



JUNE 2019 NEWSLETTER



NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Well, June is upon us and after a very promising start, it's certainly turned into a very soggy second week, although I'm sure that all our allotments will be enjoying the rain!

Firstly, we have quite a few new members who we would like to welcome. Ann Maddison, Tessa Bradberry and Zoe Hopgood and Angus Riddell have joined us at Pillings Road and Lindy Howard at Willow Crescent. We hope they all enjoy their gardening experience with us.

As mentioned last month, we had to postpone May's meeting by a few weeks due to holidays, so our usual Committee meeting only happened on Tuesday night with extremely depleted numbers. This was due not only because three Committee members were unable to attend, but also because we are now five Committee members short. Although Rob Bowley makes an excellent Acting Chairman, we don't unfortunately seem to be able to persuade him to carry on the role on a long term basis, so we do need to find a replacement! We are also still missing stewards at Elm Close and Willow Crescent (I think Burley Road has been sorted now) so we really would urge you to think seriously about maybe filling one of these vacancies for us. We are a large Society who needs a permanent leader and it's also important that we have a voice from all our sites at our monthly Committee meeting, so we desperately need a few of you to step up to the challenge and help us out! It's really not so bad, we sit there for an hour or so, generally once a month, it's an excuse to have a beer or a glass of wine (well I do anyway, it helps with my minute taking skills haha!) and we talk about what's been going on (speaking of which, here's some of what we discussed)!

In last month's newsletter we told you that the dyke work at Pillings Road was hopefully going to start about now. Unfortunately Bob Kendrick is overloaded with his own work at the moment and so is having to postpone this until later in the year. As the hiring of a digger was also connected to the parking improvements at Elm Close and the additional water point we plan to put in at Pillings Road, these will also be affected, but on a more positive note, the main water pump at Pillings Road has now been fixed!

As you may remember, we received a complaint last month relating to the area around the Trading Hut looking messy, which has now been more or less cleared. However, in a few weeks time, Dick Gilbert and Terry Dunlop will be treating the area with weed suppressant membrane and there are also plans afoot to build a small retaining wall to enable the top car parking area to be levelled out, using the remaining blocks that had been set aside for the toilets.



OHGAS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acting Chairman:	Rob Bowley
Vice Chairman:	Rob Bowley
Treasurer:	David Smith
Secretary:	Penny Paton
Trading Hut Manager:	Dick Gilbert

YOUR STEWARDS

Pillings Road:	Nathan Ticehurst Terry Dunlop Georgina Messenger
Burley Road:	Vacancy
Elms Close:	Vacancies x 2
Willow Crescent:	Jim Hardwick Vacancy

FORTHCOMING COMPETITIONS

Judging for the Scarecrow Competition will be taking place on Saturday 24th August 2019 and entry forms will be available soon, together with full details of the competition.



Judging for the Best Allotment Competition will be taking place on Monday 1st July 2019. Your site stewards will be picking the best three plots on each site to be entered into the competition, which will be happening within the next week (apologies for the short notice)!



Whilst on that subject, I'm happy to be able to report that, following the sale of the bricks and blocks, Martin Duncan was able to get £800 for their sale (bearing in mind that he got them for nothing in the first place), which has more or less offset the cost of the planning consent applications for the toilets, as promised at the AGM.

Jim Hardwick also spoke to us about the general rubbish problem that seems to be happening at Willow Crescent and he came up with the idea of placing several general rubbish bins near to the main entrance and possibly water points too. It was decided that this will also be trialed at Pillings Road and, if it works, it will be rolled out to Burley Road and Elm Close shortly.

One of the main topics of conversation was going to involve the planning of the forthcoming competitions, but as Georgina was unable to make the meeting and is paramount in the organisation of the Scarecrow Competition, we were unable to discuss anything in any great detail so a special newsletter will likely follow later this month/early next month. However, you will see some pertinent dates in the side panel on the first page which, in the case of the Best Allotment Competition, doesn't give too much warning (sorry)!

Now onto the main subject of our meeting, The Trading Hut. Although membership numbers are high and empty plots are non-existent, Trading Hut figures are dropping dramatically. In the two week period covering Sunday 26th May and Sunday 2nd June 2019, takings were 28% down on the previous year, which is obviously not good. Dick Gilbert reported that sales of compost were healthy, but that sales of everything else were not, despite the wide range of products on offer. Unfortunately the price lists showing on the website didn't show the full range, which maybe hasn't helped, and this has now been corrected. Obviously everyone on Pillings Road should know about the Trading Hut, but maybe there are those of you across the other sites who have no idea that we even have a Trading Hut or what it stocks? Perhaps the openings hours don't suit you? Or maybe we should consider having an online shop on our website (that's something that has just come into my head, but it would be relatively easy to set up) where you could order and possibly pay for your products online and then collect at a mutually convenient time? Whatever your reason, please support the Trading Hut!

On a slightly different topic, but an interesting one, I was approached by a gentleman (via email) who has purchased the OHGAS Leslie Stokes Cup which dates back to 1956, and was last won by Mrs. V. Allsopp in 1997. Rob Bowley believes that this relates back to Brooke Road days and that this has been purchased as part of a house clearance lot. The new owner has offered it back to the Society for £15.00, which we are obviously going to take him up on. So, this will be returning to us towards the end of next month!



On a final note, the forecast is predicting the return of Summer like conditions from Saturday onwards so hopefully we will all be able to get back to our allotments to deal with all the weeds that the rain will have encouraged out of the ground! 😞😞

Penny Paton
OHGAS SECRETARY



THE TRADING HUT

The Trading Hut is open on Wednesday evenings between 18.00 & 19.30 pm until the end of June. It's obviously still open between 9.00 and 10.30 every Sunday morning.

Items that are particularly useful at present are:

Green scaffold net (very suitable for covering leeks to prevent leek leaf miner) - £0.70 per metre

Baling net (very cheap method to protect your veg) - £0.08 per metre

Organic fertilisers:

Fish, blood & bone - £0.95 per kg

Seaweed meal (very small amounts required) - £3.00 per kg

Runner bean and pea seeds

Please support your Trading Hut! We try to keep prices competitive and below those in the shops and garden centres, and if you only want a very small quantity, we will oblige. There's also usually help and advice available too!

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

CHAIRMAN OR CHAIRWOMAN

We are still looking for a new Chairman or Chairwoman to steer the Committee. Unfortunately it's an unpaid post, but you get the chance to decide upon and implement the long term aims of OHGAS, as well as chairing and co-ordinating the work of the Committee and you get to represent OHGAS to the public, Rutland County Council and Oakham Town Council!

If you are interested, please let me know!

STEWARDS

We're still looking for a steward(s) for Elm Close and an additional steward at Willow Crescent.

This is currently an unpaid role, although the Committee is planning to make a proposal about this at next years AGM.

The role involves keeping the site running smoothly and safely, communicating with fellow plot holders, encouraging good gardening, encouraging those who neglect their plots, picking up on suggestions for improvement, issues or complaints, helping with the general maintenance of the site and encouraging others to do the same, reporting back at monthly Committee meetings, and having a say in the broader issues of OHGAS policy and other issues, and if possible taking a turn at serving in the Trading Hut. It really isn't as bad as it sounds!