

Western Wards Allotment Association

Salisbury Site Managers

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Salisbury Green Allotment Site – a 2023 spring season update

Dear Plot Holder,

Clocks have gone forward, it's getting warmer and the spring season has almost finally arrived.

To welcome the spring season, a **spring social gathering** has been arranged at the Cricket Club on **Saturday 15th April 2023 between 3pm and 5pm**. All will be very welcome for a social drink and Martin and I will be available to answer questions about site projects and anything else you may care to ask. I am sure you will wish to say hello to friends and exchange good planting ideas with fellow plot holders. It's a good time to swap seeds if you have some spare. Many thanks to Hazel Oliphant, the cricket club secretary and plot holder for 36A(1) for hosting the event.

Other allotment matters of interest are as follows:-

1. Vacancy for WWAA Chairman

The Western Wards Allotment Association continues to be very successful with our group of five sites fully occupied and more people always wanting to come and experience the pleasure of working the land and meeting like-minded people.

The Association operates with a Board of Trustees and a management team, all of whom are volunteers but we are looking for more people to come and join us.

We continue to have a vacancy for a Chair for the Association. The Chair's role is to guide and lead the association. If you are interested in finding out more about this role or any of our roles please contact your site manager, the Treasurer or Secretary.

2. Outdoor Eco Composting Toilet No 2

Following the building of the first eco composting toilet at the lower end of our allotment site, the trial building has been judged as a success.

As a result, work has started to build a second toilet facility close to the Equipment Container at the top end of the allotment. This will provide a toilet to plot holders in that area of the site.

The Dunster House composting toilet building will cost £1299 plus additional foundation and other building costs. We seek a grant towards the costs when we have identified a sponsor. For those who might be interested, the Dunster House range of eco toilets can be found at https://dunsterhouse.co.uk/eco_toilets.

3 Site vacancies and waiting list

There are 20 persons listed on the 'Sarisbury Green allotment site waiting list', as I write, some of whom have been waiting for nearly eighteen months. For those who have reached the top of the list and secured a plot, we welcome:-

Plot 2b Robin Stroulger;
Plot 9b(1) Steve Snell (wef 1.10.23)
Plot 10b(2) Dawn Hammond (wef 1.4.23)
Plot 13a(2) Evelyn and Mike Gibbons
Plot 36b(1) Lorna Bullen

You and your families are very welcome to Sarisbury Green allotment site, and I am sure your allotment neighbours will provide any advice or support you may need.

4 Sarisbury Site Project work

Following project work carried out by site managers and volunteers, including Mr Ben Spraggon, the digger driver, over the winter, work has continued to build:-

- The concrete base for the new eco composting toilet next to the container.
- A new chippings and manure bin will be installed next to the **middle set of double gates** opposite the Junior School. The timber for the installation was delivered by a local merchant on Tuesday 21st March. The design for this installation will be the same as the one next to the Equipment Container. This new facility will be of considerable benefit to plot holders in the middle of the site. Chippings and a supply of horse manure will be arranged.
- Improvements have been made to the perimeter hedge line next to plot 20a and middle grass area by cutting back the hedge and leveling out banks of soil.
- Improvements to the perimeter hedge line next to plots 19b, 20b and 21b by leveling out banks of accumulated soil, removing large quantities of plastic rubbish and disposing of it properly, demolishing two long disused sheds creating more space and burning the rotten wood.
- Work has been undertaken to support the Sarisbury Green Junior School plot by planning to install mini sleepers for raised beds paid for by the school and helping tidy up the plot after the winter season.
- A solar panel powered water pump and filtration system has been purchased for our wild life pond on the corner area to improve the quality of the water. We are also very grateful to Liz Wood Plot 28a for her continuing hard work planting shrubs and bulbs and maintaining the corner area project. It is pleasing to see frogs, newts and other wild life in the pond and birds using the 'feeders'. Liz welcomes any volunteer support to work on the project.

5. Water and Water Butts

I am pleased to report that the mains water supply has been turned back on.

Please inspect your hosepipes feeding water butts to ensure there are no leaks especially where they have become inadvertently buried in the ground. Water is now the most expensive resource we use.

In relation to water butts on plots, most have no 'cover' over them. In the warmer weather, birds tend to perch on the edges of the water butt in an attempt to drink or bathe their feathers. Unfortunately, some drown in the attempt. To protect birds, it would be good practice to place a cover over the top of water butt using simple wire mesh, a piece of board or, if you have one, a purpose made cover.

6. Managing Extreme Weather Conditions

At the request of the WWAA Management Committee and mindful of the need to address climate change conditions, your site managers have published a report on the Management of Extreme Weather Conditions on the WWAA website documents section <https://www.wwaa.org.uk/new>.

The report advocates the need to store rain water on a much larger scale than we currently do and at Sarisbury this year, we are going to experiment with the collection of rain water in two 1000 litre 'IBC' water tanks from the roof of the Equipment Container. When collected, the rain water will provide a store for use in excessively hot conditions when there is the potential for hosepipe bans. These will be linked to a new rain water standpipe. If successful, the systems will be rolled out across the site as money and time for installation allows.

The new chippings and manure bins have also been installed to encourage the use of mulches and greater use of manure and compost to preserve water.

An information leaflet for managing extreme weather is being drafted by the Hon Secretary Julie Prescott and will be circulated when published.

7. WWAA - Affiliation to the Royal Horticultural Society

We would remind tenants that the WWAA as an organisation is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society. An RHS Affiliated Society Garden Entry Card has been issued to the WWAA which gives a 30% reduction on the entry fee for one person and a guest to one of the following RHS Gardens:-

- Wisley; Hyde Hall, Essex;
- Harlow Carr, North Yorks;
- Rosemoor Devon;
- Bridgewater, Salford, Manchester

If any WWAA member wishes to make use of the card (you need to show it when you arrive at the venues), contact John Parsons at the Trading Hut and he will make it available. John's telephone number is 01329 665008.

8. Fareham in Bloom Competition

During 2019, Sarisbury Green Allotment Site was judged as part of Fareham in Bloom competition and, for the first time, I was delighted when the site was awarded a Gold Award. Disappointingly, the competition was cancelled in 2020, 2021 and 2022. If the competition goes ahead, we hope that we can repeat our success in 2023.

I am sure that there will be one or two plot holders who will separately apply to have their plots judged and the process for application can be found on

https://www.fareham.gov.uk/leisure/open_spaces/fareham_in_bloom/farehaminbloom.aspx.

9 Dates for your diaries - Local Horticultural and other Shows

I have been advised that:-

- Warsash Horticultural Society 'Plant Sale' will be held at Victory Hall on Saturday 13th May 2023. Doors open at 8am;
- Sarisbury 'Show on the Green' (at which the WWAA will have a stand) on Saturday 10th June 2023;
- Sarisbury Community Centre Horticultural Show on Saturday 12th August 2023
- Warsash Village Garden Show on Saturday 9th September 2023.
- Botley Horticultural Show also on Saturday 9th September 2023

It would be good to see some Sarisbury Green plot holders' exhibit their vegetables or flower arrangements for judging at the Sarisbury, Warsash or Botley Horticultural events. We have done very well in past years.

10 Health and Safety on Site

I am sure you will all agree that it is important for the site to be as safe as possible. In recent times, two plot holders we know about have tripped and fallen where there are deep gaps between paths and cultivated ground. These can trip the unwary and need to be filled in with soil to avoid causing injury.

11. The WWAA Jim Lett 'Trading Hut' at Hunts Pond Road

The Trading Hut is open on Sundays from 10.00am until 12.00 noon. The shop is stocked with a good range of products at very cost effective prices for WWAA members. Keep in touch with the shop opening and the range of products available at <https://www.wwaa.org.uk/new/home> and follow the link to the Trading Hut.

12. 'Allotment Road' - Facebook

I am constantly amazed that we have so many members using our 'Allotment Road' Facebook account. Clearly, there are a lot of non plot holders interested in what we do. Many thanks to Abigail Harrison Plot 31B for the work she does moderating the account. Abigail may be contacted for guidance on 'abigail.attic@gmail.com'.

13. The WWAA website - <https://www.wwaa.org.uk/new/>

The WWAA website administrator is Rona Neilson. She works very hard to maintain the website on our behalf. If you have any photographs or items of interest which can be published on the website, Rona would be pleased to hear from you, contact details on the WWAA website 'Who to contact'.

14 Dave, the Scrap Metal Man

As most of you are aware, we use a scrap metal merchant 'Dave' telephone number 07772 609679 to collect and dispose of unwanted metals from the site. He collects on request and is very reliable.

15 Thank you

Finally, Martin and I in our site management roles would like to thank all of you who have contributed in any way to the improvement of the site.

Robin Green and Martin Wheeler, Joint Site Managers