



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



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2016

A Happy New Year to one and all from all of the Committee at K.A.T.A.!

We hope that everyone experienced a wonderful festive Season and enjoyed good health throughout.

As usual, the allotments tend to remain a bit dormant for a couple of months at this time of year, but for those of us who dared to venture onto their plots trying to 'get ahead', they will have had to cope with extensive waterlogging underfoot, so will not have been able to achieve all that much, even though the spirit may have been willing and intentions all good!

I do remember including in our end of year newsletter (Sept 2015) that there had been lots of weather records set throughout the early part of last year, and the end of year didn't disappoint either with successive storms Abigale, Barney, Clodagh, Desmond and Eva, then finally Frank, the worst storm of the year battering our shores in December, ensuring that we had not only the wettest but also warmest December on record, this having followed the mildest November night on record – 16.1 degrees. Collectively, this caused some very confused new tender rhubarb to break through on our plots during December and daffodils to appear earlier than usual as well as extremely early and vulnerable blossom on some of our trees and raspberries still being produced for Christmas.

The New Year also started as the old one ended – Very wet and with the exception of a couple of brief, mild frosts, still relatively mild, so mild at the beginning of January that I was even shown pictures taken on plot 38 Odibourne, where an astonished Catherine had found some plump strawberries growing away happily! But yes, as a few notes were scribbled down for this newsletter in early January, there were still 50 flood warnings in place across the UK and rivers in the north-west were at their highest levels on record. What's more, the experts have forecast that these extreme weather patterns are only going to get worse!

However, we must be grateful that we seem to have escaped the devastation that our neighbours up in the north and north-west have experienced as they have almost taken the full force of the extreme weather. It is bad enough when our Odibourne site

floods, but nothing like the experience of losing a home and all your life long possessions.

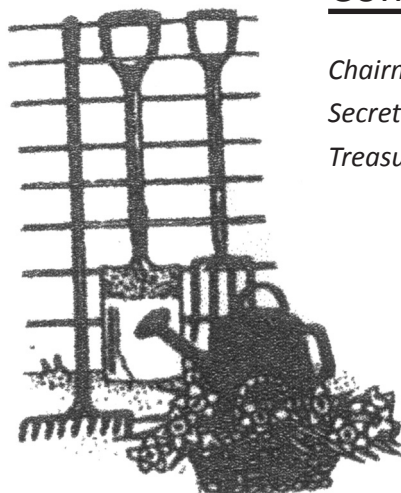
Extreme water-logging is merely an inconvenience to say the least, as it has prevented us from getting an early start in our new gardening season, but midway through January, it was evident that someone had ventured down the track in a vehicle from the shop end at Odibourne and caused some awful damage to the track, which is most inconsiderate as much time and effort goes into keeping our track in good order, thanks to our volunteers Richard and Pete, and one or two others who take the time and to 'do their bit'. Please, please do not take vehicles onto the track when the track is obviously very wet.

That also applies from a safety angle, particularly if you use a vehicle on the track on the Lower Ladyes Hills side of the Odibourne site. When we had our delivery of manure in late Autumn last year, we very nearly lost a tractor complete with trailer into the river. The farmer was trying to deliver a full load to a tenant half way down the track and although the track was not particularly wet, the slope of the track towards the river caused the trailer and its full load to slide sideways and it very nearly went over the edge taking the tractor and his driver with it. The farmer was so shaken, he has refused to make personal deliveries in the future and will only now leave loads by the gates. Please take care *for your own safety* as well as for the welfare of our tracks.

The heavy waterlogging has also affected the cutting of our boundary hedges. Whilst we are grateful to Chris for organising this, the hedges have only been cut where the tractor has safe passage ie. Along the Spring Lane boundary and Lower Ladyes Hills boundary, The hedge bordering The Close has been left as the tractor wheels would have caused too much damage to the surrounding grassy area.

But now onto a lighter note – K.A.T.A. hit the airwaves twice last year, firstly on BBC Radio 4 when the popular gardening programme 'Gardeners Question Time' was to be recorded from

Committee members



			Plot / Site
<i>Chairman</i>	Mike Hitchins	864801	79 Odibourne
<i>Secretary</i>	Lily Brownjohn	855291	51 Odibourne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Philip Jordan	733407	37a 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

Kenilworth Castle back in July and yours truly (as well as a few other allotment holders) went along out of curiosity. Members of the audience were invited to submit questions and amazingly ours was included in the programme. The panel, which included Christine Walkden and Bob Flowerdew were extremely helpful and delightfully entertaining and so we put K.A.T.A. on the map! The second occasion came following a phone call at very short notice in November from BBC Coventry & Warwickshire Radio, when they asked if they could do a 'live' interview from our Allotments. They hold a regular gardening spot around 11.30-12 every Sunday morning on the Mollie Green Show and we had a ten minute slot where we were able to talk about our Association and also ask gardening questions of their gardening expert Daren Rudge. Their outside reporter Keith Wedgebury was an excellent and entertaining interviewer, his exuberance instantly putting this nervous interviewee at ease!!

Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary

SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME SAD.....

Quite a few of us will remember Les Beard, who at one time had an allotment at the Odibourne site. He was also the familiar face and right hand man at Guest Nurseries in town for many years (now the site of Sainsbury's). More recently he and his wife Betty ran the Kenilworth Pet and Garden Supply shop at Abbey End and as one of the Town's respected businessmen, became one of our main sponsors at our Presentation Evenings, donating wonderful prizes for our raffle table. Les had been battling bravely for some considerable time against cancer, and sadly he lost that fight and passed away peacefully in hospital last October. Our sincere condolences go to his wife and family.

But to brighter news and following on from our announcement in the newsletter last September that we were losing our Treasurer Mark, as he was moving out of the area with his young family, we are pleased to announce that we now have a new volunteer to join our team and take over the reins as Treasurer. We are extremely pleased to welcome Phillip Jordan from our Odibourne site, a retired accountant, eminently qualified to take good care of our hard earned funds. We wish Mark and his young family well and are ever grateful for the time consuming work he has put in for us over the last few years.

SO BRIEFLY LOOKING BACK.....

AGM 2015, HELD AT THE OLD COPPER HOUSE CLUB 22ND OCTOBER..... Was a more than lively affair, despite only a 15% turnout of membership having attended. Leaving the Committee with many issues to review, a much abbreviated report follows:

The Chairman's report re-iterated the previous year's continued good relationships with local agencies, good competition, successful fund-raising events and open days, and the continued building on our secure financial state, which, he added had enabled us to carry out a fair bit of maintenance with plans for future purchases of grass cutting equipment. He praised the continued success of the shop and the ongoing value of the educational plot within our community. Expressing regret that we were losing our current Treasurer Mark Cotton, he complimented him on the professional layout and management of our accounts. He announced that the Committee had appointed a new Treasurer, Phil Jordan.

The outgoing Treasurer's Report gave a comprehensive insight into our accounts, *the full detail of which will be displayed within our shop*. He stated that the accounts were in a healthy state with the main income being derived from rents, fundraising events and shop sales. Re-cycling items such as sheds, greenhouses and sundries plus joining fees were also contributory factors, although income from this area was down, due to a slower turnover of plots/tenants compared to the previous year. As from 2014/15, our funds had been split into 3 practical areas for day to day running costs, future projects and an emergency fund. A rent increase had been implemented for September 2015/16, the first in 3 years, but he

saw no cause for an increase in 2016/17. However, as in previous years, he gave the option for a rent increase of no more than £1 to be imposed should core costs unexpectedly rise.

Election of Committee: The Committee agreed to stand again and were re-elected.

Motions: Two motions were presented By Harvey Brown (i) That tightening up of rules should be applied to plot holders who were not keeping their plots in good order, to which the Chairman replied that each case was dealt with individually. (ii) That restrictions be put on Committee spending, and after some long discussion, it was agreed that Committee had been elected to make decisions without running back and forth for approval. Neither of these motions were carried

Any other business:

The question of the condition of the track at Odibourne was raised once again by Mr Savage, who had brought the issue to light at the 2014 AGM. The Chairman said that he was on top of the project and would be applying for Lottery funding to take the project forward

The cutting of the grass track at Odibourne was raised by Mr Brown, saying that the north side had not been cut as frequently as the south side but Mr Hayes reassured him that Committee were capable of rectifying this

Mrs Harwood said that she and possibly other tenants found the maintenance of the river bank adjoining their plots very difficult and even dangerous. The Chairman said that he had put in place a scheme of works, which would start on November 1st.

Meeting closed 8.23

PRESENTATION EVENING, HELD AT THE OLD COPPER HOUSE CLUB, 13TH NOVEMBER 2015.....

Another well attended and fun Presentation Evening to brighten up those November evenings was held at The Old Copper House Club in Park Road, Kenilworth. This was attended by The Mayor, Councillor Michael Coker and his wife Janice, who presented our cups, trophies and certificates. The food once again was exceptional, and our thanks go to Madeleine who organised it and to Judith who assisted with its presentation. Our 'girls on the door' Annie and Jane executed swift and efficient entry to our event and last but not least to Paula who battered us with raffle tickets throughout the evening!!! – Not surprising though, as she organised a superb and groaning raffle table this year. Our major prize for which we are most grateful, was provided by Chris Saunderson, who presented us with another of his fabulous paintings of Odibourne Allotments. We also acquired a generous £20 shopping voucher from Sainsbury's (our buffet supplier) and no less than two £20 vouchers from our seed supplier Kings! Our thanks go to everyone else who generously supported our raffle table including Catherine who, with her craft skills, created a beautiful and practical 'gardening' orientated shoulder bag.

AND AS WE NOW MOVE FORWARD INTO THE NEW YEAR.....

Tenants who ordered their seeds from Kings last October will already have had them delivered to their doors. For this exceptional service, we have to thank Chris once again, who takes and collates our order forms and delivers the seeds to us when they arrive. Great savings are made by ordering through Kings for as well as being very competitive on price, a percentage of the total order reverts back into our funds.

OUR FIRST OFFICIAL 'GET TOGETHER OF THE NEW YEAR'.....

A lively meeting with a good turnout was held at 'The Virgins & Castle' Pub in the old High Street on Thursday 21st January. This is a meeting where we say thank-you to our shop volunteers who turn out in all weathers at the weekends to open up our shop at the

Odibourne site. Suggestions for improved service/stock are asked for, new rotas are planned, and a general discussion is held over a complimentary drink on K.A.T.A. Outgoing managers Robin and Sue officially introduced new shop managers Pete and Trudy who gave a report on the year's trading. (Figures are published along with the AGM minutes), but another successful year was reported, meeting all targets as well as stock increased. Thanks were given to Robin and Sue both for their work over the last 5 years and for the help given to Pete and Trudy to carry on their dedicated work.

THE SHOP HAS HAD A FACELIFT.....

In our September newsletter, references were made to the aftermath of our Open day, where tables and chairs were stacked behind the shop for another 12 months until required again, ultimately gathering dirt, dead spiders and cobwebs and weathering badly. This is no longer the case, as Trudy and Pete with some help from Chris, have been very, very busy! Our chairs and tables are now neatly enclosed and sheltered from the elements by a made to measure Acrylic roof, tailored to fit the awkward space behind our shop. If you haven't already seen the construction, please take a look. It's impressive and what's more has stood up to the batterings from our recent storms! And work has not stopped there. As good as their word (they said that more work would be taking place over the Winter months whilst the shop was closed), they have altered and greatly improved the shelving layout inside the shop with sloping shelves, giving more visibility and easier access to stock items. The dustbins at the back end of the shop containing bagged up products have all gone giving more floor space. Overall a totally new and improved layout, a full Spring clean has taken place and even the walls have been re-painted giving a fresher, brighter and welcoming appearance to the shop. Well done Pete and Trudy from all of us for your extremely energetic and competent input to our Association!

SEEDY GOINGS ON IN THE SHOP?.....

Towards the back end of last year, a 'Seed Swop Scheme' was set up within the shop by Odibourne tenant Catherine (plot 38). This has really taken off and has since been expanded as Catherine has now acquired support from Smith's Nurseries at Bagington, who have agreed to donate seeds to our seed swop scheme. You will now find an increased stock of seeds which **are in date!** Many thanks to Catherine for her enterprising work. Again, she stresses that you don't necessarily have to 'swop' any seeds. If you have run out or are simply curious to see what there is, please feel free to just come along, have a look and help yourselves. Donations entirely optional! 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

OUR RECYCLING CORNER....

Is still going strong with a few more items about to be added. A 6x10 polytunnel has just been sold from there over the winter (an absolute bargain) and two pop-up mini polytunnels are about to be added, as well as a virtually new 'push' lawnmower. There are also some brand new wellingtons as well as some impressive staging for either a greenhouse or your shed. It's worth a look, you may find a bargain you didn't realise you needed!!!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2016:

Jan Thurs 21st	Shop meeting
Feb Sat 13th	Shop re-opens (<i>see opening times above with shop report</i>)
April – beginning of	Notices will go up to giving roughly one month's notice pre plot inspections
May – beginning of	Plot inspections will be carried out by Committee
June Sat 11th	Lion's Show
June Sun 19th	Open Gardens at Beehive Hill (1-5pm)
July (w/b Mon 11th)	Judging of plots (<i>Actual date to be notified</i>)
Aug 8th/9th	Judging of Scarecrows (<i>Actual date to be notified</i>)
Aug 8th – 14th	(National Allotment week)
Aug Sun 14th	Open Day held at Odibourne (2-4pm)
Aug 29th /30th	Notices advising payment of rent will be displayed
Aug (end of)	Sunflowers to be measured
Sept Sat 17th Sun 18th	Rent collecting in shed by committee
Sept Sat 24th Sun 25th	Rent collecting in shed by committee
Oct Sun 2nd	Pumpkin weigh in at Engine (starting at 12.30)
Oct Thurs 20th	AGM (prompt 7.30 start at The Old Copper House Club)
Oct Sun 30th	Shop closes for season
Oct Sun 30th	Last day for seed orders (Form to be handed in to Chris at 69 Spring Lane)
Nov Fri 11th	Presentation evening at the Copper House Club (7pm for 7.30pm start)

NEWS FROM OUR THREE SITES.....

SPRING LANE has benefited from the new badger fencing erected by Chris last year. The hard work put in to install this seems to have paid off and the badger/s have not made an appearance since – touch wood!

BEEHIVE HILL can look forward to a new mower this year, the old one now unreliable is being replaced. A new secure container is also being purchased to house it. Warwick District Council has announced that it is carrying out some layering work along the main road boundary, which should reduce shade along that side.

ODIBOURNE SITE Plans are still ongoing for the toilet block with secure storage area, improvements to the track, tree and riverbank maintenance and a bridge across the river for easier access to and from the shop for our Lower Ladyes Hills tenants, especially with heavy loads of compost being transported in wheelbarrows!

SHOP OPENING TIMES FOR 2016 : SATURDAY & SUNDAY MORNINGS

Shop re-opens from w/e Sat 13TH & Sun 14th February -

ONE HOUR ONLY – NOTE TIME: 11AM-12NOON

From March through to end of September -

TWO HOURS – 10AM-12NOON

Throughout October until Sunday 30th (close of season) -

BACK TO ONE HOUR ONLY – 11AM – 12NOON

This year, we are also hoping to open over Bank Holidays.

ALL WELCOME AT OUR SHOP RE-OPENING DAY –

JOIN US FOR TEA/COFFEE/CAKE AND HOME MADE BISCUITS AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR SPECIAL OPENING OFFERS.

JUDGING OF PLOTS 2016.....

Referring back to the comments made in our September newsletter, the Committee have yet to discuss any amendments to this year's judging schedule, but as we have to plan well ahead, our judge has to be booked early in the year, and Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nurseries has agreed once again to help us out and for those who are keen to compete, our schedule is as below.

Any amendments will be published on our notice boards in plenty of time. Constructive comments are invited but in writing please, addressed to the Committee and posted through the letter box r/o Secretary's shed on plot 51, Odibourne site.

BEST CULTIVATED PLOT -JUDGING SCHEDULE FOR 2016

CULTIVATION AND CROPPING

Types of produce (1/2 point each type)	15
Seasonal Produce (Extra point for Winter/Spring produce	5
Soft fruit (1 point each type – includes rhubarb)	5
Attractive features (flowers etc)	5
Herbs (1 point each type).....	5
Quality of crops	10

HUSBANDRY

Compost/manure heap (quality of).....	10
Freedom from Annual weeds.....	10
Freedom from Perennial weeds	10
Rubbish (freedom from).....	5
Label showing variety and maturity cropping time	5

ENVIRONMENT

Rain water saving	5
Plot number prominently displayed.....	5
Paths/roads neatly maintained	5
Judges discretion – the 'wow' factor for those last 10 points	10

TOTAL: 110

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST AND NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY.....

The Warwickshire Flora Group visited our site in early January as part of a national survey to see how many plants were in flower during the weekend around the New Year. They managed to find 38 species in flower and a total of 159 species during the three hours allowed for the survey by visiting Abbey Fields, Finham Brook, Odibourne Allotments and surrounding streets. John Walton who is arranging a further programme for Summer and Autumn would like to re-visit our site later in the year when the annuals have had time to grow. In the meantime, if you are interested in finding out more about the national survey, you can visit the BSBI website: www.bsbi.org.uk where you can also find their Flora Group web page for Warwickshire

The Heart of England Organic Group If you are interested in growing entirely 'chemical free' on your plot then you might be interested to know that the local Heart of England Organic Group is based in Kenilworth. Established over 30 years ago, the group provide help and advice for small growers and organise speakers and trips throughout the year. For more details seek out Ross Taylor on Plot 3 Odibourne, visit www.heorg.org.uk ,or call 852135. One of the main activities this year is:

Kenilworth Potato Day Held on Saturday February 6th from 10am-2pm at the Kenilworth Senior Citizens Club in the Abbey End Car Park. This is the first year for this event, with 15 varieties of seed potato on sale together with guidance on varieties and lashings of tea and cake. **Admission Free**

Compton Verney is creating a 50's style allotment as part of their Summer Exhibition about design in the fifties. Jenny Jones, one of our tenants at Odibourne is helping out with the project, initially with research, and is looking for anyone out there who may have inherited some lovely old photographs which could help with the design, so

that an allotment of the 50's era can be re-created as accurately as possible. If you would be prepared to loan these photographs briefly for that purpose, please contact Jenny directly on 01926 853930

Smith's Nurseries.... If you have not already ordered your seed potatoes from our suppliers at Kings, there is still plenty of time to visit Smith's nurseries at Baginton. They have a large selection, which they will sell in any quantity and are offering a 10% discount for our Allotment holders upon presentation of an ***Allotment ID card (*please contact Lily for a personalised card)**

Get a Slice of the Good Life at the Edible Garden Show at Stoneleigh Park from 11th – 13th March. Special deal for Allotment holders: TWO TICKETS FOR £18. QUOTE CODE: NAS18

Hinton's Nurseries are offering a 10% discount on plants, seeds and bulbs plus a 5% discount on all other horticultural goods. They are fruit and veg specialists and can offer 150 types of veg seedlings **ready to plant**. See flyer insert for full details. ***Allotment ID card needed to take advantage of these offers (*please contact Lily for a personalised card)**

Want to know more about composting and get a compost bin for just £5? Interested in learning how to make the perfect compost or just keen to know more? Why not book yourself onto a home compost workshop where you will be guided through the do's and don'ts of composting. In return for your time, you will be given a voucher to purchase a compost bin for just £5 from your local re-cycling centre.

Workshops are planned for Monday 4th April and Monday 23rd May at 6pm at Warwick Methodist Church, CV34 4TH. To book a place please visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/composting

Recycle your food waste at home and WIN....Warwickshire County Council is encouraging residents to recycle any unwanted food waste, rather than throwing it in the rubbish bin

Did you know that each year in Warwickshire, the amount of food waste thrown in the bin is enough to fill Warwick Castle to a depth of 4 metres, costing council tax payers an extra £2 million in disposal costs?

By simply putting food waste in your garden green wheeled bin enables it to be recycled into a nutrient rich compost which is used for growing crops on local farmland. Of course it is better to compost all you can at home or at the allotment but items such as meat bones or plate scrapings are best put in the green bin. Food can be wrapped in newspaper or compostable liners if you prefer.

To raise awareness of food waste recycling, Warwickshire County Council is running a competition to win one of two Amazon Fire HDs plus many other prizes

To enter visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/foodwaste and follow the competition link

Our thanks to tenant Caroline Faulkner (who just happens to be Waste Project Officer at County Council) for the up to date info on composting and recycling

And finally, please spare a thought....

Just a few days after Christmas, whilst doing a quick progress check on a couple of new tenants' plots at Beehive Hill site, a sleeping bag was spotted in the undergrowth just beyond our boundary at the far end of the site alongside the old Severn Trent pumping station. Wrongly assuming that fly tippers had been around, a closer examination (from a safe distance) revealed that there was a person inside. To cut a long story short, and out of concern for this person's welfare, the police were called, and they revealed that the occupant was a young man in his 30's. Whatever the desperate and distressing circumstances which had forced him into this situation, the PCSO's attending were compassionate and professional in their handling of what could have been a tricky situation, not to say dangerous or tragic. Should anyone spot anything similar, please do not tackle a situation like this alone. Please ring the police on101 and ask for assistance.

HAVE A GREAT GARDENING YEAR!