

The *HARTHILL* Plot

Nearly Autumn Issue

September 2023

Locked out!

There have been a couple of problems with locks recently. Two involved your (entirely blameless!) editor. One lock had to be bashed off, another cut off. The best way of dealing with these issues is, of course, to stop them happening in the first place. So, make sure your hands are clean before touching any of the locks on site – mud is the combination locks biggest enemy. And if you notice a lock starting to get a bit stiff, please let us know *immediately* so that we can deal with the problem. It's no fun – though fortunately very rare – to be stuck on the site because of a faulty or jammed lock.

The association pays a small fortune in locks. We've tried another, more expensive type and that didn't work properly at all so we had to get our money back. And believe me we've considered all possible alternatives – keys, electric gates etc – and none of them fit the bill, so we have to get on with the best combination locks possible. Please help us out by stopping them from failing in the first place or getting them replaced as soon as possible. We do of course maintain and lubricate all of the locks on site.

Blight

Blight is, well, a real blight on the allotmentee, mainly affecting tomatoes and potatoes. If you suffer from these there is good advice on the RHS website. For tomatoes go to www.rhs.org.uk/disease/potato-blight. For spuds it's www.rhs.org.uk/disease/tomato-blight.

A TV weather forecaster said the other day that 'meteorological autumn' starts this week. I must have missed meteorological summer then. To be fair I gather it was hot for a few weeks when I was basking in the warmth of the Australian winter in June. It certainly hasn't been the easiest year for allotment gardening. That's my excuse anyway.

We have a long *waiting list* for plots and have closed it to new applicants, so there's no excuse for neglecting your plot, there are loads of people out there who are keen to have a go. If you are struggling for any reason, do let us know. Going down to a smaller plot might help.

We have plenty of *chippings* to help keep your plot in order and are constantly on the lookout for manure sources. If you know anyone who could help let us know.

Our *volunteer mowers* are as usual doing a sterling job so please help them by keeping paths clear of overhanging plants. Especially brambles. Emily said at a recent committee that she would consider cutting overhanging branches back. I'd go further - If I was still on the rota I would IMMEDIATELY cut back anything that got in my way. We've had plenty of warnings.

As ever; Park carefully; Scramble locks; Keep paths clear

(Apologies for poor production standards, caused by the editor's stupidity. Working on it)