

# Witney Allotments Newsletter

## February 2024

### In this issue

Welcome to the first 2024 issue of the WAA newsletter!

Have you had a chance yet to make a start on getting your plots ready for the new season or if it's been too wet or cold on your site, maybe you've been busy planning this year's growing and buying seeds. Are you planning a revamp of your plot or is it business as usual? Maybe you're planning to try out a new method or grow something you've never attempted before?

The main item this month is a quiz developed by John Hackston at Hailey Road, which might help you in your planning! John is an expert on psychology and personality and his quiz is designed to get you thinking about your allotment personality.

*Julie Charlesworth  
Hailey Road*



*Julie plans a plot revamp with cuppa at the ready*

### Looking back at last year

We'd love to hear your thoughts on last year's growing season and your plans for this year! Mary Killick from Lakeside kicks us off with her observations:

*I grew Romanesco, seeing as how vegetables in the brassica family grow so well in the alkaline soil in this part of Oxfordshire AND I had never grown any before - I do like to grow something new every year. I was very pleasantly surprised how delicious it was. It is a much milder form in taste to cauliflower. It is very beautiful to look at and remains firm on the plate. It freezes very well as florets (even without blanching) and the colour does not leach out. I highly recommend it.*

*After 5 years I won't be growing sweetcorn again as I cannot establish any form of protection from the badgers. Coming back from holiday and knowing that the sweetcorn would be at their peak for BBQ (in my opinion THE best way of cooking them to charred perfection) I found that every single cob of 15 plants was stripped bare - not even a kernel was left. A trail camera showed at least one badger trotting down our common walkway looking for more.*

*We have dug a tiny pond to encourage wildlife and were amazed that we reached the water table after only 30 cm. We are not going to add pond fauna just hope they will come naturally.*

### Contact details

Do you have feedback, information or ideas for the next newsletter?

Email: [WAAnewsletter@outlook.com](mailto:WAAnewsletter@outlook.com)

What's your allotment personality? Here's a quick quiz, loosely based on the Myers-Briggs (MBTI) personality framework. Complete these 12 questions and then see if you agree with your allotment personality profile – and whether there is some useful advice for you there. Choose either a) or b) for each question.

If people say hello to me at the allotment, I usually prefer to:

- a. Have a long chat with them.
- b. Say hello back, but then quickly get to work.

When there is no-one else around at the allotment:

- a. I get bored after a while.
- b. I really enjoy the peace and solitude.

When I get to the allotment, I prefer to:

- a. Get straight on with things.
- b. Think through what I'm going to do first.

If you chose more a's than b's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Extraversion: write down 'E'.

If you chose more b's than a's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Introversion: write down 'I'.

I think it's more important to:

- a. Get the details right.
- b. Pay attention to the big picture.

I tend to:

- a. Grow the same things every year.
- b. Try to vary what I grow; I enjoy a change!

I prefer:

- a. Step by step, realistic, clear instructions.
- b. To work things out for myself.

If you chose more a's than b's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Sensing: write down 'S'.

If you chose more b's than a's, perhaps you have a personality preference for iNtuition: write down 'N'.

If I'm honest, I'm more interested in talking about:

- a. Factual topics, such as which crops are doing well or the tasks that need to be done.
- b. People, such as whose plot looks good or isn't up to scratch or who is or isn't well.

If people give me feedback on my plot:

- a. I'm fine with constructive criticism, so long as it's fair and they know what they're talking about.
- b. I can feel personally hurt, even if I know any criticism was well-intentioned.

If you had to choose, which of the following would you prefer?

- a. Recognition for my expertise in producing a successful harvest.
- b. Appreciation for all the hard work that I have put in.

If you chose more a's than b's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Thinking: write down 'T'.

If you chose more b's than a's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Feeling: write down 'F'.

I prefer:

- a. To have a clear plan of what I'll be planting through the year.
- b. To keep my options open and make some decisions when it feels right.

When I've started on a job:

- a. I can't really relax until I finish it,
- b. I can leave it if something more interesting comes along; I can always finish it later!

I tend to visit the allotment:

- a. At the same times and on the same days every week; it's useful to have a routine.
- b. When I feel like it; I get bored if I follow a strict routine.

If you chose more a's than b's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Judging: write down 'J'.

If you chose more b's than a's, perhaps you have a personality preference for Perceiving: write down 'P'.

You should now have a code with four letters. Either E or I, then either S or N, then either T or F, then either J or P. Find your code in the sections below to see your allotment personality.

**ISTJ:** You're probably a practical, methodical plot holder, with an organized, tidy plot. You might be a little bit dismissive of new approaches (like 'no-dig', for example) and it's likely that you'll rely a lot on past experience when you're planning what to grow. Why not try something different this year? If it didn't work last time, maybe that was just the weather.

**ISFJ:** Do you make do and mend? Avoid spending money on the allotment so that you can spend on things for your family and friends? Maybe this year invest in those plants or that tool you've been thinking about but worrying that it was a waste of money. After all, if it helps you to care better for others, that's a good thing.

**INFJ:** You might be someone who sees the allotment as a refuge, a peaceful retreat where you can get closer to nature at the same time as helping the environment by growing your own food. You're probably full of ideas of what you could do, but don't let these run away with you; create a plan and work towards your ideal.

**INTJ:** What's your long-term goal for your allotment? Having this in mind will help you to plan and move forwards. You probably take quite a scientific approach, working out the best techniques and strategies for yourself, but sometimes you might find it useful to discuss your ideas with other plot holders as well. You might be convinced that you have found the best ways to tackle everyday allotment problems, but you can still glean useful insights from other people.

**ISTP:** You are probably a very hands-on practical allotmenteer, learning on the job and getting a buzz from solving any problems as they occur. You might enjoy experimenting with different gardening tools and techniques, adapting these to the needs of your crops. You'll likely find this variety useful; if you stuck to the same crops and methods year after year, you'd probably get bored and could fail to maintain your plot.

**ESTP:** It's likely all or nothing with you. You probably enjoy the physical exercise of working at the allotment and are keen to try new crops and new ways of doing things. This can mean that you have an amazing plot, but if you get bored or lose interest you could have a mass of weeds instead. You might want to scale back your plans until you really know how much maintenance your plot is going to need.

**ESFP:** Try aiming for a plot that looks good but doesn't need too much maintenance. You might want to grow flowers as well as food crops but be wary of choosing anything that needs too much looking after. Put a bench on your plot or keep some folding chairs in your shed so that you can invite people to come and have a chat.

**ENFP:** Variety, trying new things, and connecting with nature are probably important to you. You might enjoy experimenting with unconventional plants and layouts, showing your creative side, and you might find working on your plot therapeutic. And when someone else appreciates the plot that you have carefully cultivated, it will inspire you to keep going.

**ENTP:** You're an experimenter. Try something new, see if it works, and if it doesn't, well you can always try something else. When you first get an allotment, and when you first plant something new, you are probably full of enthusiasm; the challenge will be to keep things going when that initial excitement wanes. Try tapping into your rational, scientific side by identifying specific, achievable goals and celebrating when you meet them.

**ESTJ:** Allotments are for producing food – and you are someone who wants results. You probably approach things in a structured, organized way, following a plan and keeping everything neat and tidy. Don't be too dismissive of people who do things differently, though; they might have some good ideas!

**ISFP:** Allotments are, of course, meant for growing food – but that doesn't mean that you can't choose colourful, aesthetically pleasing crops that help you to connect with nature. There is a danger that you might at times struggle with the regular maintenance of your plot, but if you can create something that somehow expresses who you are, you are more likely to spend quality time there.

**INFP:** For you, the allotment isn't just about growing food in the most efficient way possible. It's a way to contribute to a more sustainable world, and you are likely interested in organic and eco-friendly practices like 'no-dig'. You will like the idea of different or otherwise interesting plants and of flowers as well as food crops.

**INTP:** You may not see yourself as having a green thumb; indeed, you might in the past have boasted of your ability to kill off even the hardiest of plants. However, once you have an allotment you will be keen to demonstrate your competence. You may find that there are areas in which you like to claim expertise – producing good compost for example. You probably like the idea of having different or unique crops but could neglect them if they need a great deal of looking after.

**ESFJ:** Allotments aren't just about growing food; they are places that can grow communities as well. Given the chance, you are probably very happy to help others to improve their growing skills. You might grow crops that have some sentimental value for you – perhaps something that grew on a grandparent's plot – but you'll be focused on the practical aspects too.

**ENFJ:** You like to experiment with new ideas and new crops and are probably interested in more sustainable allotment practices; it might be that the idea of being greener by growing your own food was what attracted you to having an allotment in the first place. You are probably a systematic, planful plot holder who values a good harvest, but you also want your allotment to look good.

**ENTJ:** Some plot holders just jump in and start trying things – but not you. You are likely approach the year in a goal-oriented, strategic way, planning and then executing your projects with efficiency and precision and producing an organised, productive plot. You won't be averse to trying out new things, and it's likely that you enjoy talking shop with other plot holders. Be careful not to overdo giving them advice – and just occasionally, relax!