



Coleshill Town Council

Allotments Newsletter

Vol.1 2023

'I always see gardening as escape, as peace really. If you are angry or troubled nothing provides the same solace as nurturing the soil.' – Monty Don.



Spring Meetings

Thank you to all that came to the Spring Meetings that took place on the 25 April 2023. There were useful discussions regarding all allotment sites, with Cllr. Tony Battle, Allan and Zoe in attendance to help with queries.

There are a few issues raised by allotment holders that need to be passed onto allotment holders from all sites:

Taps

Please ensure that all taps are turned off after use, there was a tap left on at Stonebridge South for around 48 hours, which is not only hugely expensive to the Town Council as we are on a meter but also a waste of water

that caused damage to the driveway area and surrounding plots. Adding additional taps should only be carried out by the Town Council.



The use of chemicals

A reminder of point 3 of the tenancy agreement:

3.1 When using any sprays or fertilisers, the tenant must take all reasonable care to ensure that adjoining hedges, trees and crops are not adversely affected; and must make good or replant as necessary should any damage occur.



Untended plots

Allotment holders on all sites were concerned about untended plots. We will be clamping down on unattended plots. At this stage of the growing season there should be significant work



happening on all allotment plots. Allan will be conducting monthly inspections and any allotment holders who haven't maintained their allotment plot will be given two weeks to make significant improvements or their tenancy will be revoked, with immediate effect.

Household waste composting and burning

A reminder of point 2 of the tenancy agreement

2.6 Bonfires must be solely for the burning of plant waste that has been solely generated during the routine and proper cultivation of the plot.

2.7 Under no circumstances should any waste be brought on to the site for disposal.

Gate Codes

Gate codes should not be shared with non-tenants, Stonebridge gate code will be changed on the 5th June, tenants on Stonebridge will be sent a separate email with the code on.

Other issues raised were the car parking area on Stonebridge; the possible installation of a mirror at the exit on Gilson; and porta-loos. All these issues will be carried onto the next meeting of Coleshill Town Council's outdoor working group and reported back to allotment holders in due course.

The spring meetings are useful way of discussing matters arising for each individual site and will be held annually in April.

Wood chip

Allotment holders will no doubt be delighted to have received wood chippings from HS2 contractors Balfour Beatty-Vinci.



Allotment Competition

Judging for Coleshill Town Council's allotment competition 2023 will take place week commencing **10th July 2023**.

Prizes to be awarded for each site are:

Best Allotment:

1st £20 National Garden gift voucher & trophy

2nd £15 National Garden gift voucher

3rd £10 National Garden gift voucher

All allotment holders are automatically entered into the competition.



This year we are also introducing a 'Best Newcomer' category we are hoping that this this will give new allotment holders an incentive to really get stuck into their allotment. Allotment holders must have been a tenant for less than 12 months to be eligible. The award will be judged over all three sites.

Useful contacts

For all allotment hire/waiting list enquires please contact Megan Davies on 01675463326 or email megan@coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk

For all general enquiries or issues regarding the allotment sites please contact Zoe Hillcox on 01675463326 or email zoe@coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk and Allan Taylor on 07541798408 allan@coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk

Any allotment holder who wishes to join the WhatsApp group does so at their own risk and should contact Allan via WhatsApp to request to be added.

Any messages sent that are deemed offensive will result in the allotment holder being removed from the group.

The WhatsApp groups are a useful way of allotment holders quickly sharing information with each other. Please make sure you have your privacy settings set appropriately.

Property marking event



PCSO Mo Yaqub from the Safer Neighbourhoods team will be holding an event at Blythe Allotments on:

Saturday 8th July 2023 10.00am to 12.00 noon

They will be offering free property marking items such as dual U.V/Black marker pens, purse dipping bells, faraday pouches for car keys & mobile phones and lots of other freebies. They will also be able to security mark bicycles and register them on the national database.

Property marking of any type is very important to help get your property back if stolen and allows the Police to apprehend criminals in possession of security marked property.

Allotment giveaway

The then Mayor of Coleshill, Cllr. Caroline Symonds was delighted to be able to hand out allotment items from a police raid on a large cannabis factory in Coleshill.



The various items of equipment that were left at the scene would usually cost the police to remove them, however they kindly donated them to various allotment holders in the area.



Jobs for June



June is a very busy time on the allotment plot. Hopefully nights are now frost free and the days are longer which gives you more time to spend on the allotment getting jobs done.

Sowing

Keep it going and keep on sowing for a succession of beetroot, radishes, spring onions and lettuce. You can also sow carrots but as always make sure you protect them from carrot fly.

Plant

Now is the time to plant out young plants of runner beans, French beans, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes and sweetcorn, plus outdoor tomatoes and cucumbers. You can also plant out Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers and celeriac.

Harvest

It's finally the time to enjoy your harvests. Peas, gooseberries, currents, strawberries should all be ready now as well as salads, beetroot and radishes. Stop harvesting asparagus this month.

General jobs

Keeping on top of weeds is a constant and important job. A hoe is a fantastic tool and lets you easily weed between rows. Let annual weed seedlings dry out on top of the soil. Strawberries benefit from a good layer of straw mulch and keep birds off the ripening fruit by covering plants

with netting. Start feeding tomatoes in the greenhouse with a high potash tomato food, this will encourage the production of more flowers and fruits.

Source

<https://www.swcaa.co.uk/jobs-june>

AGM



Coleshill Allotment AGM will be held on:

Tuesday 10th October 2023

at Coleshill Town Hall, Old Court Room. We will open the meeting at 17.30 for anyone wishing to pay their yearly rent. The meeting will start at 18.00.

The AGM gives allotment holders a chance to raise issues directly with councillors and officers, as well as an opportunity to socialise with fellow allotment holders.

Competition winners are also awarded their prizes, come along, who knows you may win!



North Warwickshire Allotment Competition 2023

North Warwickshire Allotment Competition is running again this year for anyone wishing to enter.

A separate email has been sent out to all allotment holders with the entry details, please see this email for details of prizes and how to enter.

In previous years there have been allotments in Coleshill that have been awarded prizes.

Deadline for receipt of entries:

Sunday, 25th June 2023

Late entries may not be judged.

Judging is scheduled to take place between Sunday 2 and Tuesday 3 July 2023 (subject to change and weather permitting). You will be notified in advance the date and approximate time your site or plot will be judged and advised on the day of any changes to the schedule so please ensure you provide your contact details on your entry form.

Focus on: Rats



Discouraging rats at an allotment site is everybody's responsibility. Please follow this advice to help prevent them making your plot their home:

1. Turn the contents of your compost bin regularly (at least twice per year). This disturbs any rats that have taken up residence.

2. Plastic compost bins should be given a small gauge wire mesh lining at the base or can be placed on paving slabs to prevent rats from burrowing in underneath.

3. Regularly check your compost bin to ensure it is not a peaceful place for rats to sleep.

4. Do not use your compost bin to dispose of household waste. Never put meat, dairy, bones, cooked foods or other inappropriate items in your compost bin. This will attract rats and make your bin smell.

5. Harvest ripe fruit and vegetables promptly and take them home to enjoy (they are a food source for rats).

6. Do not leave discarded fruit and vegetables on the ground, as these are a source of food for rats and other pests.

7. Keep your plot tidy and ensure that allotment gardens do not become overgrown or allow rubbish to build up e.g. timber, old carpet, stockpiled materials etc. Built up rubbish etc. provides cover for rats to live under (harbourage).



8. Fruit and vegetables with signs of rat damage should be destroyed. Rats carry risk of Weil's disease, Salmonella and Leptospirosis among other things

and they urinate wherever they go.

9. Sheds must be made rat-proof i.e. holes should be blocked and regular checks should be made to ensure that rats are not living underneath sheds or taking up residence in your greenhouse.

10. Consider storing seeds, bulbs etc. in rodent proof containers.

Source:

<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/leisure-and-culture/parks-and-open-spaces/allotments/allotment-guidance/guidelines-discourage-rats-allotment-sites>

Seed swap events



A few allotment holders are interested in holding a seed swap event in Coleshill. If anyone is interested in getting involved, please email:

zoe@coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk for more information.

Garden Organic based in Coventry have a list of seed swap events in the local area.

<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/what-we-do/hsl/seed-swaps>



101 call logging

All anti-social behaviour, break ins and damage must be reported to the police on 101 or logged via the 101 website on:

<https://www.police.uk/put/contact-the-police/>

The only exception to this is if the crime is actively in progress, if this is the case, please call 999.

Please note that all allotment holders are responsible for their own insurance.

Happy growing!

If anyone has any information that they would like to share, including pictures of their allotments and produce grown please email Zoe.

Good luck allotmenters!

