

Allotment News



**February
2021**

COVID-19

We know that 2020 was a tough year for many people and hope that you are well and staying safe. In view of the pandemic, we relaxed the requirements for cultivation for 2020, and were also more flexible in cases where tenants applied for concessions or payment plans late. We are not enforcing the policy whereby the 3rd Notice to Quit a tenant receives for non-payment is final, even if payment is subsequently made. These relaxations were for 2020 only. However if you are having difficulty paying your rent, please contact us as soon as possible. We hope that it will be a more normal growing season for most of this year, but please continue to observe regulations and keep looking out for updates from the government, and any

updates on our website. Groups must ensure that any activities are permitted under current government guidance.

We have been pleased to hear how therapeutic those who could still work their plots have found them through this difficult time.



A recent study by the University of Sheffield found that working an allotment is beneficial to well-being in a number of ways. (Of course we know that already but it's great to hear that the scientists agree!)

Allotment Competition

Sadly we were unable to hold the Allotment competition in 2020. We are unable to plan a competition for 2021, since we cannot be sure that such an event will be permitted under COVID-19 regulations by the summer. We may however try to hold some form of 'virtual allotment competition'. Please look out for updates on our website or via your allotment society, or contact us in June.



Contacting the Allotment Office

We are not currently based in the office and we do not know when that will change. If possible, please contact us by email (pwc.allotments@sheffield.go.uk). If you need to phone us, please call the Parks and Countryside number, 0114 2500500. This is currently active 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday

Site Improvements

Each winter we spend approximately £50,000 on site improvements across the city.



Our winter programme of site improvements for 2020/21 has been delayed and is restricted by COVID-19. However we are trying to deliver some projects which are critical or relate to health and safety. These include provision of additional standpipes on a number of sites, improving the surfaces of some of the lanes, installation of new gates and some fencing at

Finchwell Road allotments, and installation of fencing at Woodseats allotments.

Asbestos on Allotments – reminder of procedure

If you find anything on your allotment which you think might be asbestos, please contact the Allotment Office. We will arrange testing/removal. Never move/disturb anything which may be asbestos.

Poultry

Remember that allotment holders are only permitted to keep up to 6 hens (no cockerels) on their plot, and written permission from the allotment office is required first.



In order to prevent the spread of Avian Influenza (bird flu), ALL bird keepers in England are required by law to take a range of biosecurity precautions. Please see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu> for details and updates.

Flatworms

Unfortunately Invasive New Zealand and Australian flatworms have continued to be recorded on a number of Sheffield Allotments. These are non-native, invasive species and prey on our native earthworms, which can have knock on effects on soil quality and nutrient cycling. The Council's Ecology Unit, Sheffield Wildlife Trust and the Sheffield universities are currently researching their distribution and spread in the Sheffield area. To prevent further contamination of Sheffield land please do not export allotment soil off site in pots, bags etc. Only used bagged sterile potting compost to move plants after thoroughly washing allotment soil from the roots. For more information please see <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?pageid=509> or <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=975> or contact the Ecology Unit on 0114 2500500. The Ecology Unit can arrange testing of samples to confirm species identity.

Fires

Whilst we do allow burning between the 1st of October and the 30th of April, burning should still be a last resort. Please re-use, recycle and compost whenever possible.

That's all for now. Please do look out for updates



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on our website
[www.sheffield.gov.uk/
allotments](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/allotments). Best wishes
for 2021