

Spring 2025



News in Brief

RENTAL YEAR REMINDER

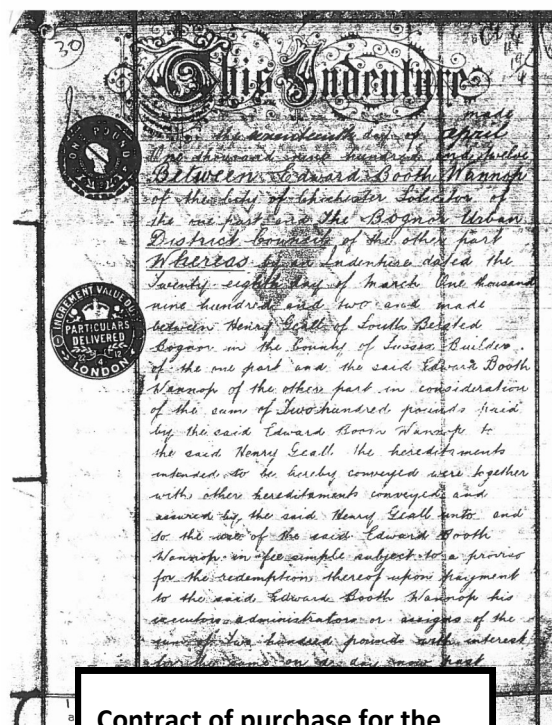
The rental year now runs April-March from 2025, so you will all have already received the paperwork asking for the forthcoming year's rent. Please could you ensure that rent is paid before 1st April.

GATE CODE CHANGE

The gate codes will be changed in April, after the start of the new rental year. A reminder will be sent out again at the time.

A Potted History of our Allotments

Did you know that August 2025 marks the 115th anniversary of the founding of the Town Council's allotments? The land at Gravits Lane, purchased for £690 (that's more than £70,700 in today's money!), provided "Allotments and Houses for Working Classes" of Bognor (no Regis in the name back then) and accepted the first tenants in April 1912. These first tenants had to sign a tenancy agreement, pay stamp duty, and submit one-half year's rent in advance. A water supply finally arrived in 1913, when a pair of wells were sunk, utilising a hand crank to raise and lower the water. Both wells still exist, although they have long since been out of use.



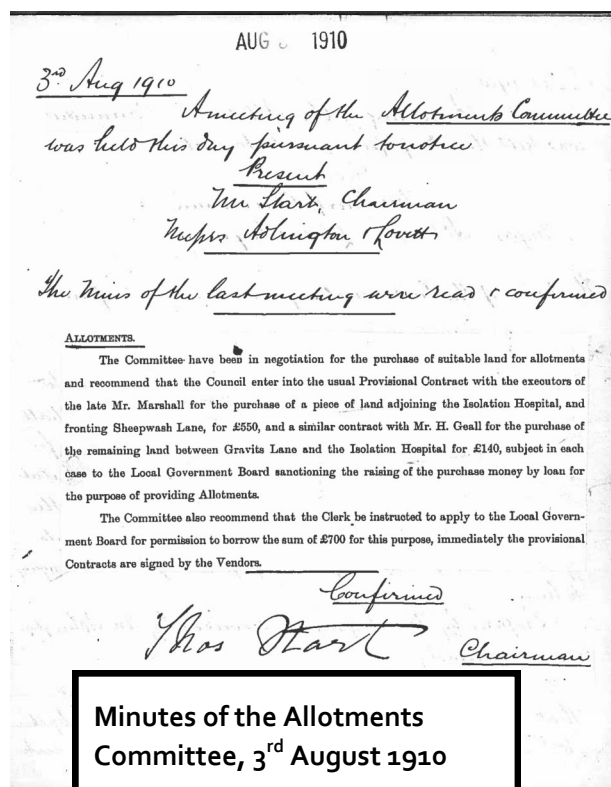
Contract of purchase for the allotments

Piped mains water came to Gravits Lane by the 1990s, and then to Sandringham Way in 2010 (at a cost of £3,915.55) - the latter replacing a system of storage tanks. Finally, in 2024, additional tap sites were installed at Gravits Lane and all 12 taps across both allotments sites replaced with brand new ones.

I hope you found this little journey into the past interesting, as we look forward to another successful year of allotmenting!

With best wishes,

Martin Greenfield, Allotments & In Bloom Officer



Minutes of the Allotments Committee, 3rd August 1910

Legionnaire's Disease

Safety at the Allotments

You may notice that water is a theme in this edition of the Allotments Newsletter. This is due to a new focus on water safety by the Town Council following obligations to manage and control Legionella across all Town Council-operated sites.

Water safety legislation is a rapidly changing field, with numerous important updates surrounding Legionnaire's Disease in recent years. Therefore, it is worth reminding all our tenants of the dangers and risks of the disease at allotments.

What is Legionella?

A common, waterborne bacteria that can be found in open water, water pipes, hoses, taps and pretty much any water system. It survives by feeding on most organic materials found in water systems, including vegetation (such as algae, leaves, etc.), animal products, limescale, sediment, sludge, dirt, rust, wood, rubber and other bacteria.

How does it spread?

A person can become infected by breathing in contaminated water droplets, such as from a sprinkler or spray hose. The bacteria then enter the lungs and attach themselves to the cells. Once inside the body's own cells, the bacteria multiply, mature and then burst out, damaging the cell and infecting other surrounding cells.



What are the symptoms?

Legionnaire's Disease starts off feeling like a typical flu, with a severe cough, tiredness, fever, chills and a high temperature. Symptoms worsen within days and include abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea, confusion, muscle aches, headaches and breathlessness as the bacteria spreads out further into the body and infects other organs. Contracting the disease can prove fatal, and survivors often suffer permanent lung damage—likened to the same effect as smoking 30 cigarettes a day for 30 years!

Who is at risk?

No one is immune to the disease, but those most at risk are those aged over 40, smokers, people with pre-existing health conditions, and those who drink alcohol or use drugs.

There are around 400 cases of Legionella in the UK each year, but the trend is increasing.



- Legionella bacteria can travel over half-a-mile from the source of contamination, and up to 1.6 miles in the wind! They can also survive for up to 3 hours in the air.
- A study by Public Health England at the Government's Porton Down facility in 2018 discovered that as much as 95% of all water butts in the UK are contaminated with legionella. Watering cans were found to be the safest method of watering gardens, with the least amount of legionella dispersal into the air.

Legionnaire's Disease—Continued

Safety at the Allotments

What are the Town Council doing about it?

The Town Council is responsible for the water supply to the allotments (i.e. the taps), and takes precautions to ensure that the supply is safe. You may notice that the water will be turned on for several minutes once a week during the winter. This is to flush out the system and help ensure that the water is safe to use. We may also take temperature measurements from the taps from time to time during the summer, which again requires them to run for up to two minutes. We understand that this may be an inconvenience to those plots next to a tap site, but it is a requirement that we have to undertake. We will also move any water tanks placed under or around the taps without notice.

How does this affect me?

Once the water is transported beyond the taps, such as in watering cans or hosepipes, it then becomes your responsibility as the tenant to ensure safe usage and storage. Any tenant using water butts, storage tanks or any other means of storing water (including ponds) do so at their own risk and liability. This is why there are several rules and regulations on the use of water in your Tenancy Agreement and Allotments Information Leaflet.

As a reminder:

- Make sure that your hosepipe is emptied after each use and before being stored away. It is your responsibility to ensure this is carried out.
- Don't leave hosepipes lying on the ground when not in use.
- Ensure that all hosepipes—including the short lengths used to fill watering cans—are disconnected from the taps after each and every use.
- Ensure that the area around the taps is left clean and free from obstructions. Tenants must not place storage tanks under or around the taps.
- Do not use sprinklers or any device or fitting that creates a spray or mist.
- Do not install or bury your own water pipes or fittings. Do not interfere with the taps or any pipework.



Compost

Legionella can also grow in compost and there is a low risk of contamination when opening a bag of compost.






Compost should not be stored on the site in quantities beyond that which is for immediate use, and should also be kept outside in the shade. Direct sunlight and/or storage in greenhouses and sheds can produce the optimal conditions for the bacteria to grow inside a sealed bag of compost, by making a warm, humid atmosphere inside. This can cause contaminated water droplets to escape and be inhaled when the bag is open.

The Town Council does not supply compost to the allotments, and does not currently permit the bulk/communal storage of compost on the sites. Any compost brought onto the site is at the tenant's own risk; liability for safe usage and storage rests with you!

Allotments Hedge

Please could all tenants bordering the hedgerow between the two allotments sites please keep the pathways that run alongside it clear. Access must be maintained at all times to allow for regular maintenance.

Therefore, please:

-  Do not dump waste (including green waste) into or along the hedgerow
-  Do not place sheds, greenhouses or any equipment within two feet of the hedge
-  Do keep the grass pathways mowed

Meeting Dates for 2025

The 2025 meeting calendar, as it relates to allotments, is as follows. All meetings are open to the public.

Allotments Sub-Committee

16th June 18:30

10th November 17:30

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

24th March 18:30

19th May 18:30

14th July 18:30

15th September 18:30

10th November 18:30 (to follow the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting)

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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