



Bishop Auckland Town Council Allotment Newsletter

September 2025

Welcome to the 2025 Allotment newsletter. We appreciate it has been a hard season for lots of you, as the long dry summer has brought many challenges but has been a bumper year for fruits like apples! Your tenancy packs for the 2025-26 season are on their way to you, and we hope you have a great season.



Thank You!

A huge thank you to the volunteers of who came together after the call for action to help replant the high streets hanging baskets.

Over the course of two days volunteers worked hard replanted 66 baskets and they did an amazing job.

They have thrived and have had some great comments on social media.

We look forward to expanding this community participation work next year, look out for more calls to action.

Allotment Rules & Regulations

Allotment Rules and Regulations have been updated, you must ensure that you take time to read them when you get your new tenancy.

When a tenancy ends you must leave the plot in a tidy and re-lettable condition. Failure to do so will result in you being charged for clearance. This is due to several plots being left in very poor state, and costing the Council hundreds of pounds to clear. In the last 6 months the council have started to charge departing tenants.

Moving forward all new tenants will have to pay a returnable deposit when they sign their first tenancy for this reason.

Enforcement Action will be issued to tenants who do not follow the Rules and Regulations.

Cockerels

! IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL TENANTS ! REMOVAL OF COCKERELS FROM ALLOTMENT SITES

Due to complaints of excessive noise from Cockerels and a subsequent investigation, and the adoption of best practice, the keepers of Cockerels have all been advised that:

- they have until 31 October 2028 to remove all cockerels from site.
- no new cockerels must be brought to site under any circumstances.
- leading up to 31 October 2028 if any remaining cockerel is found to be causing a nuisance then they will be served with enforcement action and a notice to remove the cockerel immediately.

This action is in line with:

- Town Council Allotment Rules and Regulations, which permit hens but not cockerels,
- Environmental Protection Act 1990, regarding noise nuisance.
- Allotments Act 1950, which does not permit the keeping of cockerels.

Failure to comply will result in enforcement action, and may result in the termination of tenancy. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining a peaceful and respectful environment for all allotment users and nearby residents.



Welcome to the Team

In January the Town Council appointed a part-time Allotment Officer, Owen Richardson. Many of you will have seen or spoken to him on site. If you have any allotment issues or queries, you can contact him via email on allotments@bishopauckland-tc.gov.uk or he is on site Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Check the site notice board for times.



Summer Inspections

Formal Summer Inspections have taken place, and enforcement action issued. Thank you to all who supported the inspections, and those who have made improvements as required. Regular inspections of sites will continue throughout the winter through our regular site visits.

Water

This year has been very dry. Water as a commodity is getting more expensive.

Therefore we ask that tenants use water wisely, follow the rules and have water butts, as well as being vigilant and report any misuse or leaks. As we have had to turn off the water at a site due to a major leak and look to cost a new supply.

Going Digital: 2025-26 Tenancies

With increasing postage costs and to drive for efficiency, email correspondence will be the first form of all communication with tenants.

This will also include tenancy agreements as there will be a link for payments to the payment portal via Stripe, clear instructions on what to do to return your documents to us with an e-signature etc will be included in the tenancy pack.

We appreciate not all tenants use email and for those we will continue to send paper copies of tenancies and letters.



Working to reduce risks

Sadly over the past three years, there have been five major fires across our allotment sites, requiring assistance from the Fire and Rescue Service. Thankfully, no one has been injured and no livestock harmed. But these incidents highlight the importance of taking action to reduce the risks. While the causes of the fires have varied, the consequences are always the same: property damage, danger to life, large amounts of debris to clear, and fire crews diverted from other emergencies. You **MUST** follow the rules relating to fires, and we recommend you have insurance. Allotments are not to be used to store items, and any fuel and gas bottle are safely stored. We are working closely with the fire service to they have information relating to sites, and know where taps and gas bottles are. They have permission to cut any locks, or break any gates/ fences to access plots in an emergency.

