

The Grower



COFFEE MORNINGS 2011
Have now finished! Each week was well attended and all monies raised that will go towards Allotment funds. Special thanks go to everyone who gave up their Saturday mornings to serve us, to all those who donated cakes and pastries and lastly to Chris Challis who organised the rota. See you in 2012

Surface Water Management Plan - Consultation

In early August 2010 the towns people of Chesham were asked for feedback on options proposed by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and Transport for Buckinghamshire (TFB) to address areas at risk of excessive flooding in the local area. Two areas of immediate interest to us are the Cameron Road and Ashridge Road allotment sites. The Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP) that have been produced as a result of a recent study provide a number of different ways to help reduce the risk of excessive flooding in Chesham using sustainable methods.

Surface water flooding can be caused by intense rainfall before it enters a watercourse or sewer, overland flow resulting from high groundwater levels exceeding the capacity of the sewer network, and out of bank flow from "ordinary" watercourses which are not designated as Environment Agency Main Rivers.

The draft consultation and plans were displayed at the Chesham library premises. Domestic, commercial, and businesses said to be in the suggested areas of high risk received leaflets, including some allotment holders at the focal point coffee morning on the 20th of August 2011. A number of allotment holder expressed their concerns as to the detrimental effect that the proposed plans will have on the allotment sites.

Allotment group members agreed that they would seek further information and David Page – allotment group member, volunteered to view the SWMP consultation plans. The Chairman wrote to the Town Clerk expressing allotment holders concerns that the SWMP consultation scheme should not in any way interfere with the allotment sites at Cameron Road or Asheridge Road. The Chesham Town Council was asked for their support in opposing the use of the allotments as detailed in the scheme.

A delegation from the allotments attended the Chesham Town Council Development Control Committee (DCC) meeting on the 5th of September 2011 at the invitation of the Town Clerk. The DCC discussed item 9 of the TFB SWMP Consultation Report, as quoted below: **(continued on Page 3)**

Changes to the Allotments Group

You will note that some new faces have joined the list of Allotments Group Representatives on Page 2. Andrew Reynolds has stood down from the committee; he was our Treasurer for the last two years and we thank him for his all his input and support and wish him well in the future. Kate Hobbs has also stood down from the committee; she was our Secretary and editor of the Grower and is currently on a sabbatical in Canada. Once again our thanks go to Kate for all the hard work she put in over the years. At the AGM held at the Town Hall on September 15th Allen Tilbury (Chairman), Vince Crompton (Vice Chairman) and all other committee members were re-elected. We welcome aboard Simon Jones and Wayne Hambridge who have joined us, with Simon really jumping in at the deep end by being elected as our new Treasurer. Yvonne Webster also agreed to continue as Minutes Secretary. Furthermore, at the Allotment Group meeting held on October 11th Marshall Hall rejoined and group and has taken on the post of Correspondence Secretary. We know you will join us in welcoming all the new Committee members aboard.

A big Thank You from Yvonne!

I was too busy taking the minutes at the AGM to notice Vince passing round a 60th birthday card for me, it was therefore a lovely surprise to be presented with the card at the coffee morning on 24th September. Thank you so much for your kind wishes, it was a truly memorable birthday! **Yvonne Webster**



...and Congratulations also to

Simon Jones and his wife Sarah, on the birth of their son Hugo Oliver Broughton Jones. He was born at 3.03pm on Oct 1st and weighed in at 9lbs – a brother for their daughter Jennifer. Mother and son both doing fine.

Asheridge Rd, Hedge Cutting

Thanks to all those who gave up their time on Saturday 10th September to help with this project. The entire hedge line was trimmed by 2.00pm. Special thanks to both Chris Challis and Sara Saunders for keeping the workers supplied with refreshments until the work was completed. At the AGM Town Clerk Bill Richards remarked on the work which was undertaken by allotment holders and which has saved the Council considerable monies in contractor fees. This will be fed back to Councillors when rents are next reviewed. Town Council Parks & Premises Manager Bob Ayres has also expressed his thanks for a job well done.

Fish & Chip Supper

Our next fish and chip supper / quiz night is less than one month away on **Saturday 12 Nov, 7pm**, at the Temperance Hall, Chesham. You can still reserve your places for this popular event by contacting Vince Crompton or Robin Plumridge; or by completing the form and handing it to any allotment representative with your payment. **(see Page 4 for full details)**. Donations for raffle prizes are always welcome, contact Yvonne Webster or bring with you on the night

Contact us:

Email: thegrowernewsletter@googlemail.com
or at pengyworld@hotmail.co.uk

Letter From America (Part 2)

For me, it has been a beautiful summer. For the tourist and agricultural industries of Penticton, it has not been one of their best. Summer arrived late, about the second week of July. Those tourists who have Recreation Vehicles decided not to come to Penticton. For the orchardists, the cherries were about 3 weeks behind, and the peaches, nectarines and apricots were about 2 weeks late. Fortunately, the apples are about on time. I am currently picking Pacific Gala apples in an intensive orchard – basically that means they are column trees with very few branches. It's easy to pick the apples, but they are so heavy.

As for the vineyards the last few days have been wonderful with temperatures in the high 20s. However, there is a dramatic cooling in the weather – not what the vineyard owners need because the grapes haven't had the summer they need to swell and ripen. There may not be much crop this year.

I am always amazed at where vineyards are planted. It seems that they are best suited to sandy soil of about 4 feet deep which is immediately on top of rock. So, where do you find vineyards? On cliff sides and on the sides of mountains.

There seems to be a strong tradition in Canada for preserving, canning and storing as much of the summer/autumn produce as possible. And they don't do it in small batches either. I was invited to a salsa making 'party'. We were given a list of ingredients to bring. The peppers, chillies and tomatoes were being provided. However, what I didn't realise was that I had been allocated enough produce to make 24 quarts of salsa – that's 24 litres!!! So now I have jars of salsa sitting on shelves waiting to be eaten!

As in the UK, with the onset of autumn, little creatures such as spiders tend to start making their way in-

doors. However, there is one spider that you don't want in your house – the Black Widow. It is a very aggressive creature, and one bite from it



means an emergency trip to the hospital for anti-venom. I had the not-so-environmentally friendly pleasure of meeting one of these

spiders when it was found on a friend's farm. They are incredibly beautiful, but deadly. Hopefully, I won't meet one unexpectedly. The locals don't tolerate them. They immediately stamp on them. I suppose you can't take the risk.

On a rather different and joyful note, one of the amazing sites of autumn here – apart from the colours in the trees – is that there is an abundance of autumn crocuses. They are a very popular flower and seem to grow incredibly well. It must be the sandy soil. I found a garden that is absolutely covered in them, so I stopped to take a few pictures. No picture



can capture the beauty of the garden, but then nature can't really be contained, can it?

As I write this, I understand that the UK is experiencing some warmer weather at last. I hope that you get to enjoy it. Until next time *Kate Hobbs*

Secrets of Herbs - Sage

Sage likes to grow in full sun, preferring a light, well drained soil. Sages are evergreen and can either be grown from seed in spring, or propagated from cuttings taken in the summer. Common sage is the most regularly grown but the purple variety is more attractive in the herb garden; it is also lower growing, more pungent and often used for medicinal purposes. There are also some more decorative types such as tricolour and golden sage that add a splash of colour to the winter garden. All types benefit from regular trimming to keep their shape. Leaves can be taken and dried at anytime but they are at their best in spring before the plant flowers. Although leaves can be used fresh the flavour is somewhat strong so it is better to dry them, the cut sprigs being dried in a warm and dry area.

Sage has a reputation for restoring failing memory and it was a traditional ingredient in many longevity potions. Sage leaves are also thought to aid digestion which explains why they have been traditionally used to accompany fatty meats such as pork and duck. An infusion of 20g of sage leaves to 50ml of hot water helps as a liver stimulant, aids digestion and provides a general tonic. A weaker solution is also said to be beneficial for sore throats, mouth ulcers, gum disease and the treatment of dandruff. It is also said to restore colour to prematurely greying hair if rinsed four times weekly in the mixture. Tobacco and red wine stains can be removed from teeth by rubbing them with sage leaves or a powder made from the dried leaves.

To give beetroot, cabbage, onions and broad beans a different flavour try sprinkling them with some dried sage after cooking.

CHS - Annual General Meeting

Members are reminded that this year's AGM is on Wednesday 9th November at the Trinity Baptist Church, 7.30pm. The speaker this year is Rodney Sims on the subject of College Lake, near Tring, as featured in the June edition of The Grower. New members always welcome.



Chesham Town Council
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Phone: 01494 774842. Fax: 01494 582908
Email: admin@chesham.gov.uk

LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ALLOTMENTS GROUP

12th November Fish and Chip Supper
(for booking form see Page 4)

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

9th November CHS Annual General Meeting,
7.30pm at Trinity Baptist Church

SALE OF SEED POTATOES, ONIONS, ETC. We have been advised by Chesham Horticultural Society that the dates for the hut to be open in 2012 are 11th, 18th and 25th February.

YOUR ALLOTMENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

ALLEN TILBURY (CHAIRMAN)
Plot 104 CR

VINCE CROMPTON (VICE CHAIR) Plot
36 CR

SIMON JONES (TREASURER) Plot
45A CR

CR = CAMERON RD
AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD

MARSHALL HALL (SECRETARY -
CORRESPONDENCE) Plot 47A/47B CR

YVONNE WEBSTER (SECRETARY -
MINUTES) Plot 63A CR

JIM ABBOTT Plot 31/32 CR

CHRIS CHALLIS Plots 46A, 65A CR

WAYNE HAMBRIDGE Plot 26A, AR

MICK GOODMAN Plots 6B and 11A AR

DAVID PAGE Plot 29 CR

ROBIN PLUMRIDGE Plot 232 CR

SARA SAUNDERS Plot 84B CR

ANDREW SINCLAIR Plot 45B CR

GILL WALKER (COUNCIL)

COLETTE LITTLE (COUNCIL)

The Focal Point - The Story So Far

Here's a brief history of the Focal Point which I thought would be of interest, especially for all the new tenants who have joined the Allotment Community over the past four years. I think everyone who attends our Coffee Mornings, comes to our annual Cheese and Wine Party or Open Day realizes what a benefit the Focal Point has been for us and we are so grateful to the Town Council for letting us have this amenity.

Our story starts in the spring of 2007 when Lee Marshall, the last tenant to have worked Plot 38A/38B, realized that he couldn't devote enough time to working a full allotment whilst helping his wife bring up their young family. He therefore, very reluctantly, decided to give up his plot. Vince Crompton, our Vice Chairman, had been campaigning for an allotment to use as a Focal Point for some time and when he heard that Lee was vacating his plot he approached the Town Council for the use of Plot 38A/38B and this was granted in favour of The Allotments Group.



Andrew Reynolds & Marshall Hall get started!

In Spring 2008 the Allotments Group enlisted the help of Marshall Hall, Larry Faulkner and Brian Rodhouse (all allotment holders, Cameron Road) to build the New Hut with an extended lean to. Marshall Hall donated £400 toward materials and Vince Crompton enlisted the help of Focus in Chesham who also donated £400 in building Materials. The balance was funded by The Allotments-Group. The New Hut was officially opened by Alison Periot, Town Mayor at

the Allotments Open Day on 16th August 2008.

On Nov 5th 2008 the old shed that had originally been used for coffee mornings was dismantled and burnt. Between November and December 2008, Bob Ayres (Parks and Premises Manager, Chesham Town Council) enlisted the help of his ground works team to level the ground under the lean to of the New Hut for a distance of 25 feet to enable it to be slabbed. In February 2009 Terry Burns and Andrew Reynolds put in the side window and serving hatch. This was completed in time for teas, coffees and home made cake to be on sale from the New Hut for patrons of the annual Chesham Horticultural Society potato sale. Then in May 2009 Allen Tilbury was able to enlist the services of David Gooch to replace the supporting posts of the Lean to as the original post footings were exposed with the previous ground levelling.

On June 20th 2009 the Town Council gave permission for the Allotment Group to have the toilet facility on site. It is worth noting that within five working days Bob Ayres had leveled the ground and laid the base for the toilet. MT Loos had the toilet in location and operational in time for the Annual Cheese and Wine Evening held on Saturday June 25th. Our grateful



thanks also to our Chairman Allen Tilbury who paid for the first years costs for the emptying, cleaning and sanitizing of the toilet

In August 2009 David Gooch and a team of Allotment Holders laid the 120 slabs in

front of the New Hut so that tables and chairs could accommodate all Allotment Holders, family and friends who were then regularly attending the Coffee Mornings. Ex railway sleepers were also laid as a border to the slabbed area. Bob Ayres had donated 90 slabs to the project and The Allotments Group funded the other 30. It was in the Spring of 2010 that Loraine and Larry Faulkner, Allotment Holders of Cameron Road, volunteered their services to landscape a terraced garden behind the New Hut. This year we hope you have all enjoyed this part of the Focal Point; Loraine and Larry toiled endlessly on it and the floral display has been wonderful. There are places to sit where you can just take a break, collect your thoughts and survey all the hard work put in by other allotment holders.

In May 2011 Allen Tilbury was able to enlist the help of Neil Page, Allotment Holder of Cameron Road, to level the ground on Plot 38A – the area in front of the New Hut and slabbed area, and also to border both parallel sides of the plot with sleepers. In June of 2011 Neil then agreed to an Allotments Group suggestion and extended this leveled area by a metre into the area behind the damson trees. Neil donated the sleepers and Bob Ayres donated the infill of sub soil.

This additional work has enabled our very large white marquee to be erected with sufficient ground space at either end. The marquee was very generously donated by Marshall Hall in 2011 and has been used for our Annual Cheese and Wine evenings and Allotments Open Days.

So a big thank you to everyone we've mentioned and to anyone we've forgot. With your help Allotment Holders and their families and friends can enjoy their teas/coffees and of course homemade cakes in a dedicated area. Our thanks must also go to all Allotment Group members and Allotment holders who have run these mornings and provided the cakes, and of course to Chris Challis who organizes the weekly rota. I'm sure she will be looking forward to seeing some new volunteers next season.

David Page

swale.

The Town Clerk has received acknowledgement from the BCC-TFB of the Chesham Town Council and the Chesham Allotment Group concerns as to the detrimental effect on the allotment sites.

We are reminded that SWMP plans are only in the consultation stage and we will be following developments in due course. As allotment holders we ask you to view the plans online at www.buckscc.gov.uk/haveyoursay

GLOSSARY

Detention Basin - A surface water storage area which provides flow control and reduction through attenuation.

Swale - A shallow linear vegetated drainage feature which can store and convey surface water

Surface Water Management Plan, cont'd

The Committee will note the proposal to build a water detention basin in both the Cameron Road and Asheridge Road allotment sites. Both Councillor Mrs Pirouet and the Town Clerk raised their grave concerns about this at the workshop citing the lack of spare land at both sites (a concern also voiced subsequently by the Allotments Group and whose Chairman has written to say "A number of allotment holders expressed their concerns about the Consultation Plans on display at the library, and have expressed their considered opinion that the scheme as documented should not in any way interfere with the Allotments. All of the plots are tenanted and with an exceptional few, are well tended, cared for, and in multiple cultivation, as described in the Council Inspection Reports of

April, June, and August 2011. Members of the Allotments Group also voice their disapproval of the Consultation Plan and ask for the support of the Chesham Town Council to express their professional views in opposing the use of allotments for the proposed scheme." However, it appears these suggested solutions have been left in.

The Development Control Committee recommended that the DCC reconsiders the SWMP Consultation plan in respect of the possible impact on the allotment sites. Specifically:

- 1) Route surface water from Asheridge Road into a detention basin in the allotment gardens via a swale.
- 2) Route surface water from Nalders Road / Cameron Road into a detention basin in the allotment gardens via a

Growing crops and cultivating in Ghana



Pictured above is of Thomas, a US citizen and an acquaintance of mine who decided to join the Peace Corps (a volunteering organization) while at University of California, Santa Barbara. He ended up going to Ghana from 2005 to 2007 where he taught an adult literacy class and met his wife. He then went on to study Applied Anthropology at San Diego State University and focused on environmental issues in West Africa, food security and agriculture in particular. His research has dealt with the ways indigenous people visualize nature, ecosystems, soil health, and farming strategies. In particular, he has been looking at the resilience of rural farming systems through the eyes of local farmers. His research is made up of their stories and he finished writing his thesis last year.

He has now moved to Ghana permanently where he lives with his wife and their young son. The area where he lives is in the middle of the Volta region, which is one of the most heavily forested, rainy parts of the county. It is in the east on the border with Togo. The land is primarily cleared for growing crops, though some is cleared to create dry season fire belts. The loamy soil is excellent for cultivation; there is a thick top soil that is organic and full of nutrients, having been fertilised by leaf litter over a long period of time. It is also an area where the soil becomes saturated with water in the rainy season so is perfect for growing rice. The principal crops grown are rice, maize, yams, coco yams, cassava, plantains, bananas, mangoes, citrus, cocoa, coffee, palm nuts, peanuts, peppers, sorghum and onions. Whilst in Ghana he has seen all the problems regarding cultivation and the problems that have to be overcome due to lack of tools. In this particular area of Ghana trees such as ceiba, odum and mahogany have to be cleared first; prior to getting rid of the elephant grass and innumerable weeds. Most people just use cutlasses and machetes to clear the land but during the dry season it would be helpful to the villagers if

they had more gardening tools to plant vegetable crops, which are becoming more and more important as the area is drying out.



The dry season is from December through to March. Temperatures are usually in the 90's year round, but the humidity can make it feel like 120° Fahrenheit. The temperature and humidity are the hardest part about being a farmer in Ghana. Most people get up at 4 a.m. and work from 5 a.m. until around 11 a.m. Water can become scarce in the dry season, even enough to cause concern about drinking water availability. In the rainy season, between April and December, there is too much water at times that can destroy roads and village structures.
David Page, Cameron Road

Chesham In Bloom - Silver Gilt Award - 2011

This year the town of Chesham was entered into the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom Competition. With the valiant team effort of the Chesham in Bloom committee and a number of volunteers, Chesham achieved the Silver Gilt Award. The judging day was 21st July 2011 and the R.H.S. judges were particularly impressed with the Focal Point garden on the Cameron Road site. Grateful thanks to Loraine and Larry Faulkner for the landscaping and maintenance of the garden. The Thames and Chiltern regional awards ceremony was hosted at the Baptist Church at the end of September 2011. Rachel Watts, Chair and Vince Crompton, Vice Chairman of the Chesham In Bloom committee accepted the Silver Gilt Award on behalf of the people of Chesham. The judges specifically mentioned that they were impressed with the achievement, and the standard of the allotments. The Allotments Group take this opportunity to thank the allotment holders that made the noticeable effort in maintaining their plots, especially the communal paths.



The terraced garden at the Focal Point that really impressed the RHS judges!

Allotment Judging

At the recent AGM the results of this years Allotment judging were announced. The plots are judged each year by Mike Allenby and his colleagues from Chesham Horticultural Society. Once again the standard was very high and choosing the winners was by no way an easy task. The results were as follows:

- Best large plot in Cameron Road -**
Jim Abbott.
- Best large plot in Asheridge Road -**
Brian Shrieve
- Best small plot - Miss A Taylor**
(Asheridge Road)
- Best new tenant - Mr J Newman**
(Cameron Road)

The winners were presented with their cups by Collette Littley, Deputy Town Mayor. Congratulations to you all and best luck to everybody in 2012!

Fish & Chip Supper with Quiz, Saturday 12 Nov, 7pm, Temperance Hall, Chesham

BOOKING REQUIRED FORPERSONS, COST £6.50 PER HEAD

I enclose payment for.....
Name.....
Address.....
.....
Tel. No.....

| | |
|--|--|
| Please Indicate the number of meals required below : | |
| FISH..... | |
| SAUSAGES..... | |
| FISH CAKES..... | |

Please bring your own drink; Wine, Beer, or non-alcoholic AND a dessert with a view to sharing.

There will be a raffle, so bring some extra cash.

Contact either Vince Crompton, 16 Hillside, Chesham (01494 782926) or Robin Plumridge, 8 Bennetts, Chesham (01494 793746), or hand your form / money to any Allotment Group Officer/Representative.
Make any cheques payable to Chesham Allotment Group. Thank you. This form may be photocopied.