Binswood Allotment Society – Summer Update 2026

Summer Plot Inspection – Saturday 27 June

A reminder that the summer plot inspection will take place on or around Saturday 27 June.

Before the inspection, please take a little time to make sure your plot is:

- being actively cultivated and maintained;
- reasonably tidy and free from hazards;
- keeping weeds under control, especially those going to seed; and
- not causing problems for neighbouring plots through overgrowth or encroachment.

We appreciate that members sometimes face difficulties due to illness, injury, family commitments or challenging growing conditions. If you are struggling with your plot, please speak to a member of the committee as soon as possible so that this can be taken into account.

Representatives from the Town Council, who lease the site to the Society, have also expressed an interest in visiting the allotments in the coming months. For clarity, this visit is not connected to the North Leamington development proposals. It is simply an opportunity for the Council to see the site, meet members, and better understand how the allotments are being managed.

With this in mind, we would be grateful if all members could make an extra effort to keep plots and surrounding paths tidy and accessible. A well-maintained site helps demonstrate that the allotments are being managed responsibly and strengthens our position when seeking future support, funding or assistance.

Site Maintenance – Suggestions and Volunteers Welcome

The committee is putting together a list of site maintenance jobs to help keep the allotments safe, accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

Please let us know if there are areas of the site that you feel need attention. This might include grass cutting, hedge trimming, overgrown paths, access issues, minor pruning, or other general maintenance concerns. Please describe the location as clearly as possible so that we can review it properly.

We would also like to hear from members who would be willing to help with site maintenance, either as a one-off or on a more regular basis. Once suggestions have been received, the committee will review them and prepare a prioritised list of jobs. We will then ask for volunteers to help with suitable tasks where appropriate.

We know that several members already give their time to help with regular site maintenance, often quietly and without fuss. The committee would like to thank them sincerely. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

If you have any suggestions, or would be willing to help, please speak to a member of the committee or send us an email.

Water Project Update

The first two IBC water tanks have now been in place for several weeks and are already collecting rainwater successfully.

A third tank is still to be installed, and we expect this to be completed shortly. Once in place, the tanks will provide additional water storage for the site and help us make better use of rainwater collected from communal buildings.

As a reminder, if you have a shed or greenhouse roof that is not currently being used to collect rainwater, and you would like advice or assistance with setting up a water collection system, please contact the committee.

Making better use of rainwater helps reduce demand on the mains supply and supports the long-term management of water use across the site.

Grant Funding Update

The Society was awarded £2,400 in Town Council grant funding for 2025/26.

So far, we have claimed £670 of this funding, which has been used towards:

- tree and hedge maintenance - £250;
- asbestos removal - £180; and
- water project associated costs - £240.

The remaining grant funding has been earmarked for further tree and hedge maintenance, plot clearance costs including skips, and improvements to Society buildings, including upgrading doors where required.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Town Council, which helps us carry out practical improvements and essential maintenance across the site.

North Leamington Development Proposals

Further to our previous updates regarding the Taylor Wimpey proposals for land north of the allotments, the committee is preparing a response to Taylor Wimpey's consultation on behalf of the Society.

The response is being prepared following the recent member discussion evening, council meetings, Taylor Wimpey's public consultation event, comments and concerns shared with the committee by members, and discussions with professionals working in relevant areas of the industry. It will focus on matters relevant to Binswood Allotments and the wider allotment community, including the setting of the site, access, traffic, drainage, biodiversity, construction impact, security, and the importance of protecting established community green spaces.

The committee intends to submit the Society's response before the consultation deadline of 14 June. Once submitted, we will share a copy with members for transparency.

As previously noted, this is Taylor Wimpey's own consultation before any formal planning application is submitted. If a formal application is made to Warwick District Council, there should be a further opportunity for the Society and individual members to comment through the formal planning process.

Thank you to everyone who attended the discussion evening, responded individually to the consultation, contacted elected representatives, or shared comments and ideas with the committee. Your input has been very helpful, and the committee will continue to monitor developments and keep members updated.

Lawn Mower Hire Trial

Thank you to everyone who replied to our recent enquiry about a possible lawn mower hire scheme. Although the number of responses was fairly modest, there was enough interest for the committee to agree to proceed with a limited trial during the growing season.

To keep the scheme manageable, the mower will initially only be available at specific days and times, rather than on unrestricted access. This will allow us to assess demand, monitor maintenance requirements and check that the system works properly before considering whether to expand it.

Further details on availability, booking arrangements, charges and usage rules will follow once the practical arrangements have been finalised.

As a reminder, plot holders remain responsible for maintaining the paths around their plots.

Scrap Metal Collection

We will shortly be arranging for the scrap metal man to visit the site.

This is a good opportunity to clear any unwanted metal items from your plots. If you have anything you would like collected, please wait for further instructions before moving items.

John Shuttleworth Cup – Best Kept Plot Competition 2026

We are pleased to confirm the return of the annual John Shuttleworth Cup.

This friendly competition is open to all plot holders, and this year's theme is Best Kept Plot. There will also be a separate prize for Best Newcomer Plot.

External judges will be invited to assess the plots during the summer, and the winners will be announced at this year's Summer Show on Saturday 22 August.

The competition is intended to celebrate the hard work, care and creativity that members put into their plots throughout the growing season. Whether your plot is large or small, traditional or wildlife-friendly, we encourage everyone to take part.

Volunteer Needed – Seed Secretary

We are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Seed Secretary, helping with this year's seed order with a view to leading the process in future years.

The role is largely seasonal and involves helping to organise the annual seed order through the Society's NAS/Kings Seeds scheme. Tasks typically include:

- distributing catalogues and ordering information to members;
- collating members' orders;
- confirming and tracking payments;
- submitting the consolidated order to Kings Seeds;
- helping administer online member access where required;
- receiving and sorting deliveries; and
- organising collection or distribution to members.

Support and guidance will be available during the handover process, and the role is a very useful way to contribute to the Society.

If you may be interested, or would simply like an informal chat about what is involved, please speak to a member of the committee or send us an email.

Pond Safety Review

As part of our ongoing review of site safety and insurance requirements, the committee will shortly be reviewing ponds across the allotment site.

We know that many members value ponds for wildlife and biodiversity, and the committee is not looking to remove ponds unnecessarily. However, our insurance policy requires ponds to be made safe so that young children cannot gain access.

Over the coming weeks, committee members will carry out a simple survey to understand where ponds are located and what safety measures are already in place. This is not a plot inspection, but a safety and insurance review.

Once the survey has been completed and we have received further guidance from our insurer, we will share clear advice with affected members. Where changes are needed, we will aim to agree practical and proportionate solutions with reasonable timescales.

Members who already have a pond, or who are thinking about creating one, are encouraged to speak to the committee before making any changes.

Thank you for your cooperation as we work to keep the site safe, wildlife-friendly and properly insured.

Hedgehog Houses Update

Following our recent appeal, the first batch of hedgehog houses has now been delivered to site and distributed to members who expressed an interest.

If you requested a hedgehog house and have not yet received one, please do not worry. You will be contacted in due course once the next batch arrives.

At that point, we will also share some simple guidance on getting started, including advice on where to place your hedgehog house and best practice for encouraging hedgehogs to use it.

Many thanks to the Community Payback team for their generous support of this initiative, and to all members who are helping to make our allotment site a welcoming place for wildlife.

What Should the Committee Focus On Next?

The committee is always looking at ways to improve the site and make the allotments safe, accessible and enjoyable for all members.

We already have a number of ongoing projects and maintenance issues on our radar, but we would also like to hear directly from members about what you feel our priorities should be.

This could include ideas for site maintenance, facilities, events, wildlife areas, communication, security, paths, water, communal areas, or anything else you think would improve the running of the Society.

Please bear in mind that the committee is made up of volunteers, and we have to balance ideas against available time, funds and practical support. However, member feedback is extremely helpful in deciding where our efforts should be focused.

If there is something you would like the committee to consider, please send us your suggestions. Even better, if you would be willing to help with a particular project or working party, please let us know that too.

And finally, if you've made it this far - thank you for reading.

Best wishes,
Binswood Allotment Society Committee

Rob Wesson - Chair

Patrick Crummy - Secretary

Alex Hitchinson - Treasurer

Craig Biffen - Membership secretary

Dave Smith - Committee Member