

# 2008 ALLOTMENT NEWSLETTER

## Best Kept Allotment Awards

The allotments are inspected in late July of each year in order to utilise the growing season and provide the best opportunity for produce. Presentation of the Winners' trophies and certificates for the runners-up for each allotment site are presented during September of each year. The winners of the Best Kept Allotments for 2007 were as follows:

**Hitchen Lane** – Mr Graham Freestone (H21A) **Winner**  
Lucy Burton (H15) **Runner Up**  
Mr Roy Brown (H17) **Highly Commended**  
Mr David Sexton (H14) **Commended**

**Whitstone Rd** – Mr Mumford (W31B) **Winner**  
Mr & Mrs Holmes (W32) **Runner Up**  
Mr Clive Gibbons (W29) **Highly Commended**  
Mrs Caroline Thorner (W27A) **Commended**



Many congratulations to all the winners!

## Rent charges fixed until 2010

As from 1 February rent charges are as follows; **£7 per annum for a small plot** (below 500 sq ft), **£12.50 per annum for a medium plot** (above 500 sq ft but under 1100 sq ft), and **£25 per annum for a large plot** (above 1100 sq ft). Please also note that there will be **no discount for the renting of multiple plots.**



We now have 81 allotment plots in total over our four sites of Hitchen Lane, Whitstone Road and two areas on the Allyn Saxon Estate. The annual rent charges will remain in force until at least February 2010 and we are pleased to once again confirm that our charges remain one of the lowest within the Mendip district. However we do request your ongoing support in yourself providing adequate maintenance throughout the year to your plot.

The cost applicable to re-cultivation of a derelict plot to enable re-letting is quite considerable and may well have implications as to charges at future rent reviews.

## Management of Allotments

For day-to-day issues relating to your allotment you can either contact your Site Representative, or the Town Clerk. We intend to continue to robustly manage the allotments, firstly by the site representative keeping an eye on matters on a day-to-day basis, and the Council's Properties Portfolio Leader, currently Cllr Richard(Bob) Champion, along with the Clerk, undertaking site inspections on a bi-monthly basis.



The concept is to ensure that allotment plots remain cultivated at all times and do not get overgrown, as has happened in the past. Following these inspections any plots not deemed to be at an acceptable standard will receive reminder letters and, if all else fails, then their tenancy will be terminated and the plot re-let from our extended waiting list.

It is however pleasing that the majority of our plots remain in satisfactory condition, producing excellent vegetables, fruit and flowers and we thank you for your continued support.

Should you wish to split your plot, if you are finding it unmanageable, please contact us and we will be only too willing to consider this.

## General Maintenance



The existing contract with Adrian Crozier will continue for a further year and, included within the contract, he is now isolating the water supplies to the water troughs in November and reinstating the supplies in March of each year. Adrian also provides maintenance to the paths bordering each plot, cutting the grass throughout the year - the cost of which is incorporated within the plot rental at £1 per year per plot. **We must stress, however, that it is the responsibility of allotment tenants to maintain the path edges and we would also request that stones and debris are not left on the paths as this interferes with mowing.**

## Bonfires

Please note that the lighting of bonfires is strictly forbidden at all times (see Clause 5(c) of your tenancy agreement). However we are willing to consider proposals, perhaps for a bi-annual communal bonfire at the start/end of the growing seasons.

## Allotments Association

A suggestion has been put forward that tenants could form an Allotments Association. This could have considerable advantages such as the possible provision of grant aid and reduction in cost of seeds etc. We would, of course, continue to provide support, general administration and maintenance of the plots. We would welcome any feedback regarding this suggestion.



## Future Improvements

**Hitchen Lane** - We have priority to expansion of this site onto the land that has been derelict and dormant for well over 20 years to the east of the existing site. We have formally requested the District Council under statute powers to compulsory purchase this land for the purposes of allotments. This is in the early stages and we will keep tenants on this site updated with progress. At the same time we will continue to strive to obtain formal Right of Way from Hitchen Lane down to the access to our allotment site. This would ensure that tenants continue to be able to use this driveway and that we would be able to carry out further maintenance and upgrade to the surfacing for occasional vehicular / trailer access.

**Whitstone Road** – Part of the boundary fencing has been replaced to assist security and we will continue to monitor the situation. Trees (within the allotment site) all of which are self seeded, many of which have been deemed in-appropriate with unsatisfactory positions and poor management are to be felled during the winter months.

Would tenants using the car park at Whitstone Road allotment site please ensure that the gate is firmly locked behind you. Please note that the **new code** for this gate as from the 1 February 2008 will be **8888**.

**Allyn Saxon** – At the site by the drill hall we have cleared one plot which has been overgrown for many years and also work to remove self seeded trees and hedgerow, which has outgrown the area making one plot unusable, again the work will take place during the winter months.

**Shed and Trees - Generic Policy** – Policy has been approved to limit the maximum shed size on any one plot to dimensions of 6ft x 4ft. We are also current reviewing policy regarding planting of trees and very large shrubs upon allotment plots and their liability and ongoing management.

## Waiting List

We currently have 18 prospective tenants on our waiting list, some of which have been waiting patiently for 12 months. Anyone wishing to apply for an allotment can be added to this list via our website or contact with this office; vacant allotments are then offered on a first-come first-served basis.



## Tenants Representatives

<b>Whitstone Road site</b>  Adrian Crozier 14 Beech Way Evercreech BA4 6NZ Tel. No. 07944035557	<b>Hitchen Lane Site</b>  <b><u>We urgent need a representative for this site. Any volunteers kindly contact the Town Clerk for further information.</u></b>
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## Tenancy Agreement

May we take this opportunity of highlighting below several clauses within your existing Tenancy Agreement. Whilst the majority of allotment holders look after their plots, and abide by the conditions set within the Tenancy Agreement, we have had several incidents throughout the previous year whereby tenants have let their plots get overgrown and **unfortunately we have had to terminate several tenancies throughout the year period.**

3) (iv) The Council is entitled to compensation from the tenant for any deterioration in the land arising from the tenant's failure to keep it clean and in a good state of fertility.
4) The tenant shall reside within the Town of Shepton Mallet during the continuance of the tenancy.
5) (a) The Allotment Garden shall be kept in a clean, decent and good condition and properly cultivated;  (b) The tenant shall cause no nuisance or annoyance to any tenant of any other part of the Allotments provided by the Town Council, or the occupiers of adjoining properties;  (c) The setting and lighting of bonfires is strictly forbidden at all times. This Council encourages and agrees for areas of each plot to be set aside for the purpose of composting down all waste from the allotment plots. Any materials, which are unsuitable for compost are to be removed by the tenant from the site at their own cost.  (g) The tenant shall maintain in decent order all fences and ditches bordering the Allotment Garden and shall keep trim and keep in decent order all hedges and paths forming any boundary of the Allotment Garden;
7) If the tenant shall have been in <b><u>breach of any of the foregoing provisions of this Agreement for a period of one month or longer</u></b> the Council may re-enter upon the Allotment Garden and the tenancy shall thereupon come to an end but without prejudice to any right of the Council to claim damages for any such breach or to recover any rent already due before the time of such re-entry but remaining unpaid.

## Shepton Town Website

Our website, [www.sheptonmallet.org](http://www.sheptonmallet.org), enables members of the public to have the latest information on matters relating to the town and enable them to view the majority of administration and information documents relating to the Town Council. If you have any information/images which you feel could be of interest, please contact us by email, the website, telephone or land mail.



Happy Gardening!  
Shepton Mallet Town Council