



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



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020

When I wished you all a 'Happy New Year' back in my February newsletter, little did we all know what was ahead of us, as just a couple of weeks later, we were all in 'Lockdown'! And what came to follow imposed a new and different lifestyle on us all. Everyone had to follow Government guidelines and as far as Allotments were concerned, we were also guided by the recommendations of our National Association. I think we must all agree that we have been rather more fortunate than most with our Allotment time being counted as legitimate 'exercise', and so our Allotments benefitted greatly for that extra time we've been spending on them. Indeed, they have never looked so good – although rather sad that it's all for the wrong reasons! Let's hope though that it has instilled in us all a new sense of value in them with our invigorated interest.

The interest in **acquiring** one, as you might imagine has risen tremendously, and we now have quite a substantial waiting list. During lockdown, we observed people hanging over the railings at the Odibourne site, watching us enviously, wishing that they could be down on a plot toiling away alongside us.

I would on behalf of the Committee just like to thank all tenants for their sense of responsibility and careful attention to social distancing during that very tense and for some, rather frightening time. It was extremely difficult for a few, as we experienced, for families with young children to keep them under control and confined to their plots, but totally necessary to keep us all safe. Even as things have now become a little more relaxed, we would still ask you to observe social distancing according to the recommended guidelines, and especially around the shop area. (More info. to follow on the shop later).

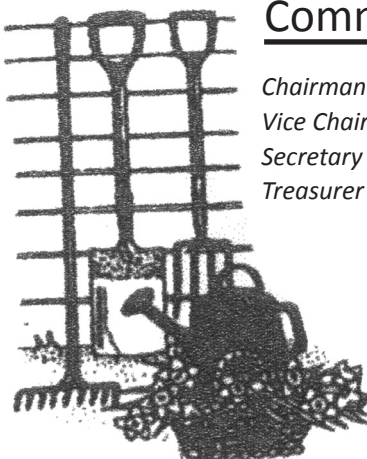
We have to thank Vice Chair Pete Hayes in particular, as he has kept us all up to date with a monthly blow by blow 'Newsflash' by email, so that we were all informed of shop opening/ordering/delivery services and new payment methods. This helped us (and our friends and families) enormously and we were all enabled by that to obtain our basic gardening supplies, as well as boosting the Allotment funds by keeping one of our main sources of income coming in. Details of all these updated services can be found on our website.

Inevitably, our planned calendar, which involved social gatherings, was shot to pieces, no 75VE street party, No Lions Show, no NGS Open Day at our Beehive Hill site, no participation in the Kenilworth Carnival, no Summer BBQ and the Heritage days on hold until 2021 But more news on the Eco Fayre, AGM and Presentation evening to come!

And a further tribute to the rest of our hard working Committee:

We have sadly lost a couple of our Committee members, who stepped down earlier this year, those being Catherine Nyman and Trudy Brown, although Trudy will still be helping in the shop alongside husband Pete. We thank them for their commitment for the time they served on Committee – not always an easy task at times! I would also like to thank Paula who has tirelessly helped out with the shop and organised our very successful Open Day this year (more on that later). A big thanks to our Treasurer Philip Jordan, who wrestles with the bank on our behalf, looks after our hard earned loot, and ensures we pay all our bills! Thanks also to Peter Jones, who organises our volunteers to help with deliveries, to Ann Barry our newest recruit, who unscrambles some of our inane comments at Committee meetings and somehow turns them into sensible and intelligent sounding minutes. Not forgetting our Beehive Hill rep, David Hoy who keeps our tenants over there extremely well informed and organises the beautifully manicured mowing of the main track and general maintenance of the whole site with a small army of volunteers. And of course, to David Harwood, who looks after our electrical problems and finally our Chairman Chris Coton, who cracks the whip when we step out of line!!! Oh Yeah???... Seriously, Chris does a magnificent job of multi-tasking in many areas including looking after the Spring Lane site, general maintenance over all three sites including organising hedge trimming, our King's Seed Scheme – (New Season's catalogues now available from the shop) and of course all legal business! And last but not least, we owe a big thankyou to Chris's husband, Oscar Nominee Nick Wood, for his part in directing and filming our Open Day this year, who, although is not strictly Committee has successfully set up and maintains our fabulous website.

Before we do a brief round-up of the year's events so far, and with all we had to cope with during that first part of



Committee members

			Plot/Site:
<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

the year, we were very aware that we may have had some seriously poorly people on site, and were vigilant of that fact. A lot of lee-way was given with regard to plot inspections, and although we've fortunately had no cases of tenants with Covid, we did have one or two who needed our help due to accidents/other illnesses which had incapacitated them. So once again, many, many thanks to all those volunteers out there, who helped/or offered help to keep those extra plots afloat with some additional hard graft and TLC. **(A big thanks to you all, both from Committee and the tenants concerned)**. Remember, if for genuine reasons you need that little bit of extra help, then please just contact us...if we don't know, we can't help.

Lily Brownjohn, Allotment Secretary

So now a brief re-cap of this year's events so far...

Well, that's one column short with nothing to say on some of our cancelled events, but let's look more on the positive side with quick look back at events which *did* actually take place...

And so to our first 'event',

Our 'Heaviest Crop of Potatoes Grown in a Bucket' weigh-in...

The weigh-in took place on a sunny Sunday 5th July outside the shop as usual, (but with everyone carefully socially distanced). With thanks to Caroline Faulkner and Paula for officiating, and with one or two soggy bottoms exposed (in the buckets of course), the final winners were:

1st Marie's grandson Conor	Plot 7 Odi	1176g
2nd Martin's daughter Ronay	Plot 9 Odi	1078g
3rd Nigel Wells	Plot 74 Odi	1051g

Martin Poole still holds the record of 2076g back in 2018

The Competition for Best Plot...

Gave Sue (RHS qualified) and Robin Ashby an enormous task to pre-select the top 25 or so plots to present to our judge Sarah Ridgeway from Hinton's Nursery to tackle on Tuesday 14th July, for as we've already acknowledged, most plots were looking really good this year, in fact spectacular! It took Sue and Robin many hours and days pouring over all three sites to produce their shortlist. Huge thanks go to them and to our judge Sarah Ridgeway. And the winners were as follows:

MAIN COMP:	Plot:	Points:
1st Nigel Wells	74 Odi	96
2nd N & R Robinson	57b&58a Odi	93
3rd = Madeleine Sexton	16 B/Hill	92 ½
3rd = Lily Brownjohn	51 Odi	92 ½

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

1st Jane Ballard	23 Odi	91 ½
2nd K&J Rockett	6 B/Hill	88
3rd L & S Parkes	21a Odi	81 ½
4th R & L Sullivan	26 B/Hill	80 ½

NOVICES:

1st Sandra Smith	30b Odi	79
2nd Caroline Meyer	82b Odi	78 ½
3rd B & R Reeves	1 B/Hill	66 ½

AWARD FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT:

Went to Billy Murphy who turned around a sadly neglected plot – Well done to Billy and family and well done to all who made that extra bit of effort to compete. The standards were superb.

The Best Scarecrow Competition...

With our traditional Open Day being moved to the end of August (Bank Holiday weekend) to allow for more 'opening up' of the public, we moved our Scarecrow competition back proportionately so that they would look spic and span for the public on the day! I'm so glad to say that the current climate did not dampen the wickedly humorous and creative ideas we rely on from our tenants! Their Scarecrows didn't let us down either, and in fact generated lots of smiles and appreciative comments from the public who walked through our site on Bank Holiday Sunday. We also have to thank our Town Mayor, Councillor Richard Dixon and his wife, former Mayor, Councillor Kate Dixon, for visiting the site on possibly the worst wet and windy day of the month to judge them! The winners in each of the categories were as follows:

CHILDREN'S CATEGORY:

1st Shielding Shallots Daniel, Amelia & Elliot Baynton

ADULT'S TRADITIONAL:

1st Mother Earth Jenny & Peter Jones

ADULTS TOPICAL:

1st Al Go-Rythme Lily Brownjohn

ADULTS NOVELTY:

Lettice, Land army girl Ann Banning

SECRETARY'S CHUCKLE AWARD:

The Classic Political Education of Boris Spruce & Gary Holmes Created by Claire

An opportunity was given for a winner in yet another category, when on Open Day, we asked the public to vote for a 'People's Favourite' Scarecrow, and the worthy winner was:

PEOPLE'S FAVOURITE:

Demeter, Greek Goddess of Harvest and Agriculture, by Michelle & Steven Smith

And so the year progressed, and Open Day Sunday 30th August was upon us...

This was a big gamble, with Committee divided for safety reasons on whether it should go ahead or not, but with the majority in favour, conservative plans were made. Care was taken to avoid overcrowding and so the opening hours were extended and a one way system imposed. The importance of social distancing was emphasized to the public upon their entry, and all went according to plan (apart from one little girl who got her finger stuck up a tap on one of the water butts- **yes that really did happen**- the fire brigade was called, but thankfully was stood down as the finger suddenly released itself with the aid of either washing up liquid or was it the WD 40 that someone suggested)! Anyway it all ended well thank goodness!

Sadly, we couldn't risk our Pimms tent, nor an extensive tea tent, although takeaway teas and coffees were available, as was some fresh produce and jams for sale out in the open by the side of the shop. We did not charge an entry fee, but suggested that donations would be welcome. Would you all be surprised to hear that we broke all records with our takings over those four hours?!!!

We have loads of people to thank for a combined effort, including the Mayor and his wife who once again gave us their support on the day, a huge team of tenants who donated their time helping to set up, man, and help dismantle everything at the end of a long day. Big thanks to all who donated plumbious produce and flowers for us to sell, and to those who erected extra scarecrows to entertain, and to Paula who pulled it all together. Thanks to Pete who took some aerial shots with a specially mounted camera and to

our now resident film maker Nick for his astonishing video of the whole event, which is now on view on our Website. If you haven't already visited this, we are at **Kenilworthallotments.org** - And Finally, a big thanks to Ann Banning, who set up a couple of literary competitions to test the minds and wit of our visitors. For a small fee, they submitted their entries, and those winning entries, judged by Chris and Nick were:

Limerick –

There was a young girl from Porthcawl
Who's tomatoes were terribly small
Her dad said – the best feed
Is bundles of seaweed
From our beautiful beach at Porthcawl

Alliterations -

Allotment apples are all absolutely awesome!
Beautiful beets in brightly burnished balls!!!

Enough of the frivolity already!!! It now seems that Autumn has suddenly arrived with a cooling down of temperatures after what seems like an alternating heatwave and rainy season sort of year. High winds starting to blow the sunflowers over, so time to get the measuring apparatus out!

Tallest Sunflower Competition:

1st Hanif Lhada	3.75m	Plots 86a & 87a
2nd Gill & Glen Hutchinson	3.67m	Plot 73
3rd Martin Poole	3.59m	Plot 9

All winners from the Odibourne site – well done to you all

With such a strange year we've all experienced, we have had to change and adapt to many things in many ways, and what follows is a personal report from Pete Hayes with his shop manager's hat on:

Shop Report...

Well, what a season that turned out to be! As with us all Corona virus has brought a whole new world of challenges. The lockdown couldn't have come at a worse time of year for the shed, or so we thought! Through some ingenious thinking, some great work on the website (thank-you Nick Wood) and an awful lot of elbow grease the shop started taking on line orders and making deliveries out to the plot holders. We had compost requests coming out of every message, and Byfields (our normal supplier) were facing a national shortage of Clover compost! Once again we needed to start shopping around and were delighted to find another local supplier who helped us out of a hole on a number of occasions this season. The deliveries were that popular that we plan on continuing this service next year if people need it.

Then the Lions Show was cancelled but we still managed to acquire and sell a range of plants and produce for both Allotmenters and the local community to enjoy.

Fast forward on a few months and we needed to be able to collect a significant set of IOU's. The shop reached the 21st century and a card payment machine was purchased. With some trepidation we started using it and we are still amazed at just how little cash we have suddenly started handling. Not only that, but it also means that in future we can, hopefully, predict the demands and try to keep up with our ever increasing range of products.

Just to give you an idea of this season... we have shifted almost double the amount of compost than last year, we have found an excellent peat free compost at a good price, we have started using milk bottles to sell the loose fertilizer, rather than plastic bags and to further try and reduce our reliance on plastic, Nick Scofield has been keeping very busy making wooden trugs for KATA.

So, to the future, by the time you read this, we will have the King's Seed Catalogue available at the shop (a month earlier than usual). The big change here is that we will be able to take card payments at the shop for your orders (I know, I can't find my cheque book) – and hopefully encourage more of you to use this great service and high quality seeds.

Thank you for all your support and understanding this year and we look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

Pete

Please note, the deadline for seed orders is Saturday 31st October, and the shop closes for the season on Sunday November 1st, so stock up now if your compost is running low for your early seed sowing! AND how about volunteering to help us out next season? Its great fun - Honestly!!!

September already and its Rent time again...

Please remember that any rents not paid before 29th September will be subject to a late payment fine of £5.00. As usual, and for your convenience, we will be taking rents at the shop over two weekends at the end of September – **Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th, as well as Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th.**

This year, you may pay your rent by card payment as well as the usual cheque or cash. One important difference with cheque payment (imposed by our bank) is that you must please make the cheque payable to:

'Kenilworth Allotment Tenants Association' - and not just KATA (**We now have a stamp we can use for the full name**)

One further option, and in view of the current situation, if you do not wish to get caught up in a queue to pay, (which sometimes happens), we are happy if you put your payment in an envelope – with name and plot number on it into the letter box attached to the rear of Lily's shed. For security, the box will be checked and emptied daily at 5pm. Beehive Hill tenants (or anyone else who lives in that area) may drop their rents through Lily's letter box at no 51 Beehive Hill.

A reminder of amounts due...

Full plots at Odibourne £30 per year/part plots pro rata

Full plots at Beehive Hill £25.00 per year

Spring Lane plots – due to the many varying sizes of plots, please see the list on your notice boards!

Apple pressing Days at the Shop...

And with the year rolling on, we are now harvesting our apples, which will be welcome at the shop throughout September and October for pressing (from around 12pm at weekends outside the shop). Don't let your apples go to waste, fallers or otherwise!

The Pumpkin Weigh-in...

Is still on the calendar and as usual will take place outside the Engine Inn, Stoneleigh Rd on Sunday 11th October at 12.30pm. Further details will follow nearer the date – please keep an eye on the notice boards/website

The Eco Fayre, AGM and Presentation evening...

As far as I'm aware, we are submitting a film about the Allotments for the Eco Fayre, but can't say much about the AGM, as its still to be discussed at our next Committee meeting and although the Presentation evening is definitely cancelled, all of last year's trophies have been re-called and

are lined up for re-engraving with this year's winners. Any revision of that information will be forwarded to you as soon as we have finalized details.

Winter Maintenance programme direct from Pete...

At least some things don't stop with Covid! The grass keeps growing, the hedge keeps springing upwards and things have a habit of stopping working at the worst possible moment. That said, personally, I have been rather glad of the normality.

After the Oak tree on the bank at Odibourne decided that enough was enough, we needed to fell it before it became dangerous. A few hours work with a local tree surgeon and it was no more. The first two metres of the trunk have been left to create a wildlife haven and talks are afoot with the Town Council who would like to purchase a tree to fill the gap.

I have planned a walk around our sites with Jon Holmes, Green Spaces Manager for Warwick District Council to discuss how best we can manage our environment and still have it at the absolute best for our Allotmenters and I shall report back with the outcome.

As the Autumn progresses, then the willow will be pollarded, the fruit trees pruned and the site made good for the coming season... oh... and if you fancy lending a hand, then please let me know!!

Pete

Safety on site...

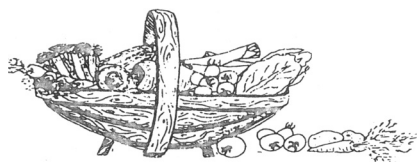
Is something that we all need a little reminder about. Accidents happen, but we can limit their impact if for example canes or stakes in the ground have top protectors, we wear suitable footwear so that we don't slip and our vulnerable feet are protected (especially when strimming). Recently a gentleman tripped and landed upon a metal stake sticking up out of the ground. That could have been fatal, but fortunately only caused surface wounds, nevertheless requiring 15 stitches at A&E. A little girl excitedly hurrying to her plot on her tot's bicycle went into the side of a greenhouse. So frightening for all concerned, but the little girl was miraculously not hurt. I accidentally dropped my secateurs and they landed pointy side down into my foot... 'Ouch' was not what I said! Every plot holder should have a basic first aid kit in their sheds and please make sure that your tetanus jabs are up to date.

We are under threat from Japanese Knotweed...

It is lurking just around the corner, in fact in the entrance way to The Manor Terrace flats- about two metres from our big Odibourne entrance gate on Lower Ladies Hills. Town and District Council have been made aware, and have assured us that it's on their treatment schedule. If you use that entrance, please be vigilant and look out for any signs at all of it creeping through to our precious site.

And Giant Knotweed...

Has also been identified along the river bank at Odibourne. Please familiarize yourself with this plant as the sap can severely burn. It needs to be removed, so please inform our Chairman, who has already removed one plant.



Another more welcome visitor to our site...

Is a young lady, an ecology intern from Coventry University. Her aim is to assess the contribution of Allotments to plant diversity in Warwickshire. A physical survey is being carried out throughout the Summer, during Autumn and then Springtime. Once the survey element of the research has been concluded, an overall report of the findings will be formally published.

Still on the subject of plants and wildlife...

Grow lavender on your plots as bees see the colour purple better than any other colour (just how do people know that)? And I also read somewhere that it takes 12 bees in their lifetime to make one teaspoonful of honey! Amazing...

Security and Fires...

You may have seen our warnings on the Notice Boards about the break-ins our colleagues have suffered over at the Gypsy Lane site. Admittedly, they are rather more secluded and off the beaten track than any of our three sites, but please take care not to leave really valuable equipment in your sheds overnight. No matter how robust your lock may be, if a thief wants to get into your shed- he will do. **Best to hire something from our shop if you need to mow/rotavate or strim your plots. For a small donation, you can hire equipment for any of the above necessary maintenance.**

And from 1st October, we can all have our garden bonfires once again... but please be aware that should we have a barrage of complaints, although we don't want to as it's a part of our Allotment culture, we may have to ban fires for good! Please ensure that what you burn is dry so's not to cause a smoky fire and please take care that nothing that could cause toxic smoke (like a broken piece of plastic plant pot) accidentally gets into your fire!

Sheds and our History...

Those tenants at Odibourne should all now have been informed of our local historian/author Peter James, who is writing a booklet on the history of how our Allotment site came to be, encompassing the 100 years since the site was created, a fitting memento to our Centenary. To make the booklet a little more light hearted, he has photographed all of our sheds and intends to intersperse them amongst the pages. He has invited us all to submit comments about our sheds, their history, usefulness, appeal and any anecdotes in which the shed played a part, the idea to make the sheds as interesting/amusing as possible.

All sheds (except those withdrawn from the scheme by their owners) will be featured, those with comments a full page, those with no comments, two to a page.

He is hoping to get the book published in time for Christmas and to that end has imposed a deadline for copy of 20th September. He has requested that all copy submitted be emailed directly to him at peter.james85@btinternet.com

100 copies are being gifted to the Association in memory of his father who gardened at Odibourne site in the 1940's. These will be made available from our shop to raise funds for the Association. Additional copies can be obtained from the Kenilworth Bookshop in Talisman Square.

Wildlife sightings...

Always rather envious of those who've spotted this that and the other - my claim to fame is a one legged Magpie, who visits us regularly, and I admire his tenacity as a survivor!

Stay safe, Lily