

Autumn 2024



News in Brief

THEFT ON ALLOTMENTS

A number of reports of theft and/or damage on the allotments had been received over the summer months.

Unfortunately it is not possible to take remedial action against offenders without hard evidence, but please continue to report any and all cases to me, so that I can build a profile of incidents to help identify any patterns.

If you do spot anything suspicious, or have hard evidence (photo or video for example), report it immediately either to 999 (if it is still happening at the time) or 101.

Above all, please do not put yourself or anyone else in danger.

Awards Evening

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 Allotments Newsletter!

Following on from last year's experiment of combining the Allotments Awards with the In Bloom Awards, it has been decided to combine the two events into one again this year. Invitations have been sent out to all those lucky winners and runners-up, so if you received one and haven't RSVP'd yet, please do so asap!



Changes to the Rental Year

There are some significant changes being made to the allotments rental year in 2025, in order to streamline the administration and accounting of the rents and renewals.

These changes will not materially affect you, and are intended to help out 'behind the scenes' with efficiencies.

The main difference that you will notice is that you are being asked to pay only a 6-month rent this time around, to cover the period October 2024—April 2025. In March 2025, you will then be asked to pay a full 12-month rent, with rental demands being issued in March of each year thereafter.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Allotments AGM 2024



The date for this year's Allotment Holder's AGM is **24th October 2024 at 7pm** in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall. A reminder will be sent out nearer the time, but it would be very helpful to those elected Members of the Allotments Sub-Committee present to have any questions or comments in advance, so that they can be certain to have the information to hand to provide adequate answers.

With best wishes,

Martin Greenfield, Allotments & In Bloom Officer

Fly-Tipping Report

Unfortunately, the area around the allotments continues to be a popular spot for fly-tipping. I had an on-site meeting with Biffa and Arun District Council in June to explore the possibilities for removal of waste in a more timely manner, but the result was not positive: Biffa cannot enter the allotments due to health & safety protocols, and can only collect fly-tipped waste that has first been collected by Town Force and deposited beside the public highway. They also cannot clear any green waste. The matter is further complicated by a complex pattern of land ownership and responsibilities bordering the allotments

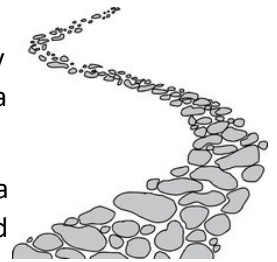
As a result, the office is continuing to explore ways in which fly-tipping can be reduced (or deterred), but in the meantime it unfortunately remains the case that it does take time to have it removed as and when Town Force are free to do so. Since the Town Council cannot remove waste to the local recycling centre, it costs a significant amount to have the waste removed to a commercial site, and therefore it makes economic sense to wait until a full load can be removed, rather than being billed for multiple trips to the waste disposal site with smaller loads.

As always, if you see anyone dumping waste in or around the allotments, please report it immediately.

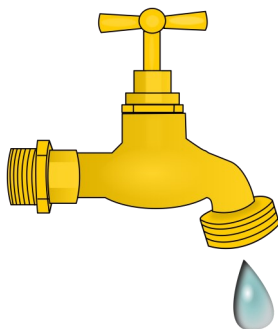
New Path for the Original Site

Tenants of the Original Site (Plots 1—30B) may have noticed a new path from the gate by Plot 4. This was recently installed with the help of Town Force and hopefully provides a better means by which to access the allotments from this gate.

The formerly vacant plot in this corner has also been brought back into use after a number of years of being unused, so hopefully this should also help to reduced (preferably stop) the persistent fly-tipping in this area.



Water Butts



Following comments from tenants, I have been working hard behind the scenes representing your views to the Allotments Sub-Committee on the matter of using hosepipes to fill water butts.

I am pleased to say that the Chair and Vice-Chair were persuaded by your arguments and have agreed to allow the use of hosepipes in this regard.

Obviously this comes with the caveat that water usage will be monitored closely, and the matter may be reviewed

at a later date if necessary.

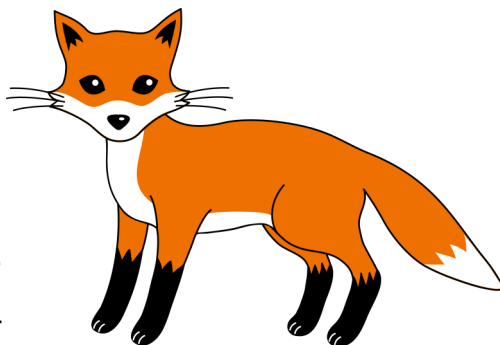


Foxes

Foxes are not and never have been classified as 'vermin', so local authorities have no legal obligation to act against them. We are also well aware there is little point. Private "pest controllers" who offer such a service omit to inform you there is no such thing as a vacant territory. Remove one fox and another will take over the territory within weeks and all you've achieved is a less heavy wallet!

So, what laws currently protect the fox and what are the penalties for breaking those laws? Penalties vary from fines, in some cases up to £50,000, to imprisonment for multiple or serious infringements.

The Town Council, having taken advice from pest controllers and with information from The Fox Project and Fox-a-Gon believe the best way to deal with this ongoing problem is to discourage foxes from the Allotments. A plan which involves action from this Council, Arun District Council and you as plotholders.



Below is the Town Council's policy for dealing with foxes, as introduced in 2022:

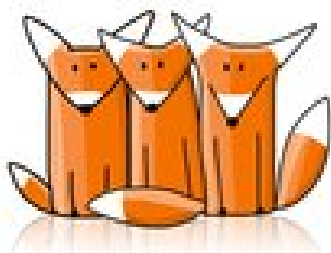
WHAT WE WILL DO

We have previously spoken with Arun District Council Cleansing Department regarding monitoring the communal bins in the roads around the allotments to try to stop scavenging by foxes.

Town Force have a programme to cut back hedges and to trim the perimeters of both sites. If you have obstructed this perimeter with sheds, compost bins, or with piles of rubbish so that Town Force cannot access the perimeter you will need to clear these paths yourselves and remove any debris at your own expense.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

1. Do not feed the foxes on the allotments. We know some people like the foxes and leave food for them. Please do not do this.
2. If you have BBQs on your allotment, make sure you do not leave ANY scraps of food after you finish. The smell of food will entice the foxes and any scraps left on the grill or on the ground will keep them coming back. We do not wish to ban BBQs but if this problem persists, we may have to consider this action.
3. If you have a pond or water on your plot you must cover it with a wire mesh cover both for Health and Safety and to prevent foxes using it for drinking water.
4. Check your plot for anywhere foxes can hide or build dens. Foxes do not like sheds that have draughts under them and usually use ones that are in the corner of the garden with a wall or fence on two sides. If there is rubbish piled behind the shed, then so much the better. To deter the foxes, all you have to do is clear the rubbish and open up the area around the shed so that it is exposed and draughty. The foxes will leave pretty quickly, usually the following night.
5. As soon as they have gone, take steps to prevent them returning. If you have exposed the shed so that it is open all round, this is usually enough. If you want to be absolutely sure that they will not come back, securely fix weld mesh (not chicken wire) around the bottom of the shed, covering the gap and dug about 12 inches (30cm) into the soil.
6. If foxes are regularly fouling or digging your plot consider purchasing and using a product such as Scoot or Get off my Garden. These are strong smelling products which foxes do not like. However, they are fairly expensive to buy and have to be reapplied after rain or weekly if there has been no rain.



Meeting Dates for 2024

The 2024 meeting calendar, as it relates to allotments, is as follows. All meetings are open to the public.

Allotments Sub-Committee

4th November at 17:30

Environmental and Leisure Committee (to which the Sub-Committee reports)

4th November 18:30

Updates to the Allotments Website

A number of updates have been made to the allotments section of the Town Council's website (www.bognorregis.gov.uk/Allotments_9794.aspx) to make it easier to use and—hopefully!—a much more useful resource for you.

On it you will now find an archive of newsletters going back to 2017 and a number of useful documents available for download. Among these are:

- ⇒ Accident Report Form
- ⇒ Health & Safety Guide
- ⇒ Permission Forms for sheds and trees

Please take time to explore, or if you do not have internet access, copies of all the above can be requested in hard copy from me.

Tenant Representatives 2023-2024

Your Tenant Representatives are your first point of contact if you have any concerns or questions.

Re-established site:

Louise Russell (Plots 104-108)

Phil Fortin (Plots 36-38)

Original site:

Colin Penfold (Plots 7A/7B)

Paul Goodchild (Plots 14B/19A)

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