



# GREENFINGERS:

## Your allotment newsletter

### Issue 10: February 2024

#### Message from the Property Services Team: Becky and Julie

We would like to wish you all a very belated HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Can you believe we are already approaching spring which makes this the perfect time to prepare for growing season.

Plot inspections will begin early spring to ensure that cultivation is ongoing. If you no longer require or have time for your plot, please let the Allotment Office know as soon as possible.

As always, this newsletter will be uploaded to the NELC Allotment webpage, please let us know if you have anything you'd like us to share or content ideas for future editions of the newsletter, your input is very much appreciated.

#### Ward funding

Ward councillors are allocated funds to provide as grants for projects within their wards.

If you have an idea for a proposed project please speak to your site association committee to discuss further.

The committee can then discuss with the appropriate ward councillor and gain support for an application for a grant.

#### Repairs & Maintenance

Do you need to report a broken tap, faulty padlock or damaged fence?

If so, call us on 01472 324696.



#### Trespassing

As a tenant, you are only permitted to access your own plot and any communal areas on your allotment site.

If you enter another plot without permission, you are trespassing.

Taking any items, this includes produce, is classed as theft. This also applies to helpers.

Nobody is permitted on the allotment site without an ID card.

#### How to contact the team

Property Officer Allotment Team: Becky Ablard and Julie McFarlane

Allotment Office: 01472 324696 or

[allotments.enquiries@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:allotments.enquiries@nelincs.gov.uk) - Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

Allotment website: [nelincs.gov.uk/leisure-and-things-to-do/allotments](https://nelincs.gov.uk/leisure-and-things-to-do/allotments)

NELC Security: 01472 325715 or 01472 313131 – 24 hour phonenumber



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### Allotment survey

We issued the tenant satisfaction survey back in January and you have until Sunday 31 March to return your completed survey.

We really appreciate your comments and feedback, they are vital in helping to shape the future of the allotments.

Complete the survey now so you don't miss out on sharing your opinion!

### Fires

A reminder that fires are only permitted until 29th February 2024. There will be no fires allowed from Friday 1 March 2024.

If you are planning a fire, please first consider if this is the best way to dispose of material and ensure you abide by the following;

- Keep bonfires to a reasonable size
- Only have them during clear dry weather
- Only have them when there is little wind
- Don't cause a nuisance to households or highways with smoke
- NEVER leave fires unattended
- Ensure they are FULLY extinguished before leaving your plot

Anyone found not obeying the above will receive an official warning.

### Winter composting advice

As the temperature falls, the composting process slows or stops.

Composting expert, Rod Weston, in conjunction with the National Allotment Association, shared 5 ways to combat the cold and speed up composting for brilliant soil to feed your allotment;

1. Insulate your bin - keep your bin snug with a jacket or reclaimed materials, whilst wooden bins should be as big as possible. Containers filled with hot water can be buried to act as hot water bottles to boost a new bin.
2. Shred and cut materials - shredding and premixing exposes the surface area of material to microbial action - use a lawn mower or long handled shears.
3. Aerate your bin - oxygen is essential. Increase airflow by adding a layer of sticks, straw or scrunched cardboard at the bottom. Inserting plastic downpipes can also help. Turning compost will introduce oxygen and air spaces, allowing microbes to multiply.
4. Kick start and activate - activate with a layer or two of soil or finished compost. Natural activators can provide additional greens. Manure will also introduce microbes and worms. Coffee grounds, comfrey, nettles, freshly cut grass and seaweed are also effective.
5. Manage moisture - water logging can reduce temperature and a slow composting. Squeeze a handful and if it makes a ball and a small drop of water appears, it is just right.

### Water

The water is usually switched back on in early April.

An email will be sent via the Allotment Office to confirm nearer the time.





## Skips

Skips cannot accept the following; asbestos, tyres, gas bottles, paint, oil cans, car batteries, fluorescent light tubes, food, pet or human waste (nappies) and fridge freezers.

Please try to make sure the skips are not overloaded.

For information on when your next skip is due, please speak to your site representative.

### Don't know what to make for dinner? We've got you covered...

Lamb and root vegetable stew - serves four

Ingredients;

- 794g lamb leg streaks, cut into chunks
- 71g pearl barley
- 12 shallots, halved
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 454g peeled potatoes, chopped
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 198g swede, peeled and cubed
- 1ltr lamb or chicken stock
- Salt and pepper

1. Rinse the pearl barley under cold running water. Place it in a pan of water and boil for 30 to 35 minutes. Drain and set aside.
2. Put the lamb, shallots, garlic, potatoes, carrots, celery, and swede into a flame proof casserole dish. Place on the hob, pour on stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to simmer. Chuck the pearl barley in and cook gently for 2-2 ½ hours, or until the lamb is tender.



A big thank you to Alan from Springfield for supplying this winter warmer recipe. Please let us know if you give this recipe a try and submit any delicious ideas you have for our future newsletters.

### Site representatives reminder

Each site has a site representative except Saltings temporarily. The representatives are responsible for ordering skips and are an ideal first point of contact for any queries you may have.

A reminder of the representatives and where to find them;

Carr Lane – Contact the allotment office

Littlecoates – Wayne Smith – Plot 12a or site hut

Peaksfield - Contact Allotment Office

Saltings – Billy Booth - Plot 13a

Springfield – Alan Tregunno – Plot 20a

Weelsby – John Hall - Plots 12, 20, 21 & 101

Winchester – Andy McCurdy – Plot 65





### Reporting crime and security

Allotment sites continue to suffer from crime and are particularly vulnerable to trespassing, theft and vandalism. You can help lower crime rates by ensuring the gate is always locked.

We encourage you to report all crimes to the police via 101 or report online by visiting, [www.humberside.police.uk](http://www.humberside.police.uk).

Reporting incidents, however big or small, will keep the police aware of any increase in issues and encourage additional PCSO visits.

### Communal site huts

If your site has a communal site hut, please remember that any items left in there unattended are entirely at your own risk.

All items should clearly display the name of the owner.

homesteadspirit.com

## GROWING CALENDAR

PLANT	START INDOORS	TRANSPLANT OUTDOORS
Basil	April 15	May 20
Tomatoes	April 15	May 20
Broccoli	March 15	May 1
Cauliflower	March 15	May 1
Peppers	May 1	June 20
Parsley	March 1	May 1
Cabbage	March 15	May 1
Pumpkin	May 1	May 20
Beets	**	April 15
Kale	March 1	April 15
Celery	Feb 15	March 15
Cucumber	May 1	June 15
Onions	Feb 15	April 1
Lettuce	March 1	April 1
Melon	April 15	June 1
Spinach	**	March 15
B. Sprouts	March 15	May 1
Corn	April 15	May 15
Peas	March 15	May 1
Potatoes	**	April 15

### Site occupancy

As requested, here are the latest occupancy levels;

Occupancy based on lettable plots at 01.02.24	
Carr Lane	60%
Littlecoates	94%
Peaksfield	92%
Saltings	92%
Springfield	94%
Weelsby	88%
Winchester	72%

### 2024 invoices

You should now all have received your invoice.

If you have any queries regarding your invoice please contact the allotment office as soon as possible on 01472 324696.







## Site updates

### Peaksfield

A tenant at Peaksfield has shared with us their experience of taking on a plot and their 1st year of crops;

*"I acquired the plot in March 2023, the plot was covered with nettles, brambles and many pallets in addition a large amount waste material. The shed was in a state of dis-repair and severely leaning over, the polytunnel covered with weeds and was torn in many places and beyond repair.*

*"My priority was to clear all the rubbish, dispose of all the pallets, clear and repair the polytunnel and get the ground clear from weeds. I'd never had an allotment before, nor had I ever grown any vegetables. It was a lot to take on but I thought I would give it a try, I had nothing to lose by giving it a go!*

*"My approach was to clear a bit of the ground, plant, clear, plant, repair, clear, plant and this how I progressed on a daily basis. I cleared, planted, repaired and harvested, it was very tiring but very rewarding.*

*"The photos below tell the story of my plot and my first season at peaksfield site;*





Back in November last year, Peaksfield Community Allotment Association held a successful wreath making workshop in the communal polytunnel.

Make sure you keep checking the notice board for upcoming events that are planned!



## Springfield

Springfield successfully cultivated mistletoe using an apple 'host' tree. If you want to give it a try, here was their advice;

- The best time for cultivation is February or March
- Any dried berries should be rehydrated by immersing them overnight in a bowl of water
- Select your host tree (apple, lime, poplar or hawthorn) or shrub (most of the Rosaceae family are also suitable) and make a slice into your selected branch
- Squeeze the berries, one at a time, so that a sticky jelly-like substance emerges containing black seeds
- Spread the jelly-like viscin, complete with the seeds, onto the slice you made in the branch
- Leave to germinate, which should happen in March or April. Some will be eaten by birds or invertebrates, but hopefully, enough will have been planted to ensure some success. Once germination has occurred growth will be slow and it may take up to 3 years before the plant even develops leaves



## Weelsby

Community Payback will continue making improvements on site during 2024. We hope to reinstate a number of unusable plots helping reduce the waiting list at this popular site.

## Saltings

Community Payback are continuing to make improvements around the Saltings site, clearing vacant plots and keeping the perimeter tidy.

## Winchester

Winchester allotments were successful in obtaining Ward funding to create a nature area in a previously flooded area.

This involved clearing, laying pipework, levelling and planting. Many plot holders have helped out, including their children, who built bug boxes and placed feeders in the trees they also







helped to plant.

Their hard work has helped the site achieve 2nd place in the lifestyle competition in conjunction with Humberside Police.

The work is ongoing and once completed, it will be a wildlife area. We will update you on the progress of works in future newsletters.



### **Carr Lane**

The Association shop is open in the brick hut near the Beeley Road entrance gate on Sundays between 11 until 12. The shop is open to both association members and non-members.

If you wish to discuss the benefits of membership, please contact the committee chair, Andy McCurdy. All site associations are independently run and not connected with the Landlord. You're under no obligation to join.

### **Seasonal jobs - some advice from the National Allotment Society**

To view a whole year of monthly jobs visit, [nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/monthly-advice/](https://nsalg.org.uk/growing-advice/monthly-advice/).

**February** - We get a glimpse of the early signs of the arrival of Spring this month. The soil begins to warm up around the middle of February and we can see for the first time this year the buds beginning to swell on fruit trees and bushes. Overwintering vegetables begin to look less sorry for themselves and they start to produce new growth. These are the signals that it is now safe to think about sowing a row of early peas and broad beans using a hardy cultivar.

**March** - Hopefully by now we are now standing on the threshold of Spring and the new gardening season. The days are beginning to lengthen and although it may not feel like it at time, the temperatures are slowly increasing day by day. More importantly the longer days are the real trigger to new growth, and you will find that with the help of a little protection you can really go for those early sowings. They might not all make it but it is still worth a try and you will still have plenty of time to re-sow any misses. Your best friend this month is the weatherman try to keep up to date with the local forecasts, better still ask the advice of the gardeners around you who have years of experience to draw on.

**April** - April is a 'let's go for it!' month on the allotment but proceed with caution. Hopefully we will all be feeling the benefit of the lengthening days and warm sunshine but beware there is always a price to pay with the treat of hard, night frosts never far away. Hold back and wait a day or two rather take a risk. It isn't the loss of seedlings or young plants that causes the problems but the loss of your precious time that you will ever get back that does the damage.

