

Issue 21

March 2022



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

# Allotment Newsletter

## A Message from Peter Roberts, Property Manager

Welcome to the 2022 newsletter. I hope this finds you and your family well and in good spirits. We are all no doubt looking forward to a productive growing season and hoping for favourable weather, not just for growing some impressive produce, but also to enjoy some much needed blue sky and warm sunshine.

Firstly, I'd like to commend you for how you've coped with the challenges of Covid-19, the lockdown and in many cases the need to self-isolate. It really has been an incredibly difficult couple of years. Yet, by and large, your plots have been kept very productive and provided a ready source of healthy, organic food as well as much needed fresh air, exercise and relaxation.

More challenges are on the horizon for us all, in particular the rising cost of living due to gas prices, tax rises and food inflation. We had intended to reduce our expenditure on water by levying a £1.50 per rod per annum water charge. For a standard 5 rod plot, this would have meant an annual fee of £7.50. However, mindful of the pressure on your finances we have decided to postpone the introduction of a water charge and review this next year. We do need to apply an inflationary increase to your rent of 50 pence per rod per annum, taking the rent to £10.50 per rod per annum. This equates to an annual rent of £52.50 for a standard 5 rod plot. I'm sure you'll agree that this still represents exceptional value for money. Allotments remain heavily subsidised by the Council, in recognition of their health and environmental benefits.

Lastly, I'd like to thank our maintenance team, Stephen Holman and Stephen Hawkins. Many of you will have met them whilst they've been undertaking work at the allotments. Over the past couple of years, they have cleared and prepared many historically overgrown areas and out of use plots. Recently, the contaminated plots at Blackberry Lane have been returned to cultivation for raised bed cultivation. In total, 28 plots, totalling 131 rods (3,275 square meters), have been cleared and brought back into use. This has allowed more people to enjoy the benefits of allotment gardening.

I wish you a very happy and productive year. Best wishes to all,

**Peter Roberts, Property Manager**

**Bonfires** From spring through to autumn, bonfires can only be lit after 5pm and if the prevailing wind is blowing away from residential properties. During the winter months, when adjacent residential neighbours are unlikely to be drying clothes outdoors or have windows open, bonfires are allowed at any time (except in windy conditions). **Please be very considerate and do not burn green waste that will create excessive smoke. Bonfires must be supervised at all times and must be kept under control.** Any damage or injury resulting from a bonfire will be the plot holder's liability.



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**Communications** All communications and enquiries should be addressed in the first instance to [s.holman@chichestercity.gov.uk](mailto:s.holman@chichestercity.gov.uk) senior management will only become involved if a serious matter requires escalation.

The Council endeavours to send communications to plot holders via email, to reduce administrative and postage costs to keep rents as low as possible. **If you haven't already provided an email address, we would encourage you to do so. Please update the Council if you change your email address and/or phone numbers or move house. It is very important that your personal details are current and up to date.**

**Data Protection** We take your privacy very seriously and comply with GDPR requirements.

We will never share your details with any third party without your explicit consent. We will use your personal details solely for essential communication regarding your allotment tenancy.



#### CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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**Composting** We encourage composting. Please ensure that you only compost suitable items and that you do not include food scraps that will encourage vermin.

### Plot Inspections

Two formal inspections are carried out each year during the growing season, in May and September. There is a degree of subjectivity as to what constitutes an uncultivated plot. For your guidance, the Council is not looking for perfection and for a plot to be entirely weed-free. However, if a plot has a blanket of weeds and/or tall weeds and grass going to seed, paths overgrown and little sign of crops under cultivation it will be considered uncultivated. **If you receive an uncultivated notice and are unsure of the reason why, please contact the person who signed the notice. We will be pleased to discuss your plot and explain what is required.** On occasions, we have mis-identified a plot due to an admin error. We are always happy to be corrected and apologise if this is the case.



The Council appreciates that accidents, injuries and ill-health can happen to anyone at any given time. However, it is still your responsibility to manage good cultivation on your plot. A monthly trim is all that is required if you have contacted us and explained your situation. If you are unable to keep the plot trimmed and friends and family cannot assist, we will be happy to provide details of suitable businesses that could assist you.

If your plot is too large for you to manage then please contact us. We are happy to consider splitting plots to create two or more smaller plots. The smallest plot we let is 2.5 rods, about 65 square metres.

### Bio-diversity

Allotments are for the purpose of growing fruit and vegetables for personal consumption only. It is not an extension of your garden and is not for growing large amounts of flowers and shrubs. Nor is it for growing crops, herbs etc for sale or for business purposes. We welcome some flowers for pollination purposes but cannot allow extensive 'wild' areas, as this creates problems for other plot holders.

### Trees

Fruit trees are allowed on plots but must be well pruned and not exceed 8 feet in height nor overshadow or obstruct adjacent paths and/or plots. If you have a tree on your plot which requires pruning and are unable to do this yourself, we will be happy to assist you. If you need help to find a suitably qualified contractor.

### Allotment maps

Up-to-date maps of each allotment have been posted on the notice boards. Red areas indicate the common areas maintained by the City Council. Plot holders are responsible for the maintenance of paths and hedge-lines adjacent to their plot. Please ensure that the paths surrounding and crossing your plot are kept well-tended to allow safe passage.