

Welcome and Introduction

Good evening. I'm Councillor Diane Archer and I am chair of Community Assets and Open Spaces and chairing tonight's meeting. I would also like to introduce other members of the working party which include Bob Sanderson (plotholder), Toby Kewen (plotholder), Bill Jerman (plotholder) Richard House – head grounds person and Katy Cena – Allotments and Administration Officer.

Annual Allotment Report

There are currently 156 plots which are all occupied. However from the 1st October there will be more at least 8 more vacant plots as a number of people have terminated their tenancy agreements.

Allotment Community Spirit

There has been a greater sense of community spirit at the allotments thanks to a few ploholders who organized some community events over the summer. This has included Caroline and her tomato tasting and also Anna who arranged the allotment picnic. Both sought permission from the office beforehand. These ad hoc events are a great way for a allotment holders to engage with each other helping to enhance the community spirit.

Swap Shop

The allotment working party were in favour of Katy's idea of the Swap Shop during Julys working party meeting. The proposal was subsequently agreed at Julys Community Assets and Open Spaces meeting. We are pleased that this has been used. This is a good resource and will help to eliminate surplus food waste. We hope that this will be used on a continuous basis and if you can post your swap onto the allotments FB page. We have included some slides showing some of the lovely produce which has been left there which includes flowers!

Bonfires

Thank you to the ploholders for their cooperation by not having bonfires during July and August. There was an incident in July whereby a fire started (reason unknown) and the fire brigade were called out so the ban actually started then following their advice. Bonfires are not allowed during the month of August and this is now part of the allotment rules and in the terms and conditions. There have been far less complaints into the office this year regarding bonfires so we do appreciate the rules being followed. As we head into Autumn and hedgehogs are due to hibernate soon, please can all allotment holders ensure that no hedgehogs or other animals are present in the material prior to lighting a bonfire and preferably use a metal incinerator.

Potash & Wood chippings

Ploholders are welcome to help themselves to Wood chippings and potash. There will often be piles of wood chippings on an ongoing basis. Ridgeway Stoves, have agreed to let us know when they deposit the potash, and Katy will relay this information on the allotment FB page. It will be on a first come first served basis.

Skips

The yearly skip is very well used by ploholders and filled to capacity. The council have agreed to an additional skip to help manage the waste on the allotment site so there will be a skip in the Autumn and one on the Spring now. The next skip is due to be delivered on Wednesday 8 October.

Local Hedgehog Survey

Local Co-ordinator Wroughton National Hedgehog Monitoring Project plan have just recently installed wildlife cameras at the allotments and will collect them late October or early November. Last year their footage from the allotment site included badgers, muntjack, deer, squirrel, fox pheasant, and hedgehogs.

Signage for Each Allotment Plot

We would appreciate if plot holders could please look at numbering their plots. You could get creative and there are plenty of ways that your plot could be identified whether it includes numbering your compost bin, a hanging sign on your shed or simply a post in the ground with a plate. This also helps with inspections and for potential new tenants who visit the site to look for their vacant plot.

Grounds Maintenance

Footpaths: Following this summer's inspection, it was apparent that many of the footpaths have become overgrown and difficult for both staff and other allotment holders to walk along. Please be reminded that footpaths must be kept clear. Plot holders must maintain at least half the width of the footpath which borders their plot and footpaths should be 1 metre wide and safe to use. If paths have been encroached by your plot please take any necessary remedial action to reinstate them.

Jobs that the Grounds Team have done:

- Following a suggestion from plot holders, the grounds team divided some of the double plots to make it more manageable to new tenants
- Maintenance of the hedge which borders the allotment site and Moormead road
- Grass cutting along the main footpaths and in the green spaces
- Clearing debris and waste from empty plots
- Strimming empty plots ready for new tenants.
- The grounds team have also been assisting plot holders on skip day.

Rental Invoices

Rental Invoices will be issued in the month of October and the invoicing period changed last year so the rental period runs from 1 October to 30 September. When the rental period was from April to March, plots were given up in April. This made it more difficult for the grounds team to trim during their busiest time of year due to the grass cutting season. We have already been informed that plots will be given up this Autumn and at this time of year the grounds staff have more time to trim them. The rent will increase 5% in October and 5% next October. This is due to increased utility costs including waste disposal costs, ongoing maintenance costs and higher water bills.

Allotments are not so much in demand at the moment and the waiting list is now very short. If anyone would like an additional plot then contact Katy in the office. Please also spread the word to your friends and family who might be interested in a plot.

Selection of Plot holders Representatives for 2025/2026

Bob Sanderson, Toby Kewen, Bill Jerman and Richard House will be standing as representatives for 2025/2026. If you are interested in applying then please contact Katy in the office.

Comments/Questions/Suggestions from the Floor

We welcome comments, questions or suggestions from plot holders. If you would prefer you can email admin@wroughton.gov.uk