

ALLOTMENT NEWS

INFORMATION FOR HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL'S ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

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Inside this issue:

Page:

1 - Editor's Introduction

1 - Bonfires - Guidance

1 Ban the Bonfire? Should your tenancy agreement do so?

2 - Site Representatives - Who Are They

2 - Site Representatives - Report

2 - Useful Websites

2 - Asbestos Removal

3 - Allotment Holders' Forum

3 - Dogs at the Allotments

3 - Sallowbush Tool Loan Scheme

3 - Best Kept Allotment Awards

4 - Composting Facilities

4 - Compost Giveaways

4 - Fork to Fork Project

Who's Who at the Council?

Karen Cameron - Town Clerk (388680)

Jenni Jones - Administration Manager (388687)

Dennis Smith - Parks Manager (388688 or 07770967158)

Councillor Tom Sanderson - Chairman of the Leisure & Community Service Committee (436822)

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the tenth issue of Allotment News! We hope you enjoy this latest edition, sent to all the tenants on our sites at North Street, Primrose Lane, Hartford Road and Sallowbush Road.

On behalf of the Council, I hope that we continue to provide you with a service that meets your needs, by making land available for gardening; maintaining the common areas; managing tenancy agreements; ensuring that suitable steps are taken when ploholders are not able to comply with conditions; and providing a water supply.

We continue to experience a high demand locally for allotment plots, with our waiting list comprising a steady fifty applicants.

Our quarterly meetings with site representatives appear to indicate that we are serving you well. Please do let your local representative know if you are experiencing any difficulties which you think we may be able to help with.

Hope this warm weather bodes well for a good growing season and that your crops are healthy and plentiful. Here's a poem to help things along:

A Gardener's Dream (by Mike Suter)

Rain every night, a good steady fall,
Warm sun all day, and no wind at all.
Earth light and soft, easy to seed,
No couch at all, not even a weed.
All seeds germinate, the carrots no gaps,
Just simple thinning, I was a happy chap.

Broad beans grew well, no sign of black fly,
Runners went mad reaching for the sky.
Pigeons found other brassicas to munch,
Sparrows did not want my peas for lunch.
No slugs seen, there was not a snail,
Across the ground, no silvery trail.

Molluscs and birds left strawberries alone,
Red and ripe but firm they had grown.
With currents and gooseberries the bushes were bowed,
The size of raspas made me really proud.
Salad crops, in abundance grew,
Parsnips and carrots were long straight and true.

Potatoes were large, the best I have seen,
No scab or holes, soil fell away clean.
Harvesting produce, the weather just right,
Not one insect wanted to bite.
Suddenly the sound of wind and of rain,
I had fallen asleep in the shed again!

Karen Cameron, Town Clerk

Bonfires

Although bonfires are a traditional method for disposing of garden rubbish, they are no longer considered to be the most environmentally friendly option. Compost your rubbish wherever possible.

It is an offence to cause a nuisance by lighting bonfires. Complaints made to the Huntingdonshire District or Town Council will be investigated and formal action may be taken if a statutory nuisance is found to exist.

Source: Huntingdonshire District Council website at www.huntsdc.gov.uk.

BAN THE BONFIRE?

Allotment Site Representatives and Management consider this is a question that should be asked of plotters at the Annual Forum.

Tenancy conditions currently do not expressly prohibit bonfires, but it has been suggested that they should do so.

This year we certainly received a considerable number of complaints about bonfires. And we think that once our new composting facilities are up and running, the argument for bonfires as a means of disposing of garden rubbish will no longer be a valid one.

What do you think? Make sure your view is counted in the debate by attending the Allotment Holders Forum on 4th August 2009. Note the date in your diary now.

Allotment Site Representatives

Who are they?

Site	Name	Telephone
North Street	Annie Welsh	384082
	Chris Harman	468124
	Mr & Mrs J Allgood	353737
Hartford Road	Liz & Martin Zientek	
Primrose Lane	Mr G Myhill	370250
	Vacant	
Sallowbush Road	Reg Wilcox	380231

What do they do?

- receive comments and complaints from plot holders at their site and bring these to the attention of Town Council allotments' management.
- regularly inspect and report to the Town Council's management any untidy and uncultivated plots on their site.
- report to Town Council management any security issues or defects requiring maintenance.
- receive notification from allotments management when letters are sent to plot holders on their site reminding them of the need to cultivate and keep tidy their plots.

We currently have a vacancy for a site representative for the Primrose Lane allotments site. Please contact Jenni Jones, Allotments Administrator, on 01480 388687 or e-mail jenni.jones@huntingdowntown.gov.uk if you would like to represent your site colleagues.

News from the Allotments Site Representatives

Your site representatives met with the Council's Allotments Service Managers in December 2008 and at the beginning of April 2009.

Most of the matters discussed are mentioned elsewhere in this issue of your Allotments News.

We are aware that some plotters have been experiencing difficulties using the combination locks on site gates and hope gradually that where troublesome locks have been replaced, these are now becoming easier to use.

Combination locks, on which the codes may be changed periodically, are a far more cost effective means of security than padlocks, the keys for which can be expensive to replace over time.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Have you visited www.myallotmentplot.co.uk yet?

ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Please note that if you have any old asbestos you wish to dispose of, this material must be handled carefully and considerately.

Donarbon Waste Management has two facilities where householders can dispose of asbestos safely, one is at Alconbury Hill and the other is at Waterbeach. They will only accept undamaged asbestos in whole sheets, and it must be properly bagged. Bags for disposing of asbestos are available free of charge from Huntingdonshire District Council's Operations Division. This service is only available to domestic residents of Huntingdonshire. Please take proof of address when you collect your bags, e.g. Council tax bill, utility bill, etc.

For more information please call 01480 388640.

The only registered Asbestos Removal Contractors' Association in Cambridgeshire is Kershaw Contracting Services Ltd, telephone 01322 316997.

Source: Huntingdonshire District Council website at www.huntsdc.gov.uk.

Allotment Holders Forum

This year's Forum will take place at the Commemoration Hall, at 7.00pm, on Tuesday 4th August 2009.

We are hoping that this year the speaker's topic will either be Allotments Regeneration or that a representative from the Environment Agency might attend to talk about environmentally friendly practice for Gardeners.

Prizes will be awarded for the Best kept Allotment, Best Newcomer and Best Young Person's Allotment. And all ploholders will have an opportunity to hear about the Council's strategy for Allotments service provision and to ask questions or comment about the service.

You will receive an agenda prior to the meeting and we look forward to welcoming you there.

DOGS ON LEADS.....

Don't spoil it for other dog owners. Please keep your dog on a lead, so they do not cause a nuisance to other ploholders.



Your tenancy agreement states that dogs are not allowed on the Allotment Sites, though the Council tolerates this for dogs which are kept under control.

SALLOWBUSH TOOL SCHEME

Although the tool loan scheme is well used at Sallowbush Road, there seems a lack of interest from the other three allotment sites. Perhaps as new plot holders take up their tenancies, news about the tool sharing scheme is not passed on? Power tools may be particularly of benefit to new tenants.

It is, of course, quite possible that collection and delivery back to the Sallowbush Road Site is simply not worth the effort for tenants at the other sites. With this in mind, I wonder whether ploholders at the North Street, Primrose Lane and Hartford Road sites would have an interest in starting their own tool loan scheme?

Such a scheme would, of course, require majority support at each of the sites and the support of a site representative to run and take responsibility for the scheme. The rules for operating and loans could be agreed by the site tenants.

Although I'm as busy as you are on the allotments, I would be willing to find time to advise on the set up and funding of a tool loan scheme, if required. I do also have some useful experience in obtaining bargain-priced equipment.

Should any small groups interested in starting their own tool loan scheme be interested, I'd be pleased to help. A large site-sized steel container could be made available, if required.

Reg Wilcox

Site Representative, Sallowbush Road Allotments.

BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT AWARDS

The Judges will be visiting the sites this year sometime in July. Everyone has an opportunity to take part in this annual competition, prizes for which are awarded at the Annual Allotment Holders Forum. The Best Kept Allotment winner receives the Hodson Challenge Cup for one year and second and third prizes are also awarded. There's an award for the best Newcomer and this year there will also be an award for the best Young Person's plot.

COMPOSTING FACILITIES

The Council's budget of expenditure for 2009/10 includes provision to create a composting facility at the Sallowbush Road Allotments site, where it is intended that all the green waste from the sites at North Street, Primrose Lane, Hatrford Road & Sallowbush Road can be processed for composting, together with all the green waste collected from the parks, gardens and open spaces owned and managed in Huntingdon by the Town Council.

Providing that a licence to store this recycled waste can be obtained from the Environment Agency, we hope to have the facility built and the compost being processed by the Council's staff by the summer months.

We are particularly pleased that this project will meet some of the plotters' demand for compost as well as reducing the need for waste skips and the associated landfill costs. Our carbon footprint will be further reduced by reducing the transportation of compost deliveries and waste removal.

Compost Giveaways

Organised by Huntingdonshire District Council, Giveaways will take place this year over the two week period commencing 11th May 2009. Two pallets loaded with 50 bags each have been ordered for delivery to each of the Allotment Sites at North Street, Primrose Lane, Sallowbush Road and Hartford Road. Don't miss your free allocation.

FORK TO FORK

HUNTINGDON'S COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT & FOOD EDUCATION PROJECT BID

A bid is being submitted to the BIG LOTTERY to fund a Community Allotment & Food Education project. The plan is to continue community work on the Sallowbush Road Allotment site, develop a dedicated food garden within the grounds of St Peter's Secondary School and reach out to every age group in the local community to promote an understanding of good food and a balanced diet, through partnership working.

Organisations lending support to the scheme include the Huntingdon Youth Centre; Cambridgeshire Community Services; Huntingdon Allotment Association; Huntingdon District Council; Huntingdon Regional College; Huntingdon Town Children's Centre; Huntingdon Town Council; Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations and Natural High. Following a successful award, organisers hope for a late-summer launch and the scheme will cover a five year period.

Food gardens have been developing in Huntingdon Junior, St John's and Thongsley Fields primary schools and their respective feeder nurseries, initiated by the 'Hunts for Good Food' programme in 2004. If the "Fork to Fork" Project bid is successful, it aims to help sustain these existing gardens, create new ones where appropriate and provide the opportunity for pupils moving up from primary to secondary school, to continue practising their skills of growing, preparing and cooking good food for themselves and the people around them, with particular emphasis on assisting novice allotments holders.

For more information or to become involved, please contact Jack Waterfall, e-mail jack.waterfall@foodskills.org or Julian Ayres, e-mail naturalhigh@btconnect.com.