Allotment numbering

Rule 3.7 of the allotment rules for tenants clearly states: “Tenants are responsible for ensuring their plot is numbered and to keep the plot number clean, readable and displayed in a prominent position at all times”.

We all sign up to these rules when we take up our allotments. This is an essential part of identifying each allotment and helps our independent volunteer area representatives. The area reps make two allotment inspections each year and most have multiple sites to visit. Some sites are straightforward but others are not, and some now have allotments a, b or c after the number. If your plot doesn’t have a number, mistakes can be made resulting in the wrong tenant getting a non-cultivation warning letter.

For the inspections this year, area reps have been asked to note down allotments that are not numbered and report this to Mark Littlefield. From next year, those who do not clearly display their number will get a warning letter followed by a termination letter if they do not rectify the situation.

On my recent inspection of an allotment site, apart from unnumbered allotments, I found numbers:

• buried in weeds
• under a currant bush
• on the side of a shed
• on the back of a shed and in small writing
• on the far end of an allotment
• clearly not displayed in a prominent position.

Finally, I found an allotment with the wrong number on the shed.

This item is raised at all area reps meetings and it would be much appreciated by all if we could remove it from the agenda.

Ron le Marechal
Grumps from the chair

At several site and area reps meetings I have been asked to contribute a section to this magazine – ‘a chairperson’s grumps’ column. I’ve been promised ‘grumps’ if I run out. The front page covers the issue that consumes so much time at meetings making it my major grump. Bonfires represent a very close second.

To remind us all of Rule 3.9: Bonfires

- Do not have a bonfire on a windy or breezy day
- Avoid smoke drift onto other tenants’ plots and neighbourhood properties especially when people are enjoying their environment
- Avoid having a bonfire when residents have washing hanging out to dry or when property windows are open
- Ideally have a bonfire two hours before dusk
- Only burn dry waste
- Consider using a purpose built galvanised incinerator and lid with centre flue
- Never leave a bonfire unattended
- Never bring materials from off-site to burn.

I know it happens (I field the complaints for one large site from allotment holders and local residents), you know it happens and those who do it know they are not following the rules. On a bright, sunny and warm Sunday morning someone lights a smelly and smoky bonfire which includes green or non-dry material and smoke blows everywhere. There is no care about washing on the line from people who work during the week and not a care about other people working their allotments or at least that is how it seems. As a chronic asthmatic, I have to head indoors and close the windows, except when I get complaints and have to talk to the people responsible which I do in what I hope they will agree is in a polite and friendly manner.

Why do people have so many bonfires? Have we not all been hearing about clean air and pollution? Do people not realise that much of what is burned can be composted and will rot down to give wonderful material to use on the allotment. If tenants are worried about potash, it is very easy and cheap to buy. Save wood prunings and either take them to the dump or have a Bonfire Night bonfire.

Grump over. Do please write and let the editor have your views, but in the meantime keep to the rules.

Ron le Marechal

Respect your neighbours plots and produce

Please do not take produce from your neighbours plots without their permission. As a reminder, point 3.14 of the Allotment Rules states: “not to enter, take or remove any plants or crops from other allotment plots without that tenant’s permission.” Anyone found taking crops from their neighbours without permission, will be evicted.
Brenda Morrison updates us on the up and downs of keeping chickens.

Since my article in the March 2017 edition of Corner Plot, tragedy struck when a fox visited and killed seven of my chickens, taking two of them with her (I’m assuming it was a vixen). It looked like the fox had torn out the chicken trap door to get to my girls.

The fox was so quiet as she didn’t disturb me or my dogs and I was at the back of the house at the time. I was watching a programme on farmyard animals and heard a noise which I thought was chickens on the programme – sadly, how wrong I was. The fox didn’t even wake my German Spitz who is always very alert.

I’ve just got the four chickens now, one of which is a bantam I adopted when a friend found it running across a road.

I’ve bought a new shed and the girls are now safe and are all laying well. Fingers crossed.

Have you considered a co-worker on your allotment?

Do you need support with maintaining your plot? Can’t get enough time with family and/or work commitments? We all love our allotments and get frustrated when we can’t keep them up to standard. They are a big commitment, as witnessed by the number of people who feel they have to give up, or don’t give up when they probably should, and let their plot become a jungle.

Don’t be downhearted if, for whatever reason, you are having difficulty keeping your allotment properly cultivated. You can always consider the option of nominating a co-worker.

Spouses and partners can automatically be co-workers and share the work, but a properly registered co-worker can be a neighbour or a friend. Your co-worker could even be a complete stranger from the waiting list who would be prepared to join you in a joint arrangement. The process of registering the co-worker with the council is simple and can be completed in a couple of days by filling out a simple form. The co-worker can have their own key within a week.

The scheme benefits the plot holder, the co-worker and the waiting list in the following ways:

- The plot holder gets to keep his or her beloved allotment but gets help with its maintenance
- The co-worker can be introduced to the joys (and frustrations) of an allotment without the daunting prospect of looking after a whole plot as a beginner
- The waiting list can perhaps be reduced
- Fewer allotments will be unkempt and unproductive
- The co-worker has the right, in most circumstances, to inherit the whole plot if you finally decide to give it up.

The plot holder remains responsible for the payment of rent, but can come to any arrangement which suits both parties regarding costs and how the growing of crops is managed.

Why delay? Do yourself and others a favour and have the best of both worlds. I speak from experience.
Notice to poultry and bird keepers on allotments

The council has experienced issues with rats on a number of allotment sites that have poultry present. If you do keep poultry, please make sure your poultry coop is well maintained and rodent proof.

Rodents cause the following problems:

- eating chicken feed
- rats eat eggs and baby chicks
- contaminating feed, water and coops with droppings, urine and hair
- they carry lice, fleas and mites and other parasites
- transmitting disease, not the least of which is salmonella (fleas carried by rats were responsible for killing an estimated 100,000 people in the Great Plague of London in 1665)
- they can damage yards by burrowing and coops and wires by chewing
- injuring chickens (rats are capable of chewing toes off roosting birds at night)
- stress for chickens which often results in a drop in egg production
- they can cause structural damage
- they can chew through electrical cables and cause house fires.

Eliminate easily accessible water sources

Rodents will walk through and drink from traditional waterers, contaminating them with their waste and disease-carrying mouths, feet and fur. Remove traditional waterers and, switch to poultry nipple waterers. This will prevent rats gaining access to the water and keep the chickens’ water supply disease-free.

Secure the coop, run and aviary

Hardware cloth rather than chicken wire should also be used to enclose the entire structure of the chicken enclosure as chicken wire will not suffice. Hardware cloth is wire mesh that consists of either woven or welded wires in a square or rectangular grid that is available in galvanized, stainless steel and bare steel. It is manufactured from a stronger gauge metal than chicken wire, (the smaller the gauge, the stronger the mesh) making it a much better choice for flock protection. Use 1/2” to 1/4” galvanized hardware cloth, which is typically recommended for coops and chicken runs.

- Install hardware cloth under the ground of the base of the coop, chicken run, and run and aviary and attach to the frame/structure to prevent access by pests through the floor
- Seal all openings larger than one inch with hardware cloth
- Secure hardware cloth with screws and washers. Staples are easily defeated by pushing or pulling

Please ensure your poultry coop is well maintained and rodent proof at all times.
Five years ago on the Hatch Warren site, we held a BBQ for all plot holders and their families. Discussions turned to the demise of local vegetable growing shows and competitions and the general feeling was that we should hold our own challenges and competitions and give out prizes.

We have now held four competitions at Hatch Warren.

Year one was the marrow growing competition and there were three classes - longest, heaviest and the biggest girth. The competition was a great success and plot holders wanted a new challenge for the following year.

Year two was the sunflower growing competition with two classes – tallest flower and largest bloom.

In year three, competitors were tasked with growing three long runner beans.

The prize went to the person who had the longest total length.

This year, we decided to have a change and held a scarecrow extravaganza. Each entrant had to pay £3 which was put into the prize fund. Judging was carried out by three independent plot holders, who could each award up to 30 points per scarecrow, giving a possible top score of 90. Prizes were awarded to:

1st – Plot 2 (83 points)
2nd – Plot 13 (75 points)
3rd – Plot 1 (66 points)
4th – Plot 12 (65 points)
5th – Plot 4 (63 points)

We are planning another competition for next year.

Ross Pollard

1st  2nd  3rd  4th  5th

Plot 2  Plot 13  Plot 1  Plot 12  Plot 4
### Five rods and under

**Winners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First name</th>
<th>Last name</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Plot number</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>Hatch Warren</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>Watson</td>
<td>South View</td>
<td>24B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Burt</td>
<td>Pitcairn Close</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Mr T Lewis, Plot 26 Hatch Warren  
Mrs M Watson, Plot 24b South View  
Mrs H Burt, Plot9 Pitcairn Close

### Over five rods

**Winners**

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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Last name</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Plot number</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Pitcairn Close</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Botheras</td>
<td>Hackwood Road</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Allan</td>
<td>Wells</td>
<td>South View</td>
<td>21A &amp; 22</td>
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Mrs K Wood, Plot 13 Pitcairn Close  
Mr E Botheras, Plot 29 Hackwood Road  
Mr A Wells, Plots 21a/22 South View
## Five rods and under

### Remaining competitors

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<td>Betty</td>
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<td>Tiverton Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Hackwood Road</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>South View</td>
<td>28A</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>C A</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Marnel Park</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Beverley</td>
<td>Cleaver</td>
<td>South View</td>
<td>132</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>Tiverton Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Goodenough</td>
<td>Churchill Way</td>
<td>96A</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Phyllis</td>
<td>Coventry</td>
<td>Tiverton Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>R D</td>
<td>Harker</td>
<td>Coronation Road</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>13th</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>D A</td>
<td>Lane</td>
<td>Churchill Way</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>N S</td>
<td>Pouney</td>
<td>Marnel Park</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>C A</td>
<td>Stevens</td>
<td>Hatch Warren</td>
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</table>

The presentation ceremony will take place during this year’s Annual Tenants Meeting which is on Thursday 6 December 2018 at 7pm at The Council Chamber, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke.
Committee

Specialist Services Officer
Mark Littlefield

Chairman
Ron Le Marechal

Minute Secretary
Derek West

Committee (area representatives)

Martin Eastwood
(Burgess Road)

Ron Le Marechal
(Eastrop)

Bill Fergie
(Hackwood Road)

Derek West
(Tony Gritt)

Iain Crawford
(Eastrop)

Brenda Morrison
(Haydn Road)

Derek West
(Whiteditch)

Susan Beard
(Carpenters Down)

Mick Phelps
(Elizabeth Road)

John Champion
(Stag Hill)

Annual tenants meeting

The annual tenants meeting will be held this year on Thursday 6 December 2018 at 7pm in Council Chamber at the Civic Offices. The Mayor will be invited to attend and will present trophies and certificates to the winners of the annual allotment competition. The meeting will finish with a buffet. All tenants are invited to the meeting.