

The Harthill Plot

Spring at last Issue

Please remember to:

SCRAMBLE THE LOCKS!

KEEP PATHS CLEAR!

COMPOST WEEDS!

PARK CAREFULLY!

MAKE PONDS SAFE!

Thanks

01/04/14

THE MISSING TREE – A MYSTERY SOLVED

You will have noticed that a large beech tree near the hut has been felled. It was removed by the City Council as it was infected by honey fungus. It is not clear how the infection occurred but it is very contagious so unfortunately the tree had to go. The council has assured us that it will be replaced, probably by a number of smaller trees.

One effect of this is we have had nowhere to keep our manure deliveries for some time. The council has advised us that the fungus spores may be in the ground near the tree so have asked us not to keep a permanent manure store there for the time being. We have had long discussions with the council, exploring a number of options and as we go to press the Committee is trying to reach an agreement for safe manure storage on the usual site, with protection from the ground. If we can do this, manure would have to be removed very quickly to individual plots so we would be asking for all tenants who want manure to help with this. We'll keep you posted.

Care of wheelbarrows, hand tools and backs

Please do not use a wheelbarrow if the tyre is soft, put it to the left of the partition wall in the hut and a Harthill Fairy will pump it up again.

If you need to move heavy stuff about use a wheelbarrow with struts between the pan and the tipping bar so that the pan is not bent (which causes it to crack).

Long handled forks and spades provide a great deal of leverage – enough to break the spade or bend a tine if you try to lift a full spits depth (*the depth of a spade's blade*) of compacted soil.

Cut compacted soil (or soil full of couch grass roots) into spade sized squares before trying to turn the cube of soil.

Remember to limber up and stretch before and after a spot of gardening, and don't try doing too much during a visit to the plot.

Tenancy agreements

The City Council requires us to carry out periodic inspections of plots to make sure everything is up to scratch. We understand that people may occasionally have problems with their plots and are always keen to help with temporary problems. But from time to time we may have to issue notices requiring improvements or even, eventually, to terminate tenancies, which the council then has to approve. Appeals are possible and when it comes to that (quite rare fortunately) we may use photographic evidence. Most people aren't, of course, affected by this, but please do read your tenancy agreement so you fully understand your responsibility as a plot holder.

Mowers damaged by stones

Our mowers have recently been damaged by stones being left on the paths. The mowing isn't done by a contractor, we have to do it ourselves (usually the secretary and other members of the Committee). It's very galling – AND EXPENSIVE – when a mower is damaged by stones left on the paths. Please do your best to keep paths free from stones – it's not hard (unlike the stones). Let's face it, if you leave stones around that damage the mowers, someone has to pay for it and nobody wants to get into getting individuals to pay for that damage.

Unless we have to.....!

Weeds – a perennial problem!

Annual weeds, such as creeping buttercup and dandelion, can be successfully composted in a compost bin/heap on your plot. This returns nutrients to the soil when the compost is spread on your plot.

More problematic weeds, such as couch grass and bindweed, can either be made into (very smelly) liquid fertiliser or taken to Otterspool for industrial style composting.

Nothing should be dumped on the verge.

For advice/further information on composting email hhallotments@hotmail.co.uk

Grant application success

Local councillors have again supported our Association. We have been given a sum of money to buy communal equipment and tools such as forks, spades and wheelbarrows.



Thank you!

To everyone who filled in the questionnaire about toilet provision at Harthill. The requirements for the majority request (composting toilet) are being looked into.