

# AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

## Allotments Update

### Best Allotment Awards 2023

Congratulations to all the winners of the best allotment awards. Here are 3 of the winners being presented with their trophies and vouchers from Mayor Sam Zair and Chair of Allotment Committee Cllr Michael Siddle.

Welcome to issue four of the Allotment Update newsletter which has been included with your annual tenancy pack. If you have any queries please get in touch.

Kindest regards  
Town Council Team



### Water Charges 2023 -2024 onwards

As advised on the summer news letter the Town Council have made the difficult decision to implement a water charge to all plots from 1st November 2023. This is due to increased supply prices and high bills for some sites, this decision was not taken lightly by the Council. The revenue will be used to cover the water charges and the funds the council previously used to cover water costs will be used to cover essential maintenance and repairs on sites, resulting in greater investment moving forward. Water butts are encouraged for water conservation. Charges are as follows and are itemised on the tenancy invoice for 2023-24:

- £15 per year for all plots up to and inclusive of 149 SqM.
- £25 per year for all plots 150 SqM or above

### Mapping Update

Thank you for your patience with the ongoing mapping exercise.

This was due to be concluded by the end of May 2023. However, there has been a larger number of data discrepancies than expected. Therefore more time is needed to ensure that the data is accurate. More work is being undertaken and any changes to plot sizes will be applied to tenancies from 2024-25

If your plot size has changed you will not be charged historically if it is bigger, and likewise if it has reduced you will not receive a refund on rent paid thus far.

### Contact us:

Tel: 01388 207110 [allotments@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk)  
Let us know of broken taps or any issues you may have.

# Site Maintenance & Development

Over the past few months we have been working to address maintenance issues on sites, with more planned during the winter. We have supplied some aggregates for cartway repairs and pot holes, and provided protective identification barriers on sites with wells. We are looking at repairs to boundary fences, and gates. We are also hoping to reinstate the site notice boards. We are actively looking to bring back disused plots and hope to have an additional 10 useable plots by the spring.

## Trees and Bushes

In addition to general maintenance in the last 12 months the Council have invested a large amount of money on tree works on the perimeter of sites. Tenants are responsible for any Trees, bushes, hedges on their plot and especially on their fence line.

Trees/bushes etc must be no higher than 1.5m tall. Therefore please ensure that you maintain these items on your plot to the standard set in the rules and regulations. You must ensure that they do not overhang onto communal area, or neighbouring plots, our public highways. If you fail to maintain these, you could be in breach of your tenancy, and if the council needs to step in to maintain them, you will then be invoiced for the works carried out.

## Allotment Associations

A couple of our allotment sites have Allotment Associations who work behind the scenes with the council to benefit the tenants and the site. Those sites require each tenant and any co-workers to be registered with the association and to pay a small membership to cover insurances etc.

Over the past 6 months we have been working with them to develop an 'Association Agreement' which sets out what are the responsibilities of the Council and what are the responsibilities of the Association to ensure that there are always clear lines of communication.

Once these have been formally adopted each they will be available for each member of the association to see.

## What does my allotment mean to me?

From a young age you could always find me in my Auntie and Uncles allotment sat next to the gooseberry Bush, looking at the vegetables growing in military straight lines. I have always had an interest in how things grow and playing in the mud. I wanted my children to have the same experience of allotment life as me, to realise all food doesn't come from a supermarket and to enjoy the fresh air come rain or shine.

On a wet April 2023 morning I got the opportunity to visit the plot, walking down the steep back I fell in love with the silence, looking out towards the vast landscape I knew that this was for me. It was quite a littered site but that night me and my family got to planning everything we dreamed of doing. The girls wanted lots of strawberries and sunflowers and I just wanted to plant everything my motto was " Plant everything what will be will be" The community around the allotment is fantastic, so many people that offer their advice and support that you learn so much and they are keen to share their knowledge with you.

Claire, Edge Hill Allotment Site

### ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

2023

Thank you to the tenants who met us on site for the annual inspections.

It is always really good to speak to everyone and get feedback on plots, the site and general issues.

If you have any queries regarding your plot please get in touch.

### NATIONAL ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Did you know that as an individual you can join the national allotment society and your membership enables you to have allotmenteers liability insurance - which provides liability cover protection to member plot-holders and leisure gardeners accused of accidentally causing injury or damaging property, in their personal capacity.

visit [www.nsalg.org.uk/join-us](http://www.nsalg.org.uk/join-us)

### Dates for the Diary

6th December 2023 6pm

Allotment & Environment Committee,  
Town Council Offices

15th Nov 2023

Deadline for Tenancy documents and payments to be returned.

24,25 & 26 December 2023

Bishop Auckland Christmas Town in Market Place Bishop Auckland festive Family Fun

### REMEMBER

You must register your co-worker and that you need to tell us if you plan to build or change a structure all info is online at [WWW.Bishopaukland-tc.gov.uk/allotments](http://WWW.Bishopaukland-tc.gov.uk/allotments)