



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



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2018

What a perfect day to start a newsletter! It's pouring down with rain outside and the temperature has dropped to a chilling 14 degrees, and that feels like freezing to me (typical Bank Holiday weekend weather in other words) and after such a glorious long spell of hot wall to wall sunshine!

So looking back briefly this year, once again we've had to cope with every kind of weather that has been thrown at us. The met office entertained us at the beginning of the year with some new expressions such as the 'Beast from the East', and enlightened us about 'snow bombs'. Then following on from snow and very low temperatures we endured what seemed like an eternity of rainfall, which prevented any of us from getting onto our plots. Even farmers predicted that crop planting was at least a month behind and that some crops would be scarce. And when the Summer finally did arrive, it brought with it a heatwave and no rain at all for another couple of months. We've all finished up with cracked parched ground and yet the weeds have overtaken the crops in some places, mare's tail becoming rampant! And as was predicted earlier in the year, we now face food shortages including beef and dairy with some prices predicted go up by as much as 80%. So let's be grateful for what we have on our plots, and **waste nothing!**

So, newsletters unfortunately have to bring some sad news to our attention at times and we were informed earlier in the year of the death of Alan Savage from our Odibourne site. Alan had been poorly for some time but was always upbeat in his outlook and never complained despite his prognosis. Alan was one of the founder members of the present management Committee when the Allotments became self-managed back in 1983, the very first Committee meeting independent of Kenilworth Town Council taking place on 20th March at the Royal British Legion Club. There were only 7 members on the Committee at that time and with that small brave army of volunteers they set up the basis and foundation of self-management, the principles of which are now by and large still followed today. On that first Agenda was the following: 1. *Fix Allotment rents* 2. *Elect officers ie Secretary and Treasurer* 3. *Bank Account (to be opened)* 4. (a) *Method of rent collection* 4.(b) *Letting procedure*

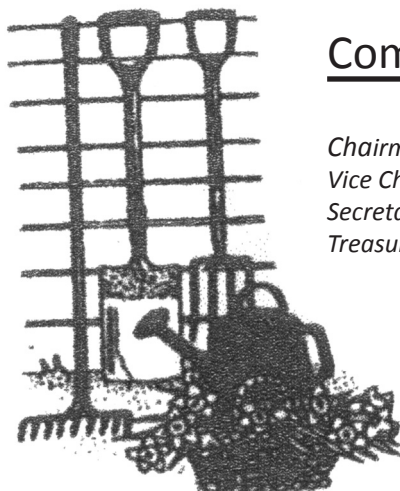
5. *Allotment rules* and 6. *Insurance*. Alan was an integral part of this planning and I always remember and looked up to him from when I was first invited onto the Committee back in 1994, that he would listen quietly, digest the information and then offer words of wisdom and everything he said made sense. He was never argumentative, negative or aggressive, always kind and helpful in a practical way to everyone and gave his time generously... a man of great qualities and sadly missed, not only from a committee point of view but by all of his surrounding neighbours and others who came into contact with him on site. Our condolences go to his widow Jackie who is doing an excellent job with the upkeep of the plot.

Committee News:

Our Committee has expanded from that original 7 to 11 over the years due to all the extra activities and assets we now have, and has remained largely the same this year with the exception of Dave Harwood. Dave retired from his Allotment, but has asked to remain on Committee as a 'Friend of KATA' and as such will still be welcome at meetings and take good care of our electrical requirements and of course help out at Open Day with our Pimms Tent! In fact Dave has just re-wired the shed for us, and for that we are most grateful – Thanks Dave, and do have another Pimms!!! **Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary**

Another busy year

As I said earlier, we became independent from Town Council in 1983 and when I first joined the Committee in 1994, (at the point where the Committee were almost thinking of handing back self – management) we had virtually no money in the bank. We had empty plots and no waiting list to fill them, as allotments were not particularly fashionable or in demand at that time. Our rents simply just covered our outgoings which included rent to our landlords at Town Council. Other than putting rents up, we had to think of raising funds by other means to survive. At the risk of repeating myself, I remember one year, our then Committee debating fiercely whether we could afford to put celery on the buffet at our Presentation Evening



Committee members

			Plot / Site
<i>Chairman</i>	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Pete Hayes	851382	15b 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 Odibourne
	Paula Hallam	856480	44 Odibourne
	Dave Harwood	07785 991291	
	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

– funds *were* that tight! Our first venture into fund-raising was introduced by John Dixon (then Secretary) and this was the Pumpkin competition which raised in the region of £30 from the sale of young pumpkin plants and this was the start of pulling ourselves up by the bootstraps so to speak. Over the years, we became more ambitious and started putting on events such as our Open Days and participating in the Lions Shows. These events were clearly successful and are now amongst our main fund raisers along with the shop and recycling of sheds, greenhouses and old tools when plots change hands. This year has been no exception and with the weather being kind to us, together with support from our tenants who volunteer willingly and the public who are loyal, coming back year after year, it all adds to our success as one of our Town Council's main assets. We now have a healthy bank balance and all our moneys raised are ploughed back into improving the facilities on all of our sites.

In recent years the Open Day and Lion's Show events have been headed up by Paula and have been streamlined to perfection including this year's Open Day when the tea tent was removed from the 'rocky road' side of the river. Not though without some sense of apprehension being expressed by many of isolating the Lower Ladyes Hills side of the site and blocking the views of plots and scarecrows and narrowing the track if the tea tent was placed in the 'T' junction at the bottom of 'The Close' side of the track. Fortunately it was re-thought and placed off track in the grassy area of plot 39a and all fears were allayed when this turned out to be the best option, neither blocking any passage nor views of scarecrows nor access to plots (and the public amazingly still visited the other side of the river). So well done to everyone in the team who contributed both with their time and additional fundraising ideas.

And the stars of the show.....

No, no, no, not the Mayors (we had two of them, Councillor Hitchins from Kenilworth and Councillor Heather Calver from Leamington), and not even our lovely Carnival Queen, Amelia Robinson, but our wonderful Scarecrows of course! Some have said that this years have been the best ever. Our judge, Kenilworth's Town Clerk Maggie Field had something to say on the subject:

'Following our tour of all three KATA Allotment sites, to judge the annual Scarecrow Competition, I was once again dazzled by the extremely high standard of entries. The skill in growing the produce on the Allotments was closely matched by the wit, creativity and ingenuity of Scarecrow design and construction! 2018 delivered film and TV characters, a politician, suffragettes, sportsmen, a pirate, and in addition to original designs recycling materials including a door, electronic parts, and general gardening implements and supplies. It is such a tough call to choose winners when the designs are so diverse and topical'. Maggie Field, Kenilworth Town Clerk.

Our thanks go to Maggie and to Martyn who also joined us on the circuit taking photos for our certificates. All scarecrows (their creators) will receive certificates in recognition of their participation and creative hard work.

Our winners in all categories were:

Childrens:

Amelia, Daniel & Elliot Baynton 10a Odi 4 candles

Adult Traditional:

Clare Spruce & Gary Holmes 42 Odi Guardian of the Allotments

Adult Novelty:

Nigel Wells 74 Odi Wizard of Oz

Secretary's Chuckle Award:

John Gardiner 56a Odi Boris – Apology

And our Open Day at Beehive Hill.....

Was also a huge success, mainly down to Madeleine's organisation. A record amount was taken at the Beehive Hill site this year at their Open Day, which was held in conjunction with The National Gardens Scheme, who inspire people to open their gardens for Charity and thousands of pounds are raised from all around the country. Madeleine liaises with the organisers and motivates our tenants into action with an early morning rhubarb raid (a big 'thankyou' to all who agreed to contribute to this), plus a plant stall and a rota of tenants on the gate taking money from our visitors (we had 200 of the total 620 visitors through our gates)! All of the takings from the visitors through our gates were donated to the NGS Charities but our plant sales, (again a record breaking £95), went towards KATA's own funds. As usual, we had many compliments about the site. The whole day, which included 8 other local gardens raised over £8,000 for charity. This included matched funding from an anonymous business donor. Thanks to Madeleine and all the team at Beehive Hill for their efforts

Staying active within the Community....

This is most important for many reasons including raising the profile of the Allotments, and we have further examples of doing just that. In years past, we have hosted visits from many schools involved in learning projects, simply bringing their school curriculum to life, the Heart of England Organic Society, who hilariously witnessed one of our older tenants emerging from the undergrowth with a backpack full of weed killer (both bad timing and just slightly embarrassing, but I suspect that they also could see the funny side of it)! plus Warwick Museum who worked on a project with us to lay down some of the history of our Allotments and WDC Ecology department who logged the slow-worm population at Odibourne. This year alone, we have had visits from groups of young children including our resident Brownie groups, who have been involved in both creative and educational projects all nature related. Another visitor was John Owen, Chairman of the Warwick Horticultural and Allotment Assoc. For these more recent visits we have to thank Trudy who has given her time generously to organise and host them.

The Beehive Hill site has also hosted annual visits from year 1 pupils at St Augustine's School which have been organised by Madeleine with the help of Judith Walmesly. I only learnt this week that Madeleine treats the little ones to **cake and strawberries!** Many thanks to Madeleine and Judith, but next time can we all come along for cake and strawberries please?!!!

Keeping up a high standard....

This is so important if we are to open our gates to the public and we are pretty certain that holding our annual 'Best Plot Competition' contributes to that. You can always tell the plot holders who've put in that bit of extra effort. Well done also to everyone who came close runners up.

Our winners in the four categories were:

Main Competition:

1st Chris Coton 3a S/Lane

Highly Commended:

1st = Madeleine Sexton 16 B/Hill

1st = Caroline Rowe 24 Odi

Novices:

Louise & Clive Baynton 10 Odi

Award for Special Achievement:

Monique & David Morris 78 Odi

We owe a vote of thanks to Sue and Robin Ashby, who kindly stepped in to pre select some of the best plots for our

judge Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery. This difficult task was previously performed by Alan Savage, who despite leaving the Committee some years ago, still helped us out in this area. Following Alan's death earlier in the year, Robin and Sue kindly agreed to step in to take on this enormously important task. Sarah completed the judging under extreme heat conditions and for this we are most grateful as we are to Robin and Sue, who's only complaint was that plots were insufficiently numbered. I repeat this every year...**Please number your plot.**

And just for the fun of it.....

A big thanks once again to Caroline Faulkner who organised the increasingly popular '**Heaviest crop of Potatoes grown in a Bucket Competition!**

And the combined big winners and little winners were:

1st Martin Poole	9 Odi	(2076g)
2nd Marie & Hector	7b Odi	(1910g)
3rd Marie & Connor	7b Odi	(1783g)

So now we need even more help from our tenants...

You may have seen the whiteboard on the track this year asking for help on our Educational/Fundraising plot/Wildlife plot. We've had some good response to this and Trudy has generously co-ordinated some of the tasks needed to help get the plot tidied up and keep it ticking over. For this we have to thank a small band of willing volunteers. However, more volunteers of help are needed so that all the hard work doesn't fall on the same shoulders every time, and that is the reason for the **beautifully designed flyer** Trudy has produced to distribute within this newsletter. Although we ask new tenants to tick various boxes when they take on their allotments and we try to get them updated at rent taking time, it would be great if Trudy and Pete could have first-hand information for help in the shop, with deliveries, maintenance, events and now some help with the fundraising plot. **Please tick an area/areas where you think you can help out. These can be returned either via the shop or through the post box behind Lily's shed on plot 51 Odibourne site, or email your availability to us,** whichever is most convenient.

So how did the Fundraising plot evolve?....

I was asked recently for the history of how/why/when the Fund-raising plot first started and I will relate it as briefly as possible. It was created just over 10 years ago out of desperation to regain my own plot back to grow my own crops! Each year, when our Open Day was imminent, I would put out a call for plants to be donated. People were generous and plants landed on my plot, in my greenhouse or cold frame simply because there was no other collection point and it was easy for me to take care of them close by. When I realised how well we were doing at our Lions Shows, I grew plants, trays of runner beans, took cuttings and generally used my own plot, greenhouse and cold frame for propagation for the benefit of the Association. My own plot gradually became overcrowded, the greenhouse became dangerous and a trip hazard and I was using my own soil to pot up newly produced plants. Soon the soil level at the bottom of my plot started to dip! So when the tenants on the two half plots two down from me decided to vacate in fairly close succession, I collared them with Committee approval and set up what you see now on plot 53, the Educational part of it with raised beds giving something back to the Community and our Fund-raising plot primarily producing masses of rhubarb, which we had discovered was a firm favourite of the people of Kenilworth. I made it known to Committee that the plot was not for me, but for **anyone** to

use to grow anything that would sell at our fund-raising days, but no-one else took advantage of it. So I just continued happily enjoying every minute until recently when health problems have taken their toll.

I don't think that anyone wants to see the fund raising plot disappear, but we do need more help now especially with the maintenance. It's a valuable asset and the rhubarb alone brings us in around £100 a year!!! **So please tick that box on the flyer if you would like to be involved in either helping to keep the fund raising plot going or indeed at any of our Fund Raising Events!**

Another Valuable Asset

Is our shop and Vice Chairman/Shop Managers Pete and Trudy, report positively on its continued success. As mentioned earlier, it has just been re-wired by Dave, and Pete is now in the process of clearing out and re-arranging stock. He said that this year has been a bit slow (maybe due to the difficult weather patterns) and there will be one or two price rises, but these will all be labelled up ready for the new season. There has been a big demand for more Manure and this is now on order and hopefully should have been delivered to us by the time this newsletter reaches you. Apologies for the delay with this but the farmer has been difficult to reach. Trudy says that the shop rota is running smoothly, but more volunteers are always needed, both for the rota and unloading delivery of stock to the shop. **So please, once again..... tick the boxes on the flyer.** Also please be mindful that the shop as in previous years will operate on reduced hours from 6th October until it closes down for the Winter on Sunday 28th October.. These hours will be from 11am until noon each weekend throughout October. The shop will re-open again on 16th February 2019, So stock up now with enough compost to start your early seed sowing for next year!!!

Apple Press trials...

Will be taking place during September and October from the shop. Dates for these are: September 9th, about mid-day, September 15th & 16th and October 20th & 21st, 10am – mid-day. Please bring your own bottles.

Maintenance over the three sites

Is a huge job and usually falls to the same few. Our thanks go to those who have helped us this year, but we still need to have more volunteers who are prepared to help out on any of the sites.

And just one last time... **Please tick the box on the flyer if you can help with Maintenance and return as directed.**

If you would prefer to email your details to offer your help with any of the above, Shop Rota. Maintenance of sites, Fund-raising Plot, Events or Deliveries, (whether already helping or not), you may do so at: katatradingstore@yahoo.com.

And last but not least in this section, we are eternally grateful to Richard, who is always willing to sort our plumbing problems out for us. And also to Viv who chases our moles humanely from our tracks when they emerge. Thank-you both and to everyone else who helps out generally!

And yet another New Project this year.....

You may have noticed that we have some super new raised beds just past the shop on entering by the School Lane gates. These are shortly to be used by our wheelchair tenant Ronnie, who was originally a tenant at our Beehive Hill site, and so is already an experienced Allotment gardener, but access was particularly difficult for him over there and so when he was offered another plot at the Odibourne site, he

was delighted. We still have to acquire some more organic matter to lighten the soil in the raised beds and arrange a more accessible water point for him. Our thanks to Pete/Trudy and Chris for making this facility come to life.

It's almost the end of our Allotment year (29th September) and Rents are due.....

The new season's Seed catalogues will be distributed as Rents are paid...

And you will be asked to check that we have your correct contact details on our database.....

Once again your Committee are making themselves available for rent-collecting at the Odibourne site at the shop on the following dates:

15th and 16th September	10am – 12 noon
22nd and 23rd September	10am – 12noon
29th September	10am – 12noon

Please remember that a late payment fine of £5.00 will be added to your rent if payment has not been received by September 29th. Should you have holiday commitments during that period or cannot make any of the above dates for whatever reason, please contact Lily on 855291 or 07768 525007 or drop your rent through Lily's letter box on site (51 Odi) or through the door at 51 Beehive Hill (cheques preferable please)

Please, do not ask our shop volunteers to take your rent

Reminder of the amounts due: Odibourne site £30 (1/2 plots £15), Beehive Hill £25 (one exception, 26a £12.50). Spring Lane site rents are traditionally collected on their own site and Chris will be available on the Sundays of 16th & 23rd Sept. to facilitate this. Individual amounts due for Spring Lane tenants are posted on the notice boards on site.

Sunflowers, sunflowers, oh so tall, Who is the tallest of us all?....

And this year's winners are:

1st Martin Poole	9 Odi	384 cms
2nd Ivan Morrow	60 Odi	351 cms
3rd Gill and Glen Hutchinson	73 Odi	323 cms

Well done to all!

Dates still in the Diary.....

Sunday October 7th Pumpkin Weigh-in at The Engine Inn

Starting at 12.30. Also, if you are holding any cups, shields or trophies, this would be an ideal time to return them to us for re-engraving. Bring along your pumpkins to be weighed, or just come along and socialise and join in the fun. *(Please note that only pumpkins bought as young plants from the shop are eligible for the Competition)*

Sunday 30th September BBQ for Volunteers 12 noon 'til 4pm just to show our appreciation for all your help.

Thursday 18th October AGM – 7.30 prompt

PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE....

This year, after a tradition spanning exactly 35 years of using the Royal British Legion for business meetings, our AGM will be held at The Abbey Club, 4 Abbey Hill. (There is car parking at the rear accessible from Priory Road via a track by the zebra crossing). Committee are currently working on a new 'Constitution' and will be putting forward an amendment to the house-rules with regard to dogs.

Sunday 28th October Shop closes for the season

Sunday 28th October Last day for seed orders (Order form to be handed in to Chris at 69 Spring Lane (the house right next to the Allotments))

Friday 16th November Presentation Evening at The Old Copper House Club 7pm for 7.30 start.

Shop Volunteers meeting To be decided... some time in February 2019, those involved will be advised by email

February 16th 2019 Shop re-opens

And just a few 'Advisory notes' to round off with....

- Earlier in the Year, one of our tenants had an accident on site and cut her foot. It made us think about some safety advice for our tenants and putting our heads together with this tenant, we would offer the following suggestions.
 1. We have a first aid kit in our shop, but this may not always be accessible if no Committee members are on site. It would therefore make sense if all tenants had a basic first aid kit within their own sheds
 2. Please wear sensible shoes when on the Allotments (unfortunately our tenant had just changed out of her tough gardening shoes)
 3. Please be sure that your tetanus jabs are up to date, especially children
- We recently had some unwelcome young visitors on site, giving abuse and stealing raspberries from multiple plots. Should you witness anything like this, please make a note of the day and time and report it to Vice Chairman Pete Hayes. We may have caught them on camera and therefore be able to identify them
- Noise from machinery on the Allotments at Odibourne was a recent cause of complaint from a neighbouring resident on Lower Ladyes Hills. A reminder that no machinery is to be started before 8am Monday to Saturday and not before 10am on a Sunday. It is left to the discretion of our tenants what time to cease operating machinery in the evening, but it is hoped that a responsible approach be taken with regard to consideration for young children trying to get to sleep in the evenings
- Our toilet facility has been invaluable, but some of you may not yet have used this facility and do not know the code. This is simply 2 4 6 8, then depress the button under the padlock to release. Please don't forget to lock it up again after use, and with respect for the next tenant, leave it as clean as you would wish to find it yourselves. However, the toilet will be out of bounds over the Winter when the water is turned off on site.
- Has someone out there still got our post thumper? We lent it out, but it has not been returned!!!

And finally.....

Next year we celebrate our 100th birthday. If you read some of the story boards around the site at Odibourne, which Chairman Chris thoughtfully put up for our visitors on Open Day, then you will be more informed about our history. (Thanks also to Martyn for the research he did on this subject for us whilst on Committee). Chairman Chris already has a few ideas of how we can celebrate this wonderful achievement next year, but if you can help us with any more ideas or suggestions, we'd love to hear from you.

