

Western Wards Allotment Association

Salisbury Site Managers

Robin Green email - robin.green505@gmail.com

Martin Wheeler e mail – firefly21@hotmail.com

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Salisbury Allotment Site – An Autumn Update 2020

Dear Plot Holder,

2020 - An extraordinary year

I am sure you will agree that 2020 has been a most extraordinary year. The spring season was unusually dry, periods in the summer when the temperature was over 30 degrees and now the autumn season is very wet, with a month's rain in just one weekend. There have been an unusual number of storms during the year damaging structures and crops - and to top it all, we have been obliged to maintain our plots within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic regulations.

Nonetheless in this period, the Salisbury Green site appearance continues to improve, thanks to your efforts, 100% of plots let and there is a healthy list of applicants waiting for plot vacancies.

Currently, allotment plots are much in demand in this area – why? – as we all know, there is a huge increase in housing development in this area - gardens for new housing have limited space. Due to the pandemic and working at home, people have more time available. Popular TV programmes, like Gardeners' World, promote the growing of vegetables and health benefits.

Waiting List and Plot Vacancies

There are currently 14 persons listed on the Salisbury allotment waiting list for plots - but the good news is that none have been waiting for more than 3 months for a vacancy.

As at the publication date of this newsletter, there were 2 unexpected plot vacancies - 20a (1) 5 rods and 21a (1) 4 rods, but these plots have already been offered to the next 2 persons on the waiting list. We quite expect these plots to be leased very soon.

Welcome to New Members

During this autumn season, we welcome the following ten new plot holders to the site:-

Amanda WILKIE - Plot 16b (2);

Sarah PASTIDES and Dr Ian WIGHTMAN - Plot 27b (1);

Catherine ALLEN and Anna WAGHORN - Plot 6a (1);

David WEST - 29b (1)

Alison HARFIELD - 20a (2)

Sharon ELISE and Nick HALL - 7a (2)

Matthew KNIGHT - Plot 11a (1)

You are all very welcome to Salisbury allotment site and I am sure your allotment neighbours will provide any advice or support you may need.

Leavers

We wish all those who have 'retired' in this period from allotment keeping at Sarisbury and thank you for your contribution to the site.

Amongst the 'leavers', we say 'farewell' to Roy DEAL, Plot 6a (1) who, after some 20 years at the Sarisbury Green site, has decided to retire from allotment keeping. We wish him well in the future and thank him for his considerable commitment to allotment keeping over many years. In particular, Roy will be remembered for his loyal support to the former site manager, Ray Baldwin, at a time when Ray was very ill. Roy continued to provide support to the site and new managers to ensure a smooth transition.

Southern Water Board Inspection – August 2020

During July this year, the Southern Water Board made a surprise inspection of the mains water facilities at Sarisbury Green allotment site and other WWAA allotment sites under the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999 - Inspection of Water Installations.

It will come as no surprise to plot holders that the Southern Water Board Inspector was critical of our standpipe facilities and imposed immediate requirements to rectify the situation. The same rigorous inspection process was also applied to Warsash, Hunts Pond Road and Lodge Road allotment sites which resulted in similar requirements.

To rectify the situation, site managers have agreed to work with WWAA colleagues to improve the standpipe standards. Works will be commenced on 9th October. The costs will be paid from WWAA central funds.

This should not affect water supply to standpipes for the time being. However, as plot holders are aware, there is a FBC lease requirement for managers to turn off mains water supply on or soon after 1st November for the winter.

Western Wards Allotment Association

Annual General Meeting

As highlighted in the summer newsletter, the WWAA Annual General Meeting (AGM) would normally be held in November each year. Due to the coronavirus restrictions, the AGM 2020 has been postponed '*sine die*' and we are hopeful that the meeting can be reinstated in January or February 2021. The venue is likely to be St John's Church rooms, Locks Heath and plot holders will be notified when a date has been re-arranged. Much will depend on the continued spread of the virus and government restrictions.

Due to committee resignations during 2020 and to assure continuity, the posts of Chairman and Hon. Secretary have been filled on a temporary basis. I am very grateful to one plot holder at Sarisbury who has put her name forward for election to fill the post of Hon. Secretary on a permanent basis.

WWAA Committee Meetings

During the pandemic, your WWAA committee has continued to meet using Zoom facilities, discussing essential area and site issues and agreeing solutions. For those who may be interested, the minutes for those meetings have been published by the WWAA website manager Rona Neilson and may be found using the internet address – <https://www.wvaa.org.uk/new/>

Facebook Social Media – 'Allotment Road'

It is pleasing to note the growing number of plot holders using and contributing to 'Allotment Road', our social media account. The moderator, Abigail Harrison, Plot 31B, is always available to advise new plot holders who would like to take part. Abigail's email address is 'abigail.attic@gmail.com'

Fareham Borough Council - Site Inspection

During July this year, the site was inspected by Matt Wakefield, an officer of the Fareham Borough Council Parks and Allotments Department, in accordance with the terms of the lease of the site to the WWAA. At the conclusion of the inspection, Matt gave managers some positive feedback about the state of the site in general terms, which was good.

However, Matt did make a few observations which we draw to your attention:-

- A few grass pathways between plots were excessively wide. He felt that plot holders were not making maximum use of the ground which could be cultivated on their plot and that pathways could be trimmed to create more growing opportunities;
- In addition, a few plots had excessive uncultivated grass areas. It is a requirement of the lease that 80% of a plot should be cultivated;
- In a few cases, there are deep gaps between the pathway and cultivated ground. These can trip the unwary and need to be filled in with soil to avoid causing injury;
- A few plot holders were found to be storing white plastic bags containing compost for growing strawberries. The compost should be used and plastic bags safely disposed of please. Heaps of the bags can be a 'haven' for rats and other vermin.
- There should be no use of chemicals to kill weeds on plots as neighbouring plots might be affected.

Tenancy Reminders

Bonfires

Thank you to all plot holders for observing the new rule that a bonfire on the allotment site shall not be lit during the months of June, July and August.

Bonfires lit on the allotment site between the months of September to May to burn wood and accumulated rubbish are permitted but should **not be lit** during the daytime:-

- more than two hours before sunset and,
- as far as possible, ensure that the wind is blowing smoke away from neighbouring properties/dwellings;
- bonfires must be attended when alight and be of a manageable size;
- the burning of plastics, carpets, tyres, MDF and laminated wood is prohibited. A skip will be provided on at least one occasion during the year, usually the autumn, for disposal of such materials.

Water Standpipes

Whilst walking the site during the summer, a few standpipe taps have been found by managers to have been left running. I am sure that I don't need to remind plot holders that water is very expensive and a valuable commodity. Care should be taken to ensure that taps, when turned on, are monitored and never left running unattended. They must be fully turned off after use.

Hoses

Over time, hoses supplying some plots with water have become buried below ground. Whilst this may be a positive act to avoid trip hazards, hosepipes need to be periodically inspected to ensure that the rubber/plastic has not perished to the extent that the hose leaks. Wasted water costs us all money.

The WAAA 'Trading Hut' at Hunts Pond Road

John Parsons, the WAAA shop manager has given notice that the Trading Hut will close for the Christmas and New Year period on 20th December 2020 and re-open on 24th January 2021.

Currently, there are still over-winter onions, both red and white, shallots, beans, peas and other seeds to be purchased. With effect from 21st February 2021, new potatoes, shallots, peas and beans will be on sale.

The Trading Hut is open for business between 10am and 12noon on a Sunday. There will be a requirement for visiting customers to wear 'face masks' and a maximum of 3 persons admitted at one time.

Marketing Allotment Keeping and Displays

It has been a great shame that there have been no horticultural shows in the area during the summer months due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. We hope that local horticultural shows will resume in 2021 and that Sarisbury Green allotment keepers will plan to exhibit their produce. Such events are an opportunity to win prizes and a good opportunity to market the benefits of allotment keeping to the community.

In particular, two dates for your 2021 diary. We have been given notice that Warsash Horticultural Society have planned a plant sale at Victory Hall on Saturday 7th May 2021 as well as the Warsash Village Garden Show on Saturday 4th September 2021, but these are subject to COVID restrictions which may be applicable at the time.

Best wishes and happy allotment keeping,

Robin Green and Martin Wheeler
Joint Allotment Site Managers