



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



## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

A belated Season's greetings from KATA committee to all of our members once again, and a big welcome to some tenants, who have taken on plots just within this last week or so. We heartily welcome you into the fold, after patiently waiting for your plots for bordering on three years! Our waiting list is now well over 100.

And on that subject, new tenants are always asked on their application form, whether they would be prepared to give a little of their time to help out with for example, Maintenance, Events or in our Shop. Up until 2020 (the beginning of Covid), our records were always updated and amended at Rent taking time, but this does not always happen now for various reasons, and we have realised that we may no longer have all the up to date information relating to your current availability or preference!

Our Association is run purely by volunteers, who give their time freely, but occasionally and throughout the year, additional help is needed by your hard working Committee either with Maintenance jobs or during the trading season in the Shop as well as supporting our Events team on site or at the Lions Show. However, there are some tenants out there, who have been with us for a great number of years, who initially indicated that they would be happy to help out in some of these areas, but now perhaps with other priorities as the years have passed ie family or work commitments, or perhaps health problems they are no longer able, or have the time to share with us, much as they would like to, and we understand this – life happens! So if you could please respond to Vice Chair Pete's recent request to update us of your availability to help out via the January Newsflash link, this would be very much appreciated.

Well we've done it again, yes its official, last year was declared to be the hottest on record. But thankfully bucket loads of rain refilled the dried out reservoirs and topped up the river levels towards the end of last year, and now we've certainly had some prolonged cold spells, with below zero temperatures bringing some very harsh frosts. As some of you will have noticed, the tracks have been very slippery even on the level, especially when the surface frosts have melted slightly. But this on top of extremely hard frozen ground, has caused a very dodgy and slippery situation underfoot. We can't do much about this in the short term, so please take good care and wear appropriate footwear. Note that wellington boots, even with well ridged soles can be slippery as the soles are in the main made of plastic.

An example of a tricky surface at the moment is at the small gate entrance to the site up by The Common. This sloping track has deteriorated into a muddy slide and it has become extremely difficult to stay upright on it, as was experienced and reported by a tenant last week. As a temporary measure, Committee member Ann Barry has put wood chippings on there to help avoid further accidents. Many thanks to Ann for her quick and effective response. This was preferable to locking the gate and barring access, forcing tenants to use longer routes via other gates. A more permanent and acceptable remedy for that track will be discussed at our next Committee meeting. (Any suggestions welcomed as well as volunteers to help get the job done)!!!

So let's all look forward to our new gardening season with enthusiasm, but firstly, let's just take a quick look back at what proved to be a most exciting and productive end to 2022.

**Lily Brownjohn** (Secretary) KATA

### 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
	Sheila Franks	779348	2a Odibourne
	Tor Clark	07867 113235	101a Odibourne

**Committee may also be contacted through our email address**

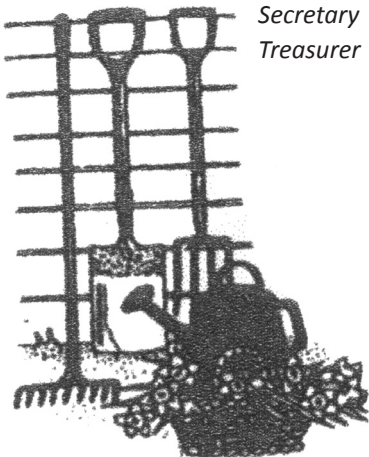
*katatradingstore@yahoo.com*

**Items of interest for the Website to: [www.kenilworthallotments.org](http://www.kenilworthallotments.org)**

**Facebook Kenilworth Allotments**

**Or contact the Secretary direct: by Phone, Text or**

**Email: *lilybrownjohn@btopenworld.com***



## **RENTS ALL IN AND THE OFFICIAL 'FINANCIAL' END TO OUR ALLOTMENT YEAR...**

Although September 29th is the 'financial' end of our allotment year, we still have events on our Calendar to take us up to the end of our physical gardening year, taking us through October and November. And our usual competitive contestants didn't let us down with our annual

## **PUMPKIN COMPETITION WEIGH-IN...**

By tradition held over the first weekend in October, and hosted by our sponsor Andrew Bear from 'The Engine Inn' on Stoneleigh Rd. If you haven't yet attended one of these events, you are really missing out on some good natured banter as it really is a competitive affair! Andy also puts on a free light lunch for us all. And so the 2022 winners were:

ADULT SECTION:	Martin Poole	71 lbs
CHILDREN'S SECTION:	Hector Gormley	9lbs

Well done to all who competed.... This year's young 'Pumpkin Competition' plants will be available from Chairman Chris as usual at the shop from around the last weekend in May

## **THE AGM...**

Followed in late October at The Sports and Social Club in Kenilworth, and was relatively well attended. It was especially encouraging to see a good representation by our ladies from the Beehive Hill site! There have been occasions in the past at our AGM's where members of Committee have simply outnumbered anyone else attending! A brief synopsis of the Chairman's report follows:

The Chairman reported another successful year for our Association, once again meeting all of our objectives. He thanked all of the Committee for their hard work throughout the year, and welcomed two new members, Tor Clarke and Sheila Franks. He confirmed that our events had been successful and the new constructions at Odibourne, ie The Bridge and the new storage shed were a great asset to the site, and although large capital spends, had all been easily covered by our reserves built up over many years. New, lighter, user friendly, power equipment with lower noise levels had also been purchased.

He thanked Pete, Paula and Trudy for their continued dedication to keeping the shop running and commented on the amount of money raised from re-cycling, hiring of equipment and from donated produce, which alone totalled just over £1200, he said that he was looking forward to the following year when more volunteers could be brought back to help in the shop.

He made reference to the hot Summer and the toll it had taken on some of our crops, yet it had benefitted others, as well as contributing to a massive water bill, which again was easily met with our comfortable reserves.

In addition, he noted that we had managed to raise considerable sums of money for charity such as the £200 donation from our Open Day to the Mayor's designated charities 'Compassionate Kenilworth and Warwickshire Pride'; a £200 donation was made to a charity supporting the people of the Ukraine from the proceeds of sunflower sales on Open Day and the Platinum Jubilee BBQ\*, and £176 was raised at a coffee morning for Macmillan. The Chairman concluded his report by thanking all members and volunteers for their time, donated plants, for spending money in the shop, for taking part in competitions, and keeping their plots mainly weed free!

(The full fat version of this report is on the website as are the minutes of the meeting). The financial report can be obtained by contacting our Treasurer, and this includes a recommendation that we impose a rent increase of £2.00 as there have been no rent increases for the past six years.

\*Since this report, a further £267.37 was raised for the Ukraine during December from a 'loose change' collection.

## **THE PRESENTATION EVENING...**

Held mid-November was one of the best we've hosted as we had a very special guest in our midst. That very brave young lady (who lives locally) was Kate Wilson-Mursell. She is herself a trained paramedic, and was instrumental in starting an organization we now know as 'Medics to Medics'. She began by delivering a truckload of medical equipment to the Ukraine and before long, regular truckloads of medical equipment from all over the country were being sent out there under extremely dangerous conditions. Our contribution enabled her to supply a quantity of IFAKs (Individual First Aid Kits) to the EOD Volunteer team, (Explosive Ordnance Device) plus a pouch of extra catastrophic haemorrhage consumables. These particular IFACs contain high quality and expensive life-saving consumables to be used in the event of catastrophic injuries such as blast/gunshot/limb amputation. The work these men do requires four catastrophic tourniquets per IFAC, and as the head of the EOD team reportedly joked, one for each limb - a joke that made Kate want to cry. Through our donation, we have given someone, possibly more than one person out there a chance to survive from otherwise potentially un-survivable injuries.

So apart from her very impressive presentation of her work with the Ukraine, and it would be impossible for anyone not to be impressed, we enjoyed good food, even better company, as well as all of our Tophies, Cups and Shields and certificates being re-distributed to our hard working and worthy winners of them, and these were presented by Kenilworth's Town Mayor, Councillor Samantha Loudon-Cooke. All credit to the team. And so the year ended on a positive note

## **THE SHOP/TRADING STORE...**

Will re-open on Saturday 11th February 10am-12noon, and welcomes everyone with coffee and cake. Some new lines have been added to the usual stock including wood fibre seed pots, organic seaweed feeds as well as plant based fertiliser pellets. A new notice board has also been installed by the shop entrance onto Manor Road. This is for 'Community' use, and not a for sale board.

## **NEWS FROM HEAD OFFICE...**

We were invited to host a Regional meeting this year, as were other Allotment sites within the CV postcode area, but St Mary's Allotments, Leamington Spa just beat us to it, and they are hosting the meeting starting at 2pm at St Mary's Church Hall, St Mary's Road, on Saturday 11th February. Refreshments included. If you would like to visit The St Mary's Allotment site, then just turn up an hour earlier and a guided tour is available! The talk at the meeting will be on 'Growing Vegetables'. If anyone is interested in attending, then perhaps we could double up on transport - contact Lily.

***So the first task in the New Year is to plan the diary,*** mainly sticking to corresponding dates from the previous year, hoping that venues will be available on those dates. You will be notified as early as possible if any of these should be changed for any reason.

## **DATES FOR OUR 2023 DIARY...**

FEBRUARY	Sat 11th & Sun 12th	Shop re-opens (10-12noon) for new season
MARCH	Sat 11th & Sun 12th	Competition potatoes and buckets available from the shop
	Sun 18th & Sun 19th	As above
MAY	Mon 1st	Plot inspections will commence across all three sites
	Sat 6th	Coronation of King Charles
	Mon 8th	Bank Holiday
	Sat 27th & Sun 28th	Competition Pumpkin plants should be ready to collect from the shop
JUNE	Sat 10th	Lions Show in the Abbey Fields. Contact Paula (07763 129678) if you can assist
	Sun 18th	NGS Open Day at Beehive Hill 12-5pm. Donations of plants and volunteers needed. Contact Madeleine (plot 16) or site rep David Hoy (plot 20)
	Sun 25th	Potato crop Weigh-in (12.30) at the shed
JULY	Tues 11th	* Judging of plots by Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery. Cut-off date for inclusion in the shortlist is Friday 7th July. Entrants to please apply to Lily
AUGUST	7th – 13th	National Allotment week This year's theme – 'Soil Health'
	Thurs 17th	Judging of Scarecrows (from 9am) by Town Clerk Maggie Field
	Sun 20th	Open Day at Odibourne 1-4pm Lots of help needed – Contact Paula (07763 129678)
	w/c 21st	** Plot Inspections ahead of Rent Collection
	End of the month	Measuring of Sunflowers
SEPTEMBER	Sat 16th & Sun 17th	Rent collecting in shed (during shop opening hours) by Committee
	Sat 23rd & Sun 24th	As above (Please note that rents not paid by 29th Sept will be deemed overdue and Subject to a £5.00 fine New Season's seed catalogue will be made available at Rent Collecting weekends Varied dates for Apple Press weekends throughout Sept and October – will be publicised Possible Macmillan coffee morning & Eco Fayre – dates TBC
OCTOBER	Sun 1st	Pumpkin Weigh-in at the Engine Inn. Starts at 12.30 – Complimentary light lunch
	Thurs 26th	AGM at the Sports and Social Club, Kenilworth 7.30
	Sat 28th & Sun 29th	Shop closing weekend – end of season
	Sun 29th	*** Last date for Seed orders. Can be handed in at 69 Spring Lane or at the Shop
NOVEMBER	Fri 17th	Presentation Evening 7 for 7.30pm at the Sports and Social Club

### **\*PLOT JUDGING, 2023 WILL BE DIFFERENT...**

Please, please remember that this year we are trialling a new entry system and you will have to put yourself forward if you would like your plot to be included in the judging. Entrants must give their names in to Lily please, no later than 7th July for inclusion in this year's competition. If you would like to know how points are allocated, we work from a schedule prepared by the National Association, which gives a rounded guide to how a good allotment should function ranging from composting, water preservation to condition of paths and freedom from weeds. Both winter and summer crops are taken into account as well as quality of produce. Fruit and flowers and special features also gain marks. Schedules for how these marks are allocated will appear on the notice boards nearer the time – but if you would like a copy in advance, please ask Lily

### **\*\*PLOT INSPECTIONS...**

You may have noticed that there is an additional plot inspection this year, scheduled to take place from the week commencing August 21st. This will hopefully prompt us to hoe down those weeds, which seem to appear from no-where throughout the Summer and before you know it, they have completely taken over allowing their seeds to drop and land comfortably for germination the next Spring! Plots which have been allowed to deteriorate badly may not have their tenancy renewed in September. So make your hoe your best friend this year!!!

### **\*\*\*KING'S SEED ORDERS...**

Your Chairman is pleased to announce that our seed orders to King's this last season totalled a brilliant £3073.43, giving us a percentage payback totalling £492.58 - profit for the Association! Please continue to support our King's seed scheme.

## **FREE FIRST AID TRAINING...**

A couple of months ago, I was contacted by Lucas Snow who is the Community Outreach Co-ordinator for a group of medical students at Warwick University who teach basic life support (BLS) as well as training with AEDs – (Automated external defibrillators), which we have at Odibourne. (FYI, a 'bleed' kit will also be arriving on site this Spring)

The medical students are part of a multi-university group called Resuscitation Mentorship Development (RMD), and

they are keen to teach and pass on these life-saving skills within the Community.

If you would like to take advantage of this valuable offer of first aid training, then please register your interest via the link in our November Newsflash. The training is FREE, and who knows, heaven forbid we should have a serious accident on our allotments one of these days, but one of you out there could potentially save the life of maybe an adult or a child as a result of this training!

***So now back to some of the more enjoyable and relaxing aspects of Allotment life***, and those of you who regularly use the 'shop' entrance to get to your plot at Odibourne, can't fail to admire the magnificent display of Dahlias on your left hand side going down the track. What follows is the first of a two part guide on how to grow them successfully.

### **DAHLIAS...**

I'm Denise, the Dahlia obsessed lady at plot 55 Odibourne. Dahlias bring me a great deal of pleasure and I love giving them to friends and family. There are so many shapes, sizes and colours and with a little time and care, can be kept from year to year. If looked after, they'll produce huge numbers of flowers until the first frosts. Whilst not claiming to be an expert, I've been asked to share a few hints and tips to help others learn how to grow them too.

This time of year is a good time to order any new tubers and rooted cuttings. Good quality suppliers are Sarah Raven, Rose Cottage Plants and Halls of Heddon.

I like to grow Dahlias for cutting so I try to choose the taller types, which are described as 90cm or more, so check the descriptions carefully when buying/ordering.

As my plot is on heavy clay and not free draining, I always start off the tubers by planting them either in tight fitting pots or trays in fresh compost, leaving their crowns (tops of tubers where they join the stems) exposed. I don't start them off until April/May as they need to be kept frost free and have some daytime warmth. They do well in my unheated greenhouse.

Growth starts quickly after only a couple of weeks. Keep the compost moist, not soggy (if too wet, the tubers will rot). You only want 3-4 shoots per plant and if you have more, you can use them for cuttings and create more plants. You do this by cutting the shoots with a sharp knife a little above the base (a basal cutting) and then plant in pots and keep warm and moist. They tend to root quickly and will need to be potted on regularly until ready to plant out.

Dahlias grow best in full sun. They are hungry plants and will appreciate a bed prepared in Autumn with well-rotted manure or compost dug in. Plant out when there is no further risk of frost, usually from the middle of May. At this time, it is a good idea to pinch out the growing tip of each stem to encourage a bushy plant with more flowers.

They will need spacing 50cm apart in rows 1m apart so you can get between the rows to pick the flowers. I never seem to get this quite right as I try to cram in as many as I can and then regret it when I have to fight my way through the rows of bushy plants. I've found its best to stake them as you plant, with a strong stake or several canes around each plant. When fully grown they are heavy strong plants and need good support. They will benefit from a weekly feed and regular watering in hot weather.

Always clearly label the Dahlias.

I don't tend to have much trouble from slugs and snails and only occasionally use a few organic slug pellets. I also like Slug Gone pellets, which are made from wool.

The Dahlias start flowering from late July onwards. If you want them to keep performing, you will need to keep picking, regularly deadhead and remove some of the side buds if growing for cut flowers. Keep tying them into their stake too, to prevent them from collapsing and snapping under their weight.

Dahlia blooms will not continue to open once cut, so select ones that are fully open. Plunge them straight into a bucket of water to prevent wilting.

I hope this is helpful and encourages you to start growing Dahlias on your own plot. I'm always happy to help, so please don't hesitate to ask if you see me.

Denise, thank you so much for that helpful information and we look forward to your follow-up advice on how/when to lift and successfully store in the Autumn.

### **WILDLIFE HELP PLEASE...**

Having created a little wildlife area in the semi shaded part of my allotment, and installing a pond, complete with outhouse (woodpile and brush on the side) which a couple of delighted little frogs immediately moved into, I was completely devastated when I came down to inspect my plot after the first big frosts and found that the frogs had obviously got trapped under the ice on the pond and had died! I have since read that frogs can only stay under water for 4-7 hours before coming up for air. Can anyone please advise me on how to prevent this from happening in the future? Lily

### **PALLETS FOR MAKING COMPOSTING BINS...**

Can be obtained free of charge from Buildabase on the Princess Drive Industrial Estate

### **AND FINALLY...**

Please support Sarah at Hinton's Nursery (who helps us with our plot judging). She has the best selection of soft fruit bushes and fruit trees in the area, plus lots of ornamental trees. Don't forget, Sarah offers a 10% discount to Kenilworth Allotment plot-holders, so please take your green Allotment ID card along with you. If you haven't got one or have misplaced it, then please ask Lily for a new one.

### **REMEMBER, GARDENING IS DIRT CHEAP THERAPY!**

LILY

