

MAIDSTONE ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

Tenancy Agreement & Amendments

Please ensure that you read your Tenancy Agreement and work your plot according to the rules. It is essential. It gives us no pleasure to send a Notice to Cultivate, but it is important and necessary. If plots are not worked on in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement, and we have seen some very challenging issues recently, we have to take appropriate action - so please work on your plots.

Not cultivating the plot to 75% cultivation is the main one, but do please look at your Tenancy Agreement to be sure of all rules. Communal paths must be maintained, with grass cut, no build up of rubbish, bonfire rules respected, etc.

Please take a few moments to re-read it; it is vital for the successful and happy continuation of plots.

We are enclosing with your invoice some necessary amendments/additions to the Tenancy Agreement. Please read them in conjunction with the Tenancy Agreement.

www.maidstoneallotments.co.uk

Contact Details

admin@maidstoneallotments.co.uk

01622 664528

Office hours - Mon-Tues, Thurs-Friday

9.30am - 1.30pm



WELCOME

Isn't it so good to have an allotment, fresh air, exercise and growing the vegetables and fruit that you love. Nothing better than picking/digging up/collecting - no chemicals involved, perfect.

But... and there is always a but - hard work sometimes and much time and commitment needed, but so rewarding and worthwhile. We always advise the work needed when renting plots.

We have some great ploholders on all our 10 sites, some 700+ plots, many enthusiastic and hard working, new folk, and some going back many years. Many different styles of growing which we love to see. We have waiting lists for all sites which is excellent.

Judith

Chair



AGM & Bees

At our AGM in July, after the Chair's and Finance reports we had a really informative and fascinating presentation about bees, from Wendy who is a registered bee keeper with a plot on one of our sites. Great photos too and the opportunity to learn, and to pick up leaflets and buy wildflower seeds to encourage these precious and important creatures. So much of our wildlife needs our help these days. Our aim from Wendy's talk is to encourage our wild bees, information from her talk will be on our website soon. Not beehives, these require expert knowledge, experience, and certification taking at least a year, not for an allotment site. But we must all do our bit for the vital wild bees.



2019/20 Invoice

Your invoice for the next allotment year, October 2019 – October 2020 is enclosed. Payment methods are clearly shown with due date. Late payments will have to incur the surcharge.

If for any reason you are unable to continue with your plot please let us know so that we can re-let before the weeds take over!

Voluntary Help

The Committee manage all the sites voluntarily on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council and the help of our site reps is vital, if you are able to spare some time to help, please let us know. The continuity of the sites is vital in this day and age. We do need help from you please. Contact your site rep or manager, details on site notice boards. Or ring or email the office.

Costs 2020/2021

In September 2020, our invoices will show the plot rental and water provision charge separately. This is due to over watering with hoses – please see the separate article about water use. So whilst plot rental, which covers cost for your plot, site maintenance etc. should not increase for that year, the water cost has risen, coupled with over use for which we must charge. The water provision charge covers essential maintenance of pipes, tanks and taps as well as water consumption.

Site 'shops'

There are 'shops' on four of our sites, Sandling Road, Loose, Upper Fant and Glebe. Sandling Road is always open on Sunday mornings and other mornings too, details for all opening times are on shop Notice boards. They stock compost and food supplements, fertilisers, canes, all at very competitive prices.

Around September they will have a stock of onion sets and garlic and then usually just before Christmas, if not early January, they will have seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots.

Sheds

Please do not leave any equipment of value in your shed. Our advice from police is to keep these at home and security mark them – postcode, pink paint, anything to make them recognizable and difficult to sell on. If you experience any theft it is your responsibility to report to the police, using their non emergency number - 101.

Contact

Our best method of communication is by email, speedy and no cost, **please** advise us if you change your email address, home address or phone number.

To make sure that our emails don't get caught in your spam/junk filter, please add

admin@maidstoneallotments.co.uk to your address book. We have to assume emails are received.

Keep in touch

If you have a concern or problem working on your plot, please let us know so that we are aware, we might be able to help. If we don't know it can cause a problem

Water wisely

It is a precious commodity - there is much online information to advise good and successful growing of vegetables etc. But from wise and experienced ploholders we have learnt to water seedlings to help establish, but daily watering once established keeps the roots near the top of the soil where they easily dry out and cause the plants to wilt and underperform in producing vegetables. Best to limit watering after that to encourage roots to grow down to find moisture in the soil, particularly important with root vegetables. Once established, less water is needed. We have had to restrict watering time by hose where it is being over used, there are notices on the relevant sites. Also consider others wanting to water too. Over watering can promote disease and encourage slugs and snails. It can also cause soil to compact and wash away minerals. Leaving stones in the soil is good to help with keeping the soil warm and improve drainage

Using a watering can is better, the water is directed to the right area without watering all the soil which encourages weeds! Rain water from a shed or greenhouse is perfect and it's on hand. Do try that.



Our secretary

Joanne Aylett, she likes to be known as Jo, joined us in October last year. Her hours and contact details are on the front page. She is doing a brilliant job and we are very pleased to have her. She works on behalf on, and with the Committee so when contacting her she will not be able to make a decision on some issues without referring to a member of the Committee. The best way to contact her is by email. Some of you will have met her when we visited the sites recently and she was at the AGM.

Autumn and Winter

No need to down tools when the weather turns cooler, hard to imagine after all the hot weather we have experienced recently – it will be good to be outside, well wrapped up but getting warm very quickly! Autumn and Winter months are perfect for getting your plot in good shape for planting in Spring. There are also crops that can grown over Winter too – we realise that many will know this but here are some suggestions – winter lettuce and land cress – onions, shallots, garlic – perpetual spinach, kale, spring cabbage, texcel greens, hardy peas – a good time to start broad beans too. Let us know your suggestions and successes. There is information online too.

Sad News

We have lost some great friends and ploholders this year. At Glebe we lost John, at Loose Dorothy, both lovely people and great ploholders. At Buckland Hill Di suddenly passed away. She was site rep, with two splendid plots, and a wealth of knowledge on growing and wildlife. All are much missed and will be remembered.

Site security

Please lock the gates on entry and exit to keep the site secure. The padlocks are the strongest possible for multiple use. Please remember to never take your key out of the padlock while the hasp is open, it damages the padlocks. We check padlocks regularly, a major problem is oil being put into them if they are tricky. This damages them even more, they are dry padlocks and only graphite or similar must be used. If you notice a problem with the padlock, please advise your site rep or manager or the office.

Composting vegetables

These produce excellent compost, but must be placed in a suitable compost container, this can be built from pallets or similar, but vegetables must not be dumped on your plot as it encourages vermin. Annual weeds are good too but do shake the soil off first, you need that on your plot. Any other waste must be removed from the site.



Wildlife Areas

In areas on three of our sites we have started dedicated wildlife areas on land that was not suitable for plots. There is a splendid one at Rocky Hill where, Jeanette the enthusiastic and knowledgeable ploholder, is working really hard on it and it is taking good shape. An abandoned bath was dug in, lined and made frog friendly and has newts and a toad already. It is a lovely peaceful area. Glebe have set one up, again worked on by volunteers and encouraging wildlife. A new one at Sandling Lane in an unusable area is taking good shape too. Maidstone Borough Council fully support us in this venture.

