



Hertford Town Council

Allotment Newsletter - Summer 2024



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

WELCOME ...

to the Summer edition of Hertford Town Council's quarterly Allotment Newsletter

Our aim is to keep you up to date with new developments and share tips on keeping your allotment in tip top condition.

The Council is also looking forward to hearing from tenants about your allotment news and successes!

New Competition

The scarecrow competition will not be running this year, but we have two new categories that the Mayor of Hertford will be judging for Eco Fest in September instead: 'Best Wildlife Habitat' and 'Best Barrow Display'.

These will be judged the week commencing 16 September. More information will be sent out via email and posted on the allotment noticeboards soon.

Website Changes

The website now has more information for tenants including links to all the site maps and links to other sites offering advice.

Applications for adding structures to plots is now easier and quicker using the online form.

More changes will be made to the website in due course including these newsletters and details of any upcoming workshops and competitions. www.hertford.gov.uk/services/allotments/ Let us know your thoughts

2024 has had a bit of a wet start, which has been great for the weeds and the slugs, but not so great for some of the crops that are suffering as a result of the slug invasion. The grounds team have been working hard to keep the paths clear of weeds and well mown, but with the amount of rainy days this has reduced the time available for this task. We're wishing for more sunny days and fruitful harvests this season!

Allotment Survey Results

We received 177 responses to our survey which is about 34% of allotment tenants.

78% of respondents don't use herbicides or pesticides. Of the ones that did slug pellets were used (20 people), followed by Glyphosate (13 people) and only 3 that use fertilisers. The reasons for not using alternatives were effectiveness (21), not knowing an alternative (7), then cost, convenience and using up supplies. Suggestions included bulk buying alternatives, supplying woodchip onsite, and giving recommendations on alternative products and demonstrations.

Waste

Sadly there weren't many people who made use of the annual skip (8 people at each site: Bengoe, Hertingfordbury and Cromwell Road) and there was concern about what was being put in the skips, with non-tenants adding rubbish to them. There were several suggestions of having a re-cycling area on-site.

Toilets

The compost toilets at North Road have been a success with 3/4 of respondents saying that they have used these. However, the Council didn't feel that enough respondents from other sites were in favour of compost toilets to warrant them. The toilet buildings are in need of repair, which is something we are addressing.

Other Recommendations:

Improve the fencing around the sites.

Check on the trees and trim regularly.

The Committee has agreed to...

A recycling area to be trialled at the Cromwell Road site and the possibility of having a bulk delivery of woodchips to the larger sites.

Considering demonstrations to be held at the allotments. If there are any subjects that you feel would be beneficial, please email us at allotments@hertford.gov.uk.

Repairs to the toilets will be carried out, or buildings replaced if necessary. Cromwell Road toilets may be relocated for easier access.

Improve accessibility - we will be undertaking an accessibility audit and improvements will be made as necessary.

Improvements to the website—See box to the left.

For the full report see: <https://www.hertford.gov.uk/council-meetings/#view-archives>

Slug Pellet Alternatives

Slug pellets containing the pesticide Metaldehyde can no longer be sold or used in the UK. They were officially banned in April 2022 as they pose an unnecessary risk to birds, dogs and other mammals and it is illegal to use them.

What can I use instead of slug pellets?

- Beer Traps or trapping them under cardboard or damp wood
- Slug and snail tape or wool waste pellets
- Putting broken egg shells or coffee grounds around plants



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Lovely Grub Garden

Community Engagement:

The Garden held its first event of the year on 19th May. This Spring event was publicised locally and attracted a few visitors. Interest was shown by some and the hope is that they will return as volunteers. The Committee definitely requires the support of additional volunteers at the Garden to make best use of the growing space available.



Donations from the event amount to £50.63. And the composting toilet had its official opening!

Terri started her Nature Garden classes in May. We are helping her with any health and safety matters, and have identified an area for her to work in. Thanks to Terri's acquisition of a pre-loved push-along lawn mower, we can maintain the grass to a safe length between the monthly Council grass cuts.

Garden Activity:

The Garden now opens for regular Summer sessions, on Fridays 3-5pm; first Sunday and third Saturday in the month, also 3-5pm. The times will be reviewed throughout the Summer according to the weather conditions.

The Garden acquired several bags of organic composted manure and other growing mediums from a charity earlier in the season.

The warm and wet weather since the last report has meant an abundance of weeds, grass, snails and slugs at the garden. The polytunnel cover remains intact but consideration will be given to a replacement or a further repair later in the year.

North Road Plot Holders Group

Recent Activities

Our regular monthly work mornings recommenced in the Spring, when we dealt with routine maintenance of the site such as mowing and strimming, plus any other repair jobs which needed attention. These mornings have been well attended, with between 20-30 members coming along to help each time, and we finish each morning with tea, coffee and biscuits.

We are pleased to say that our new water trough is now in operation, and is much appreciated by the ploholders in the area. *"Thank you to the Council for the grant which made this possible, and also to Stuart Baker for his assistance in organising the ground works for the pipework".*



Plans for 2024

A significant proportion of our mowers and trimmers are electric rather than petrol, and whilst we have solar panels to provide us with the capacity to charge them, we are looking at potentially adding a small wind turbine to enable us to be even more self-sufficient.

Mudlarks Community Garden

Rain, Rain, Rain...Despite the weather, the allotments continue to thrive.

We welcomed a new staff member, Joe, to the Mudlarks team and wished Hannah from Special Branch good luck with her maternity leave. We are pleased to welcome baby Holly. We have also welcomed 4 new volunteers to the allotments.

We started off in early Spring, holding our willow workshop, which was so popular we had to hold two sessions. We had 24 eager people who made the most amazing willow obelisks, some of which were so large that they had to travel home on the rooves of cars.

We made some beautiful Mother's Day gifts with the gardeners, using the flowers we grew and made a few extra which we sold at the café Spring Craft Fair.

We had the Ware Scout Group for a community day, weeding the base of hedge line around the plots. We have so many birds nesting on site that we are currently unable to tidy the hedgerow.

The annual Rumbles award was held at Robinson House, Stevenage on the 2nd May. We are pleased to announce that Jade, one of our gardeners, won the leading light award. She attended the ceremony with her mum and stepdad. This great night celebrates the achievements of people with disabilities in the county.

Reminders

- No bonfires between 1st May and 1st September.
- Dogs must be kept on leads at all times.
- Please respect your neighbours both on the allotments and in neighbouring houses. Keep noise to a minimum and mechanical tools must only be used between 9.00am and 8.00pm Monday to Saturday, and 9.00am to 4.00pm on Sundays.
- Rules and regulations can be found on our website www.hertford.gov.uk/services/allotments

Hertford Town Council

The Castle

Hertford SG14 1HR

Phone: 01992 552885

Email: allotments@hertford.gov.uk