



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



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2018

As I've ventured out onto our sites over the last few days in January, I was pleasantly surprised to see many other tenants were already pottering around their plots, even though it's still very soggy underfoot after the rather wettish last few weeks. Odibourne is still recovering from a flood, albeit not as bad as we've had in past years but bad enough to leave unwanted debris strewn around some plots. One shed on stilts near the riverbank is tilting perilously towards the river at a worrying angle, but that could also be due in part to recent gales, which have also removed one or two panes of glass rather unceremoniously from some of our greenhouses!

In general though we've been lucky compared to other corners of the world who've suffered devastating wild fires, floods and frightening mudslides, fierce hurricanes and spectacular volcanic eruptions. It's been a topsy-turvy year with expressions like bomb cyclones and super moons being hurled at us. And global warming is leading to more and more extreme weather events on an even more frequent basis. Seasons are becoming less distinctive and this also confuses our wildlife. And in view of all this evidence, one of our supposedly 'great world leaders' denies that there is any such thing as global warming and tweets instead that he has got a bigger button than his North Korean counterpart with which to blow us all to pieces! So let's think positively and look forward with fingers crossed to a more peaceful and bountiful 2018 gardening season on our Allotments, and all good wishes from KATA Committee are conveyed to you for a very healthy and Happy New Year.

Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary

And so to round up the events at the end of last year...

But firstly may we pay our respects to Neil Mason who was at our Spring Lane site, who following an illness, passed away just before Xmas. His wife Shirley played on plot 4 as a little girl with her brother and lived in the family home right next door to the allotments (where Chairman Chris and Nick live now). Her parents were

the plot tenants originally, and when Shirley took over the tenancy as an adult, Neil worked alongside her for almost 50 years. Neil will be sadly missed, and certainly remembered by some of us for his wonderfully warm and big welcoming smile. Our sincere condolences go to Shirley who is continuing to work the plot.

Did we speak too soon...?

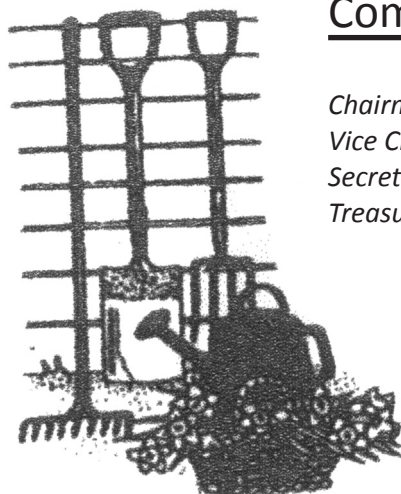
So... after jubilantly and somewhat smugly declaring in our September newsletter that we had identified (through our CCTV system attached to the shop) some little toe rags, who deliberately came down to the Odibourne site to cause damage to our greenhouses, we then suffered break-ins over at our Spring Lane site! Just about every plot had sheds broken into and in some cases, property was stolen. Break-ins and thefts also happened a few days later at 'The Common' end of the Odibourne site which is also out of CCTV coverage area. So far we haven't heard of anyone being hauled up for these incidents. As always, you are advised **not** to keep expensive equipment on your allotments.

AGM Thursday 19th October...

This was held at The Copper House Club and was well attended. Chris gave his first annual report since taking over as our new Chairman in May, which was well received, and a much abbreviated version follows:

Chairman's report: (Recording of full report to be approved at 2019 AGM)

The Chairman began by thanking our outgoing Chairman, Mike Hitchins as well as retiring Committee member, Martyn Partridge. He welcomed new Committee member Catherine Nyman. A new post as Vice Chair had been created and this has been filled by Committee member Pete Hayes. In a new departure, it was announced that Chair positions were to be held for 5 years before re-election. He also announced that a new constitution would be drafted laying out the role of the Association – to be approved at the next AGM.



Committee members

			Plot / Site
<i>Chairman</i>	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Pete Hayes	851382	15b & 45a Odibourne
<i>Secretary</i>	Lily Brownjohn	855291	51 Odibourne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Philip Jordan	733407	37a Odibourne
	Robin Ashby	853560	68a Odibourne
	Trudy Hayes	851382	15b & 45a Odibourne
	Paula Hallam	856480	44 Odibourne
	Dave Harwood	07785 991291	58b Odibourne
	David Hoy	851396	20 Beehive Hill
	Peter Jones	853930	18b Odibourne
	Catherine Nyman	07980 552963	38 Odibourne

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

There was evidence of another busy year with 19 new tenants, and Open Days at Beehive Hill and Odibourne as well as our attendance at the Lions Show, which had brought funds both to the Association as well as the Lions, Myton Hospice, Carnival Comforts Fund and the many big charities supported by the Open Gardens scheme. He thanked the army of volunteers who had participated in making these events happen. He commented that our competitions had been well supported and that the new Potato Competition organised by Caroline Faulkner had been a success. He thanked Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nurseries, not only for judging the 28 shortlisted plots which were all of a high standard, but for supplying a trophy for our new Potato Competition. He gave credit to Andy Bear from The Engine Inn who had hosted our Pumpkin Competition and thanked everyone who had produced magnificent Scarecrows once again this year.

Maintenance had been high on the agenda with the Engine entrance being re-aligned and a new gate post fitted at the School Lane entrance. Some new notice boards had been put in place, and a toilet facility had been installed. Plans for willow pollarding with consideration to wildlife were in hand, and a large sycamore deemed dangerous has been removed. Himalayan Balsam, which grows along our river banks is now considered 'invasive' and plans for Balsam bashing work-parties are afoot. Beehive Hill site has had a new gate plus a bollard installed by WDC. Nothing was known of these plans by WDC until work had commenced. The Chairman thanked site rep David Hoy for keeping tenants informed. The new barriers were deemed necessary to keep travellers off the Open space land at Beehive Hill. Both Chairman and Vice Chair have had meetings with Jon Holmes, Open Spaces Mgr. at WDC and have agreed a policy to observe the wildlife corridor at Odibourne between The Common and the Castle. The Chairman has also been introduced to our Town Clerk, Maggie Field and hopes to maintain a good relationship with both Town Council and District Council. The Chairman then thanked Committee for all their hard work over the past year.

Treasurers Report:

The Treasurer began by announcing that the Association had embarked on a number of projects to improve the facilities on the Allotments, the major one being the installation of a toilet. This had inevitably resulted in the financial report showing an excess of expenditure over income. However the core income had risen slightly due to a small increase in rental income. Core costs have fallen due to a reduction in general maintenance costs and a good surplus was recorded from our Open Days and Lions Show events. The Trading shed had also had a good year with a gross margin of 23% being achieved. Though overall reserves are slightly reduced (for reasons above) they are still excellent with the funds being split into three areas: A designated project fund, a contingency fund for emergencies and the balance to be used for day to day running costs. The Chairman thanked the Treasurer and asked for proposals that the report be accepted.

Election of Committee:

Committee were willing to stand again and a show of hands voted them through

Motions:

None had been received

Any other business:

Pat Hough raised the subject of the unstable path on the Lower Ladyes Hills side of Odibourne. The Chairman responded that there had been no further movement since the tractor had caused the depression in the track. The Environment Agency's advice had seemed disproportionate and so the Committee had agreed to monitor the situation. As the farmer said he would no longer be prepared to use the track, Alan Savage and Pat Hough asked whether any more manure would be delivered to that side of the site by the gate. Mr Hayes said that what had already been delivered had not all been used and now grass was growing through it. He said that as the small bridge over the river was imminent, this would make collecting it from beside the shed a lot easier.

With no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

(The full version – [to be approved] of AGM report and Accounts will be available for viewing on request at the shop)

Presentation Evening at the Old Copper House Club Friday 17th November

Was extremely well supported and this year especially with a good representation of tenants from our Beehive Hill and Spring Lane sites. Our Town Mayor, Councillor Kate Dixon was in attendance and she was most impressed and surprised that so many children were at the event, perhaps not realising that the Allotments are all about a family community. She passed favourable comments on the excellent buffet, thanks to Madeleine, which once again included chocolate brownies donated by Nick Wood of Crustum Bakery in Priory Road, and also passed complimentary comments on the quality of the raffle. As well as KATA's usual contribution of practical gardening equipment, we also have to thank Chris Saunderson for his continued support in creating another wonderful painting of the Allotments for our raffle table, King's Seeds for their generous donation of 2 x £20 seed vouchers, Sainsbury's for their donation of a £20 grocery voucher and Caroline Wells for her donation of wonderful cosmetics, courtesy of Boots the Chemist. This especially delighted some of our ladies who landed some super top notch designer makeup gifts. Thanks go to anyone else who donated to the raffle table and to everyone who helped in many ways to make the evening run so smoothly, and of course to everyone who came along to support. A surprising number of guests turned out just for the social side, and not necessarily to receive awards, which was really encouraging and very much appreciated. Our thanks go also to The Old Copper House Club who let us use their function room at no cost.

When awarding our Pumpkin Trophy, our Chairman explained the phenomenon of the unusually large winner of the competition this year, weighing in at 168lbs, which was won by Nigel Buckler. A sharp eyed plot holder pointed out that the shape and skin markings indicated that it could be a different variety from the ones grown and supplied by Chris as our competition plants (Mammoth Hundredweight). After sending a photograph to Kings Seeds, this was confirmed to be the case, identifying it as an Atlantic Giant. They said that it could have been a rogue seed in the wrong packet, but interestingly, the Atlantic Giant came about as an offspring of the Mammoth Hundredweight and Howard Dill who discovered it, patented it as 'Dills Atlantic Giant' in 1981. After successive record breaking years, one reached an impressive 2624lbs in 2017. 'We will stick with our Mammoth Hundredweight variety as they fit into a wheelbarrow' declared Chairman Chris!!! Incidentally although Nigel technically grew the heaviest Pumpkin this year, the record holder for our Mammoth Hundredweights is still held by Ian Harris in 1999 at 114 ¾ lbs.

And so into 2018, starting with our Shop Volunteers meeting Weds 17th Jan – and a little bit of maintenance news...

This took place at the Virgins Pub in the old High Street. Vice Chair/Shop Mgr. Pete Hayes report is as follows:

'Well, we seem to have stayed dry at the shop which is far more than I can say for the rest of the plots. Looking down to our plot as I tidied the shop today I wondered how long it would be before we could dig without sinking!

But to happier thoughts and a date for your diaries; The shop will re-open on SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2018. We will be serving tea, coffee, cake and biscuits to all those brave enough to face whatever the British weather might throw at us. The opening hours will be the same as in previous years, 11am – 12pm on Saturday and Sunday in February and October and 10am – 12pm on Saturday and Sunday from March to September.

***We are currently actively seeking new volunteers for the shop to assist our wonderful team that keep the shop open 9 months of the year. If you can help us, please contact us either through the shop or via our email below.**

The toilet will be re-opened as soon as the site water supply is switched back on once the risk of frost damage has passed, so please be prepared for the first few weeks of the new season!!!

If anyone from Spring Lane or Beehive Hill needs a delivery of anything from the shop then do let us know. We have the trailer so bringing compost onto other sites won't be a problem.

Those of you at Odibourne may have noticed the willow coppicing that the maintenance team have been working on recently. In agreement with the Council, we have trimmed alternate trees this year with the intention being to do the other trees next Winter. This should keep them in check whilst keeping a healthy environment for our beautiful wildlife along the Finham Brook. The observant may also have noticed a large sycamore has been felled this Winter after the Council agreed it was dangerous and needed removing. To any of you affected whilst the timber has been on the ground, thank you for your patience; we always try and make any maintenance as low impact as possible but it cannot always be without a little intrusion onto individual plots. The clear up will be completed as soon as we can arrange it.

Keep an eye on news and development on Facebook – KATA Kenilworth – or Twitter @KATAAllotments.

***Contact us on email KATATradingstore@yahoo.com or call Trudy on 07557 965089 or Pete on 07970 891954'**

Dates for your Diary 2018 (our list seems to get longer)!!!

Feb Sun 11th	Shop re-opens. Come along for coffee/tea /cake and biscuits
March 2nd & 3rd and 9th & 10th	Competition Potato and buckets available from the shop
April beginning of	Notices will be displayed advising of inspections starting in May
May beginning of	Plot inspections by Committee will commence on all three sites
June Sat 9th	Lion's Show in the Abbey Fields
June Sun 17th	Open Gardens at Beehive Hill
June Sat 30th	Kenilworth Carnival
July Sun 8th	Potato crop Weigh-in starting at 12.30 by the Trading Shed.
July w/c Mon 9th...	Judging of plots (day to be confirmed)

Aug Mon 13th – 19th	National allotment week.
Aug Tues 14th	Judging of Scarecrows
Aug Sun 19th	Open Day held at Odibourne 2-4pm
Aug Weds 29th	Dates for payment of rent will be displayed (one month's notice)
Aug (end of)	Sunflowers to be measured
Sept Sat 15th & Sun 16th	Rent collecting at Trading Shed by Committee*
Sept Sat 22nd & Sun 23rd	Rent collecting at Trading Shed by Committee*
Sept Sat 29th	Rent collecting at Trading shed by Committee* (LAST DAY)
Oct 1st – 15th	Participation in St Nicholas Harvest Festival. Detail to be discussed
Oct Sun 7th	Pumpkin weigh-in at Engine (starting at 12.30)
Oct Thurs 18th	AGM (Prompt 7.30 start, The Old Copper House Club) Back room
Oct Sun 28th	Shop closes for the season
Oct Sun 28th	Last day for seed orders (Order form to be handed in to Chris at 69 Spring Lane)
Nov Fri 16th	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 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.

News from around our three sites...

This has almost all been covered in our Chairman's report from our AGM in October last year and reported above, but just a brief catch-up to fill in any gaps or follow on news where appropriate is to follow.

Beehive Hill site

Has benefited from new gate posts to the rear of the site. We now also have permission to leave the heavy bollard recessed into the ground by the front gate until such time as the threat of travellers is imminent. It will then have to be raised, but site rep David will keep us all advised. The double locking system on the front gate is a pain but again necessary. We have arranged a fresh woodchip supply to the rear of the site on our car park, so that many of you can top up your paths. Please make payment (£1.00 per barrow load) into the shop at the weekends (from Sun 11th Feb) or into the letter box R/O Lily's (grey box van) shed to the left of track – plot 51 at Odibourne (if you can't get to the shop over the weekends). Anything dropped into the letter box must please be in an envelope and clearly marked with your name and what it is for – purely so that it can be recorded. A quick 'thank you' again to Chris who has recently laid a short run of neglected boundary hedging. This area had missed out on being trimmed, but has now been correctly remedied.

Spring Lane site

Chris has kindly repaired the boundary badger fencing, which was cut into when the recent break-ins occurred, and fresh deliveries of manure as well as wood chippings have also been delivered to the site for your convenience. Payment methods same as before please, but manure is £2.00 per barrow load.

Odibourne site

Thanks first of all to Robin, Chris, Dave and all involved in finishing off the work by the gate at the Engine entrance (including re-surfacing the track) and to Chris who has tenaciously followed up the mysterious patches of running water, leading to soggy plots, an intermittent problem which has been affecting plots 98-101 since around 2014. Severn Trent has finally admitted that it is a mains water leak and that it originates from the Manor Road Flats, so now perhaps the problem can be resolved! Thanks also to Pete and his team for once again sorting out our willows. This will allow light onto our plots, and copious amounts of woodchip are now available! Most of our original delivery arrived through our renewed connection with Jon Holmes at District Council. Payment is as before for both manure and woodchip please. We currently have around 8 or 9 very large slabs up for grabs by the side of the shed. An absolute bargain at £2.00 each – would make superb permanent pathways. We also still have some re-cycled glass at the shop, maybe enough to repair any Winter gale damage? The letter box on Lily's shed can always be used outside shop opening times. The track mowing season is almost upon us once again, but Odibourne has taken another big hit from the moles this Winter, especially around the bridge area. Please, please, please help us by raking over the mole diggings to help flatten them out. These mounds are incredibly damaging to our lawnmower blades! And if you would like to assist Pete with keeping the track well-trimmed, I'm sure he would be grateful for a phone call. We have also had reports of badger activity at Odibourne! Chris has managed to curb their damaging activities at Spring Lane by erecting badger fencing around the perimeter of the site, but this is not possible with our seven acre site at Odibourne, plus it would be too difficult to dig down with all the large tree roots along the site perimeter. Advice from 'Badger Watch' is that badgers do not like strong smells or noise, so it's up to us to take appropriate deterrent action!!! And a final thank-you to Chris who has organised the hedge trimming on all three sites this week – all neat and tidy to start the new season

Events and Competitions...

These will all be posted on our notice boards as usual in plenty of time for those of you who are not into social media, otherwise I think that Trudy may have lots going on for your interest on our Facebook page.

Judging of plots 2018 and Seed Order news...

The following is the tried and tested criteria on which our plots are judged using the original schedule recommended by the National Association. This has been adopted *and* adapted by our Association *and* approved by our judge Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery. Thanks once again to Chris for organising and delivering our seed order from our quality supplier Kings Seeds. All tenants make great savings by ordering through our Association and our collective order made a handsome £250 for our funds.

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

Some other items of interest...

As part of your rent payment, says Chris, £3.00 is your subscription to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. This organisation fights for the rights and interests of Allotment holders. They represent Allotment holder's interests to the media, NGOs, Government departments and Charities. Our membership allows us to use the discounted King's seed scheme and we receive a preferential rate for our public liability insurance. They have a solicitor who provides free advice to Associations on Allotment matters. There is a member's area where you can view their quarterly magazine on line, with voucher codes from various companies. Their website is www.nsalg.org.uk and you can access the member's area with user name b3888 password nsalg12 all in lower case.

Who doesn't like a good bonfire? but please be considerate, says Chris. It must be something deep within our DNA evolving over thousands of years. Well there are neighbours and people with their washing out on the line who don't – some of whom have Town Councillors on speed dial! There is nothing wrong with having a bonfire, it's not illegal providing it's not causing a nuisance. There are guidelines on all our notice boards so please take a look. Try to compost as much as possible and keep woody prunings dry until you are ready to have a fire. Dry material produces a lot less smoke.

Keeping Mobile is what a lovely young plum tree decided to do as it obviously took off on the crest of a wave during the Odibourne floods this year. Rescued by Catherine, it now resides (having been re-potted) on our fund-raising plot. Please let Lily know if you have lost one and it can be returned.

A shortage of plants this year for our fund-raising days might just be on the cards as we no longer have the luxury of all the lovely split clumps of plants from Annie and Jane's (gardening) customers which they donated to our fund raising plot to be further split and potted on. If you are thinning down and splitting clumps of plants in your gardens at home this Spring, please remember that we can make good use of your cast offs!

Kenilworth Footpaths Preservation Group have just published their latest booklet, which will be on sale from 17th February in our shop, priced at £6.00

And finally... Last year, your Committee agreed that in order to open up further channels of communication with tenants, we should offer another option and allocate part of our Committee meetings to those wishing to come along and air their views on Allotment matters. Alternatively, a suggestion box is being designed by Catherine, and this will reside inside the Shop. Other than that, please use any of the other methods of communication described in this newsletter – and if all else fails – please just talk (nicely) to us!!! Have a good gardening season,

Lily

