

Henley Allotments Association Newsletter

www.henleyallotments.org.uk

Jan/Feb/March 2010

Please note that this edition of the newsletter will be **posted** to all plot holders as a one-off. The next newsletter will be e mailed and posted as normal.

Chairman's tips

New Zealand is lovely at this time of year!

Fantastic New WebSite

The website has been completely re-vamped and re-launched in early February. Graham Jones, Jon Lock and Liz Reid have spent the last three months working on this project, and the site is now completely up-to-date. The site includes all kinds of information about how to rent an allotment, information for new plot holders, Committee members and contact details, site maps, weather forecasts, social events, newsletter, minutes of the AA meetings, recipes, links to various gardening sites and much more. A plot holders' chat room is also available, which will allow plot holders to swap advice/produce/ideas as the seasons progress. If you regularly use the internet, please spend a few minutes visiting the new website www.henleyallotments.org.uk. It really is packed full of information. Please send any comments you have about the new site to us, so that we can continue to improve it during the next few months.

Thanks again to Graham, Jon and Liz for all their hard work in producing an excellent interactive site, full of great content.

General Update

Henley Town Council is looking for extra allotments to help reduce the waiting list. There are no obvious options: purchasing land would be very expensive, so it is looking to convert some of the land it already owns or to rent private land on a long term lease. The waiting time for a plot is rapidly increasing, as the ability to split 10 pole plots in to 2 x 5 poles has reached saturation point, and it is anticipated that the current waiting list of 19 will take up to a year to accommodate. Henley Town Council is very keen to support this amenity, and is hopeful of providing more allotments for the future. We will keep you updated!

Intruders

The Allotments Association is looking into producing permanent signs for the site notice boards, advising plot holders what they should do if they see intruders on the allotments. As you will know, there has been some vandalism in the past few months, and it is important that tenants know what they should do if they see anyone acting suspiciously.

Tenants should NOT keep valuable items on site. PLEASE can everyone ensure if you are the last person on the site that you ALWAYS lock the gate behind you.

Insurance

Some tenants have asked for an update on insurance.

The Allotments Association pays an annual fee for site insurance for both sites. This covers the following: Public and Products Liability insurance (covers injury to a third party on one of our sites), Employers' Liability insurance (covers any member doing work for the Association), and Personal Accident insurance (covers members engaged in Association business).

Insurance to cover sheds (theft and vandalism) has to be taken out by individual plot holders. This insurance is very expensive, and requires tenants to comply with stringent security measures, e.g. shed doors to be secured by 5 lever mortice dead-locks or stout locking bars and 5 lever close-shackle padlocks; all windows to be protected by stout metal bars or grilles.

There is usually a £100 excess, and the premiums are around £20 per £100 sum insured, with a minimum premium of £15 + 5% insurance tax and £7 admin fee.

Anyone wanting to find out more on this should visit:

www.newspaceinsurance.co.uk

Watermans Site update

The AA has proposed to the Council that a 6'6" deer fence should be erected around 2 sides of the Watermans site. This should help keep out the herd of deer that regularly visits the site.

Conversations are continuing between the Council and the AA, approval still needs to be given, and the funding for this project still needs to be confirmed.

It is hoped that 1/3rd of the cost will be borne by the Council, 1/3rd of the cost be paid for out of existing AA funds, and the final 1/3rd be paid for by voluntary contributions from Watermans plot holders. Doug Richards, Site Manager, has spoken to a number of Watermans plot holders, to see if they would be willing to contribute towards this project, and they have all said that they would be happy to give a one-off donation to help with costs. We will continue to keep you informed of developments: watch this space!

Greencroft

The new cricket pavilion is well underway, and tenants will be able to use the facilities of the pavilion once it is completed (in May 2010). This will include use of the toilet facilities, as well as the kitchen (bring your own teabags and milk!).

Peter Herbert is currently cleaning and maintaining 12 water pumps, which will be replaced in Spring.

Dates for your Diary

Firm dates have been set for the following events:

Gardeners' Question Time : Thursday 20th May at Henley Town Hall. This event is in support of the Mayor's Charities and is an extra date in the calendar. There will be a panel of 5 at the top table, and questions on all horticultural problems are welcome. This event is being held in conjunction with Henley-in-Bloom.

Plant and Seed Sale/Swap: Saturday 22nd May in the Market Place. Please plant extra seeds when planting for your plot, to support this event. Last year the Association made £150 at the sale, despite the windy and cold weather. The town is expected to be very busy this weekend, as this event coincides with the Henley Food Festival.

Plot holders Boat Trip : Thursday 3rd June. Tickets £15 each. This popular annual event is being held later in the season than normal and so warm weather and light evenings will be a bonus. Format as ever, with delicious home made food on board. More details to follow in the next newsletter.

A talk on Beekeeping by Henley Wildlife Group will be held on Tuesday 2nd March in the Barn, 19.30 start. Some tenants have asked about beekeeping on the allotments, and this talk will give an insight into what is required. Tickets are £2 each, and anyone interested is very welcome.

Past Events

Gardener's Question Time

A full house of over 70 people attended this event on November 19th 2009, held in conjunction with Henley-in-Bloom, at the Town Hall. Martin Sheldrake of Toad Hall garden centre gave an excellent talk on Winter Planting, and Sue Rippon, Master Composter, gave advice on composting. A large assortment of horticultural questions was answered by the panel of 5, which included Doug Richards, Andrew Hawkins and Liz Cope. A glass of wine was enjoyed by many after the event, which was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative evening.

Excellent Christmas Dinner

Over 40 people attended the annual Christmas Dinner at Christchurch on December 17th 2009. Doug Richards and the team at Christchurch cooked an outstanding 4 course Christmas Dinner, including a flaming pudding! The Mayor attended the event, and a good time was had by all! Thank you Doug and the team for all your hard work!