

Issue 15

October 2016



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Allotment Newsletter

A Message from the Property Manager

Welcome to the latest issue of the Allotment Newsletter. It has been a busy year, with the appointment of Stephen Le Gallez as Property Maintenance Officer, as well as the new software system going live.

As you may have noticed, Steve has been busy installing the new notice boards. We hope you like them. The next stage is to put an up to date site plan in each notice board, along with a copy of this newsletter and any other relevant notices. If you would like to display a notice please contact Claire Adams on 01243 788502 or by email c.adams@chichestercity.gov.uk to make your request.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - Rent Increases

Historically we have invoiced allotment rents in October for the rental period of 1st April to 31st March, 6 months in arrears, 6 months in advance. This is confusing for many tenants and doesn't correspond with our financial year, increasing administration time.

Therefore it has been decided, effective from next year, to invoice in advance in February for the rental year 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018 and likewise every year thereafter. This will provide several advantages, not least allowing us to re-let plots before the rental year commences if a tenant should decide not to renew their tenancy. This saves much time and cost in calculating pro-rata invoices. It will also reduce loss of revenue due to the plot being abandoned part way through the rent year and before the rent has been paid.

To combat the problem of non-cultivation and plots being relinquished in poor condition we have introduced a deposit for new tenants, returnable if the plot is handed back in acceptably tidy condition. This has proved necessary due to the high cost of clearing plots for re-letting. Often we have to remove glass, metal, carpet, wood etc as well as cut back overgrown foliage when plots are handed back in poor condition.

Effective from 1st April 2016 we increased the rent for new tenants to £10 per rod per annum. From 1st April 2017 the rent will increase from £5 to £6 per rod per annum for existing tenants and will increase by £1 per rod per annum for the four years thereafter until all rents are equal at £10 per rod per annum.

Whilst we understand that nobody wants a rent increase this is necessary in order to go some way towards offsetting the large cost of maintaining the allotments and ensuring that this valuable community activity can continue and be enjoyed by future generations. This increase must be seen in context with the fact that rents have not increased for many years and now need to catch up with our increased costs. The allotments will still remain a significantly subsidised activity even after the rent increases.

We trust that you understand the need for the above changes and will be supportive. Best regards and happy gardening to you all.

Peter Roberts
Property Manager

E: p.roberts@chichestercity.gov.uk T: 01243 788502

Best Kept Plots

The awards for the plots judged to have been 'best kept' or 'most improved' during 2016 were presented by the Mayor of Chichester, Councillor Peter Budge at the Chichester and District Garden and Allotments Association Annual Show held on 20th August at the Newell Centre.

The winners were Best Kept: (5 rod) Mr Robert Riding, Florence Road Plot 7A, (10 rod) Mr M J Wilde, St James Road Plot 51A/B and Most Improved: Mr Ian Williams, St James Road Plot 48B.

Congratulations to you all.

Volunteer Stewards

We have appointed Andrew Perry at Florence Road 2 and Julia Lander and Veronica Wiseman at Kingsham Avenue as volunteer site stewards to liaise between tenants and the City Council regarding allotment issues. They are not maintenance or enforcement officers but have been appointed to be a conduit between tenants and the Council so as to improve communication.

If you are interested in being a volunteer steward please contact Claire Adams by email: c.adams@chichestercity.gov.uk



Fly Tipping

There has been a spate of fly tipping onto common areas and vacant plots. Often the dumped items are household goods rather than allotment waste. This has resulted in additional and unexpected expense on skips in order to remove the rubbish. We appeal to all tenants to keep their plots tidy and to dispose of all waste in a considerate and responsible manner.



Plot Boundaries

To assist us in identifying plots when carrying out inspections we ask again that you mark all four corners of your plot with a post or stake with your plot number clearly displayed. We also remind you that under the terms of the tenancy agreement it is your responsibility to keep any paths or hedgerows forming the boundary to your plot tidy and well pruned.

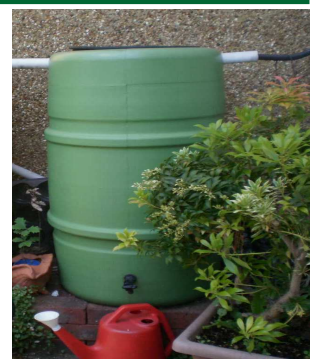
Health & Safety

A reminder that all children and dogs, whilst welcome on your plot, must be supervised at all times and not allowed to roam onto other plots. Also a reminder that tenants are strongly recommended to take out Public Liability Insurance to prevent yourself from potential injury claims arising from any accident on your plot. Information on insurance can be found on the National Allotment Society website.

Water Harvesting

Water is a valuable resource and should not be wasted. Please only use hoses for hand-held watering for short duration and do not leave a running hose unattended. The use of sprinklers is strictly prohibited. We encourage the use of water butts to collect rainwater for irrigation. This is more sustainable and will reduce the cost of water provision. A range of subsidised water butts and equipment is available through Southern Water;

<https://www.savewatersavemoney.co.uk/products/water-butts>



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The Council House, North Street, Chichester, PO19 1LQ

Tel: 01243 788502 www.chichestercity.gov.uk

Property Manager

Property Maintenance Officer

Front of House Supervisor

Peter Roberts

Stephen Le Gallez

Claire Adams

p.roberts@chichestercity.gov.uk

s.legallez@chichestercity.gov.uk

c.adams@chichestercity.gov.uk