



# KENILWORTH ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION K.A.T.A.



## NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2015

As keen gardeners, most of us avidly listen in to the weather forecasts and this year we seem to have been bombarded with facts relating to 'UK weather records'. April was deemed to be the sunniest on record. July hosted the hottest day ever recorded for July. August appeared to have been the wettest on record and I find this hard to believe but the first 6 months of this year were also declared the hottest first 6 months ever recorded!

### ***Meanwhile Odibourne Allotments have definitely been busy setting records of their own!***

Yes, once again, the chequered table cloths from the tea tent have been meticulously wiped down and rolled for storage in the trading shed until next year. The white linen table cloths and hessian and check aprons have all been laundered, ironed, aired and folded and are now reclining in drawers under a spare room bed. Cake display containers, trays, serving utensils and Pimms jugs are all washed and boxed and stored in spare room cupboards. The gazebos have all been checked over and are repackaged into their holdalls and ferreted away in the trading shed and our plastic chairs and tables have all been returned to their resting place behind the trading shed to gather Autumn leaves, creepy crawlies and dust until they are needed again!

Yes, this is the final chapter of ***our Record breaking Open Day!*** ...

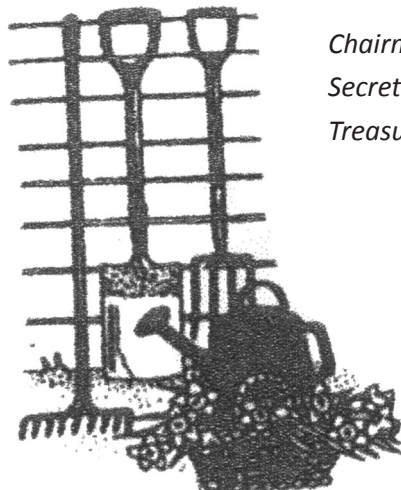
This year the weather was definitely with us and our Open Day held at Odibourne on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August was the best ever in all respects. The Mayor Councillor Michael Coker and his wife Janice joined us at 2pm and our first stop past the fresh produce stall, which was crowded with customers even at that early stage in the proceedings was to show him where the planned toilet block was to be situated and to impress on him the importance and urgency of this project in view of the increasing interaction between the Allotments and our visitors from within our local community not to mention the needs of our own family orientated membership.

Our next stop was for a very welcoming glass of Pimms to help us on our way and resisting the attraction of the stepping stones nearby, this was followed by a brief visit to the bee keeping display, where as always, Chris held a mesmerized audience, keen to learn more on the subject of apiary. All age groups were fascinated with the structure and workings of the live beehive on display. Then leisurely moving on to the cake and raffle stand, our guests were gently accosted by Marie where raffle tickets were purchased to try to win the once again marvellous Waitrose hamper expertly put together by Madeleine.

From this point onwards we experienced some new attractions to interest our visitors. Plot 43 was 'borrowed' by plot holder Katherine who demonstrated her expertise in her field of the 'Bourne Technique'. If you have a dodgy back or other aches and pains, Katherine would be happy to hear from you. Her contact details are on all of our notice boards. This technique is gentler than osteopathy or chiropractic treatment. She had a very busy afternoon! Our next new attraction on the circuit was a great hit especially with the youngsters. What Sunday afternoon event is complete without ice cream?!!! We were loaned a very old fashioned ice cream cart by friends of the Association, Geoff and Maggie which proved to be a great success. Having purchased a modest 8 litres of ice cream to 'see how it went', we had to send out for another four litres....and then for another four. Next year we will know better, learning curves and all that.

Our next pleasant surprise was situated by the bridge and we were entertained by the legendary group of folk singers whom many of you will know as they have been entertaining us in Kenilworth for lots of years. Romany Pie did not disappoint and we were treated to an afternoon of gentle but rousing renditions of well-known folk songs. Thanks to allotment neighbour Dave for letting us 'gently persuade' him to bring his talented pals along for the afternoon.

## Committee members



			Plot / Site
<i>Chairman</i>	Mike Hitchins	864801	79 Odibourne
<i>Secretary</i>	Lily Brownjohn	855291	51 Odibourne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Mark Cotton ('til end of Sept)	07974 662750	2a Odibourne
	Robin Ashby	853560	68a Odibourne
	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
	Paula Hallam	856480	44 Odibourne
	Dave Harwood	07785 991291	58b Odibourne
	Pete Hayes & Trudy Brown	851382	15b & 45a Odibourne
	Peter Jones	853930	18b Odibourne
	Martyn Partridge	07973 510415	15a Odibourne
	Catherine Pettman	748456	10 Beehive Hill
	Keith Rockett	863143	6 Beehive Hill

The tea tent was its usual top class act as well. With the folk group close by to entertain, the afternoon was doubly relaxing and many stayed on for an extra cuppa or three. But our attractions didn't stop there. Hanif sold out of 400 samosas within the first hour.

Young Mo (Gill and Glen's grand-daughter) once again organised a 'fun' competition from her grand-parent's plot as did Harvey from his plot. Thanks to both of them for their enterprise and the generous funds they both raised. And last but not least, our thanks go to Caroline, our Master Gardener, who organised a composting and recycling display. Members of the public showed great interest in this stand.

**And a special thank-you goes to some of our surrounding neighbours,** To Mark and Tracy in The Close who lent us their vehicle with a tow bar to transport the ice cream cart, chairs and tables, and to James and Sarah in Lower Ladyes Hills who gave us access to their freezer for the day to store the ice-cream! To Andy from The Engine Inn who covered us with his outside catering license to sell alcohol on the day and to Martin who produced a professional map on the flipside of our usual entry forms and who took photographs of the event to submit as a press release follow-up.

Our thanks go to everyone who gave their time, especially Paula, our 'Events' organiser. Thanks also to the many who gave their time before, during and after the event. This includes those tenants who made an extra special effort with the appearance of their plots (nagged by the Secretary or otherwise) especially for the day!

**And our record breaking Open Day raised.....** The results will be published in our accounts at the AGM. Meanwhile, the Mayor will receive a generous donation from the amount raised to this year's chosen charity, Diabetes Research.

*Lily Brownjohn (Allotment Secretary)*

## **IT'S BEEN ANOTHER BUSY YEAR SO FAR.....**

Even though both the Kenilworth Festival and now Foodie Fortnight have been moved to the end of the year and are no longer viable events for us to participate in, we have still been actively fund-raising by way of supporting the good old Lions Show in the Abbey Fields and also the **National Gardens Scheme Open Day held at our Beehive Hill site.**

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June, we did a repeat performance of our first Open Day at our Beehive Hill site as following our very successful first attempt last year, we all agreed that this event should be a regular feature on our calendar. Funds were raised through plant and rhubarb sales and both the Association benefited as well as a decent donation being made to the National Garden's Scheme who in turn support many worthy charities. Not only local people visit us on these Open Days, but they are advertised nationally and visitors from far and wide came through our gates. Our thanks go to Keith and Joan (Joan did an additional high quality plant stall) and to Catherine and to all the tenants at Beehive Hill who helped to fly the flag and make us proud once again!

**The Lions Show**, which preceded the Beehive Hill site Open Day by only a week, took place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June, and thanks to Paula's organisation once again it ran as smoothly as clockwork. Teams of volunteers helped from early morning to early evening both with raiding and bundling the rhubarb, with transport, manning the stall, selling raffle tickets and the whole team effort ensured another K.A.T.A. triumph. Thanks to all who volunteered once again.

## **JUDGING OF PLOTS.....**

***This year's event has brought some criticism from some disgruntled tenants, so a background to proceedings follows for fairness on both sides of the argument:***

This event takes place each year around the middle of July and

tenants do not have to enter anything. It is an event, which some of the more competitive tenants gear themselves up for and put in that extra special bit of effort and **hard work**. Weeds are mercilessly slaughtered, brassicas netted and protected from butterflies and pigeons. Onions endlessly watered and fed, and the hoes are in overdrive with sparks flying in all directions. **The current schedule/criteria for judging is posted on all notice boards and published in our newsletter in plenty of time.** This schedule has been produced and recommended by the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and has been used by us now for at least the last 10 years or even possibly more. The reason for changing from the old RHS schedule all those years ago has been lost in the mists of time, but we are **not** RHS members and we **are** National Association members and as such (we believe) should be guided by their rules relating to Allotment judging and which also relate to the well-being of the site in general. The Judges we have used are of **excellent horticultural pedigree**, doing the job for us on a voluntary basis and they are escorted round the site by the Secretary and if she is lucky, another Committee member will join her, although it can be the most boring and long day in all extremes of weather as no conversation or observations can be offered to the Judges as this could be misconstrued as 'influencing' them one way or the other.

It is also important to stress that **the judging of plots is a valuable tool for any Association** as it inevitably raises the standards, especially in the Novices section where for example in her first year on the plot over 20 years ago, a young and inexperienced female gardener achieved the status of 2<sup>nd</sup> Best Novice. She was so surprised and delighted that it spurred her on in those early years to always do the very best that she possibly could. Not surprisingly, and with that positive mentality, the people who were winners back then being judged under the old schedules (RHS) are still winning today under the National Association Schedule unless of course they are not in such good health and cannot physically compete any more or they **simply refuse to comply with the Nat Assoc schedule currently in use.** Having explained all this to one disgruntled tenant who had lost very easy points by simply not labelling his plants or conserving water, **His response to the lack of water conservation was simply, 'well why should I, I pay my rent'!.....**

Another point raised was that whoever takes the Judges round should not be allowed to compete themselves. **Not a problem, anyone out there is welcome to the job of escorting the Judges round, but would be expected to take on the whole package, its not just 'a day out'.** They would naturally be excluded from being judged themselves and immediately have to find a new judge as the same person who does not conserve water also **slated the competence of our current Judge.** The admin behind the whole event is extensive and does not conclude until the Presentation Evening is done and dusted in November, so all applicants most welcome. Please apply to the Secretary as soon as possible!!

Although it is difficult to keep everyone happy, the Committee have agreed to a meeting to discuss this situation and your comments or *criticisms* – hopefully constructive, would be greatly welcomed in writing please and may be helpful. Any significant changes made to the schedule will be published next year in plenty of time prior to the judging.

It must also be noted that on the list of winners way back in 2010, we had the phenomenon of our winning 'novice' having a higher score than our winner in the main competition (the same criteria being used for both). This winning 'novice' came from our new Beehive Hill site and the Secretary's observation was made at that time on the notice boards that our new Beehive Hill tenants, who had set a fabulously high standard, were going to give the rest of us a run for our money. Please note that in this year's results, Beehive Hill took 1<sup>st</sup> **and** 2<sup>nd</sup> places in the main competition. Perhaps 'Mr Disgruntled' from Odibourne would do well to take a long look at the competition out there before dismantling the system.

### MAIN COMPETITION WINNERS:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	PLOT16 B/HILL	MADELEINE & SAM SEXTON	102 ½
2 <sup>ND</sup>	PLOT 6 B/HILL	KEITH & JOAN ROCKET	101 ½
3 <sup>RD</sup> =	PLOT 51 ODI	LILY BROWNJOHN	93 ½
3 <sup>RD</sup> =	PLOT 48 ODI	MARIE GORMLEY	93 ½

### HIGHLY COMMENDED:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	PLOT 68A ODI	ROBIN & SUE ASHBY	89
2 <sup>ND</sup>	PLOT 22 ODI	JEN HARRIS	87 ½
3 <sup>RD</sup>	PLOT 23 ODI	JANE BALLARD	86
4 <sup>TH</sup>	PLOT 16 ODI	DENIS SHAKESPEARE	85

### NOVICES:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	PLOT 26 B/HILL	CLIVE RADFORD	81
2 <sup>ND</sup>	PLOT 69A ODI	MELANIE SMITH	71
3 <sup>RD</sup>	PLOT 28A ODI	PHIL & STEPH ALLCOCK	66 ½

### \*AWARD FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT\*

This award is not always easy to allocate as sometimes there can be more than one deserving recipient in the same year. However, exceptional work done to improve a plot never goes un-noticed, no matter what the timescale.

This year the award went to James Higginbottom, plot 84, Odibourne site. James has successfully terraced what was previously a plot with a very difficult slope. This has laid the foundations for future success. A new baby slowed down the work for this year, but we are expecting great things from James in 2016!!! Well done James

### SCARECROW COMPETITION:

**Our Scarecrows play a major part at our Open Day.** Those listed here are only a small selection from the top of around 30 produced for the judging. The remaining scarecrows were all awarded commendations and tenants will be invited to collect these at our Presentation evening in November. More Scarecrows made their debut for us on the Open Day. Thanks to all who joined in the fun. From experience, we know how time consuming these productions can be!

*Apologies to Catherine & John Wier from plot 98b Odibourne, who's second place winning Scarecrow in the Traditional section was inadvertently credited (on our notice boards) to their neighbours on 98a! This error has been corrected*

### JUNIORS:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	SHIMMER THE MERMAID	MATTHEW AND ELISE HOLMES	42 ODI
2 <sup>nd</sup> =	KING BOB	ALEX WHITE	71 ODI
2 <sup>ND</sup> =	EXHAUSTED FIREMAN SAM	ANTONIO PINHIRO	45C ODI
3 <sup>RD</sup>	PRETTY SCAREY SLIMEY SNAILS	IMOGEN MORRIS	73 ODI

### ADULT TRADITIONAL:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	SCARECROW INTERACTIVE	PETER & JENNIFER JONES	18B ODI
2 <sup>ND</sup>	THE GREAT BRITISH SUMMER	CATHERINE & JOHN WIER	98B ODI
3 <sup>RD</sup>	THE OLD ONE	RICHARD PALMER	11 ODI

### ADULT NOVELTY:

1 <sup>ST</sup>	CECIL'S REVENGE	HEATHER & JOHN DAVIES	97 ODI
2 <sup>ND</sup>	PENELOPE & HORSEADISH	FIONA BENCH	12B ODI
3 <sup>RD</sup>	HAWAIIAN LADY	DENISE SHUTTLEWORTH	55 ODI

### SECRETARY'S CHUCKLE AWARD:

CECIL'S REVENGE	HEATHER & JOHN DAVIES	97 ODI
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*Once again we are grateful to our Town Clerk, Maggie Field who spent the morning with us, photographing and assessing the construction, materials and effort put into our wonderful scarecrows. She said that in fact she felt all the scarecrows deserved celebration and recognition and added that they will bring a lot of enjoyment to our visitors on Open Day. A big 'thankyou' once again from KATA Committee to all who supported the competition.*

### **YOUR COMMITTEE.....**

There has been and will be further changes to our Committee this September. Sadly we have to announce that we are losing our Treasurer as his young family is outgrowing the family home and he is moving out of the area to a much needed bigger property. On an initial trawl of our membership we are lucky enough to have a number of candidates to fill Mark's very large boots. His replacement will be discussed at our next Committee meeting. We wish Mark and his family well and will miss them all greatly.

### **NEW SHOP MANAGERS.....**

Already well installed, our next addition to Committee (and I know they won't mind me saying this) came about by a chance remark. Shop Managers, Sue and Robin Ashby made it known earlier in the year that they felt they had run their time with the shop. Both have put in many hours over the last four years and as with Annie and Jane before them had done an excellent job. A passing casual comment to two of our shop volunteers definitely sparked some interest in the position and as a result, they were pointed in the direction of Robin and Sue to discuss what was involved. The outcome was truly positive and we now have Pete Hayes and Trudy Brown, who stepped in immediately and as many of you will have noticed, have started to revamp the shop. More work planned for this Winter! With our continued support, I am sure that the shop will continue to go from strength to strength. They would like to hear from you if you have any ideas that would help to boost trade, new stock suggestions or simply more volunteers of help on the rota, even if only on an emergency basis. Pete would also like to hear from anyone who would be willing to help with any maintenance. To keep communications open, he has set up an email address for direct contact: [katatradingstore@yahoo.com](mailto:katatradingstore@yahoo.com)

Trudy and Pete would like to convey their thanks for all the support they have received so far and they are planning to organise a barbeque for us all some-time next year. As Roger Bennett would have said, 'watch this space'. Thankfully we are lucky to have Robin remain on our Committee and once again we thank both Robin and Sue for the past four years for most competently running our trading shed.

### **SEED SWOP SCHEME.....**

A seed swop scheme from within the shop has recently been set up by tenant Catherine Nyman. Catherine stresses that strictly speaking you don't necessarily have to bring in seeds to swop. Surplus seeds can simply be donated or just come in and take some away with you. An interesting selection has already been put together and although some seeds may be slightly out of date, no charge is being made for this service, so you have nothing to lose by experimenting and giving them a try. However, if anyone wishes to make a small donation, this will not be refused either! Catherine will be happy to speak to anyone or receive further seed donations out of shop hours if you cannot make it during shop opening times. Her number is: 07980 552963

### **MONEY OFF DEAL.....**

If you have recently purchased Maxicrop or Roundup through the shop in our new safety topped white bottles and require further supplies of these products, please return your old bottles to us and get a discount off your next purchase!



## THE SHOP CLOSES ON SUNDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER.....

**Don't forget the shop starts to wind down in October and opening times are reduced to one hour only on Saturday and Sunday mornings throughout the whole month: 11-12 noon. It will not re-open until mid-February 2016.**

So stock up on your compost now if you are organised enough to sow very early seeds next Spring!

## MAINTENANCE.....

During this current year, a new gate has been erected at the Lower Ladyes Hills entrance, Odibourne site, as well as at the Spring Lane site. Badger fencing has also been erected at Spring Lane, hopefully resolving the problem of our destructive little visitors.

At last year's AGM, a discussion took place on the difficulties encountered with the sloping approach to our Odibourne site at the Lower Ladyes Hills entrance. Discussions are now also taking place with regard to the safety of the sloping terrain at the entrances from both the School Lane and The Engine approach.

## FUND-RAISING AND EDUCATIONAL PLOT.....

**A warm welcome to our newest users of the Educational plot.** Last year, the University crèche group had difficulty in getting transport for the little ones so had to give up the raised beds, which they so enjoyed. We were pleased to offer the facility to the Spring Nursery group who operate locally from within The Sports and Social Club.

**Our Fund-Raising plot has produced some rather splendid lavender plants,** too many for this year's Lion's Show to sell! As a result, we will have an excessive amount of lavender plants next Spring. These will be on offer from our shop from about mid-April at a special price to our tenants (easily less than half the price of any nursery). We already have an abundance of well rooted cuttings to take their place!!! They are all English lavenders taken from the 'Hidcote' variety, one of the more hardy species. Apparently there has been a large scale study by the Institute of Ecology and Hydrology and our bees prefer English lavenders to French lavenders. *Clever bees!!!*

## RENTS ARE DUE ON OR BY 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.....

No increase in rent has been applied for the last 3 years. At each of our recent AGM's, the option has been left open to increase rent by no more than £2.00 if costs have escalated within that year as it is always difficult to assess price rises in advance. But slowly and surely some costs have been rising over the last 3 years (water and membership to the National Association for example) and as a result a small increase of £1.00 has been applied to each plot across all three sites to help cover these costs.

Rents due are as follows:

**Beehive Hill plots £25.00**

**Odibourne plots £30.00**

**Spring Lane plots £40.00**

**(Part plots are charged pro-rata.)**

For your convenience, our Committee members will be in the shop during shop opening hours (10am – 12noon) on:

**SAT 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPT AND SUN 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**

**SAT 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPT AND SUN 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**

If you cannot make any of these dates, please advise the Secretary and alternative arrangements can be made. A fine of £5 will automatically be sent out if rents are not received on or before the 'due by' date of 29<sup>th</sup> September.

The new season's catalogue from **KING'S SEEDS** will also be available for collection from the trading shed on those dates, but if you forget to take one, they will still be available to collect from the shop in time to order before the 25<sup>th</sup> October. King's seeds are around 40% cheaper than comparable seeds on the market and collectively, our total order brings a percentage back into the Association as funds – so everyone benefits. The orders are all collated by Chris, our Spring Lane representative and when they arrive, he is good enough to deliver them to your home. Thanks to Chris from all of us for this excellent service.

**NOTE FOR THE DIARY – the last day for seed orders is Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October** and the orders must please be dropped into Chris at 69 Spring Lane (the house right next to the Spring Lane site)!

## AND STILL TO COME.....

### **SUNFLOWERS TO BE MEASURED**

This is usually dependent on the maturity of the majority, so the date is not a fixed one

### **PUMPKIN WEIGH-IN (PLEASE OBSERVE THE NOTICE BOARDS)**

There are some pretty competitive pumpkin growers out there and Andy from the Engine is gearing up once again to host the Pumpkin Weigh-in event of which he is our sponsor. This year it will be held on **Sunday 4/11<sup>th</sup> October (TBC) at 12.30pm.** (Usual format, pumpkins weighed outside on the pavement before adjourning inside The Engine for refreshments). You are welcome to come along even if you haven't got a pumpkin to be weighed. It's good fun with a lot of friendly banter. (Note: only pumpkins from plants purchased at the trading shed back in May are eligible for the competition. Names for entry will have been taken at the time of purchase). Andy puts on a tasty hot soup lunch completely free of charge and it is a most enjoyable and sociable light lunch break.

## AGM

Come along and air your views. Date **Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> October at the Royal British Legion – 7.30pm prompt.** Please remember that any motions for discussion must be received in writing one week prior to the meeting. Please use letter box rear of Secretary's shed, plot 51 Odibourne site.

## **YOUR FINAL DATE FOR THIS YEAR'S ALLOTMENT DIARY, PRESENTATION EVENING FRIDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 7PM FOR 7.30PM START**

An entertaining evening for all, when those who have worked hard to grow 'the heaviest' or 'the tallest' or 'the best in whatever category' is rewarded with a cup or Trophy or a Certificate for their achievements. This also includes awards for our scarecrows. A first class buffet is provided and the Mayor will be presenting the awards.

This year, we are grateful to Rosemary Wiggin's, who when her husband Barry died (plot 10) offered to provide a new 'Award' in Barry's name. The category which the Committee agreed this should represent is 'Award for Special Achievement' and this is for someone who has really made an outstanding impact to improve their plot.

The Presentation evening is held at The Old Copper House Club (top of Park Road) – *Formerly The Royal British Legion Club.* **See you there**

