

Newsletter



Hamilton Buildings
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June 2020

WELCOME TO YOUR WIRRAL ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to your Wirral Allotments Newsletter that will be providing tenants and site secretaries with information from all of our Wirral Allotment sites.

Vicky's Corner

I can't believe we are in June already, only feels like yesterday it was Christmas, this season started off with the country in lockdown, obviously a few have struggled to get to their plots due to self-isolating. On the other hand many plot holders have had plenty of spare time to work on their allotments, transforming them into beautiful havens. I would personally like to thank you for your patience and understanding during such a difficult time.

Usually the risk of frost has passed by now, and with longer days there comes more sunshine and time to be in your allotment. If the weather is dry, then water your seed drills well before sowing any seeds – this way the young plants will develop a good root system.

Beetroot, broad beans, cabbage, cauliflower, early peas, lettuce, rhubarb, spring onions, radish, spinach can all start to be harvested now. Lift the earliest potatoes towards the end of the month and continue earthing up the rows of your other varieties. June is the end of the asparagus season, so stop cutting and give the plants a top dressing of general fertiliser to help build up the crowns for next year. Start to harvest the first of your soft fruits.

*Stay Safe
Vicky xx*

Break Ins

Recently we have had a lot of break ins, I would ask all plot holders to be extra vigilant at the moment.

Can you all please make sure you lock the gate when entering and leaving, whilst abiding by the Covid 19 guidelines.

We have fantastic sites across the Wirral and shouldn't let a minority of people ruin the allotments by mindless vandalism.

Seed Swap

I have been asked to include a section regarding sharing seedlings.

Has anyone got seeds they can swap with their neighbours or other plot holders.

Some sites have created an area for people to leave any extra seeds they may have, so other people can benefit from them.

All Covid 19 guidelines and social distancing should be adhered to.

Contacts:

Vicky Abbott
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0151 606 2941 /07557311738

Parks, Allotments & Countryside Team

Leaders

Wallasey Area

Terry Bainbridge, Nick Bower

Birkenhead Area

Neil Garnett, John Jakeman

Wirral South

Ian Roberts, Luke Bithell

Wirral West

John Shipton /Christine Smyth/Paul

Greenslade



Can you help with any of the following????

1. What's happening around your site - Have you secured funding or a good news story, have you got events planned in 2020?



Building on your Healthy Hobby

COVID-19

Allotments, as of 27th March, remain open and accessible to yourself and fellow allotment holders.

We ask that if you are continuing to attend your allotment plot, that you ensure to follow the government's guidelines around staying safe by using hand sanitiser/ washing hands and following social distancing.

If you or a fellow allotment plot holder are currently self-isolating and/or cannot tend the plot, 'non-cultivation' notices and inspections have been officially suspended until the end of June 2020.

For any friends or family interested in applying for an allotment plot, we have suspended the need to provide proof of ID 'in person' for the period to the end of September 2020. Please note that this proof of ID, will however, be required retrospectively.

We hope that this offers some reassurance at this difficult time.

Keep up to date with the latest government guidance by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Stay safe and well.

STAYS SAFE
AND STAY
POSITIVE

Bonfires

For the time being, there are to be no allotment bonfires in line with Merseyside Fire Brigade's guidance dated 27 March, for health reasons .



Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service



Friday at 12:03 · 🌐

In view of the serious health implications linked to any form of burning we are requesting that **#Merseyside** residents **DO NOT** dispose of waste (garden or other) by burning.

Many people who would normally be out at work or school during the day are now confined to their homes either through sickness, self-isolation or from government requirements to work from home.

It is essential that everyone understands that smoke from burning waste will have a greater impact on neighbours who would not normally be affected by it.

In view of the serious health implications linked to any form of burning we are requesting that Merseyside residents **DO NOT** dispose of any waste (garden or other) by burning.

If you must burn garden waste, please follow our safety advice below.

Help us to help you.

✗  **NEVER** use petrol or any accelerant to light a fire or to encourage it.

Also barbeques are not allowed at the moment , I have received a few complaints about people having barbeques. I will keep you updated with any information I receive.

CORONAVIRUS

**PROTECT
YOURSELF
& OTHERS**

Judges Wanted for 2021

The Wirral Allotment Community have taken over responsibility from Wirral Council for organising and running the annual allotment competition.

We need 2 or 3 volunteers to act as judges. Ideally you will have had some experience in judging allotments or have good practical experience in managing an allotment plot over a number of years.

As a judge you will not be allowed to enter the competition yourself.

Duties of a Judge:

- ◆ To attend a briefing session in order to fully understand your role and the criteria used for assessing/scoring plots.
- ◆ To be available for 3 or 4 days during Week Commencing 13th July 2020, to visit all of the plots throughout the Wirral that have been entered into the competition.
- ◆ To assess each plot in line with the agreed criteria.

Transport will be provided on all judging days and you will receive a free lunch each day.

Judging can be a very enjoyable experience enabling you to see most of Wirral's allotment sites and talk with a wide range of plot holders.

Judging days can be long and it will be necessary to be sufficiently mobile to be able to walk around a number of our larger sites.

If you feel that you would like to volunteer to act as a judge or simply want more information please contact me at:

davejmorris49@hotmail.com or phone 07565 199660.

Dave Morris



Many of you may have seen the video link of the allotments overview and scrutiny committee meeting, we have a massive demand for allotments at present and huge waiting lists, We were asked by one of the councillors if we could work with incredible edibles and start some pilot schemes.

To enable us to do this we would need the allotment community to help, we need to create community groups and use land maybe on allotment sites or land that is not being used across the Wirral. This would help with reducing some of the waiting lists as people would be able to have a couple of raised beds to grow some food.

Also if we created a community plot for the incredible edibles on allotment sites, this would help bring the community together, if this is something you would be interested in, please contact me at the office on 0151 606 2941, or you can email me at victoriaabbott@wirral.gov.uk.

I think this is a really good suggestion and a worthwhile group to be a part of, Anything that can help progress and promote allotments is something we need to be a part of.

We already have an incredible edibles group in Hoylake and would like to expand this across the Wirral.

Unleashable Plots & Wasteland

Due to the huge demand for allotments, we are looking at areas that could be brought back into action. I would like all site secretaries or plot holders to send any information of potential areas of land that could become new plots.

Some areas may just be they need clearing of rubbish, we are also looking at any land not being used by the council to create allotment sites.

We have identified a few areas already, but again any information would be much appreciated.

As you may already be aware we need to reduce waiting lists dramatically, so by creating new plots this will help to reduce waiting times, and also stop anymore waiting lists closing.

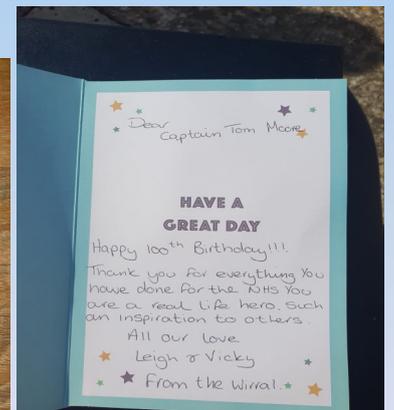
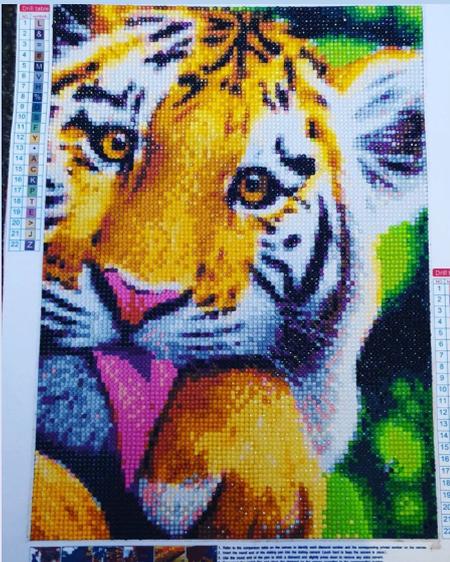
Vicky's Isolation Story

The past few months have been a difficult and testing time for us all, there is a lot of negativity everywhere we look, the news, the television, social media. I would just like to do a few pages where we as an allotment community can share positive stories to give everyone the lift we need, Be it what you get up to on your allotment, anything you have taken up during isolation, or just anything that makes you smile. I would like to hear about it.

My time in isolation, I have tried doing anything to keep busy, working from home has been nice, those few steps to the office in the morning makes getting up much easier, I have baked a lot, some for my neighbours, my brother and his workmates who work in a nursing home, also for my nephews and nieces at Easter.

We have been trying our old primary school favourites such as school cake, Jam rock cakes, made some homemade jam and lemon curd tarts, I've also done my tiger diamond painting art, and made some handprints out of salt dough, We also sent Captain Tom Moore a birthday card for his 100th birthday.

Its been nice to do things I would never normally have time for.



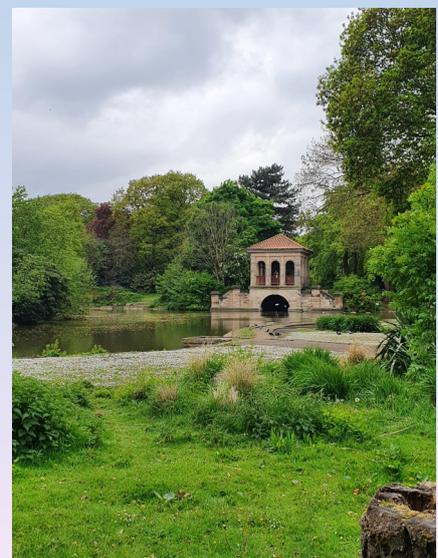
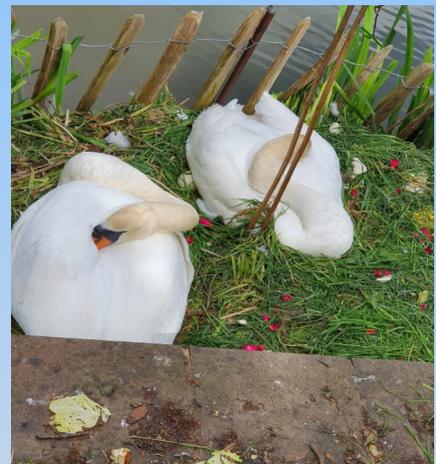
We have had a picnic in the garden which was lovely and something we would never do and also tried making a 30th birthday cake which was a success.

We were challenged with the task of making a victory sandwich cake also, which tasted lovely.

All of these things are something I would of never made time for , so Isolation has been tough but its also had many positives, I would like to promote positivity throughout our allotment community, as this time is a tough and worrying time for us all, that's why I would like to share my isolation stories and also our plot holders stories whether or not they are about allotments, when all around us we are hearing about the corona virus it is nice to see some positive and happy news.



My mum has been using her hours exercise a day to walk round the beautiful Birkenhead park, she has also been checking up everyday on the swan and her eggs, such a beautiful site to see.



The end of May my mum was lucky enough to get pictures of when the eggs had hatched, such a beautiful sight



Lovely to see pictures of the Cygnets swimming with mum and dad



Allotment Positivity Page



It's been great being able to visit the allotment in these lockdown times, especially with the weather being lovely these last weeks. Well apart from one night in May when the frost got all our potatoes, but all is not lost as they are recovering well, they may just be a bit late this year.

Beth Dallinger—McConville Forwood Road Allotments



First Strawberries picked at my plot on Forward Road.



The Lupins are in bloom.



The Bees are loving the Comfrey, an excellent fertiliser too.



First bunch of Sweet peas picked.

Allotment Positivity Page

This is plot 26 this is my 3rd year, I've had a slow start as last year I was concentrating on my career of becoming a driving instructor. I've just started to get more raised bed boxes, put plastic sheeting down and put fresh top soil in the boxes. I've started seeds off and I'm hoping to plant , Radish, Lettuce, Cauliflower, Broccoli , Cabbage , Tomatoes, Pumpkins Green beans and sweet peas, Courgettes, Sweetcorn, Peppers, Basil ,Parsley Onions, and Parsnips.

I have a few in the beds already but waiting for plants to get stronger before planting out.

I also have Strawberries that are in a new raised bed boxes and apple, pear, cherry and plum tree that should get fruit on them this year.

Janet Murr age 27

Share the plot with my friend Lindsay, who hasn't been able to help with the virus.

Dad (steve) has helped me a lot in the past couple of weeks.

Buckingham Road Allotments



Allotment Positivity Page

Whilst pottering on my plot, I noticed a Robin going into my old potting shed with food in her beak, observing her for a while I noticed she was going into an old pipe resting on the window sill inside. After she had left I took a cheeky peek and saw 4 gaping mouths. Over the weeks she fed her chicks and I'm happy to say they flew the nest and she continued to feed them why the fledglings pottered around inside the shed.

Shaun Mcghee Bebington Road Allotments



Manor Drive allotments had some new tenants arrive on site , some baby ducklings with their mum, they didn't fancy staying so were escorted over to Upton Park.

Bought a smile to a lot of peoples faces , that nature carries on regardless.



Allotment Positivity Page

Following the recent submission of an action plan to request that the small grassed (weedy !!) area close to the gate at Manor Drive Allotments be converted to hard standing,

Dave Whitehead (a long standing and popular Allotmenteer at the site) arranged a "Barrowthon" to clear the area. All while maintaining 'social distancing' !!

Most of the plot holders who could attend, did so. The day was a great success, not only in clearing the area in preparation for the work (hopefully !) to be done, but also engendering and strengthening the already close community spirit at Manor Drive.

A big 'well done' to all involved !! Site Secretary's Commendations for everyone !!
Hahaha ... and a massive "thank you" to Dave for arranging it.

Mike Lawrence, Manor Drive Allotments Site Secretary.



Allotment Positivity Page

Finally finished the last part of our plot.
2 weeks of hard graft, sieving and bagging glass/stones/ plastic/
window frames and a whole array of rubbish from the pile./

Happy with the final finish and Lettuce are in, Also included 70
bags of rubble to take to tip (2 hrs) each trip- total
3 trips but I'm sure you will agree Queenie (guide dog pup in
training) and I did a good job

Anita Cull-Roy Plot 22 Tollemache Allotments





Allotment Positivity Page



After retiring from the NHS my friend and I thought it would be a good idea to get on the allotment list towards the end of last year, knowing full well the time it takes to be offered a plot! However, by a stroke of good fortune following a disappointment early this year in we discovered Leasowe Community Allotments and the fabulous people who started it off back in 2013. Through the generosity initially of Peter Rogan we were able to borrow a couple of his beds to put some of our veg in, otherwise we would have had a lot ruined. As we got to know the people on there and knowing there were communal areas to be used by those on the waiting list and presumably by those who may not need or be able to manage a full plot. Lynne and I decided to tidy the beds up and use some while we wait.

As you can see from the photos it was in a bad way! Some beds had been utilised and looked very smart already thanks to Tina and Charlie, so we set to initially thinking we would just clear one or two! Well it got addictive and a few days later we had them all cleared ready for planting! Now several dozen bags of compost later and they are planted up! Everybody is very kind to us. Had lots of little plant gifts which we've made use of!

Before



After



So, as our area was in an ok situation, and being gluttons for punishment,!

We then set a challenge to sort the communal social area out ! Hopefully it's ready for the time we can all socialise.....soon! The photographs show before and now after for this area as well. Cant wait to use it properly! I should add that the weeds had been killed off it was just a question of getting them up! Of course we did pick some of the hottest days!



What I would say to people is if you are prepared to share, and to work hard, and to be a totally be part of a community there are places like this just crying out for volunteers and you get to grow some food as well. There is now a concerted effort into getting the community area up and running and it's really making a difference. We are so pleased we stumbled on this gem and very grateful to the generous people involved in making it work

Lynn Grant & Lynne Parkinson Leasowe Allotments

Hoylake Allotments

Easter Weekend, Still in Isolation due to Covid -19
Sunday 12th April 2020



Time to plant out the new Asparagus that Kings delivered earlier than expected, but at least we had the bed prepared with sifted/manured soil.



Looks great now its done.

Thanks to Jo's hard work.



So while Jo was busy, I started planting the main crop spuds 'Picasso'



In a trench about 6-8" deep watered well and each seed potato placed 15" apart in the bottom of the trench, then back filled.



So that's 30 Picasso planted, this patch will only take 3 more rows, which I plan to fill next weekend with 'Maris Piper'



Jo planted out 2 types of Broad Beans, the canes are to support them as they grow.



The Leeks still look good, we had some rain so hope it helped to swell them more.



We have removed the fleece from the Cauliflowers and replaced with netting, as they grow we will put higher hoops in so they have plenty of room. We need to cover these as we get Pheasants & Pigeons that love tender young veg!



This new raised bed has been filled up with sifted soil and Jo has started planting Bee friendly flowers, as this is our wildlife corner, with a log pile too.



In the greenhouse Jo added more Tomatoes, the ones put in last time have grown already. They like the deep soil & heat in there.



The 1st harvest of Stockbridge Arrow Rhubarb, we will be having a crumble very soon!



The Victoria Rhubarb is coming along nicely, a later variety and sweeter.



So a really good few days, Fri/Sat/Sun and we got lots done.

I've been busy at the lane end, making a new fence & gate, so check back to see my progress.

Thanks for reading/returning. Ian & Jo

Sunny weekend & week ahead

Monday 20th April 2020

Such a busy weekend, isolation is easy on our plot.

Jo got busy putting up a wig-wam for Sweet Peas. The cardboard is to stop the weeds popping up in the middle where its hard to reach once the Sweet Peas have climbed up the canes & strings.



Then Jo decided to empty a couple of our compost bins, she managed to fill 16 sacks with well rotted compost!

She transferred some of the contents with lots of worms to get the now empty bin started.



I got busy planting out the next lot of 'chitted' main crop potatoes 'Maris Piper'



Three rows with 9 in each row now in the ground. I planted them just the same as the others I planted last week



In between the other things I have done, I've been busy changing the front of our plot, to give a hard area, with a new fence and gate.

But its now full of bags of weeds and rubbish to take to the recycling centre when it re-opens after the

Covid-19 lock-down.



Jo ended up sorting all the compost bins, the two on the right (with black/yellow tape) are now sealed for use next year, the three on the left are now empty and we will be filling them up over the year.



The blossom on the Cox's Orange Pippin looks lovely, we expect a good crop again this year.



Latest harvests:
Rhubarb & Leeks.

Not in this pic:
Spring Onions.



Well we have been down to our plot almost every day so far and its looking much better.
Who would have thought a few months ago we would have all this spare time!



Our good friend & fellow allotment holders daughter made this lovely rainbow pic for our shed window. Thanks Emma x

Keep safe, stay well & observe distancing.

Thanks for reading/returning. Ian & Jo



Allotment Quiz

- 1) What would you use to feed garlic?.
A: Nitrogen
B: Manure
C: Potash
- 2) How far apart should you plant courgettes?.
A: 30cm
B 60cm
C: 90cm
- 3) When does cauliflower need watering?
A: At seedling stage
B: when it starts to mature
C: Both
- 4) What is the main aid to pollination for Beans?
A: wind
B: Bees
C: Birds
- 5) What pests is French Marigold said to deter?
A: Whitefly
B: Greenfly
C: Aphids
- 6) Which of these takes the longest time to mature?
A:Curly Kale
B:Brussel Sprouts
C: Shallots
- 7) Which family does the cultivator Elephant garlic belong to?.
A: Onion
B:Garlic
C:Leek
- 8) Which part of the Salsify plant can be eaten?
A: Roots
B: Petals
C: Root only
- 9) For rotation purposes, which group does the Turnip belong to?.
A: Brassicas
B: Solanaceae (Potatoes)
C:Umbelliferae (Roots)
- 10) The three sisters combination features which 3 plants?.
A: Sweetcorn, tomatoes and squash
B: Sweetcorn, beans and squash
C:Tomatoes, beans and courgettes

Thank you to our amazing NHS staff

#thankyouNHS



Recently I have had a lot of tenants who work for the NHS contact me to say they are working all hours to help deal with the coronavirus, and are worried they won't get to tend their plot. I have reassured these tenants we will allow them to get their plots back on track after this is all over.

I personally would like to thank all of our tenants who work for the NHS, who are going into work each day to help other people whilst risking their own health and that of their families. You are amazing and we cannot thank you enough for the work you do.

I would also like to thank all our amazing key workers that are still going to work and working tirelessly to keep their services going, you too are amazing and we can't thank you enough for the work that you do.

DEAR NHS STAFF AND KEY WORKERS

**IN THESE EXTRAORDINARY TIMES,
FOR THE AMAZING AND DIFFICULT WORK YOU DO,
FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS,
WE WANTED TO SAY:**

THANK YOU!



Liquid fertilisers made from unwanted plants – WEEDS?

Weeds are just plants in the wrong place. Many of them grow very quickly (so good crop!) and/ or very deep rooted e.g. as dandelions and dock, which have been able to draw up valuable minerals and other vital nutrients from deep in the soil (as we all know) and store the nutrients in their roots and leaves.

So next time you are weeding the garden why not make them into a liquid fertilizer.

All weeds are full of nutrients they have absorbed from your soil so good to return them to your garden plants.

Some plants that make extra nourishing liquid fertilizers include:

Stinging nettles are high in nitrogen, calcium, iron and many vitamins. Nettles also makes good tea and soup !

Horsetail/ mares tail is a deeply rooted weed that draws up minerals from far below the soil.

Comfrey is rich in many major and trace minerals.

Dandelions

Freshly mown grass clippings are high in nitrogen and potassium.

Liquid fertilizers are fast-acting. Apply them no more than every two weeks usually or when your plants need a boost.

HOW TO DO

Throw all the weeds, including roots, into a bucket, when it is about half full, fill it with water. Ideally use rainwater or water from water butt – think recycling at all times!

Put lid on to keep water born flees etc. out and smell down – it should not be too bad as not leaving for too long. Stir daily or if using manageable sized buckets you can pour it from one bucket into another to mix things up and keep it aerated – slightly less smell!

Let it soak for 3 days to 2 weeks. Strain and use the liquid right away as a fertilizer or foliar feeding. Best to use diluted just in case, 1 part concentrate to 10 parts water. Throw waste on to compost heap, dig into ground or apply as mulch to your soil.

If using grass clippings - Gather up clippings next time you mow the lawn, fill a bucket 2/3 full of them, add water and leave for 3 days, stirring daily, this can be added not diluted to established plants.

This is especially good for lawns but DON'T collect if you have applied weed killer/ moss killer recently. Then apply back on to your lawn as a feed - recycling at its best

You could also put weeds/ grass in to hessian sack and put in to water so easier to remove.

If you have a lot of comfrey and can afford to do the following you will have a very concentrated NON smelly fertilizer. Collect the comfrey leaves, chop up and put in to a bucket with a tight lid with NO WATER and leave for at least 8 weeks or until it has yielded a very dark highly nutritious , concentrated, NON SMELLY liquid fertilizer!

CAREFUL NOTE - the longer you leave the weeds in water the more concentrated so need to be diluted by possible 1 part to 10 parts water and never use weeds/ plants you have applied weed killers to.

For more information there is plenty on internet so why not have a go.



<https://wirralenvironmentalnetwork.org.uk>

Always
believe
something amazing is
about to happen!

Newcomers Section

Richard and Lynda took on plot 5 at Manor Lane allotments, the plot had been left derelict and neglected for a long time, After only taking the plot on in March , the work they have done is amazing and the plot is completely transformed. Below are some before and after pictures of their plot, and all the things they are growing what an amazing transformation.

Before



After





Richard & Lynda Clark Manor Lane Plot 5

Allotment Quiz

Answers

1)C – potash; wood fire ash is a good source.

2: C – for best yield.

3:C – cauliflower needs water at both stages.

4: B – bees are the main pollinators.

5: A – French Marigolds are useful in the greenhouse for this reason.

6: B – Brussels Sprouts take 30-36 weeks to mature.

7: C – Elephant Garlic is technically a type of leek.

8: A – you can eat the roots, young shoots and flowers of salsify.

9: A – Turnip is a Brassica.

10: B – the Three Sisters (from central America) features Sweetcorn, beans to climb up the corn, and squash to provide shade at the base of the plants. It will also work with courgettes