



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



## NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2021

I don't know about all of you out there, but this year seems to have sped by at a phenomenal rate, even though it was a bit slow to take off. Doesn't seem like five minutes ago that I was putting my canes up in the greenhouse and optimistically tying my spindly, miles behind little tomato plants to them and thinking, 'Will these poor pathetic little souls ever catch up?' Now I'm battling my way through them to try and harvest masses of ripe red tomatoes and making sauces for the freezer with the excess! That's after I've fought my way past the bunches of delicious grapes hanging from the rafters!

The beginning of the year was a challenge for all of us with prolonged spells of rain as mentioned in the February newsletter plus low temperatures and then a heatwave. Even the most experienced of us just couldn't get things to germinate, but then second time around, were successful, albeit producing slightly later crops. Perseverance and determination seems to have been the name of the game this year in particular. Yet the erratic weather seems to have suited our soft fruits, as they have been abundant, and there are now masses of plump and ripe blackberries both cultivated and wild, flourishing as we speak, despite an unseasonably cool and overcast August.

### **Success and sharing...**

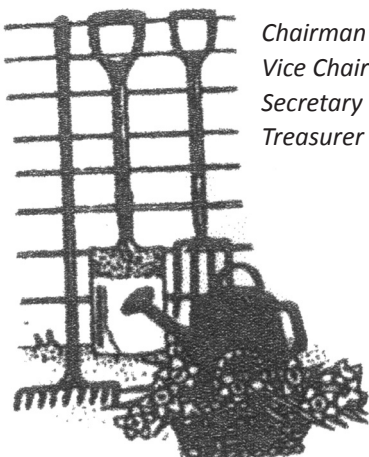
In relation to an abundance of fruits, I would like to thank on behalf of Caroline Rowe, plot 24 Odibourne site, a number of tenants, who with permission, allowed me to harvest some wonderfully early supplies of their fabulous rhubarb (the excessive rain having enhanced its growth). Caroline sold this in generous bundles to friends who donated willingly to help swell her funds for Ovarian Cancer. This year alone, she

raised around £220 from your generosity with the rhubarb, her home-made jams and produce sales. And in total, Caroline has raised £3,792 to date from the sale of these items. The Charity, 'Target Ovarian Cancer' has acknowledged her tireless work and says that every penny counts. Caroline is still continuing with her admirable work and hopes to harvest some mistletoe from our trees (again with your permission), nearer to Christmas!

### **And some fond memories...**

Earlier this month, I had some really sad news about the death of a lovely lady who had an Allotment with us for many years. She wasn't a youngster, but could give us all a run for our money when it came to Allotment gardening. As the years took their toll however, she finally retired from the Allotments, and moved up north to live near to one of her daughters. This lady's name was Rita Hibbitts, who without a doubt, I'm sure will be fondly remembered by all who knew her. Rita was greatly supportive of the Committee, organising our raffles for the Open Days, and also welcoming everyone at the door and taking the tickets at our Presentation Evenings, as well as once again organising our raffle for the evening. She was at the helm working with us when we took the Association to its first outing to the Abbey Fields to our very first Lion's Show. As well as surplus produce to sell, for a bit of fun and decoration, (bearing in mind that we had none of today's trappings, such as grand gazebos and flags etc.), we transported Rita's scarecrow to exhibit alongside our stand. Incidentally, our 'stand' was just one table donated to us by Walsgrave hospital, courtesy of our then Treasurer Matthew Wallis, who was head radiologist there. We hadn't any money for anything else!

## 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: [Kenilworth Allotments.org](http://Kenilworth Allotments.org)**

**Facebook [Kenilworth Allotments](https://www.facebook.com/Kenilworth Allotments)**

**Or contact the Secretary direct: Email: [lilybrownjohn@bopenworld.com](mailto:lilybrownjohn@bopenworld.com)**

But Rita's scarecrow was indeed fearsome and attracted much attention!!! Rita was Mauritian and she put together an effigy of her uncle Louis and he truly was so scary looking! Rita's love of her homeland in the Indian Ocean on the island of Mauritius was also reflected in the accurately carved shape of the Island on her plot beneath her apple tree, and she regularly and lovingly tended it on hands and knees with kitchen scissors to keep the outline crisp and sharp. The real example of her skill became apparent one year when she pipped all the regular trophy winners (males) to the post and walked off with our 'Best Plot' Trophy. What cries of exasperation and disbelief from those guys - How? What? A woman??? We were so proud of her and it brought delighted smiles to the faces of all her supportive friends and left those guys just scratching their heads in bewilderment and disbelief. We ladies haven't looked back since then and we thank Rita for giving us the incentive to have a real good go with our plots - and win some top trophies! Happy days.

**Lily Brownjohn (Allotment Secretary)**

So, the weather finally brightened up and our first event of the year was rolled out. Perfect conditions for our

### ***Beehive Hill Open Day...***

Which was held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June in conjunction with the NGS, alongside a number of beautiful gardens in the surrounding area. Once again our rhubarb brought in donations for generous bundles and we had a stunning display of plants to sell to the public, most of which were grown and donated by our tenants at Beehive Hill. Our thanks go to Site Rep, David Hoy and Madeleine Sexton for organising the smooth running of this event and to all the Beehive Hill tenants who worked on a rota to oversee the entry to the site. The day progressed on a pre booked and timed ticket system, with a one way route in operation, so a gentle but steady flow of visitors passed through there at any one time.

And things have brightened up at Beehive Hill in more ways than one, as I understand that our request to Severn Trent has been responded to and the very tall ash trees surrounding the pumping station are in the process of being pollarded. This will drastically reduce the shade to at least four plots in that area, and as an added bonus, the contractors have promised to leave us the wood chippings for our paths from the work completed. Good news!

### ***On the subject of wood chippings...***

These deliveries are now far and few between, so if anyone out there can locate any for us, we would be most appreciative (but not pine please as these are acid).

A couple of our tenants contacted me earlier in the year, as they had used some of our wood chippings as mulch around their raspberry canes. It may have just been coincidence as raspberries seem to suffer from die-back after a few years for whatever reason, but their raspberries did not look happy and it transpired that they had used *fresh* wood chippings as mulch, which can cause acidity to the soil. Raspberries do *not* like this. If you want to use wood chippings as a mulch, please be sure that they are well rotted.

### ***Our Potato Growing Competition...***

was as popular as ever with record entries. The aim is to grow the heaviest crop in one bucket from one potato (purchased through the shop). The results of this event held on 4<sup>th</sup> July were as follows, and no prizes for spotting the difference in the winning format as we inadvertently created a 'Children's Section'!!! ***Would anyone out there like to sponsor a Trophy for the newly created Children's section? Please?***

**Adults:** 1<sup>st</sup> Martin Poole 1.6kg  
2<sup>nd</sup> Caroline Faulkner 940g  
3<sup>rd</sup> Martin Poole 810g  
**Children:** 1<sup>st</sup> Saul Gormley 420g  
Joint 2<sup>nd</sup> Hector Gormley & Conor Wehring

Well done to everyone who competed. Martin Poole still holds the record at 2076kg set back in 2018

And so July rolled on and soon the plots were flourishing and looking spectacular with everyone making the best efforts they possibly could. The plots were judged on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July by Sarah Ridgeway BSc (Hons) MI Hort, from Hinton's Nurseries, and once again, we have tenants Sue (RHS qualified) and Robin Ashby to thank for whittling down the entries from across all three sites to a reasonable selection of roughly the top 20-25 best plots for Sarah. ***Please note that the criteria for how points are awarded and cut off dates were displayed as usual on all notice boards in order to ensure that everyone had an even chance.***

One of Sarah's accomplishments is in her knowledge of trees and she noticed that we now have some banana trees adorning a few plots at Odibourne. She identified these as a variety called MUSA BASJOO, a well-known hardy variety, and they have been seen to bear fruit, although very tiny! However, the frost will get the tops in the Winter and although they will turn a soggy brown colour, don't be despondent and discard them. Amazingly, the new green leaves will shoot through all of this in the Spring. It is advisable though to mulch/protect the roots just in case, although mine survived unprotected! Banana 'trees' as they are called actually have no trunks. They are simply a root which throw out leaves which remain tightly rolled until they are about 4-5ft high (giving the impression of a trunk) and then they unfurl into those massive beautiful tropical leaves. If anyone would like a cutting as they throw out baby plants prolifically, please ask Lily. I would be delighted to share some. Best time for transplanting is in the Spring.

Sarah also noticed that a lot of our pear trees have a condition called orange spot, which is a fungal disease spread by spores. Not an awful lot can be done about it as treatment by fungicides is not recommended for trees bearing edible fruits. The only advice given is to cut out badly diseased areas and dispose of them appropriately (do not add them to your compost). Your pear crops may be slightly diminished, but other than that, your pear trees should not suffer too much, although the frost seems to have hit the blossoms at the crucial time this year as many of our normally heavily fruiting pear trees are bearing no pears at all.

Going back to more unusual crops, has anyone had any experience of growing Yacon? My neighbour Annie gave me a tuber which seems to be flourishing well. We would both love to hear of your experiences, and take any advice.

So the results of everyone's hard work on their plots this year this year were as follows:

### **Best Plot Competition 2021....**

#### **MAIN COMP:**

		<b>PLOT/SITE</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
1 <sup>ST</sup>	MADELEINE SEXTON	16 B/HILL	95
2 <sup>ND</sup>	LILY BROWNJOHN & JIMMIE ALSOP	51 ODI	91 ½
3 <sup>RD</sup>	ROB & LIN SULLIVAN	26 B/HILL	91

#### **HIGHLY COMMENDED:**

1 <sup>ST</sup>	KEITH & JOAN ROCKETT	6 B/HILL	90 ½
2 <sup>ND</sup>	MARTYN PARTRIDGE	15 ODI	89
3 <sup>RD</sup>	NICK & NICKY SCHOFIELD	34 ODI	86 ½
4 <sup>TH</sup>	JANE JIM & CHRIS BALLARD	23 ODI	85

#### **NOVICES:**

1 <sup>ST</sup>	CLAIRE WHITE & DAVID CATTELL	47B ODI	78 ½
2 <sup>ND</sup>	BRID & RICHARD REEVES	1 B/HILL	77 ½
3 <sup>RD</sup>	CAROLINE WADSLEY	22B ODI	67 ½
4 <sup>TH</sup>	PHIL & NICKY BOOTH	31 ODI	62 ½

#### **AWARD FOR SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT:**

DAN & ALICE DAVIES with help from their lovely daughter KATIE

### **Annual Open Day Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021...**

No sooner had our Scarecrows had been judged, (results to follow), than our annual Open Day was upon us, and despite dire weather predictions mid-week, we had a fantastic day both weather-wise and event wise...

#### **Report from Paula –**

'Over 300 attended our Open Day and there were many happy faces wandering around including The Mayor, Peter Jones, one of our own plot-holders. Visitors were generous with their donations and we sold out of all our cake on the tea stall, most of the ice creams, and very little was left on the produce stall. A big thank you from all of the Committee to all the plot holders at Odibourne for showing off the site at its very best, and to all those who helped on the day, either with their time, donations of produce and spectacular bunches of flowers.

The day was declared a success and we will be making a donation from the day's takings to the Mayor's Charities, which are both Kenilworth based – 'Compassionate Kenilworth' and 'Kenilworth Youth Well-being Trust'. Once again thanks to all those who made the day so successful.'

**Paula Hallam**

And a big 'thank-you' to Paula from us all for ensuring that everything and everyone was in place to make it go so well! – not forgetting the work Pete Hayes put in just days beforehand by manicuring the main path and most generously some of our side paths, as well as applying a quick lick of paint to smarten up the front of the Trading store!!!

### **Best Scarecrow competition 2021...**

So our Scarecrows play a big part in our Annual Open Day and sadly we didn't have quite so many entries this year. This was for a great many different reasons including health issues and simply because many people were away taking desperately needed holidays as restrictions were finally being eased, with the majority of the adult population now having been vaccinated. The resulting winners were once again judged by our Town Clerk, Maggie Field. All entries bar one came from our Odibourne site. Just the winners have been listed in each category, but a huge 'thank-you' to all who took part. All of the scarecrows on display were positively brilliant and much admired by the public on our Open Day.

#### **ADULT TRADITIONAL:**

1<sup>st</sup> Chris & Margaret McIntyre Plot 19  
*'Grandad & his little helpers'*

#### **CHILDREN'S SECTION:**

1<sup>st</sup> Alex White Plot 71  
*'Miraitowa'*

#### **ADULT TOPICAL:**

Joint 1<sup>st</sup> Jennifer & Peter Jones Plot 18b  
*'An optimists guide to 2020'*

Joint 1<sup>st</sup> Lily Brownjohn Plot 51  
*'I'm in the green zone'*

#### **ADULT NOVELTY:**

Michelle & Steven Smith Plot 30a  
*'C-3Pea Hoe'*

#### **SECRETARY'S CHUCKLE AWARD:**

Patrick Stapleton Plot 22  
*'Boney Bob'*

So, it's been more or less business as usual around the site and what follows is an upbeat message from Vice Chairman Pete Hayes:

#### **'Trading Store report...**

The start of 2021 was very much a continuation of 2020. The Trading Store continued to be exceptionally busy with previously unheard of amounts of compost being delivered on what felt like a weekly basis. (We certainly don't need to go to the gym). We also now have a steadier supply of peat free compost and the feedback we have on this seems very positive. We have also been in the lucky position of receiving an array of interesting items made from re-cycled pallet wood from Nick Schofield. All the funds received from these go to KATA and we are very grateful to Nick for his continued support and skills. If you pop into the trading store, there is also a board with items available to order and they make great Christmas presents!

Many of you will have seen the start of the new store shed that is going to be built alongside the existing Trading Store. This will allow the main store to be used purely for sales and create a significant amount of additional storage.

The shop will remain trading until the end of October with the opening hours staying as 10am until 12pm.



## Site news...

Please excuse me whilst I (Pete) jump for joy! After many years of it being talked about, we are at the point where all the permissions have all been granted, the bridge ordered and the groundworks started. There is lots of information on an A-board that is displayed outside the trading store every weekend about our new pedestrian bridge. The bridge will cross Finham Brook between plots 54 & 55 and will be next to the brick culvert on the Lower Ladies Hills side.

## Maintenance...

Following the disintegration of the old mower at our Beehive Hill site, we had a bit of a mower shuffle and a new larger machine was purchased for the Odibourne site. This has allowed an improved mower for both Odibourne and Beehive Hill and has also seen Pete walking fractionally less miles on Odibourne (He loves it really)'

*Many thanks to Pete Hayes for the update*

## And hot off the press from Chairman Chris:

**Tallest sunflower competition**, and once again, all the winners were from our Odibourne site

1 <sup>st</sup>	Colin(Josh) & Gail Bates	3.64m
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Martin Poole	3.54m
3 <sup>rd</sup>	John Watson	3.44m

*(Note the exact 10cm between each one)!!!*

And so, with only a few dates left in the diary, our year has once again almost come to an end. Still to look forward to is our **Heritage weekend** 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Sept., **Macmillan Coffee Morning** at the Trading shed on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept, **Eco Fayre** Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, our **Pumpkin Weigh-in** Sun. 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct outside the Engine Inn at 12.30, food to follow. Our **AGM for 2021** will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 at the Sports and Social Club and our **Presentation Evening** also at the Sports and Social Club is on 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.

All further details, times, dates and venues etc. relating to these will either be on notice boards, but most certainly you will be informed by our monthly newsflash information sheets from the shop.

### **Rent taking at the shop....**

Will take place as usual over the last two weekends in September preceding the **end of our Allotment year on 29<sup>th</sup> September**. Please put these dates in your diary as fines will be issued immediately for non-payment of rent if the last date is missed. They are as follows (during the usual shop opening hours 10am-12pm):

**SAT & SUN 18<sup>TH</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**

**SAT & SUN 25<sup>TH</sup>/26<sup>TH</sup> SEPT**

And if the allocated dates are inconvenient for you, please let Lily know and alternative arrangements can be made.

We have also designed a new information booklet about the Association, which incorporates some of our rules, just as a reminder. This will be available for collection from the shop

## King's Seed Scheme...

Has benefited the Association for many years now and the new season's catalogues 2021-2022, will also be distributed from the shop when we pay our rents over the two allocated rent taking weekends. As well as obtaining seeds at almost half the price of other seed companies, the Association also receives a commission payback on the total of our orders, so please support it – we all benefit. Many thanks to Chairman Chris aka Seed Secretary for facilitating this

**Deadline for seed orders is Sunday 31st October.**  
**(This is also when we close the shop for the season).**

You can either take your orders with payment straight to Chairman Chris at 69 Spring Lane, or to the Trading store and pay for them there.

## Friends in the Community...

Have this year shared a few of their cast-offs for us to recycle, and these were the posts that Warwickshire Wildlife use to secure their young newly planted trees until they are well established. When these were no longer needed, they were donated to us and were shared around between the three sites. Word of mouth prevailed and they were snapped up as dahlia supports or improvised net supports for our brassicas and probably used for a few more original ideas too.

## And talking of wildlife...

This year, quite a few of us have designed water features for our Allotments, and I have seen some beautiful ones created from really original containers. Word seems to have gone out to the frog population and the new residencies were snapped up immediately. **So just a quick plug for Hinton's Nurseries – they do actually have a good selection of water garden plants in stock – worth a quick look!**

## And finally...

A big thankyou to Martyn Partridge for printing this newsletter for us, and to all our lovely volunteer distributors who have popped them through your doors

***Enjoy the rest of your gardening year,  
Lily and the Committee***

