

# Welcome to your 2024 Allotment Newsletter

## What are the benefits of having an allotment?

There are loads of great reasons to get involved with allotments and growing. Here are just a few of them:

- We use allotments to grow our own food, helping us be more self-sufficient, reduce food waste and save money.

- They are a great place to connect with other people, helping to tackle the growing problem of loneliness and social isolation.
- Allotments provide opportunities for children and families living in built-up areas to experience the natural world.

## Allotment Reviews 2023

Following a successful review on Thursday 10th August 2023, the allotment competition winners were;



### Oakenshaw

**1st Prize** Plots 47 & 48 Mrs D Hales

**Highly Commended** Plot 22 Mrs J Richardson  
Plot 1 Mr T Sharp

### Springfield

**1st Prize** Plot 29 Mr N Cowan

**Highly Commended** Plot 12 Mr S Barker

Plot 7 Mr P Burnside

**Best New Plot** Plot 21 Mr G Robson

### Park Top

No awards were allocated this year.

**1st Prize winners received a cheque for £25. Highly Commended and Best New Plot winners received a cheque for £20.**



## Allotment Reviews 2024

Allotment Reviews will coincide with National Allotment Week 2024 and will take place over two days.

A judging panel will have been appointed and will visit the sites as follows;

**Oakenshaw** Wednesday 14th August 2024 at 10am

**Park Top** Thursday 15th August 2024 at 10am

**Springfield** Thursday 15th August 2024 at 11am

All allotment winners will be notified in writing and invited to have their photograph taken receiving the award. This will be done at the Town Council Meeting in September 2024.

Please note 50% of your plot must be cultivated and maintained as stated in your Allotment Gardens Lettings Policy. Failure to do so, will result in additional rent being charged following the reviews.

## National Allotment Week 12th – 18th August

The theme for 2024 will be **Celebrating Biodiversity on UK Allotments. We will share some useful and informative topics about Biodiversity including pollinators and wildlife, and much more.**

The Allotment Association maintains that allotments encourage pollinators, wild flowers and wild life which help control pests. A pond is beneficial, frogs and toads are friends of the allotment. Pests can be controlled without the widespread use of chemical sprays. An important strategy is companion planting, plants and crops which support one another, growing marigolds amongst brassicas helps to ward off many flying pests, including cabbage white butterflies.

Last year the theme was soil health, soil in good heart remains central to successful allotment growing. This remains dependant on good home-produced compost. There will be a celebration of the diversity of compost production, and it's benefits during National compost week later this year. There are considerable advantages to home produced compost, not least of which is its eco credentials of not buying bagged compost which are potentially damaging to the environment and the costs involved.

Allotments offer opportunities for educating the next generation. Children are encouraged to grow food and help supervise animals. Allotments support greater social interaction, create a positive sense of sharing a common goal.

They are a significant inclusion for the promotion of well-being and mental health. Equally they offer the opportunities for self-fulfilment and encourage a sense of achievement. The ability to have contact with nature is fundamental to good health, along with the fresh and seasonal produce they produce. What's not to like.

Biodiversity is currently being explored with the planning application for the first proposed geo thermal growing poly tunnel on the Oakenshaw site where plans are advancing. This is cutting edge and will fully support the ethos of biodiversity. We watch with interest.



## SPRING 2024

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# Nobody expects the Spanish...Slug!



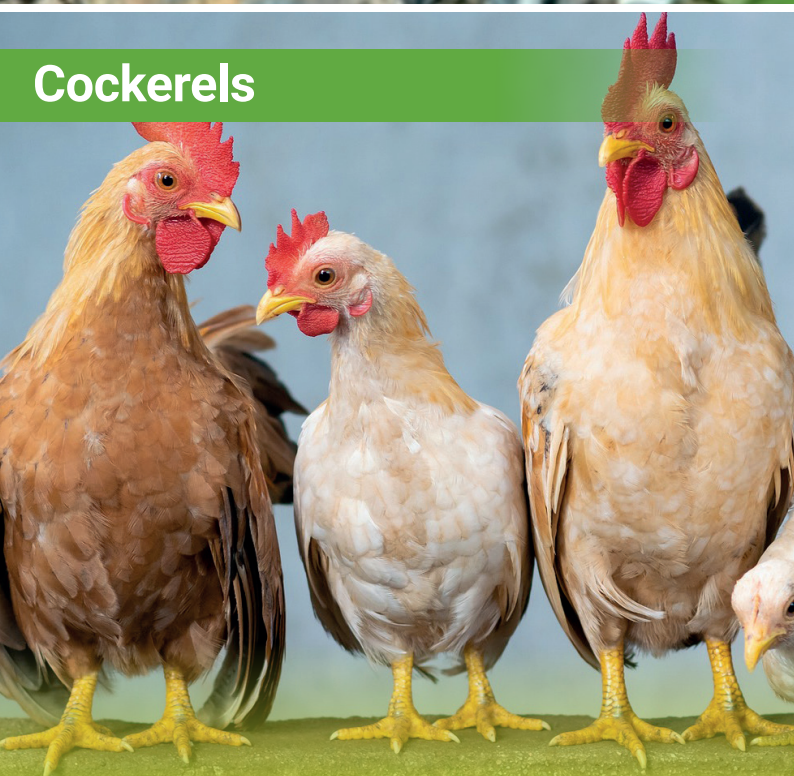
The latest invader to our shores. Forget the Spanish Armada this the Spanish Slug, discovered in the UK in 2012 imported in salad leaves from Spain. This creature is brown with an orange underbelly and grows up to six inches long, easy to spot!

It is potentially dangerous, a carrier of parasites and bacteria. They eat excrement, dead animals, other slugs and each other!

Their mucus can cause serious illness, always wear gloves when handling and dispose of them by burning. Hands must be washed, and antibacterial hand gel used afterwards.

They are resistant to bio friendly pellets, though it is suspected that they will foam at the mouth with traditional treatments such as salt and jam jars sunk into the ground with some beer, what a waste. Be on your guard, they are out there, or are they...?

## Cockerels



**A reminder that the keeping of cockerels is STRICTLY PROHIBITED by both GWTC and the National Allotment Association.**

Anyone found to have Cockerels on their plot are in breach of their tenancy agreement.

If you have cockerel(s) on your plot, please remove them as failure to do so may result in you being asked to leave the allotment site completely.

GWTC reserves the right to withhold any future tenancy.

## Allotment Rents

All tenants should have received their invoices for allotment rent for season 2024-2025 with this newsletter. Rents are due on or before the 1st May 2024.

Failure to pay by this date could result in your tenancy agreement being revoked and the plot being offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Allotment rents for 2025-2026 include a 5% increase on the 2024-2025 charge.

## Skips

Annual skips will continue to be provided for the benefit of allotment tenants. Whilst this has yet to be approved by GWTC, it is expected to place skips in early May, slightly later than in previous years.

The location of the skips will be determined by the condition of the access tracks.

## Water

A huge thank you to those that are now using water butts as their main water source. Could all tenants please be vigilant for leaks anywhere on the sites. If you have an existing spur on your plot, could you please inform us. If you have any concerns, please let us know.

## A reminder

Currently, vehicular access is only allowed for drop off purposes.

## Locking of gates

Please ensure all tenants are following the regulations and locking gates. The allotments are for allotment holders only and not a walk through for people walking dogs etc. This is to the benefit of all to increase security on site.

## Policy

All tenants will have received an updated policy document with this newsletter. Please note the amended sections in yellow. These changes are effective from 1st April 2024.

## The good we do

The response last year to sending excess produce to the team at Willington Open Door Church was fantastic. In Oakenshaw, it contributed towards 3500 food parcels, Springfield were also amazing by providing over 126 meals for people in need throughout December 2023.

Rosedale as always went all out with a wonderful team of volunteers including our local schools, in addition to the tenants. Park Top are working so hard to help with development of the site, we are incredibly grateful for their help, especially Jackie Fleming.