



KENILWORTH ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION

K.A.T.A.

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017



Once again a belated happy New Year to one and all, and we hope you enjoyed the festive season and are feeling refreshed and keen to re-start the new gardening year. How quickly this last year has zoomed by! Hopefully, not too many of you have succumbed to the nasty cold and flu viruses flying around, but for those who have, we wish you a speedy recovery.

Some sad news reached us last month and for those of you who read the notice boards, you will have seen that John Vincent who recently retired from plot 30b Odibourne site died following a fall and a short illness. John and his wife Mary were always keen to help out whenever they could and were regulars at our Open Days with their many and varied competitions set up on the front of their plots – how many smarties on top of the cake/how many potatoes grown in the dustbin/beans in the jar etc. Our sincere condolences go to his family. An interesting fact came to light at John's funeral and that was that he was one of the youngest men ever to get his pilot's license at the tender age of 17 years and 3 weeks old. John passed away at the good age of 80.

We have also just said our goodbye's to Annie and Jane from plot 58a Odibourne, but this time because they are moving out of the area to Sidmouth. Annie and Jane contributed generously with their time to our Association, Annie serving on our Committee, both Annie and Jane running the shop as well as helping out massively at our Lion's Shows, Open Days and Presentation evenings. No-one can touch them for the speed and skill with which they could put up the gazebos either!!! Sorry chaps but its so true. They asked to express their farewells to everyone they knew via the newsletter, so here it is in their own words:

'Dear Friends, it is with great excitement that we look forward to fresh pastures in Sidmouth and with much sadness that we surrender our plot at Odibourne. We took over no 58 as a 'docklands' come 'marestail meadow' and it truly was 'a mare'! However we soon came to the realisation that we were very fortunate to have such a fantastic location, flooding aside. Not only was the close proximity of the Trading Shed a definite bonus, but so many Allotmenters passed our plot stopping for a chat, asking advice, offering advice, offering produce, always welcome.

The Committee and the Volunteers work so hard to make the Allotment sites very special places with the annual events getting better year by year and we'll miss them. We consider ourselves

very lucky to have had the opportunity to have been part of this community and would like to thank everybody who welcomed us and for the help they have willingly given us over the years. Some of you will know that every single seed we own was put into store back in March so we would also like to thank all those who donated the seeds and plants for everything we managed to grow in 2016

We wish you all good health, happiness and a wonderful harvest....and we will visit whenever we can!!

'Annie & Jane'—AKA—'The Girls'- AKA—'The Ladies' to Josh'

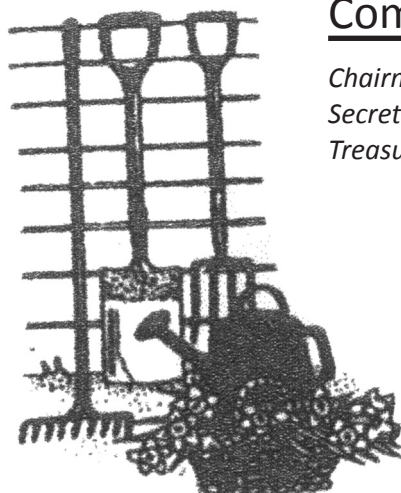
We will miss them both and wish them a terrific new start in Sidmouth.

One last bit of news about two of our tenants. Liz and Dave Johnson on plot 35 Odibourne recently gave up their plots to move up north to be nearer to elderly parents. To help in their search for suitable property, with hopefully enough land to grow the fruit and veges they would miss from their Allotment, they applied to the BBC2 programme, 'Escape to the Country'. They were accepted and in order to authenticate and bring another item of interest to the show, the BBC actually did some filming on site. They can't be specific about the date of airing as yet except to say it will be included in Series 18 to be shown in the Summer.

And finally, we would like to welcome new Committee member David Hoy who has joined our team

Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary

A SPECTACULAR AUTUMN was the only way to describe the end of 2016, with a fantastic harvest of apples and an amazing show of colours on our trees. The vivid reds, bright yellows and golden hues were, according to the experts, down to the previous very wet Spring, which allowed the trees to store their sugars and then the prolonged hot Autumn days which followed during September and October. In fact the experts have once again declared more records set, with December as being our warmest on record and in fact last year for the third year running we experienced the warmest year worldwide on record. So as 2016 came to a spectacularly colourful end, we rounded it off with our usual events –



Committee members

			Plot / Site
Chairman	Mike Hitchins	864801	79 Odibourne
Secretary	Lily Brownjohn	855291	51 Odibourne
Treasurer	Philip Jordan	733407	37a Odibourne
	Robin Ashby	853560	68a Odibourne
	Trudy Brown	851382	15b & 45a Odibourne
	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
	Paula Hallam	856480	44 Odibourne
	Dave Harwood	07785 991291	58b Odibourne
	Pete Hayes	851382	15b & 45a Odibourne
	David Hoy	851396	30 Beehive Hill
	Peter Jones	853930	18b Odibourne
	Martyn Partridge	854890	15a Odibourne

Committee may also be contacted through the Trading Shed email address katatradingstore@yahoo.com

AGM THURSDAY 20th OCTOBER 2016 was held at the Old Copper House Club. A *much abbreviated report follows:*

Chairman's Report The Chairman apologised at the outset, following a comment made that the Chairman's and Treasurer's reports seemed much the same year after year. He explained that this was in fact true as we do very similar things each year, which simply have to be noted and minuted. He then went on to state that the Association had once again made very good progress, adding to our substantial reserves which was mainly down to our volunteers' efforts. He confirmed that the Committee met regularly throughout the year with one of the most time consuming discussions being on problem plots, stressing that each case had to be dealt with on an individual basis. It was very time consuming work with the bulk of it being carried out by Lily backed by the Committee. The Chairman then made reference to retiring Committee members Keith Rockett and Catherine Pettman from Beehive Hill and thanked them for the work they had done for us. He welcomed David Hoy as the new Representative for Beehive Hill. The Chairman made reference to the success of our events, which he reiterated was mainly down to the help given by volunteers. Not only were these events good for fundraising but also as a PR exercise, with Open Day being attended by the Mayor of Kenilworth. As usual, all of our annual competitions had been well supported and he made a brief mention to a new competition which was to be introduced in 2017. He then referred to the Trading Shed, and yet another highly successful season, due in the main to good management by Pete and Trudy and the help given by their team of volunteers. He added that more help was needed with unloading the stock as it arrived, so could anyone please contact Pete or Trudy if help could be offered there. As a side issue, he said that a CCTV system had been installed within and around the shop purely to deter or detect a repeat of any further vandalism in the nature of that which had occurred earlier in the year. Also a lawnmower had been acquired for the Beehive Hill site and a storage unit had been purchased to contain it. The Educational plot was still going strong and was a valuable asset as it was being used by the young gardeners of the future. He said that site maintenance was ongoing with hedges shortly to be cut, but reminded tenants that Odibourne was in a conservation area and permission had to be sought from WDC to carry out work on any trees other than willow and routine maintenance on fruit trees. Referring to our regular newsletters, currently being produced by Lily, he said that she would welcome any articles or comments submitted for inclusion. He then passed over to the Treasurer

Treasurer's Report The Treasurer stated that the Association had benefited from another successful year with an overall increase in surplus over last year. He said that the surplus had come primarily from the two main fundraising events plus the Trading Shed. He said that core activities had resulted in a loss, but explained that although core income had increased, the expenditure at Beehive Hill ie a new lawnmower and storage unit had incurred a loss. As well as the fundraising events generating funds, he said that Pete and Trudy should be congratulated for their prudent management of the shop, which again had produced a significant surplus over last year. The Treasurer concluded his report by producing figures for each of our three accounts ie A designated 'Project' fund for toilet block and bridge, A contingency fund for unknown costs and emergencies, and A day to day running account before handing back to the Chairman and prior to confirming that there would be no rent increase

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

Motions None were received, but the Chairman proposed that we give plot-holders the opportunity to attend designated committee meetings throughout the year to air their views and any concerns

Any other business Nick Schofield said he thought there were too many sheds and greenhouses. The Chairman said that this topic had already been discussed in Committee. Phil Stock said that his plot and several of those around him were unworkable due to a water leak from Lower Ladyes Hills. He was assured that we were in touch

with Severn Trent, but that the process was a slow one involving road closures. Pat Hough asked whether it was possible for us to attempt to control the Himalayan Balsam along the river bank which was now becoming invasive. Nick Schofield offered the Scouts' services to help ease that problem.

Meeting closed at 8.23pm

PRESENTATION EVENING FRIDAY 11TH NOVEMBER

was held at the Old Copper House Club. And we feel it is safe to say that it was probably the most well attended Presentation evening on record! The preparations started around lunchtime with seats and tables being arranged and Trophies delivered well in time for the big event – or so we thought!!! By 7.15pm we were scrambling round trying to find extra chairs and tables from underneath the stairs and out of cupboards to accommodate all of our guests. Despite the last minute panic, everyone was finally seated, maybe with a bit of a squeeze, but an enjoyable evening was had by all. As usual, a superb raffle with the star prize being the painting of one of our Allotments which was donated by Chris Saunderson, a pair of panto tickets from the Spa Centre, and once again two £20 vouchers for King's seeds as well as a superb selection of gardening aids put together by Paula. We have Madeleine to thank for organising the excellent buffet with help from Judith and new recruit Valerie. Annie and Jane looked after the door for us for the last time and Chris produced all of our wonderful certificates. The Town Mayor, Richard Davies gave the most touching speech in which he said that the overwhelming impression he had of the Allotments during his visits throughout the year was that of a 'Community' feel. We are grateful to the Old Copper House Club for their continued support and use of their 'free' function room

SO AS WE MOVED ON INTO THE NEW YEAR

Apart from a few frosty and sparkly sunny days, which enticed a few of us out onto the plots to attempt some vague tidying up, we seem to have had a prolonged spell of some pretty damp and dismal grey old weather. But an event which cheered us up immensely was Pete and Trudy's ...

SHOP VOLUNTEERS 'THANKYOU' EVENING, which took place on Wednesday 11th January at the Engine Inn.

Pete opened the meeting by thanking all the Volunteers for coming along and for all their hard work last year, adding that the shop could not be the success it was without their much valued help. Profits were well up on the previous year with a fairly low mark-up of around only 10% on stock items, but he added that with the addition of sales of items from our re-cycling corner, this profit margin rose to around 20%. He then covered the recent work that had been completed during the quiet season both in and around the shop. This included the new CCTV system, which he reassured volunteers had been installed purely in the light of the recent vandalism during the year and not meant as a 'big brother' feature. The other practical item installed was the new racking system to hold the ever increasing range of netting and material rolls. This he hoped would also make it easier for the volunteers to dispense those items. A new addition to the table furniture was a 'Suggestions' box into which all messages, suggestions, application forms etc could be deposited safely. Having had several discussions with Planning and meetings with the Environment agency, he also made reference to the bridge over the river, a feature which was gradually progressing and would hopefully be both helpful to tenants and also improve trade from the Lower Ladyes Hills side of the site. The toilet facility alongside the Trading shed was also a step nearer. It was announced that 'Team Janie and Carol' had won last year's Highest Sales Award, and that Trudy was now tweaking the new shop rota. (Extra volunteers still needed please). Pete said that for those into the technological world, KATA was now on Twitter and Facebook, which was not just for our own tenants, but also to let those in the wider community know what we were all about.

'The Seed swop scheme' within the shop had also had a very successful year – despite a visit from a very hungry mouse!!! The scheme really has taken off and had to be re-filled several times during the year. Thanks to Catherine for all her efforts there.

Pete asked for any suggestions from the floor and these included more Social Events, Barbeques, more competitions and a Harvest Supper type gathering. A suggestion which was met with the most resounding cheer was for a fruit press! However Trudy said that she would have to investigate the problems surrounding hygiene and storage.

So here's to a happy and enjoyable 2017 in the Trading Shed – from Pete and Trudy

THE TRADING SHED RE-OPENS ON SATURDAY 11TH FEBRUARY- with coffee/tea and cake between 11am and Mid-day

SHOP OPENING TIMES FOR 2017 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY MORNINGS

*Shop re-opens from

Sat 11 Feb: ONE HOUR ONLY, PLEASE NOTE TIME: 11-12 NOON

From March

to end of Sept: TWO HOURS: 10AM – 12 NOON

Throughout October

until Sun 29th: BACK TO ONE HOUR ONLY: 11AM – 12 NOON

We can be contacted by email: katatradingshed@yahoo.com

Follow us on Facebook – KATA Kenilworth Allotments

OR:-Twitter – @KATA Allotments or Kenilworth Allotments

*All welcome at our **SHOP RE-OPENING DAY**, join us for coffee/tea and cakes. There are also some fantastic bargains to be had from our re-cycling corner, which we have been collecting over the closed season....

And now on to the events to look forward to as the year progresses, starting with:

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017

Feb Sat 11th	Shop re-opens. Come along for coffee/tea and cakes
April beginning of	Notices will be displayed advising of inspections starting at beginning of May
May beginning of	Plot inspections by Committee will commence on all three sites
June Sat 10th	Lion's Show in the Abbey Fields
June Sun 18th	Open Gardens at Beehive Hill
July Sun 9th	Potato crop Weigh-in starting at 12.30 by the Trading Shed. Social event to follow
July Mon 10th	Judging of plots
Aug Mon 14th – 20th	National allotment week
Aug Mon 14th	Judging of Scarecrows
Aug Sun 20th	Open Day held at Odibourne 2-4pm
Aug Tues 29th	Notices advising payment of rent will be displayed
Aug (end of)	Sunflowers to be measured
Sept Sat 16th/Sun 17th	Rent collecting at Trading Shed by Committee *
Sept Sat 23rd/Sun 24th	Rent collecting at Trading Shed by Committee *
Oct Sun 1st	Pumpkin weigh-in at Engine (starting at 12.30)
Oct Thurs 19th	AGM (Prompt 7.30 start at The Old Copper House Club)
Oct Sun 29th	Shop closes for the season
Oct Sun 29th	Last day for seed orders (Order form to be handed in to Chris at 69 Spring Lane)
Nov Fri 17th	Presentation evening at The Old Copper House Club (7pm for 7.30pm start)

*The above **rent taking** dates are for your convenience, but payment can be made by prior arrangement with Lily at an alternative time if for example holidays etc. prevent payment over these two weekends. Please do not ask our shop volunteers to accept rent.

Please note: Rents are due no later than 29th Sept in accordance with our lease agreement. Late payments will be subject to a fine.

SO WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AROUND OUR THREE SITES?

Spring Lane has been fairly peaceful this last year and one or two new tenants have taken up membership following a couple of our more senior tenants retiring. The delivery of manure for communal use has been welcomed by all.

Beehive Hill site lost their two hard working site reps last year, but we are very happy that David Hoy has agreed to take on the job. Like a duck to water, he has already contacted a group of you to continue with the lawn-mowing rota, and at some time in the future will again be making contact to organise volunteers for our Open Gardens Day on June 18th. He will be asking for volunteers to 'man' the gate in short stretches and also look after a small plant stall. This is a prestigious event run nationally and we will be part of a team of beautiful gardens in Malthouse Lane, Fieldgate Lane and the High Street. The money raised on the day will be donated to many worthy charities. Needless to say, we will be hoping that our Allotments will have been afforded an extra bit of TLC for the event as visitors from all over the country as well as local people like to have a look around. At this point it may be worth repeating that the paths in-between plots is the *shared* responsibility of all tenants, even if you have 'rabbit proofed' the boundary of your plots with netting, you must also take responsibility for the in-between path please.

We have not yet been able to establish how we are to deal with the hedge along the bottom border of the site and are currently talking to volunteers at Warwickshire Wildlife. As an organisation (we've only just found out) they no longer do hedge laying courses. Cheekily, we had hoped that they might like to use our hedge as training material!!! The outer hedge along the main road is the responsibility of the District Council and it is our understanding that there has been some dispute between Council and their Contractors who had started to lay the hedge further along the boundary of the playing fields. That would appear to be the reason why the work in the hedge laying has come to a full stop. Just a reminder that well-rotted manure and wood-chippings are also available at the rear (top end) of the site and this is for communal use. See costs on notice boards

We will shortly be getting some contractors out to price up the job of renewing a couple of gate posts as these are now in serious need of replacing. Otherwise all is well at Beehive Hill.

Odibourne site has not had an easy year with the deterioration of the main track and restrictions for vehicles on the Lower Ladyes Hills side of the site. Committee members have had site meetings with the Environment Agency in order to take advice on the correct procedure for repair work to be undertaken. The urgency of this has, for the time being, shuffled a couple of other jobs to the back of the queue. However, a toilet facility *will* be going ahead shortly and possibly a 're-routing' of the steep approach of the Engine entrance may be a solution to expensive shoring up work of the existing one (a practical suggestion only at this stage). The work on the steep and slippery approach at the Lower Ladyes Hills main entrance is on hold until the whole subsidence of the track further along has been fully addressed. As if all of this hasn't been enough to deal with, several tenants further down that same track have been waterlogged through a leak originating from Lower Ladyes Hills and this has been ongoing for the last two months causing much disruption and damage to one shed. It has been established that the leak is from private property and will need road closures taking 12 weeks' notice. Currently Severn Trent seems to have diverted the water flowing under the road to the allotments to above ground and into the storm drains. Work here is still ongoing and may need legal procedures by Severn Trent to force the householder to carry out the work necessary. Severn Trent meanwhile is keeping us advised.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE AND GRASS CUTTING...

is pretty good and regular ongoing jobs such as grass cutting is a

lot easier these days with our new lawn mowing and strimming equipment. However the Odibourne site would benefit from the example set at Beehive Hill and we would like to set up a track mowing rota for Odibourne. Odibourne is a 7 acre site, so the more help we have, the lighter the workload for all, and with enough volunteers, it would only require around 2 hours of your time per month/6 weeks. Please contact Pete Hayes if you would like to be part of the team. Pete's contact details are on the front cover of the newsletter or he can be contacted through the KATA email address.

A NEW 'FUN' POTATO GROWING COMPETITION...

will be making its debut this year, which was suggested and is being organised by Caroline Faulkner from plot 4b Odibourne site. Hinton's Nursery has generously agreed to put up a trophy for the winner. Details below:

1. The potato supplied must be used and grown in the bucket provided
2. Any soil combination can be used
3. Judging to take place at 12.30 on Sunday 9th July at the KATA Trading shed
4. Please bring your complete bucket to the weigh-in
5. The winner will be decided by the heaviest crop

Bucket with competition potato on sale from the Trading shed from Saturday 11th February. Competition entry £2.00. Good Luck!!! (A social event is being planned to follow on afterwards)

JUDGING OF PLOTS 2017... and following some minor amendments to our judging schedule last year, the following is the criteria on which our plots are being judged. The original schedule is recommended by the National Association and has been adopted and adapted by our Association and approved by our judge Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery.

Cultivation and cropping

Types of produce (1/2 pt per type)	15
Seasonal produce (extra pt for winter/spring) crops	5
Soft fruit (1pt per type)	5
Attractive features (flowers etc)	5
Herbs (1pt per type)	5
Quality of crops	10

Husbandry

Compost/manure heap (quality of)	10
Annual weeds (freedom from)	10
Perennial weeds (freedom from)	10
Rubbish (freedom from)	5
Labelling – variety/maturity cropping time	5

Environment

Paths/roads neatly maintained	5
Water conservation	5
The 'wow' factor	5

TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE **100**

OUR SEEDS ARE HOME AND HIGH..... Thanks to Chris's hard work taking/collating/and finally delivering our seed orders to our doors. Chris informed us that we reached a new 'highest ever order' for King's seeds this year. A percentage of this will come back into the Association. Thank you Chris for such a generous effort on our behalf.

NEWS FROM OUR FRIENDS IN THE COMMUNITY

Heart of England Organic Group and Kenilworth Potato day...

Unfortunately, this newsletter may just miss the **Potato Day**, but here's the info just in case...It will be held on Saturday February 4th at the Senior Citizen's Club in Abbey End carpark with 14 varieties of seed potato together with guidance on those varieties. There will be lashings of tea and cake. Admission Free!

If you are interested in growing 'chemical free' on your plot you might also 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.heog.org.uk, or call 852135. (No harm in checking to see whether Ross has any potatoes left over either if you missed out)

Hinton's Nursery and Plant Centre are happy to give some good discounts to Allotment holders and this year they will be growing over 200 different types of veges ready to plant out. They are also increasing the range of soft fruits on offer to include some of the more unusual ones such as Worcester berries, Chokeberries, Japanese Wineberries, Lingonberries etc. plus some of the newer types of fruit tree Miracot (Mirabell x Apricot), Saskatoon (fruiting Amelanchier) & Pluot (Plum x Apricot)

Guyscliffe Walled Garden is situated at the rear of Hinton's Nursery. Since the restoration work first started in January 2014, the garden has come on in leaps and bounds. It was used originally from around the 1770's until the late 1940's as part of the kitchen garden for Guyscliffe House. A dedicated band of volunteers have worked tirelessly and 2016 was the best year so far. It has recently, thanks to a grant had a proper pathway installed, which is not only aesthetically pleasing, but gives better access for wheelchair users. It has also benefited from the donation of a beautiful cedar wood greenhouse. It has hosted visits from various groups within the Community as well as local schools. This year plans are afoot for at least 80 days opening to the public (this includes volunteer working days) and needless to say...more volunteers are needed. Please visit their delightful website www.guyscliffewalledgarden.org.uk for lots more information and dates when open to the public.

WDC Competition 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 £1 million in disposal costs?

By simply putting food waste in your 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 and plate scrapings are best put in the green bin. Food can be wrapped in newspaper or put in compostable containers if you prefer.

To raise awareness of food waste recycling, the Warwickshire Waste Partnership is running a competition where you can win monthly prizes. To register visit www.feedyourcaddy.co.uk and follow the competition link. The first 1000 registrations will receive a free tea towel!

Kenilworth and District Horticultural Society meet on the first Wednesday of each month except January at the Senior Citizen's Club, Abbey End Car Park. They have a superb calendar of speakers for 2017 as well as 3 shows throughout the year. The first speaker of the year may be of special interest as it is Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery who is also a trustee of Guyscliffe Walled Garden – see above. Cost as a visitor to one meeting at the Horticultural Society is £4.00 with membership for the full year only £10.00. Visit their website for more information. www.kenilworth-hs.org.uk

Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers are holding their 'Introduction to beekeeping' sessions throughout February and March at the National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh Park. For further details contact Val Dillon 02476 417374 or email val.dillon@outlook.com

AND FINALLY It is quite difficult to create a newsletter which after 3 years now of 'interim' jottings is hard not to feel guilty of becoming repetitive. But as the Chairman rightly said in his AGM report, we do repeat events on a regular basis. Our aim is mainly to keep you up to date and informed about events, with relevant dates, progress or problems, but our request for items of interest is a genuine one, so please submit whatever you can – this is your newsletter. **Have a great gardening year. Lily**