

## Western Wards Allotment Association

Salisbury Site Managers

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### Salisbury Green Allotment Site – a 2021 spring season update

Dear Plot Holder,

Spring has finally arrived after a wet and sometimes windy winter season and it's good to see so many of you cultivating your plots ready for planting. Remember that the coronavirus pandemic is still with us and please take appropriate precautions when you visit.

Amongst our local Western Wards community, there is currently great interest in allotment keeping but, sadly, not enough allotment space to satisfy increasing demand. It is clear that the surge in interest results from new housing development in the area with small gardens, the pandemic where people are working from home and have more time for hobbies and TV programmes, like Gardeners World, encouraging people to 'grow your own' vegetables. The WWAA is currently raising the issue with Sean Woodward, Fareham Borough Council to promote consideration for additional sites in the Western Wards area.

Other topical matters of interest are as follows:-

#### 1. WWAA - Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020

The 'on line' WWAA AGM 2020 took place using 'Zoom' facilities on Thursday 25th February 2021 at 7.30pm. After a short meeting, a new Association Chairman Avoen Perryman (Hunts Pond Road plot holder), new Hon. Treasurer Paul Rann (Warsash plot holder) and new Hon. Secretary our own Julie Prescott (Salisbury Green Plot 35A(2)) were voted into their new roles.

I am delighted to report that Martin Wheeler was formally voted in as the Salisbury Green Second Site Manager. Martin is the plot holder for 8A (1) and will be well known to many of you at the upper end of the allotment.

The WWAA website has been updated and you will find the draft minutes of the AGM have been published on <https://www.wwaa.org.uk/new/>

#### 2. Plot Vacancies

There are currently **no vacant plots** available on the Salisbury Green site. We have 100% occupation of available plots. As I write, there are now 20 persons on the 'Salisbury Green allotment site waiting list'. Accordingly, the waiting list has been closed until there are further vacancies occurring, but the names of interested persons who contact us are being recorded.

#### 3. New Plot Holder

We welcome to the Salisbury Allotment Site 1 **new plot holder** who has joined us during the winter months:

Ashley Ryan - Plot 25B(2)

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

#### **4. Water and Water Butts**

I am pleased to report that the water supply has been turned back on. Standpipes have been checked and adjacent butts filled with some water.

During 2020, costs of water supplied by the Southern Water Board almost doubled and were 15% of our income. This was a substantial increase over 2019 and was understandably due to plots being watered during the very dry spring and summer seasons. Meter readings and costs will be monitored during 2021.

Please inspect your hosepipes feeding water butts to ensure there are no leaks especially where they have become inadvertently buried in the ground.

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.

#### **5. WWAA - Affiliation to the Royal Horticultural Society**

The WWAA as an organisation is affiliated to the RHS. 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.

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.

#### **6. Rodents**

From time to time, the rat population nesting under sheds and in compost heaps becomes a nuisance and it is necessary to take action. The fox population locally generally keeps rats under control but site management has purchased three rat boxes from B&Q which contain blocks of Difethialone as an active ingredient for use when necessary. The use of boxes prevents other animals from accessing the poison and being affected. If you have a problem with rodents and need help, please ask to use one rather than laying down poison direct.

#### **7. Slug Control—Information provided by Plot Holder Penny Daish Plot 26A**

Penny reports - protecting our seedlings & crops from voracious slugs and snails is a constant challenge and slug pellets containing Metaldehyde are [or have been] one way to kill gastropods efficiently. Unfortunately this product also kills either directly or indirectly a host of other wild life, especially birds, toads and hedgehogs. Metaldehyde is also highly toxic to both dogs and cats, even in small amounts if ingested.

The product is to be banned by legislation. The ban on Metaldehyde will be applicable to all users across the whole of Great Britain and will be phased over an 18 month period to give growers time to switch to alternative measures. From 31 March 2021, no further supply will be permitted but distributors can still sell stocks and use can continue until 31 March 2022. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 it will then be illegal to sell and use Metaldehyde products.

Alternative ways of protecting our crops will have to be used very soon and a quick Google search suggests:

- Coffee grounds spread round plants you want to protect do deter slugs and snails;
- Beer Traps. Slugs love beer, apparently;

- Eggs shells and sea shells;
- Diatomaceous earth (DE);
- Copper tape;
- Slug repellent plants/Slug attractive plants;
- Recycled wool waste pellets;
- Nematodes.

It is also worth considering that slugs and snails have an important role in the food chain. They provide food for all sorts of mammals, birds, slow worms, earthworms, insects and they are part of the natural balance. Upset that balance by removing them and we can do a lot of harm. So another useful way of control is to provide a safe environment to encourage & support their predators.

Let's be proactive on our allotment plots and start using the alternative ways of slug control immediately in order to protect the birds and wildlife we love to see.

### **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 but we are hopeful that it will be re-instated in 2021 and that we can repeat our 2019 success.

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

### **9. Local Horticultural Shows**

Sadly and due to the coronavirus pandemic, local horticultural events were cancelled in 2020. (At the time of publication, the following will be held in 2021)

- Sarisbury Show on the Green - I have also been advised that there are proposals to hold the Sarisbury 'Show on the Green' on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021. The show is intended to incorporate a mini horticultural show. This will replace the local horticultural show usually held in the Community Centre.
- Warsash Village Garden Show and the postponed 'Plant Sale' – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Both events are a bit of fun after a difficult year and it would be good to see some Sarisbury Green plot holders' exhibit their flower arrangements or vegetables for judging. We have done very well in the past two 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. During the year, 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. 'Allotment Road' - Facebook**

I am amazed that we have over 170 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](mailto:abigail.attic@gmail.com).

### **12. The WWAA website - <https://www.wwaa.org.uk/new/>**

The WWAA website administrator is Rona Neilson who 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. Her email address is [rona\\_neilson@btinternet.com](mailto:rona_neilson@btinternet.com).

### **13. Thank you**

Finally, Martin and I in our site management roles would like to thank all of you who have provided practical support to us. It is much appreciated.

For our part, we will continue to do whatever we can to ensure Sarisbury Green Allotment site is a safe, secure, well maintained and a productive site for current and future plot holders.

Happy allotment keeping and best wishes,

**Robin Green (32B) and Martin Wheeler (8A1)**

**Joint Site Managers**