

NEWSLETTER



JUNE/JULY 2018

The WAM committee would like to thank Sarah Palmer who has recently resigned as Newsletter Editor.

The WAM AGM is fixed for Thursday Sept 13th 2018 at 7.30pm. All members are welcome so please put the date in your diary.

As you are probably aware, we alter or supplement Terms and Conditions slightly from time to time to allow for anything unforeseen or to make something clearer. These changes are always ratified at the AGM. The most up-to-date version is on our web site - <http://wamplots.org.uk/fo rmdocs.html> .

We also print copies for the tenants' manual in site shops, but to save wasted paper will only reprint the whole set if anything really vital needs changing.

Please could everyone remember to lock the site gates when entering or leaving the allotments, thank you.

To answer a question you may be pondering, there is no set interval for when our newsletters come out.

Where possible we leave you in peace, but if there is news you need to hear we will send it round.

After a busy few months getting the new growing year started, here is a summary of the news so far:

Never Mind The Bollards..

Plans are afoot to fit folding traffic bollards at the entrances to grass drives on Chesswood. With the very wet weather, ruts caused by car tyres have grown deeper and have already caused one twisted ankle.

We shall be filling the ruts in autumn but meanwhile may sometimes restrict vehicle access to the drives with lockable, foldable posts.



When you need to deliver a shed or remove heavy materials, ask an overseer to arrange access. If you have been in the habit of turning into the drive to park, make sure you do not drive into the new metal post once it is fitted.

Theft of produce is thankfully rare but does happen. Tenant's are reminded that the taking of produce from another plot without consent is a breach of WAM's Terms & Conditions and anyone caught doing so can be evicted.

If you see someone on a plot other than their own taking produce then please let your overseer or site manager know. Netting of vulnerable crops could deter theft by birds (as well as unscrupulous people).

Rodents



Rats continue to be a problem and we have an ongoing programme to deal with it. Do not move traps or touch the bait with bare fingers. Keep children well away from bait boxes.

To help deter them, please do not put any cooked food on your compost heap. If you feed foxes, you also feed rats. Dog food left out for foxes will encourage them.

SCALING THE WALLS

Leeds University have started a study of the **non-native Wall Lizards**, the big green ones, that thrive on the West Tarring Site.

They have placed 20 black felt squares on various plots (if yours is one you will have been notified by email) and over the next month will monitor what reptiles are seen on and under them. If you see one, please do not move them or throw them away - a student will be visiting weekly to carry out the checks. Many thanks for your cooperation.

Children on allotment sites

We encourage children to enjoy healthy activity with their families, but would remind everybody that allotments are not a playground. We make it plain in our Terms and Conditions (6:18) that “children should be closely supervised at all times when on site”.

At Chesswood, children threw ammonia based cleaning products around inside the toilet, staining the surfaces. At Tarring, young children emerged from the toilet after a long delay to rummage about in someone else’s plot and help themselves to a plant. Others have trampled on beds and climbed a tree on someone else’s plot. Plot 90 was made child friendly but the Wendy house should not be climbed on or apples picked when not ripe (or theirs).

If you bring your kids along with you, you should know where they are and what they are doing. If you see other people’s children apparently unsupervised and possibly in danger, it is a responsible act to guide them gently back to where they belong. Reporting it after the event may be too late.

IS YOUR NUMBER UP?

You may not be aware of rule 10.5 - *Tenants must ensure that the plot number is clearly marked on the outside of every shed or greenhouse.*

That is to help overseers and contractors navigate when working on site. In the short term, we would ask you to make sure your plot is clearly labelled. In the long term, if too many are not labelled, we may have to do it ourselves and pass on the cost.

USE OF TOILETS AT TARRING & CHESSWOOD

Please be aware that a composting toilet must be used exactly as indicated on the large signs and no cleaning products with chemicals should be left there.

Note that children must be always be accompanied by an adult when using the site toilets. The reminder follows several incidents that could have been dangerous and were certainly an inconvenience, as it were.

What if I get stung?

Bees fly about in the air and even if we did not keep them you would want to see them arrive from outside to pollinate, so there is always a chance of a sting.

There is less chance if you don't wave your arms and just back off, but it may happen.

Most people get over it easily. Some are allergic - they will probably already know that and should carry epi pens with them on site. We don't provide creams etc in our First Aid kits because some people may react badly to medication, so if you are worried you should keep some in your shed.

If you find you have been stung it may not be a bee. It could have been a wasp, hornet, horse fly etc. Nature is stingy. Keep the grass short, a hat on your head, your arms covered.

Buzzy things and stings

At Tarring and, to a lesser extent, Chesswood, we have had problems with bees either swarming or stinging tenants.

Why do we keep bees on site?

Our native bees are vital for our crops but under threat from chemical sprays and viruses, so we are using trained bee keepers to help keep the supply healthy in our area., for the sake of our crops.

Are they dangerous if kept on site?

Usually, no. Ignore them and they will ignore you. This year several things went wrong. A visiting 'expert' recommended something called 'double brood' method and the bees hated it so got angry. That has now been dropped and will not be used again. In addition, one colony proved an aggressive type (like people it happens sometimes) so had to be removed. These problems should not recur.

Muggy weather can make them restless, but if they just get out for a fly about that is not a problem as they go home in time for tea, but if they lose a queen they may get out and swarm until they find a new one. Again, not a threat but it looks bad if you have never seen it before. If you see a swarm, just contact our resident bee experts, who will just come and collect them and take them away.

West Tarring - John Scrace - 07899 877329

Chesswood Farm - Guy Wheatley - 07875 443116

We will monitor the situation and take further action if necessary.

Contributions and responses to this newsletter should be emailed to:

newsletter@wamplots.org.uk