

Syston Allotment Society Newsletter

Winter 2011/2012

A happy new year to all ploholders, and a warm welcome to those of you taking on a plot for the first time. In this newsletter we focus on maintaining and improving our water supply, an issue that came into focus even more than usual last summer, when we had months without any significant rainfall.

Mains Water Under Threat

At a meeting of Syston Town Council on 13th September 2011, a motion was passed that all the taps except the one nearest the entrance gate should be turned off. This was returned to the Amenities Committee for further discussion on 11th October.

Syston Allotment Society (SAS) committee members turned out in force to this meeting to highlight to the Amenities Committee that they consider a full mains water supply essential, and with drier summers the site cannot manage on rainwater alone. Although SAS had no right to speak at the meeting, Paul Windridge was invited to put the case for the allotments. He emphasised that the high water bill of the previous winter was due to a leak that went undiscovered for months, and that although the summer of 2011 was the driest for 36 years, around 20% of the previous bill had been saved by monitoring the water meter and repairing leaks as they arose. This meant the Town Council saved about £600.

Although they agreed to keep the water supply to all the taps turned on, the Amenities Committee agreed that Syston Town Council would be responsible for the first tap only, and that SAS would have to maintain the rest. SAS committee members continue to work on ways to save mains water and maintain a good relationship with Syston Town Council to help avoid threats to our water supply in the future.

1,000 gallon tanks obtained

The photograph shows two 1,000 litre IBC water tanks kindly donated by a local circuits company. Installed by Vin Kidger and Grizz Thorpe at the rear of the shop, they are connected together and hold 2,000 litres in total. It is hoped they will help supply the adjacent allotments and in turn save on mains water usage.



To prevent further threats to our water supply – Syston Town Council is not obliged to make a supply available to us - SAS committee members have been working on ways to capture rainwater and on getting the pump working again. Other options discussed have been getting troughs that refill using a ball valve system to prevent hosepipes being attached to taps. The water meter is being monitored weekly, and the committee are working on sources for more IBC containers.

Collect free water

One of the best ways of reducing mains water usage is to collect the free stuff from the sky, and as the best time to collect rainwater is in the winter here is a summary of suggestions from Phil Applewhite, the Leicester City Council Allotments Officer:

- Collect rainwater as run-off from sheds and greenhouses
- Put a temporary roof over your compost heap to channel run off into a tub
- Leave buckets and bowls around your plot to fill up when it rains - to keep the collected water fresh, it should be transferred to a lidded barrel or tub as soon as possible
- Filter the water coming out of your down pipes by putting an old sock or stocking over the end - the filter collects debris and silt, and should be rinsed out regularly.

Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study

Syston allotments rated as 'excellent'

Charnwood Borough Council has published a study into open spaces, sport and recreation which involved local people having their say about what they value in their area. Allotments were included in the study.

30% of respondents to the survey said that they would be interested in managing an allotment, but 40% felt that there weren't enough allotments in their area. There are shortfalls of allotment provision across the borough, including in Syston, where a further 72 plots are needed. The report suggests that new provision should be made in south/ south western Syston, as this area is more than 15 minutes walk from the Upper Church Street site, and access on foot rather than by car should be a priority.

The quality of existing allotments was assessed through site visits undertaken by the Borough Council. Each site was measured

against the factors defined in the quality standard, including cleanliness, water supply and access routes, and received a total percentage score. The average quality score of an allotment was 57%. However, Syston was rated excellent for quality, which means the score was 80% or more.

Bonfires – a reminder



Syston Town Council's rule about bonfires says that bonfires are only allowed during the two hours before dusk. If you plan to have a bonfire please ensure you don't light it any earlier than this. As a guide, some sunset times for the next few months are:

February 1 st 4.49 pm	February 14 th 5.14 pm
March 1 st 5.44 pm	March 15 th 6.09 pm
April 1 st 7.40 pm	April 15 th 8.04 pm
May 1 st 8.32 pm	May 15 th 8.55 pm
June 1 st 9.19 pm	June 15 th 9.30 pm

Dates for Your Diary

Committee meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month at the Syston and District Social Club, starting at 7.45. Any non-committee members are welcome to attend.

The Annual General Meeting is on 13th March 2012 at the Syston and District Social Club, starting at 8pm. All plot holders, their families and friends are welcome to attend, but please note that only plot holders will be able to vote.