

Allotments

Newsletter

2017



Kendal Town Council, Town Hall, Kendal. LA9 4DL.

Email: allotments@kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk

www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01539 793495

Chairman's Rambling

Well it's that time of year again when I am asked to submit my ramblings for the annual newsletter, so here goes.

As you will no doubt have noticed the growing season was a little mixed with a warm start which then went downhill, to say the least, with a late recovery it put back the cropping season on some plants. This of course is somewhat frustrating if like myself you are not always around to tend your crops in dry spells or deal with infestations of pests etc. A fair summary would be that gardening in Britain is not easy but we usually manage to gain from our efforts whilst getting some exercise and camaraderie.

I will now issue an apology for what I felt was a lack of attention the allotments received this last year, with a few things being overlooked. This was due to staffing issues which resulted in disruption to the normal smooth running caused by staff being redirected to other duties deemed more urgent. Hopefully we are now over this and getting back on track with maintenance issues etc. with the appointment of a new "Townscape Manager" (formally known as the Handyperson) confirmed as I write this.

Unfortunately the water usage issue is still of concern as all our sites have water meters and we appear to get a least one unexpectedly large invoice per annum, a recent example being one for £750 for one site for the quarter. We are of course looking into reasons for this but I would urge plot holders to be vigilant for missuses or leaks etc and report any problems. This issue does not help our budget or our case when it comes to the annual rent review and as such the Council have increased the rent by 1p per square metre for the coming year.

I will sign off now and wish you all well for a productive growing season next year.

All the best, Councillor John Veevers

Allotment Office Hours

Janine Holt - Assistant to the Town Clerk can be contacted Monday—Wednesday between the hours of 8.30am and 4.00pm, her direct line is 01539 793495.

Townscape Manager works a five day week and can be contacted via the office on 01539 793490

General Office Open 9.30am—12.30pm everyday. After 12.30pm calls can be left on the ansaphone.



Mayors Christmas Coffee Morning
Kendal Town Hall
9.00am—12.30pm
Saturday 16th December 2017
All Welcome



Hello, my name is Pierre Labat and I am the newly appointed Townscape Manager at Kendal Town Council. I will be working 37 hours a week on various projects including the allotments, Kendal in Bloom, Christmas lights and some maintenance of Town Council owned property. My main focus of work for the first 3 months will be on the allotments. I have visited each site and know the size of the task ahead!! I am looking forward to getting stuck into the role.

I am sure you will see me out and about over the next few months, please stop and introduce yourself.

Pierre Labat, Townscape Manager.

Stay vigilant over the winter months, this is the time of year when more break-ins on allotments occur.

Please remember to inform the office if your circumstances change. Myself and the Townscape Manager visit the allotments approx. every 6 weeks. As you know, I contact tenants who appear not to be working their plot. So if something happens and you are unable to work your plot, please telephone or email the office and let me know, this will avoid me wasting time writing to you and hopefully avoid any upset at times when you are already under pressure.



TOOLED UP AND READY TO GROW

Tool Tips:

- Buy the best you can afford rather than cheap tools which won't last as long
- After use scrape off soil, wash with warm soapy water, dry thoroughly, sand gently if necessary and then oil lightly, especially after working with diseased or infected plants.
- Either wrap the metal part of the tools in oiled rags or oiled newspaper if storing them for any length of time and make sure air can circulate to prevent rust.
- Keet the cutting edge of blades regularly sharpened and stored safely, but aluminium blades should not be sharpened, just cleaned and lightly oiled.
- A sturdy bucket of sand moistened with a little oil can be used to plunge your tools into to clean and polished in one go.
- Keep wooden handles cleaned, lightly sanded to remove splinters and lightly oiled with linseed or teak oil and buffed with a soft cloth.
- Broken wooden handles should be replaced rather than mended, as they must be able to withstand the force you exert on them.
- Keep tools organised in wall-racks in sheds or garage.
- Use the right tool for the job eg. don't use secateurs to cut thick branches.
- Looking after your tools properly will greatly extend their life, and it is a pleasure to start a job with tools that are ready to go.

Article from Issue 3 2017 of the Allotment & Leisure Gardener

2017 Update on the University of Sussex- Sow Wild Pollinator and Insect Survey

We have now completed year 2 of this three year project. If you recall in the last allotment newsletter we reported on the first year of a UK wide survey to track the effects of wildflowers in allotments and urban gardens upon pollinator populations. The research involves cultivating a wild flower patch of 2x2 sq. metres and regularly reporting on the number of pollinators visiting the wildflower patch and a neighbouring section of the allotment that contains the usual allotment plants. This takes place each April to August and after all growth had finished in autumn of 2016 the patch was cut back ready for this year's new growth.

This year we were asked to set out four collection pans on each site, rather than the single pan used last year. The pans were coloured red, blue, white and yellow. Last year only a single white collection pan was used on each site. The collection pans contained water with a small amount of scentless detergent and also we had to place a small sticky patch on a stick at each site. Another change made to the 2017 collection method was that the collection pans had to be set on a raised upturned crate, rather than on the ground and left for forty-eight hours. Also included in the 2017 survey was a ten minute observation period where we had to count the observed insects, beetles, flies, bees and wasps by eye at each site and record this on a record sheet. This was by no means an easy task as I was never sure if we were counting the same fly twice! However it was an enjoyable and informative quiet time and we were amazed at the different types of bees and wasps there are.

At the end of each collection period an attempt is made to count and identify all insects that have stuck to the sticky traps and that have fallen into the coloured traps. The content of the traps are decanted into small collection jars containing vinegar as a preservative and after the final collection was made in August all test samples are packed up and returned to the University.

What was noticeable was that the fewest insects were collected from the blue traps with most being collected from the yellow and white traps, with the red trap seeming to consistently contain more than the blue but less than the white or yellow. Also noticeable was that the numbers collected from the wild flower patch and the allotment patch were not vastly different in either number or range.

No doubt all will be explained when the results of all three years research are analysed. We will let you know what the findings are in a future newsletter.

Elizabeth & Rachel Kelly (Castle Drive Allotments)

New for 2018, Allotment Drop in Sessions

Aim of the Drop in Session

To have dedicated time set aside to deal with all issues relating to allotments.



Objectives

Informal setting where specific queries can be discussed

Annual rent payments can be received

Advice given and sharing of knowledge with site reps and the Townscape Manager

Surplus veg can be dropped off to be exchanged or donated to worthy causes

Seed swaps

Development of display boards where tenants can advertise sheds, greenhouses etc and other information which might be of interest to allotment holders

Register for the Kendal in Bloom Competition

Why have the Sessions?

Improve communication between, Town Council, site reps and allotment holders

Dedicated, uninterrupted time to discuss allotment issues

Create more of a community feel for allotment holders with seed swaps, surplus veg donation or exchange scheme, facility to advertise sheds, greenhouses etc

To minimise disruption in the Town Council office

When will the session take place?

On a monthly basis, the third Tuesday afternoon from 1.30pm –4.00pm.

Where will the session be held?

In the Romney Room in the Town Hall. This is the room next to the Town Council office. You can enter either through the Town Hall or on Highgate.

First Session

The first session will be held on **Tuesday 19th December 2017 from 1.30pm—4.00pm** in the Romney Room. If you normally drop in a cheque for your rent, you can pass it on to me during this session. There will be coffee and mince pies available!!!

I will trial this for 3 months to see if they work. The 3 scheduled sessions are:

1.30pm—4.00pm 19th December 2017, Romney Room, Town Hall, Kendal

1.30pm—4.00pm 16th January 2018, Romney Room, Town Hall, Kendal

1.30pm—4.00pm 20th February 2018, Romney Room, Town Hall, Kendal

If you need to speak with me urgently, you can contact me via telephone, email or arrange an appointment.

Janine Holt, Assistant to the Town Clerk.



UK FINALIST 2017
SILVER GILT MEDAL

The Kendal in Bloom Committee meet in January 2018 and will discuss the competition. I will circulate the outcome of the meeting at a later date.



**Best Site 2017
Natland Road**

Tidy plots and pathways Allotment plots, pathways and boundaries are to be kept tidy. Maintenance of the main access path is the responsibility of the Town Council, but side paths are the **tenant's responsibility** and these should be maintained on a side to edge basis. Encroachment onto the paths and/or boundary is not permitted. Internal boundary hedges and bushes should be cut back by the tenant.

Update from Wattsfield Site Representative

Nothing about James Wong, this year, but this has been an unusual allotment year for me, as we were away, and nothing happened on the allotment until mid April.

I know that I am usually rather early with my plantings, so it was going to be interesting to see whether things caught up and how.

Onion sets and first early potatoes normally go in the soil during early March. This time I heeded some of my fellow allotmenters' advice and planted Charlotte potatoes for use as first earlies as well as second earlies. The difference with the onions planted later is that we still had a good crop that was ready to come out at the usual time of late August. However, they were smaller – a good thing as usually my big, fleshy onions do not store well and I throw away half of them over the winter. Charlotte earlies were beautiful, and there is not the usual angst of having to eat up the 1st earlies before the 2nds get ready. In 2018 I will probably plant some Charlottes about mid March.

I also discovered how wonderful friends and fellow allotmenters are at growing too many plants, and therefore having plenty available to give away. So, tomatoes, chillies, broad beans and pumpkins were available in abundance, which also gave me the chance to try new varieties. Of the tomatoes, I have to admit that I still like the good old reliable Gardener's Delight, with Sungold being my favourite, but the seed is much more expensive.

My big failure this year was my red cabbage. Normally I can grow 2kg heads with no trouble, but this time the small plants just failed to thrive and most perished. I can only put this down to using old seed which was 4 years old. I've made sure that I've been through my seed packets and am only keeping last year's seed.

This does give me the joy of being able to go through the seed catalogues, select my packets of some new varieties, and some old friends, and dream about next year's crops and harvests.

Ros Taylor. Wattsfield Allotmenteer.

Allotment Competition Winners 2017

1st Place	33 Wattsfield	Mrs Howarth
2nd Place	5 Coley Barn	Mr Dent
Joint 3rd Place	8 Wattsfield 12 Crow Tree	Mr & Mrs Batchelor Mr Silk
Runners Up	27 Wattsfield	Mr Houlsworth
	22 Wattsfield	Mrs Lee
	8 Castle Drive	Mrs E & Miss Kelly
	10 Greenside	Mrs Hartley
	39 Coley Barn	Mr Watson
	1 Natland Road	Mr Blamire
	11 Greenside	Mr Johnson
	8 Underley Hill	L Palmer
	19 Underley Hill	Mr & Mrs Palmer

Dates for Site Visits 2018

- 24th January
- 7th March
- 18th April
- 23rd May
- 4th July
- 15th August
- 26th September
- 7th November

If you would like to meet us on site, please contact the office to make arrangements.

Pest Control

This year rodent activity has increased since last year. Should you have concerns about rodent activity, please contact the office immediately.

We have vacancies for site representatives on Natland Road, Sandylands and Sedbergh Road allotments. If you are interested in becoming a site representative please contact Janine Holt. You will find a complete list of all the current site representatives at : <http://www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk/council-services/allotments/sites>