

Allotment News



A regular newsletter for allotment holders in Welwyn Hatfield

Winter 2011

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Fun, food and fresh air... with a good helping of talent!



All set up and ready to go before the start of the show, Mrs Ralph from Hyde Valley Allotment Garden in WGC.

Grow, Eat & Enjoy, the Council's second allotment show, was held again this year in the beautiful grounds of Mill Green Museum and attracted keen growers and plot holders wanting to share in the benefits of growing your own - healthy eating and creative cooking and much much more!

Various marquees protected punters from the brief downpour of late summer rain and the tea room provided light relief with cream teas. The Council promoted the Change for Life scheme, which encourages healthy eating and Green Lanes allotment association had a successful day in signing up new members, who can benefit from discounted seeds. Deputy Mayor Helen Bromley judged the competitions along with Caroline Rawle, Museum Manager and Robin Barr from the Green Lanes Allotment Association.

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Competition Winners

Fresh Allotment Produce

1st Prize - Mr and Mrs Sheilds, Sewells allotment



2nd Prize – Mr Donerciler, Blythway allotment



Adults Scarecrow Competition

1st Prize – Mr Johnson, Moneyhole allotment



Children's Scarecrow

1st Prize - Georgia Hattam (Age 7) Moneyhole allotment



Now & Then Displays

1st Prize - Claire & Charlie (age 6) Parker, Hyde Valley allotment



Now & Then Displays

2nd Prize – Sandra, Michelle & Tina, Moneyhole allotment

Homemade Produce

1st Prize – Jessica Sutton, Blythway allotment



2nd Prize – Lee Tyson & Rachel Keen, Hatfield Hyde allotment



Helen Bromley Judging Now & Then Competition





Allotment Photography



1st Prize – Autumn Gold Raspberry by Sarah Ariss, Sewells Allotment

Thank you

A big thank you to all tenants who entered the competitions and came along to the show.

The Council welcomes any feedback you might have and also if you have any ideas for next year's show or competitions. We would like to produce a **recipe leaflet** - to encourage people to turn their hard earned produce into food that they can enjoy.

Details of next year's September event and the spring evening allotment talks will be announced in the New Year.

The Natural Environment White Paper

The recent White Paper lays out the government's vision on the natural environment of which allotments, tenants and gardeners can be a part.

Benefits from Allotments

The White Paper acknowledges the financial, social, cultural, physical and even spiritual benefits that can be gained from the natural environment.

Although just a small part of the natural environment, allotments have tremendous benefits. In terms of physical and mental health they provide a source of organic and fresh food. This can lead to healthy eating, most notably because fruit and vegetables are grown! The digging, planting, clearing and weeding is good exercise, leading to a healthy body and mind. With the cost of food increasing, there are also financial benefits to be had from growing your own.

Allotments can be social places too. It can be a good way to meet new people - seeing others on site or joining the local association.

Green Infrastructure

Allotments are also an important part of the country's "green infrastructure":

"We need to stop thinking about isolated spots of green on a map... and start creating a thriving green network linking wildlife sites with farmland, forestry and urban parks and gardens" (*The Natural Choice: What the Natural Environment White Paper means for you [Defra, 2011] p.2*).

Plot holders can make a real difference by improving their plots and sites and, in doing so, contribute to the localism agenda. To see how you can make a difference, see "How to be even greener", Allotment News, p4



How to be even greener

You are already making “green” choices by choosing to grow your own vegetables, so why do more?

Growing fruit and vegetables is only part of the picture. The allotment can be seen as an ecosystem which provides many benefits.

The allotment provides fruit, vegetables and flowers; the actions of bees and other insects help pollinate the crops; the site

provides a local green space where people can be active, get to know others and have their spirits lifted. Benefits are also provided by tiny bugs and fungi that support healthy soil formation.

As acknowledged in the government’s recent White Paper, allotment sites are important green spaces, yet more could be done to increase the benefits gained from them.

Tales from a patch in Panshanger

“My allotment is not just a place for growing fruit and vegetables but also is a place where wildlife can visit and live.

A small pond provides a watering hole for a variety of animals including foxes [they leave tell-tale dung] and birds as well as being an aquatic environment for frogs whose life cycle goes from spawn to penny size adults. Larger frogs are sometimes seen.

Surface water is at a premium on Moneyhole allotments and

Panshanger as a whole. The pond also provides a hunting ground for the grass snake that I saw on top of a compost bin last September.

I haven’t seen the droppings of hedgehogs on my plot for several years. Absent because of slug pellet poisoning?

Owl droppings on the seat show that owls visit my plot, while a strange buzz one afternoon turned out to be a swarm of bees passing overhead.

What you can do

Give nature a helping hand: Encourage bees and other pollinators to your plot by planting flowers and spring bulbs; avoid using pesticides; put out bird feeders; create homes for hedgehogs; make bug houses; buy peat-free compost.



Bees are attracted to the lavender bushes and also the pendulous white flowers of *Leycesteria Formosa*, the lovely bush with the unpronounceable name. While a garden escape, Evening Primrose, is a large and pretty yellow-coloured plant.

On my plot I also have seen the vivid red cinnabar moth and its black and red striped caterpillars”.

By Bill Turton, Moneyhole Lane allotment, WGC

TopTip



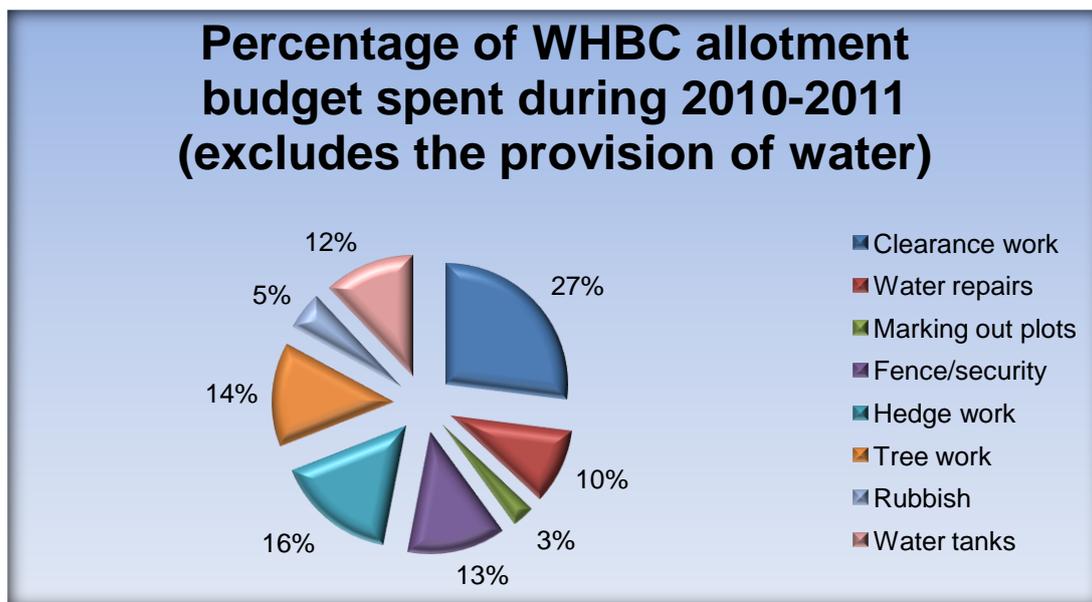
Don't abandon the plot yet!

The summer is over but there are still many things to do on the allotment. Give your garlic a kick start with the frosts and cold winter weather, plant one clove at a time pointing side up. Get a delivery of manure so it well rotted by the time Spring arrives and give your compost heap a stir. Make the most of the leaf fall by creating leaf mould - great for mulching in the Spring. Plant dwarf stock fruit trees, raspberry canes and other fruit bushes. Tidy away unused items for the winter months and plan ahead for next year.



Work carried out by WHBC 2010-2011

The Council undertook various works on our 46 allotments sites last financial year, between April 2010 and April 2011.



Shrub clearance to create plots at Deerswood Avenue and Blythway. **Water repairs** at Ingles, Blythway, Rowans, Blythway, Briars Wood, Westmead and Moneyhole. **Marking out newly divided plots** at Harwood Hill, Sewells, Hatfield Hyde, Maple Grove, Blythway, Rowans, St Audrey's Green, Hyde Valley, Newstead and The Pastures. **Fence repairs/replacement** at Martin Close, Swallow Gardens, Lemsford Lane and Bullrush Close, Ingles and Dove Court. **Hedge Work** at Digswell, Westmead and Colgrove and **Tree Work** at Dellcott Close, Raven Court, Tilecroft and Swallow Gardens. **Rubbish removal** at Sewells. **Rainwater Harvesting system** installed at Firs Close.

Newly opened allotments

This year new allotments at Bushey Green and Marley Road in Welwyn Garden City, and Haven Close in Hatfield.

All plots are fully let, and many new tenants have made a fantastic start in fully cultivating their plots already.

The sites opened in WGC have helped to reduce the waiting time in the Hollybush and Howlands area.

Allotment Rate increases

As advised earlier this year, from April 2012 the rates will be increasing.

£11.04 per 25m² on a plot with water provision.
£6.75 per 25m² a plot without water provision.

Please note that plot sizes are rounded up to the nearest 25m².

Concessionary rates for those over the age of 65 years and for those on full income support still apply.

Allotment News



Why not become an allotment friend so you can communicate with other plot holders? The Council needs you to work together with regards to sharing deliveries for manure, woodchip or leaves. You might want to organize the maintenance of boundaries, meet up at the local association or need with help with watering whilst you are on holiday. If you are have experience, why not give some advice to a new tenant? If you are a new tenant why not ask for help and advice? **For those who haven't already, please complete the below form and return to us.**

Contact

Helen Sharpe
Landscape & Ecology
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
The Campus
Welwyn Garden City
Herts AL8 6AE

Tel: 01707 357329
Fax: 01707 357 375
Email: h.sharpe@welhat.gov.uk
Web: www.welhat.gov.uk/allotments



Please contact us if you would like to contribute to the next edition of Allotment News.

Allotment Friends Group Data Protection Disclaimer

I.....(name)

Hereby give permission for the Council to share my contact details with other plot holders:

On my allotment site only, which is.....

On all sites in my ward, which is.....

On all sites in Welwyn Garden City and/or Hatfield (please delete as appropriate)

My contact details are:

Tel. no:.....

Email:.....

Signed:

Dated:

Putting people first.

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