

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 44 September 2015

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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Autumn Social
Sunday 13th September,
11am – 1pm

More categories
in the preserves
and conserves
competition this
year! see page 2

Plus pumpkin,
sunflower and
scarecrow
competitions,
BBQ, raffle,
home produce
stall, beer tent –
and the Seed
Store Café!

Seed Store turns red...

But not with embarrassment.

The last major work on the café has been completed. Nick Baylis pointed and repainted the walls and then, with Anne Wingrove, Susan Saunders and David Harnden, cleaned, sealed and painted the floor. The café now has a new look – the colour choice is non-

political, of course – and the floor is protected and more hygienic.

This work was much needed but it had



to wait until the concrete had fully dried out, and the seal and layers of floor paint mean that it's now a dust-free surface. Easier to keep clean, and bright and cheerful too. Thanks to Anne, who is also the café co-ordinator, and Nick, Susan and David.

With the addition of a new table and chairs outside on 'the patio' watch out The Pheasantry!

Send contributions for the next newsletter to jenbourne@btinternet.com

News from your Committee

WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS

Joanne Miller (plot 133f); Michael Smith and Helen Underwood (plot 32f); Ian and Sally Boulton (plot 86f); Kathryn Teo (plot 191b); Claire Drury and Estelle Buckland (plot 73); Jennifer Solé and Andrés Fernandez (plot 71); David and Amanda Leek (plot 72); Ambrose and Mary Holden (plot 146b); Vivienne Kemsley (plot 3); Katherine Curtis Tyler (plot 153b); Mehi Nabé (plot 75); David and Katherine Knocker (plot 126b); Sarah and Mark McDonald (plot 87); Shaheen Akhter-Hamid and Farook Hamid (plot 69).

THE OFFICE Open every Sunday, 11am – 12 noon.

CONTACTS see www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk
ploholderscommitte@paddocks-allotments.org.uk

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

David Harnden, Chair (plot 152)
Carol Dukes, Treasurer and Website (plot 77)
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary (plots 27f, 28b)
Ashley Catto, Sheds (plots A,H)
Gill Hiley, Lettings (plot 50)
Nick Baylis (plot 110f)
David Lainchbury (plots 131f, 132b)
Theo Christophers (plot 148)
Gaby Armstrong (plot 33b)
Martin Scotton (plot 59)

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Council appointees: Mark Boyle, Jerry Elloy (Chair), Gareth Evans, plus a fourth councillor yet to be announced.
Tenants: Jenny Bourne, Nick Baylis, Theo Christophers, David Harnden (Vice-Chair), Susan Saunders (Secretary)

The Autumn Social – see you there!

**This year's Autumn Social is on
Sunday 13th September, 11am – 1pm**

BBQ – quality hot dogs and veggie options
Grand Raffle – top prizes from local businesses
Home produce stall – sale of your homemade jams, chutneys, cakes, biscuits, plot produce: fruit, veg, flowers, craft, homemade: lavender bags etc
Awards for tallest Sunflower competition
Beer Tent – cold drinks and liquid refreshment
Café serving hot drinks and the best homemade cakes!

Competitions

Pumpkin Competition – your biggest and best! People's Pumpkin vote for the most attractive/oddest/unique
(age category – any)

Scarecrow Competition – let your imaginations run wild! (age categories: up to 8; and 9 – 15)

Preserves and Conserves Competition –
New categories this year!

Your best conserves and preserves made with plot produce: jams; jellies; bottled fruit; cordials; chutneys; pickled vegetables; relishes (piccalilli, ketchup etc) – made this year or last year

See the website and posters for full details.

Offers of help or queries: jenbourne@btinternet.com



Compost Toilet Appeal

Chris Pocock makes an appeal for help with maintenance

Originally constructed to replace the Elsan toilet, the Compost Toilet has been in operation for nearly 8 years. The Elsan required regular emptying necessitating the digging of holes and the use of 'chemicals'. It was not a job that members of the committee used to compete for!

Using a well designed compost toilet should require minimum maintenance. Ours has been emptied just once in 8 years! This involved removing about 2kg of dry, odourless and almost inert granular material and a number of cobwebs from one side! It has remained empty for some months. Before it is put back into use, it has needed a bit of an MOT – some cleaning and a bit of painting (nearly finished).

When it is put back in use, the other side will be locked up and not reopened for maybe 3 years. Until then nobody will be able to see how it all works.

So we are looking **NOW** for someone else to take over the small amount of maintenance of our Compost Toilet. **NOW** because it is the only time the inside workings can be viewed.

The recently installed solar-powered running water system will also need someone else to maintain it. It is somewhat more technical than the rest of it!

We need

someone prepared to do some occasional simple DIY who is available to start now

AND

someone who knows about and is interested in simple low voltage circuits using micro, tilt and magnetic reed switches.

I plan to be around for some time yet and am prepared to give support and tuition if needed!

● **If you are able to volunteer to help with this very public-spirited role please contact Chris via the website, or call into the Seed Store Café one Sunday to give us your details.**



George hangs up his spade



After many years as a ploholder George Loosemore has given up his well-loved plots and retired from the challenge of cultivation. In recognition of the dedication and help he has given to the running of the site George has been given an honorary freedom of the RPA, so you will still see the familiar yellow jacket around the place!

A date for your diary! Christmas Café, 20th December

SCHOOL GROUP VISIT

St John's Gardening Club visit

On Wednesday 8th July St John the Baptist junior school's Gardening Club (a bit of a mouthful!) visited the Royal Paddocks allotments. Even though the weather did its best to dampen our spirits, we had a great time scouring Mrs P's plot. Treasures such as purple podded mangetouts, baby yellow courgettes, flowering fennel were picked, eaten and closely inspected (the kind of inspection Mrs P doesn't mind!) and ladybirds observed. We even dug up some new potatoes to take home; some of the potatoes were simply tiny.

As we only managed to look at Mrs P's plot we need to visit again... maybe in the Autumn once the squashes have done some growing... Sarah Palamartschuk



Seedy Sunday

5th February 2015

We were so lucky with early February sunshine for the first of the year's social events – mild and spring-like so no need for the gala tents to go up. There was a good range and variety of seeds to sell and swap, including interesting heritage beans. Keen competitors added their names to the pumpkin and sunflower competition registration sheets – good luck to all!



In the café two new volunteers were inducted as slices of cakes went flying off the cake-stands!

Many thanks to David, Jenny and Nick who

helped out on the stall. We made £81 from generous donations to the seed stall and it was a very enjoyable morning all round! Jenny Bourne



Many plottolders attended the funeral service for Jenny Trevillion, who appears in the picture above (left). Jenny gave an enormous amount of time and enthusiasm to the running of the site, and we will miss her.

Bob displayed a chilli plant at the service, one of the last plants which Jenny grew, and flowers grown by fellow plottolders formed a colourful tribute from the RPA.

Plant Sale 26th April 2015

A cold and overcast day didn't deter the tent team, up early to provide shelter for the sales volunteers and the more tender plants on sale! Despite the cool temperatures and grey skies a good sales day ensued,



with interesting varieties of heritage beans, squashes, cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers on sale, as well as flowers, leeks, brassicas, salad leaves, tayberries and peas (some of Dan's 'Greenshaft' peas going on to win 1st prize in the Summer Produce show!) to name but a few! The pumpkin and sunflower competition registrars took down more hopeful contestants' names – I wish I'd had a few spare fleeces to keep Bethan and Hilary a bit warmer. Hope you both survived

the chilly morning – highest registration number yet!

The café did a roaring trade (warmer inside than out – and tasty cakes!).



An additional source of income this year came from a brisk sale of equipment and tools, including those very sought after lamp-shade cloches – David raised £112.50, adding to the £267.82 from plant sales to make a very acceptable overall day's total of £380.32.

Thanks to everyone who helped out, without whom these events couldn't take place: setting up and stalls sales team: Barbara, Bridget, Carol, David L, Gill, Helen and Sue; the tent team: Ashley, Nick, Ray and Barbara, David L, Gaby and Jem; Hilary and Bethan on registration and, of course to Anne, Gaby and the café team for providing us all with hot drinks and top cakes! *Jenny Bourne*



Smart New Pump Signs *by Ashley Catto*

With all the new ploholders arriving lately, the need arose for new pump etiquette signage. The last ones I put up have all but fallen to pieces now and it was agreed, with a small outlay, to put up new ones for all 26 pumps. Small outlay, not so small effort making and putting them up... some of these pumps are well hidden! A sort of hunt the pump ensued. I think I've got them all. At least the weather was kind over the two days of making and putting them up; polish my halo. Jenny Bourne added the final touches, printing the notices and stapling them on the boards.



RPA at the Hampton Wick Festival

The RPA again took part in the annual Hampton Wick Festival on the 3rd of August. With tools akimbo and a fine display of horticultural millinery we marched in the Grand Parade – no-one in Hampton Wick can be unaware of the allotments now!

For the first time this year we also had a stall to let people know who we are and what ploholder life is like. We ran a children's colouring table



which proved extremely popular all day.

Many thanks to the ploholders who paraded and who helped man the stand.

All the photos from the Hampton Wick Festival can be viewed on www.hwfestival.org.uk



A Plot in the Dark:

A Mrs Maple Detective Story

by Helen Nix

Episode 4: hep cat on a hot tin roof.

Mrs Maple trod carefully over plot 57f's rocky, verdant soil towards Louis.

"Mr Balfour? May I have a word with you?"

"I've told you before! I'm not talking to any more committee members without my lawyer present!"

"But Mr Balfour, it's me, Mrs Maple. You agreed to speak to me this morning about the item that was stolen?"

He looked at her properly. "Oh, yeah, sorry. All this bad mojo with the committee has got me jumpy." His foot started tapping agitatedly again.

"What bad mojo would that be?" asked Mrs Maple, looking at him inquisitively.

"Oh, those cats have got it in for me, real bad. They write me letters about how I don't use my plot for vegetables, they complain I don't pay my fees on time and now they've started a campaign of hate through stealing my things. It's like constructive dismissal."

Mrs Maple looked carefully at the beautifully manicured lawn before her. "And what are the vegetables you're growing here?"

Louis pointed to a lone potato plant at the end of the plot. "That edzell blue is the apple of my eye."

"And the rest of the plot is just grass?"

"Well, I like grass," said Louis, his foot performing a lone samba. "It's good for my other passion."

"Which is...?"

"Boules, man, I love boules. That's why I was so upset when my boule was taken from me."

"So what actually happened when it was stolen?"

"Well, it was like everyone else. On Monday afternoon I was tending carefully to my precious potato plant, my boules standing ready for a game when my friends came over. When I went back to the front of the plot, my jack ball had been stolen, so we couldn't play.

Those..." Louis caught Mrs Maple's eye "...baskets from the committee obviously want me out so badly they'll stop at nothing..." And there it was again, the leg ticking nervously, seemingly independent from the rest of his body. "They won't get rid of me. But, man, they've taken the joy out of it alright."

"Yes, I can see that," said Mrs Maple. "I'd get yourself a restful hobby. Perhaps you could plant a few more edzells next season. Put more of yourself into your other passion. I have the oddest sense the committee wouldn't mind so much about that."

"Maybe," said Louis. "Thanks doll."

And with that, Mrs Maple set off to Ted's plot, to investigate what had happened to his trowel.

"Ah, Mrs Maple. How lovely to see you at last," said Ted, holding out his hand and shaking hers firmly. Mrs Maple glanced down at the hand which was so warmly holding hers. It was old and gnarled, and had been steeped in so much soil and sun for so long that

probably no amount of scrubbing could return it to its original pink. His green jumper was held together by hope and its holes, and like its owner had a friendly, accommodating air.

"Nice to meet you too," replied Mrs Maple. "Now tell me about your trowel."

Ted's shoulders slumped as he shook his head sadly. "Ah ma'am, it's a sorry business and no mistake. I don't like villainy about the plot. It upsets the people and the plants, and then no-one's happy. I've been gardening man and boy, and this kind of shenanigans never ends well."

"And how long have you been growing here?" Mrs Maple asked.

"Oh, not that long. Only ten years, but here in Little Bramble, that makes me an old hand. Most here have been here much less time. I remember when allotments were running to weed, and then you had your Titchmarshes and your Diarmuds and next thing you know you can't get a plot for love nor money. I blame that Percy Thrower, meself. Back in Saffron Walden, me and mine farmed. We worked the ground and with the animals to produce tremendous bounty well before anyone started banging on about organic blooming gardening. We grew organic because that's what there was. You should have seen the marrows when we got to the shows. They were great times..." he paused for a moment before catching Mrs Maple's eye, and laughed quietly. "Well, in the main they were. It was why I was so upset when I lost my trowel. It was one of my last links with my past. My old dad gave me that trowel when I graduated from agricultural college and I've used it every day since. The thought of some young scroat making off with it, or selling it on that eBay, or not cleaning it off properly so it goes all rusty... well it makes my blood boil." He paused, softly wiping his eye, leaving a smudge of mud on his wizened old face.

"I'm so sorry," said Mrs Maple. "Can you talk about what actually happened when it went?"

He nodded, unable to look her in the eye. "Well, I've a story to tell about that, right enough. I was here late one night, as is my preference. My shed was open and lit. I was giving my beds a good hoeing, and I heard a scraping sound. I went to the shed, and I saw my trowel was missing, and some young lad was making off with it. I gave chase, but my ticker isn't what it used to be, so I had to leave off. If I ever see him again though..."

Mrs Maple gaped at him. "So you actually saw the thief?"

"Only from behind. I'm just assuming from the baseball boots and the hoodie that he was young. And I suppose everyone looks quite young to me."

"Would you recognise him if you saw him again though?"

He shrugged. "I'd give it a good old go."

"I see," said Mrs Maple thoughtfully. "Well, then I'd better go and see Miss Toni about her clog."

Summer Produce Show

26 June 2015

It was something of an experiment to hold the produce show in June and with such a cold April and May we did not really know what to expect. But we need not have worried. There was an impressive display of both vegetables and fruits with excellent beans and peas (note to self – separate categories next time) and beautiful

brassicas and alliums. Berries ruled on the fruit front with attractive displays of lots of varieties. We were delighted that there were more entries in the flower category as that had been one of our objectives.

As to the making and baking it was rather disappointing that there were no chutney entries and only a couple of jams despite the fact that entries made last year were acceptable. But as for the cakes – great to look at and even better to taste!

We made some changes to the children's show with 'allotment on a plate' replacing 'veggie monsters' and adding a cake baking/decorating section. The entries we had were impressive but there was plenty of scope for more. If you or your children have any thoughts about what we might do next year please say.

Although the produce show was not meant to be a summer social to replace the autumn social (coming up on September 13th), I think it fair to say the Pimms Tent certainly added to the atmosphere and was much enjoyed.

The show would not be possible without you, the judges, registrars, tent team, those who help out setting up and clearing away and a lot of hard work by the Social Committee, particularly Jenny Bourne who keeps everything on track. And the day would certainly not be such fun without the café volunteers who kept us all fed and watered. So a very big thank you to everyone concerned in the event!

As for next year – it's never too early to start thinking about what you're going to enter!

Ruth Walker



Summer Produce Show Prizewinners *with Judges' comments*

VEGETABLES

ROOTS

1 Ashley Catto, plot A

Beetroot: lovely uniform size of beetroot, good colour

2 Liz Rigge, plot 83

Carrots: good shape and length

3 Mike McMinn, plot 145

Beetroot: nice colour, similar sizes

BRASSICAS

1 Chris Knight, plot 82

Cauliflower: lovely head, full, large cauliflower

2 Ben Wilkins & Helen Sparrow, plot 101

Cabbages: lovely dense head on both; good, solid, full cabbages

3 Ashley Catto, plot A

Cabbages: 2 good pointed cabbages, loose leaves, not quite ready

ALLIUMS

1 and **BEST IN SHOW**

Amy Baker & Will McElhinney, plot 189b

Onions: fantastic onions, good size and shape, nicely presented; really good quality and presentation; excellent

2 Nick & Janet Baylis, plot 110f

Garlic: great garlic bulbs, nice size and well presented; very good garlic, some damage

LEGUMES

1 Jenny Bourne, plot 27f

Peas: very uniform full pea, good flavour; wonderful peas, uniform, packed with peas

2 Ashley Catto, plot A

Broadbeans: great broadbeans, good size and flavour; really good size bean, excellent quality

3 (joint) Flora Souper, plot 142f

Mangetout: very uniform mangetout, good size; lovely

3 Ben Wilkins & Helen Sparrow, plot 101

Peas: uniform peapods, less uniform inside; good peas

LETTUCE

1 Nick & Janet Baylis, plot 110f

good, full lettuces

2 Denise Warren, plot 142b

small, thick texture, good flavour

POTATOES

1 Nick and Janet Baylis, plot 110f

uniform size, no damage, good looking and good size

2 Ruth Walker, plot 128b

uniform size, no damage, good looking

3 Ashley Catto, plot A

uniform size, slight imperfections

OTHER

1 Nick and Janet Baylis, plot 110f

Chard: lovely stems and good leaves

2 Liz Rigge, plot 83

Chard: lovely stems, leaves ok

3 Flora Souper, plot 142f

Chard: nice leaves, stems ok

FRUIT

Small plate of soft fruit:

1 Jenny Michell, plot 144

Raspberries: good colour, clean, quite uniform

2 Gill Hiley, plot 50

Tayberries: good colour and shape; evenly matched in size; good condition

3 Nick and Janet Baylis, plot 110f

Gooseberries: good size and colour; reasonably clean and uniform in size



Currants – 5 strigs of red, black or white

1 Gill Hiley, plot 50

Redcurrants: good rich red colour, fairly evenly sized

2 Liz Rigge, plot 83

Blueberries: good colour, fairly good size, not all equally ripe

3 Lindsay Stallard, plot 76b

Redcurrants: nice colour, smallish

FLOWERS

Mixed floral arrangement in a small vase up to 10cm lip width

1 Jenny Michell, plot 144

2 Flora Souper, plot 142f

3 Liz Rigge, plot 83

3 stems in any size vase

1 Flora Souper, plot 142f

2 Chris Knight, plot 82

3 Liz Rigge, plot 83

JAMS

1 Liz Rigge, plot 83

packed with flavour, pieces of fruit distributed throughout; interesting flavours – Gooseberry and elderflower; tayberry and framboise

2 Ashley Catto, plot A

Good presentation; one jam too runny

CAKES

To be made primarily from produce grown on the plot

1 Caroline Warner, plot 80

apple and sage: great taste and presentation using sage

2 Lindsey Stallard, plot 76b

lemon with nasturtium: fantastic flavour of citrus, with moist texture

3 Andrea Berghal, plot 101

strawberry: delightful summer flavour of strawberry



YOUNG ENTRANTS

Allotment in a Dish

Age up to 6

1 Dylan Boynton-Lavell, plot 131b

Very artistic arrangement, enormous gooseberries, healthy peas, nicely presented, colours of the plate enhance the fruit and veg

2 Freya Wilkins-Berghal, plot 101

Good variety of crops, healthy green lettuce, beautiful small strawberries and herbs

3 Rufus Storey, plot 95f

Lovely spectrum of colours, inventive with courgette, flowers and herbs, mini-courgette and lavender

Age 7 – 10

1 Max Wilkins-Berghal, plot 101

Attractive and colourful variety of allotment produce – fruit, legumes and asparagus

2 Robyn Boynton-Lavell, plot 131b

Very good potatoes! Attractive arrangement

Mixed Bunch of Flowers in a Jam Jar

Age up to 6

1 Alf Makepeace, plot 177b

Rich orange california poppies, pale blue nigella, lavender, verbena and white cosmos mixed with dried grass. Very good mix of colours and heights in the arrangement.



2 Freya Wilkins-Berghal, plot 101

Japanese minimalist arrangement. Lilac and yellow mix, delicate phacelia

Summertime Cake

Age 7 – 10

1 Alf and Stanley Makepeace, plot 177b

Looks and smells delicious, nice touch with the lavender decorating the plate. Chocolate heart-shape cakes decorated with cream and a big strawberry

and **nominated for BEST IN SHOW**

Nature Watch Blog

Jenny Bourne's blog continues to capture the wildlife and nature at large on our site.

Follow it on the RPA website

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

Jenny welcomes your thoughts, sightings, contributions and photos –

Contact jenbourne@btinternet.com

How Growmore Grows More: part 2 – POTASSIUM

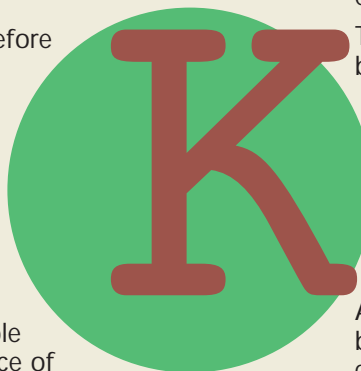
The chemical symbol for potassium is K. Why? This element – element number 19 and the alkali metal below sodium in Group I of the Periodic Table – was first isolated by Humphrey Davy in 1807 by means of passing an electric current through the substance known as potash (now called potassium carbonate). He christened his discovery 'potassium' after the word potash. Kalium was the mediaeval Latin word for potash – hence the 'K'.

In the natural environment, the weathering of soil minerals releases nutrients that then can be absorbed by plants via their root systems. Potassium forms 2.5% of the Earth's crust

('lithosphere') and is therefore readily available in some soil types. The decay of dead vegetation, dead animals and manure by soil microbes recycles the nutrients after plants and animals have used them. Rainwater passing through the soil would wash away ('leach') soluble chemicals, but the presence of decaying organic matter tends to reduce this, and clay minerals have a similar binding ('sequestering') effect. However, in cultivated soil where high yields are demanded, plant material is removed every year by harvesting and leaching by rainwater is more significant, the reduced availability of N, P and K often limits plant growth, and that is why commercial fertilisers such as Growmore are designed to restock the soil with these vital elements.

K deficiency is most common in light, sandy soils, and in acidic soils K retention is assisted by application of lime. Gardening books describe the symptoms of K deficiency as brown scorching and curling of leaf tips, yellowing ('chlorosis') between leaf veins, and purple spots on the underside of leaves. These symptoms often appear first on older leaves. Poor flowering and fruiting and reduced disease resistance also follow when potassium is in short supply.

Plants absorb potassium through their roots in the



form of the positively charged atom K^+ . Its main role is to provide the optimum environment for the cell chemistry ('metabolism') that is controlled by enzymes which speed up ('catalyse') the important chemical processes that are at the heart of living things. Each of the thousands of enzymes produced by a cell has evolved to catalyse a particular reaction. Enzymes are the machines that run the cell, and processes crucial to plant growth such as the manufacture of sugars, starch and proteins are dependent on adequate levels of K^+ ions. Production of the hugely important molecule ATP – the universal energy currency in living cells – also involves K^+ .

The mechanisms by which plants transport substances between leaves, roots and storage organs are also diminished if K^+ ions, and hence ATP, are lacking.

Products of photosynthesis need to be moved from the leaves to other parts of the plant through the phloem fibres; water and nutrients such as phosphate, magnesium and calcium must be translocated from the roots through the xylem fibres. All this is, of course, vital to a healthy plant.

A plant's outer layer of cells ('epidermis') is covered by a waxy cuticle that prevents potentially catastrophic loss of water by evaporation. But there does need to be the loss of a controlled amount of water – to assist water transport through the plant ('transpiration') and for its cooling effect. Gas exchange with the outside world is also required: carbon dioxide for photosynthesis comes in and oxygen (a waste product) goes out. Special pores called stomata exist in the undersides of leaves that enable the plant to regulate these flows. When K^+ levels are insufficient this essential function is compromised. Similar mechanisms in specialised tissues account for the ability of some plants to turn their leaves to face towards or away from the Sun and thereby regulate the rate of photosynthesis.

That concludes my scanty account of the biology and chemistry of potassium as it relates to our gardens.

● Coming up next time:

Phosphorus – Information, power and bacterial slaves. *Martin Scotton*

Fruit pruning workshop (full notes on the website in the Past Events section)

On Sunday 1st March, a fruit pruning workshop was led by Kate Robinson – Community Garden Coordinator, Jam Yesterday Jam Tomorrow.

The event was very well attended, with approximately 30 ploholders present. We started with apple and pear trees and then went on to look at soft fruit.

Kate gave clear explanations and demonstrations of what to cut, where to cut and how to cut. It was a very useful and enjoyable morning, despite the outbreak of 'secateur envy' among some of those present. We are very grateful to Kate for her time and expertise.



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee in the letterbox in the shed by the gate, or email us via our website

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk