

Amber helping with the winter digging on Adam's plot



Emergency Contacts

Water
 Polsted Rd supply: William Macphee
 29 Armour Road 0118 9414873
 Armour Hill supply: Rod Mills
 5 Wendover Way 0778 9765652

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 tplc@talktalk.net

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

Inform Stephanie of any wind
 damage to trees on site.

Please come to the
Plotholders' General Meeting
 Village Hall, Victoria Road
 on
Thursday 23rd April at 7:30pm

FREE
 Swap seeds, plants and
 sundries

Discuss site issues

Spring Cleaning

The Trustees Site Inspection will happen on **Saturday 25th April**. They will check Health and Safety matters and that people are following the conditions of their lease.

Please be ready; check your plot for:
No obstacles, sharp bits of metal, steep drops or concealed trip hazards.
All water butts and troughs covered.
Clear path all round the whole plot.
Only kept stuff you know you will use!

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

Chairman's Chat

Well this last winter's not been too bad, fairly dry with a few sharp frosts and very little snow to get excited about. I was hoping for some colder weather to help kill the bugs off. Walking alongside The Thames in January through clouds of midges doesn't seem right. Maybe March and April has got a few weather surprises ahead for us.

I've been able to get on the allotment a bit, due to the ground being reasonably dry and firm. This allowed me to deal with a few tidying jobs I should have cracked before winter. It's also been encouraging to see a few other plot holders enjoying the cold sunny days preparing their growing beds.

I've made my annual pilgrimage to White Tower nursery at Aldermaston to get my seed potatoes, onions and shallots.

Richard Buckingham

Plot Holders on TAS Committee 2014/2015

Chair	Richard Buckingham	PC13	07738 003057			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasurer	Karen Fidler	PB12				
Committee	William Macphee	PC2	Mary Bartlett	AB7a		
	Colin Robinson	AA20	David Griffiths	PB10	Lucie Twivey	kogG2

TAS DIS

RESCUE

That's Rivers and Environmental Spaces Clean Up Event. It is our once a year chance to get rubbish taken away from the site for free. On **Friday 27th and Saturday 28th March**

The event is under new management, RBC Highways. So we will be under scrutiny to ensure all RESCUE regulations are followed precisely. We are lucky that the arrangement has carried on so long, so please do your best. Please get organised well before the event.

All rubbish must be in bags, securely tied at the top and light enough for one person to lift.

Stuff for re-cycling goes in clear bags.

No green waste, or stones are collected.

Old wheel barrows or similar large metal things will be removed by RBC or volunteer plot-holders. Please help by dismantling as much as possible.

Dangerous waste will be dealt with separately so keep it separate. There will be notices in the car park area.

We will leave some bags in the car-park a fortnight before the event to help you get organised. Please take the opportunity to clear up your plot and any odd corners you spot.

Plot-holders will be working at their own risk as usual. There is NO Insurance cover. Leave your bagged rubbish in the car park on the Friday and Saturday. On Saturday the council remove bags of rubbish for land fill or re-cycling. There will be one final collection early on Sunday morning (we do not know when) so NO RUBBISH should be left after Saturday.

To prevent damage to cars by rubbish lorries manoeuvring, there is NO PARKING in the CAR PARK on Saturday and Sunday.

RESCUE services are for registered groups only, so please be alert and deter strangers from dumping stuff.

There are no on-site rubbish collections on any other days. You should take stuff 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.



Problems?

Please let Jenny or Stephanie know immediately if you have problems that prevent you keeping up with allotment tasks. Your plot should be showing signs of being cared for. Don't let things get out of hand. If you cannot cope let us know in good time.

Please be considerate and drive really slowly, maximum 5 mph in Polsted Road and on site. Or park elsewhere and walk to the site.

Spring?

Spring is approaching, but the land is cold and wet. If you stand on wet land you compact the soil squashing out essential air. On the other hand conditions are excellent for clearing brambles and self seeded ash or sycamore saplings. Why not clear out any wild corners that remain?

Be cautious about sowing seeds. You can lose the lot if they rot before germinating. When the weeds start growing is the time to start sowing!

The Trustees will arrange for the taps to be checked and water to be turned on in March. Please keep a careful eye out and report any problems immediately to Stephanie. It is much better to get lots of messages than none.

Free Stuff and Discounts

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

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.

See our website for discounted seeds. Members say they seem very good value and the service is efficient.

Committee Notes

Since the AGM, the committee, led by Mary Bartlett, have arranged a plant swap at the Plot holders' meeting on 23rd April. Any left overs will go to our Hospital fête stall. Please come along and bring things you think someone else might like. It is an opportunity to talk about site issues with other plot holders.

A Facebook group has been set up. For access, log onto Facebook and search for the group "Tilehurst Allotments". Click 'join'. When our admin team have approved you, add tips, photo's and any information that we should all be aware of. Let's make it a fun group.



Looking After Your Soil

We all want lovely soil, light and fluffy, holding a bit of moisture, certainly not claggy. But remember, and take heart; even heavy clay can be transformed by persistent effort.

You need to look after the texture of the soil more than worrying about feeding it. Whilst worms will do a lot of the work, taking compost down into the soil, you have to do your bit and make sure lots of organic stuff gets into the soil.

Compost as much green waste as you can, most weeds make excellent compost, especially mixed with bits of wood or cardboard.

Manure is good. Mrs Drayton 9572379, and Tim Metcalf 9428001 deliver well-rotted muck. Check the price when you phone.

Local stables let you bag up manure and take it away for free, but it will need time to rot down.

Look out for the free bags of pigeon litter left near the main notice board occasionally. This is far too 'rich' to go on the soil immediately or 'neat' but is an excellent addition to your compost. Mix it into your compost heap, and all is fine after a few months.

Fund raising

We will have a stall at the Hospital Show on Saturday 6th June on the Victoria Recreation Ground. We need lots to sell at our annual fund-raising occasion. Shrubs, flowers, garden produce, little veg plants, etc. Please note the date and think of us when you sow seeds and pot things on.

Vacant plots

The committee are disappointed that the Trustees have not arranged for plots to be let promptly. There are too many plots left vacant for too long. The keen people on the waiting list just need the go-ahead to start looking after the land. We hope the Trustees will discharge their duty to behave 'as a prudent businessman' and manage the site efficiently all the time.