewhere. Others declined the charity's offer of a main-site plot with no guarantee for the future. They are now trapped by complex circumstances. People want allotment plots near their homes. In spite of a legal 'duty to provide' there are no allotments in Tilehurst Parish for their residents. The nearest allotment sites to the contentious Chapel Hill site are in Pangbourne and Purley, both are in West Berks, or in the borough at Oak Tree Road. RBC will not rent plots to non-residents if it has residents waiting for one. Some Chapel Hill tenants living in West Berks must wait for the Reading list to empty to be offered an Oak Tree Road plot.

All Chapel Hill tenants are sad and regret the changes ahead. Whilst some have new gardening challenges to tackle, some West Berks residents wait for good luck.

We urge the Trustees, especially Cllr Sandra Vickers, RBC representative on the charity, to be flexible and help find a way out of this immediate problem, perhaps even re-consider the future of Chapel Hill site and safeguard the amenity for future generations.



Chapel Hill

A community asset lost?

Wanted: A new home for - 12 fruit trees, 10 blackberry bushes, 45 rows of strawberries, 7 sheds, lots and lots of seasonal produce including some whopping pumpkins and an enormous Jerusalem artichoke, 1 small plastic wheelbarrow (our youngest digger is 19 months), and a bottle of stout... for warding off the slugs. Of course!

It is with great sadness that in six weeks' we shall be hanging up our rakes, winding up the hose pipes, and negotiating tool access with the unfathomably large spiders in our shed for the very last time. This is because in July last year we allotmenters at Chapel Hill, Tilehurst were served with a notice to quit our plots following the decision of our landlords (The Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity) to sell the land on for proposed development. This move has since been fought by ourselves, countless local residents and Councillors of the Reading Borough, but as yet to no avail. Try as we might not to let it get us down, this year's growing efforts have been undertaken with a sense of despondency, and to some degree apathy, as we know any extra effort made now will be in vain.

What a shame.

Indeed, we find ourselves lost as a small fish in the sea of some pretty big issues which both work against and in our favour of keeping our little oasis. On the nay side is the Government's drive to tackle the housing crisis by



Diane
Wakefield

setting a building target of a thousand homes per year to keep pace with population growth and offer the 'boomerang generation' an opportunity to secure a place on the property ladder. Councils are therefore under increasing pressure to find new land for housing that is both viable and sustainable, whilst also protecting the greenbelt, and taking into account other designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our little allotment in this sense is an unavoidable concession to an overwhelming dilemma, but one which works in the favour of the Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity.



Blackberry
Picking

However it has also long been said that 'look after the smaller things, and the bigger things will take care of themselves'. Various studies have proven the health benefits of amenity space, particularly allotments, as they provide an opportunity for exercise, healthy eating, promote a sense of wellbeing and have an enormous positive impact on mental health. In a nation where health services are increasingly under pressure, where children believe cheese grows on plants (and perhaps more worryingly, fish fingers are made of chicken...), and where it is estimated that half of all Britons will be obese by 2050, perhaps the argument to keep our little allotment isn't so trivial after all.

And then there is our community. Many of my fellow allotmenters have been tending their plots for decades (notably the site manager Mike Geater who has been digging away since 1991 and Peter Edwards who planted his first carrot in 1986). Many firm friendships have been cultivated amongst us all, and we support each other on everything from propagating, nurturing and harvesting to what we shall do with our Sunday evening when the latest series of 'Downton' has finished. It is also lovely, when getting stuck in with one's hoeing, that so many passers-by will stop us and ask us questions as to which crops are coming into season, what has been a



Peter Edwards

success or a failure, and overall how much pleasure walking past the site gives them; we are located on a busy thoroughfare.

Extending the pleasure of our allotment has also translated into offering a local nursery school the opportunity to get stuck in, dig up some produce, and take it back to their kitchen to talk about, prepare and taste the food they have seen growing. On a personal level, it has been a wonderful second home for myself and my daughter, whose first visit at 2 weeks has encouraged a love of the outdoors (and getting muddy!), and she likes nothing better than picking whatever is ripe on our plot for her morning snack.

So be it for the big reasons or small, our allotments have transpired into exactly that - 'a lot meant'. Our fellow diggers have described how they will be losing an old friend, a trusted ally who has been there for them when times were tough and the chips were down. We do understand that the pressures of development will continue to march on, but we feel that someone somewhere has lost sight of the broader picture. Look after the little things, the little spaces, the little green lungs of our neighbourhoods, the health and wellbeing of our communities, and the bigger things will look after themselves. Indeed, you get out what you put in.

If only we still had the opportunity.

Amy (Daughter of Nigel Turner, Chapel Hill)

