



# KENILWORTH ALLOTMENT TENANTS ASSOCIATION

K.A.T.A.

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021



I have to confess that as I start this newsletter with my usual belated 'Happy new year to all and sundry' I don't exactly feel full the joys of Spring with yet another lockdown having been imposed – although should be grateful at the very least to still be around and as yet in good health!

Storm Christoph arrived, and on top of an already waterlogged site contributed to some moderate flooding at Odibourne, and although the recent fall of snow enhanced by bright sunshine reflected brilliantly, lifting the spirits, the inevitable thaw plus yet more rain, has led to another flood, adding further delay until we can get onto our plots once again. It's already been soggy underfoot for weeks, so please do not attempt to take any vehicles onto any site and do please enter all sites in suitable good grip footwear as one or two tenants have recently slipped heavily even on the main tracks, one almost putting his arm through his greenhouse in order to try to save himself, plus we don't want any broken bones either!

My first thank-you this year goes to the dozen or so tenants who have kindly distributed this newsletter to you all, as they have used their exercise allowance whilst out walking in order to do so (each within the permitted radius of their homes I might add)! It was always our policy to involve as many tenants in the running of the Association in as many ways as possible, and keeping members well informed is vital to any organisation, so once again, a big thank-you to ALL of those distributors. And a big thank-you also to Martyn Partridge, who does the layout and printing of it. This twice yearly publication, was first launched way back in 1990 by Deb Bennett's late husband Roger, and is just a gentle means of touching base with you all now, as

with newer technology, we also have a brimming and informative website kept well up to date by Nick Wood as well as monthly newsflashes from the shop team via email to keep us up to date with any relevant news and of course Facebook and the notice boards.

Sadly, we lost two of our most dear tenants from Odibourne this year, Priscilla Barratt, plots 47b & 56b and Ronnie Harris from plot 2a. Our deepest condolences go to their families.

Please contact any of our team (*see below*) at any time, as we are here to deal with any problems, which may affect your plots/membership, and if you wish to report any incidents on site, which are of a sensitive nature, your comments will be treated with the utmost confidence.

So here's to what's going to be another challenging Year – let's all face it with Well washed hands, Masks where necessary, **(with a mandatory big cheesy smile underneath)** and lots of space!!!

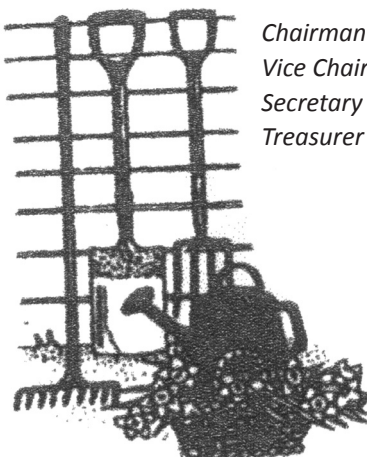
*Lily Brownjohn , Allotment Secretary*

And so to a brief round-up of events since last Autumn's newsletter incorporating some trials, tribulations, traumas and triumphs (We won't mention the tears and tantrums)!

### ***As lockdown was eased during 2020...***

Your Committee tried to operate as normally as was safely possible, given the circumstances. We managed a couple of Committee meetings outdoors, socially distanced, by the side of the shed, but towards the end of the year had to abandon those due to the fall in temperature. Chattering teeth wouldn't have made interesting reading amongst the rest of the minutes!

## Committee members



			<b>Plot/Site:</b>
<i>Chairman</i>	Chris Coton	513268	3a Spring Lane
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Pete Hayes	07970 891954	60 Odibourne
<i>Secretary</i>	Lily Brownjohn	855291 or 07768 525007	51 Odibourne
<i>Treasurer</i>	Philip Jordan	733407	37a Odibourne
	Ann Barry	857240 or 07799 564451	70b Odibourne
	Paula Hallam	07763 129678	44 Odibourne
	David Hoy	07770 652874	20 Beehive Hill
	Peter Jones	853930	18b Odibourne

***Committee may also be contacted through our email address  
katatradingstore@yahoo.com***

***Items of interest for the Website to: KenilworthAllotments.org***

***Facebook Kenilworth Allotments***

***Or contact the Secretary direct: Email: lilybrownjohn@btopenworld.com***

**And so 2020 started winding down...** With the usual rent payments at the end of September for the following Allotment year. These were taken at the shop as usual, with social distancing in operation, and as I understand it, were executed more efficiently as payment by card was enabled. Database details were updated where relevant and everyone was happy! (Please note that cash and cheque payments will still be accepted by the shop). I am happy to say that only a small number of tenants had to be chased for late rents together with a fine!!!

**Sheds, sheds, and yet more sheds...** With the Autumn now in full swing, yet the still warm sunshine drenching the Odibourne site, (remember those days), this was an ideal time to take some exceptional photographs of its vast array of sheds!!! And why not? With fruiting vines or heavily scented climbing roses and honeysuckle adorning the plainest of sheds, to old oak panelled 'sentry box' styled sheds hiding away in the hedgerows, what better structures could adorn our treasured plots!

This idea had certainly occurred to our local historian and author, Peter James. Many of you will recall having had conversations with him on site as he excitedly explored with his camera. But what a task! He eventually photographed most of our sheds, and many of you sent him amusing or even poignant stories relating to them. What is most amazing is that Peter did a wonderful job combining both photographs and the history of our site, within a beautiful little book entitled '**Odibourne Sheds**' that will remain in the archives for ever. How lucky are we? The book was written and dedicated as a memorial to his father, who had an allotment at Odibourne in the 30's/ 40's and Peter has asked that the proceeds from the sale of the books, (the 100 which he kindly donated to the Association), be put towards something practical and functional on site. My proposal was therefore that the proceeds should be allocated towards our next project, the little footbridge over the river, planned for completion this Spring (weather and ground conditions permitting), and dedicated to his father... Alfred (Jim) James, who was a Henry Street sub-postmaster and former Town Councillor.

And so finally, the delightful little books went into print... just in time for Christmas, absolutely lovely, some I understand travelling half way across the world sent as gifts for some of our grown up children.

As priority for distribution of our personal supply, it was offered firstly to those who had submitted little stories relating to their sheds, and then followed by the owners of the rest of the sheds featured. Distribution was fairly time consuming as the first job was to identify all of the sheds displayed (thanks to Ann Barry for help with that). Next job was to contact the shed owners! Due to its popularity, our limited supply of books quickly ran out and so some remaining tenants with their sheds featured had to be

referred to the Kenilworth bookshop in Talisman Square, **who I understand have had to order a re-print – it was that popular!**

Collection from plot 51 at Odibourne (as our own shop was by this time closed for the season) was organised on a staggered basis to avoid any 'gatherings', and I thank those who accepted the rather blunt invitation to 'grab and go'!!! All books were released on an IOU basis and payment will be due mid-February at our own shop when it re-opens.

**To reserve your copy from The Bookshop in Talisman Square, please ring 01926 855784**

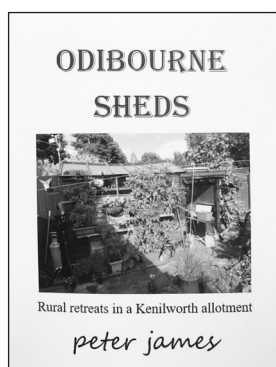
**Mid October and the AGM...** Sadly fell casualty to Covid. Obviously it couldn't be held indoors as gatherings were not permissible, and the weather being so unreliable at that time of year made it impossible to plan ahead for an outdoor meeting, so the AGM was put on hold. A zoom meeting was considered, but that, due to a number of reasons, would have meant that some regular attendees might not have been included. Guidance from our National Association stated that communal benefit societies be given until the end of March 2021 to hold their AGM's, but that information may well be reviewed again at that time. We are currently looking at planning for an outdoor meeting as soon as restrictions and the weather will allow. When things improve and a date can be set, there will be plenty of notice given on the website and notice boards.

**End of October and the Shop finally closed for the season – or did it?...** One slightly drizzly Sunday in December, there was a brief but busy re-opening for anyone who wanted to purchase any small items suitable for Christmas presents, (*nothing at all to do with the fact that free mulled wine and mince pies were on offer!*)

**Our Presentation Evening...** Also fell casualty to Covid, and so we were left with roughly 46 certificates and 11 cups and trophies to be individually distributed to our talented, fun loving and well deserving tenants.

This turned out to be a very rewarding task with many appreciative comments and thank you cards received from amongst our winners. One young man said that he had never won anything before in his life, and was quite emotional when he was handed his trophy and certificate over the doorstep, albeit not with the usual ceremony imparted by the presence of the Mayor! Some awards include small monetary prizes and when one lady was the recipient of hers, she said that she would be donating it to the local Food Bank. This extremely kind gesture on her part sparked an idea, which I hope you will all be happy with.

As we had not spent our usual allowance on catering for the Presentation evening this year due to the exceptional circumstances which led to it's cancellation, I put it to the Committee that we donate roughly what it would have cost to provide our buffet, to our local Foodbank and without a second thought, they agreed. This was donated on behalf of everyone at KATA, and so we have spread a



little more of our good will around this year to those in our community in need of a little extra help.

**Our end of year King's seed order...** Was humungous!!! The total value of our order was an amazing £3700 to include veg, flowers, potatoes, sundries and plants. As you know, we receive a percentage kick-back on our total spend which this year amounted to an impressive £573!

Apologies were sent to us from Kings Seeds, as with Covid safety rules and regulations, they were forced to work with smaller teams which led to a slightly later than usual delivery date. On top of that, their orders had doubled. So, apologies again on their behalf for that slight delay. Several of you did ring to query whether you had missed out on your order, but you should all have received your basic seed orders by now courtesy of Chris, who was chauffeured by Nick to your front doors (Spuds, some plants and sundries will possibly arrive a little after your main seed order). Thanks once again to Chris for collating those orders and despatching them so efficiently to you all at home, and thank you to all who supported the seed scheme.

**So Christmas came and went...** Hope you all had a good one! If you didn't hear our Christmas carol rendition to the nation via our KATAPOD, then please have a listen. Tune in via our website! Definitely to be missed. (Sorry – that should have read NOT to be missed!!!)

**News from our shop...** Many of you will know by now that the shop will re-open on Saturday February 13th. The opening hours have been simplified and it will now open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10am until noon from mid-February throughout the year until the end of the season (end of October).

During the pandemic, shopping was made simpler out of necessity using a click and collect system, and delivery to your plot was available. Payment was made at the shop and card payment was introduced. To further streamline business, **You can now order and pay on line** and delivery can still be made to your plot. For precise details of this new facility, please go to our website (address on the front page) and follow the links. You will see a list of all stock available and the instructions on how to order and pay will be made clear. Please note that although a card facility is now available for making payments and ordering on line, cash and cheques are also still acceptable at the shop.

Whilst we are still in lockdown, our usual band of shop volunteers will not be called upon and the shop will be manned as last year with just the usual small team, who have once again stepped up to keep the shop operational. We are most grateful to Pete, Trudy and Paula for their dedication in this respect.

Please be observant of the current Covid legislation with regard to wearing masks, which as you know, is now mandatory in **all shops**, and this includes our site shop. We are under an obligation to comply with the stringent conditions within the horticultural Trades Association guidance for garden centres. Notices will be displayed at the shop accordingly.

**\*As mentioned earlier, many of you will have IOU's outstanding for the shed books, which were distributed in December. Just a reminder that payment for these is now due (£6.50 per book please)\***

**Site Maintenance...** Once again, we owe a vote of thanks to Pete and Chris for both the river pollarding/tree maintenance and hedge cutting towards the end of last year and over the Winter. Work parties have been difficult to arrange due to social distancing, so Pete's teenage sons were roped in at one stage. Our thanks also go to them. Pete says the chipper will be round shortly to dispose of the branches, some of which are laid on tenant's plots. You are advised to stay well clear whilst the chipper is in action!

### **Our Dates for the Diary...**

As I said in my last newsletter, most of last year's dates were shot to pieces, but we still have to think positively and with that in mind, **Event organiser, Paula Hallam** has asked that anyone, past helpers or new volunteers, **please contact her directly on 07763 129678 if you would still like to be/or get involved.** The more hands, the lighter the work, and it is great fun. **Help is always needed with our Open Days, Lions Show and Carnival as well as any other events we participate in that are in line with the Allotment Ethos.**

**What follows is purely based on seasonally appropriate timing. Many dates/events may be subject to change, cancellation or re-scheduling due to the current restrictions with the Covid situation:**

<b>Sat 13th Feb</b>	<b>Shop re-opens</b> for new season 10-12 noon
<b>Mar Sat 13/Sun14th</b>	<b>Competition Potato &amp; Buckets</b> available from shop (during shop trading hours)
<b>Mar Sat 20/Sun21st</b>	<b>As above</b>
<b>May (beginning of)</b>	<b>Plot inspections</b> by Committee will commence across all three sites, but please remember that should you need help due to sickness or extenuating circumstances, we do need to be told. Allowances can be made.
<b>June ....</b>	<b>Lions Show</b> At the time of writing this, the date is still under discussion (is traditionally 2nd Sat in June) but there is a strong possibility that the event may be moved to later in the year. We will inform you all as soon as we receive firm details.
<b>June Sun 20th</b>	<b>NGS Kenilworth Gardens Open Day</b> Totally dependent on whether we can do it safely (Open day at our Beehive Hill site). <b>If</b> we do go ahead, there will be a rhubarb raid on the day. Any surplus plants will be welcome for our plant stall. Please contact Site rep David Hoy or Madeleine (plot 16). Keep an eye on the notice boards, but David will keep Beehive tenants informed!
<b>June Sat 26th</b>	<b>Kenilworth Carnival</b> Although this date is published on their website, we will have to wait until nearer the time for any confirmation or otherwise!
<b>July Sun 4th</b>	<b>Potato crop weigh-in</b> at the shed 12.30pm
<b>July w/c Mon 12th</b>	<b>Judging of plots</b> by Sarah Ridgeway from Hintons Nursery. Cut-off date for the pre-selection of plots will be announced via the Notice boards nearer the time.

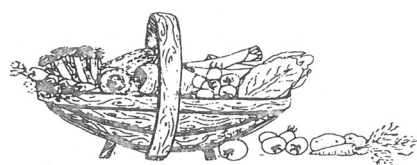


<b>Aug 9th – 15th</b>	<b>National Allotment week</b> This year's theme: 'Shared Harvest'
<b>Aug 15th OR 29/29th</b>	<b>Open Day</b> To be decided. Traditionally held on the last Sunday during Nat. Allotment week, but last year's event was put back to Bank Holiday weekend
<b>Aug 10th or 24th</b>	<b>Judging of Scarecrows</b> Judging may be put back in relation to the Open Day event to ensure pristine condition of our lovely Scarecrows!!! We will let you know in plenty of time. Don't forget we now have four categories to enter – Traditional, Topical, Novelty and Childrens!
<b>August end of</b>	<b>Measuring of Sunflowers</b>
<b>Sept 18th/19th</b>	<b>Rent collecting at Shed</b> (during shop opening hours)
<b>Sept 25th 26th</b>	<b>Rent collecting at Shed (Last possible date for payment is Sept 29th...</b> If you can't get to the shop, please use Lily's letter box. <b>Rents not received by cut-off date 29th Sept will incur a £5 late payment fine.</b>
<b>Oct Sun 10th</b>	<b>Pumpkin Weigh-in</b> Normally held outside The Engine Inn with a complimentary light lunch provided, as landlord Andy Bear sponsors this event, <b>but</b> if current restrictions are still in force, the weigh-in will be held as last year, outside the Shed when shop closes
<b>Oct Thurs 14th</b>	<b>AGM</b> This would be the appropriate date if everything resembled 'normal'. However, date and venue to be discussed nearer the time, and all will be advised
<b>Oct 30th/31st</b>	<b>Shop closing</b> for the end of season
<b>Oct Sun 31st</b>	<b>Deadline for Kings seed orders.</b> Note, these can now either be handed in and paid for through the shop or delivered directly to Chris at 69 Spring Lane – next to the Spring Lane Allotments
<b>Nov Sat 21st</b>	<b>Presentation Evening</b> – May or may not happen!!!

**Asbestos free at last...** Another legacy from days gone by was that one or two sheds were still clad in asbestos panels! Thanks to Chris, these have now all been identified, safely removed and professionally disposed of. We now have asbestos free sites. Yeah!!! Another big thank-you to Chris

**News from the National Association...** If anyone is interested in attending the West Midlands Quarterly meeting via Zoom, you are invited to join them on 13th Feb at 2pm. A speaker (Pauline Harper) will precede the meeting with a talk on Winter vegetables for the kitchen. For the Zoom link, please contact [johnmcnab2010@gmail.com](mailto:johnmcnab2010@gmail.com) There is space for 100 attendees

**Allium Leaf Miner...** This little bug (first noted in Poland in 1858) has lately become a significant pest on Allotment sites and has in recent years become more destructive, yielding our crops of leeks rather sad and spindly looking. I have written to the National Allotments Society to see if any of their experts can offer advice, but



as yet have had no response. Ann Barry has recommended a good article explaining the pest and life cycle. Go to <https://www.allotment-garden.org/vegetable/leeks-growing/allium-leaf-miner/> Incidentally, the best leeks on the Odibourne site have been produced by Pete Longworth on plot 59!

**Here's some helpful advice from our Chairman** – 'I have found that growing F1 varieties, keeping them weed free, and good soil fertility results in bigger leeks able to withstand attack. Reducing the population will help to control the problem and we can work together by covering the plants with Aphid netting. The lifecycle of the fly means it emerges in the Spring from over wintered crops, so if we use up our leeks before the end of February, this may help to break the cycle. The pupae are like brown grains of rice in tunnels in the outer leaves. These can hatch out from any plant material put on the compost heap, so removing infected material from site to your green bin will also help.' **Chris**

**Bonfires – and a further request from our Chairman...** 'Last year, I made a sympathetic plea to reduce the number of bonfires. I received grateful thanks from residents who have complained in the past. Plot holders have also benefited when working their allotment not having to endure smoke from other potholder's bonfires. Plant material will decompose eventually making organic matter that our soil needs. Woody material can be stacked to create habitats for ground beetles which feed on slugs. The roots of perennial weeds can be put in the green bins at home. As lockdown continues and activity increases in the Spring, can I ask you to consider if your bonfire is really necessary?' **Chris**

**What 3 Words:** There has been a lot of publicity about this recently, and if you can possibly get the App for your phone, it could save your life. Would you believe that the world has been broken down into 3m squares with unique words associated with each square. If you should need the emergency services you can give them your exact location. Meanwhile, the W3W location of each entrance to our sites has been posted on all notice boards by the gates.

**Hintons Nurseries:** Please support those who support us. Sarah Ridgeway has generously given her time to judge our plots annually for many years now. She is most knowledgeable on the subject of trees and is also tree warden and advisor for Warwick District Council. She offers a discount to our Allotment holders (on production of your little green cards). Currently in stock she has: Bare root hedging- Winter bedding- Hellebores. Logs and Bird foods available all year round – and if you missed your Kings order, you can get your seed potatoes, onions, garlic and shallots from Sarah.

**And so finally:** Thank you in advance for helping to keep our sites safe. We don't know what lies ahead, but if we all observe the Hands-Face-Space advice, we can at least do our bit in that respect. Look out for each other and have a good, productive and safe gardening year.