



GGAA Newsletter 19 November 2020

Dear all.

Rent Letters for 2021.

You may recall that in our last newsletter we said we would not increase rents for next year, that was the good news, and now you will receive your rent letter in the next day or so, if not already.

Please try to pay quickly and preferably directly to our bank account before 1 January 2021. Details are in the letter. Please do not try to pay in cash or cheque at the Trading Hut, as they get lost. If you have any problems with paying, please contact Sara at sarathebells@gmail.com

Waiting List – vacant plots – Plot Inspection

We have a record of 74 people on our waiting list. These are all very keen people desperate for a plot and last weekend we let the last of our vacant full plots and only have available one half plot. We have never had the site so full, it's fantastic! We are all very lucky to have an allotment and we should not forget that or become complacent about our individual plots!

We did a plot inspection on 31st October and its always interesting walking around the site and seeing how differently people do things. However we need to remind some of you that **the primary reason for a plots existence is for it to be cultivated and so be productive in the proper sense of the word for an allotment, which is primarily for the growing of veg and fruit.** We expect to see at least 80% of any plot adhering to the above criteria with the rest of the plot being kept in order and reasonably tidy and on the whole most of you have done and

always do a great job with only a few who do not.

Untidy plot letters are never personal, they are an objective view of the rule above and whether it applies or not to your plot. We never compare plots or peoples personal situations but use a set of criteria to see if the above rule is adhered to. Then of course there is the state of your paths, sheds, weed control or lack of etc etc etc.

We have a few ploholders who have had some difficulties this year and have kept us informed. Some of you have not kept us informed of any problems and it's important to do so. We have also found that for some of you we have no contact details or email address. We need to be able to contact you so on your rent letter, please respond if it says we don't have either of these two pieces of information for you. It is important, so let us know if this applies to you.

Water Supply

The water has gone off for the winter but a few weeks ago, one of you decided to turn it on at Hendon Way West and then turned it off, incorrectly. It might have been Thames Water, but that is highly unlikely. If it was you, please do not do it that again, and may we remind everyone not to touch any of the water stopcocks, ever. If you are seen we will give you a warning letter.

Bonfires

You shouldn't have much left to burn now but again we need to remind you NOT to ever burn plastic or **wet** green matter as it gives off too much smoke. We had a complaint at the weekend from someone in the houses on the estate in front of Tesco. She was absolutely livid as her house was filling with the awful stench of black smoke coming from the allotment!! And also there is nothing worse than trying to work on your plot and your neighbour has a bonfire burning, with the smoke drifting into your lungs! A lot of councils are banning these sorts of fires so it may be that next year this could happen on our site. We are looking at ways to help – maybe we will get a chipper. Otherwise think very seriously about building yourself a set of compost bins!!

Winter jobs on the allotment

Might we suggest some jobs that you can do during the winter months when you are

tired of just sitting looking at the rain.

- It's going to rain lots, so why not collect some water for use later in the year, or for seed planting before the water taps are turned on. **Rainwater harvesting** as it is known, is quite easy to do and if you have shed, you can very quickly collect quite a lot of water from the roof. You need some guttering, which is pretty cheap and you need a water butt. We are looking at selling guttering in the trading hut so watch that space! There are a number of websites that can help <https://www.growveg.co.uk/guides/how-to-harvest-rainwater-in-your-vegetable-garden/> or just look at what other ploholders do, it's not difficult!

Also, for those of you with poly-tunnels, they need a lot of water in the summer because the rain does not fall on the ground in the tunnel. You should try to collect water from the tunnel roof and store it, reduce our water bill. Or take the covering off once plants are established.

- Make, borrow or buy a composting bin, and use it for all your green garden waste and kitchen waste, which you can bring from home, but not meat waste as that will attract rats and so not appropriate for composting at the allotments. Again there are web sites to help you and again look at what others do. Compost bins should be at the main path end of your plots by the way?
- Tidy up your plot while you are not busy with other things. Weed and cover raised beds or parts of your plot with no winter crops in them. You will find spring even better if you can get on with planting without having to kill weeds, dig and clear up the rubbish you accumulated this year.
- Look at the paths in-between you and your neighbour's plot. Decide between yourselves which path you will be responsible for? The paths should be grass not mud or chippings. Maybe prepare and sow some grass seed. Strim the grass on the path. Perhaps try to even the path up – some are very lumpy and a H&S problem! So try to level them out? Neaten up the edges and if your path is not at least 18 inches wide and straight, lay a line out with string and build it up again. If you walk around the site you will see how great the paths can look with a little regular maintenance.

Trading Hut:

We are back to opening both days over the weekend, Saturdays 1.30pm until 3pm and Sundays 11.30am until 1pm. Many thanks to all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication. We are always in need of volunteers to help us out, if you can help please contact Anna. We have plenty of stock and we are expecting potatoes

and spring onion sets at the end of January. Franchi seeds – we do not stock the full range so if you see something on their website or online brochure please let me know and I will endeavour to get it in stock for you in January 2021.

Trading hut will be closed for 4 weeks over Christmas, last open day is Sunday 13th Dec and the hut will re-open on 16th January.

Thanks, and best regards

GGAA Committee