



MAY 2019 NEWSLETTER



NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

I can't believe that another month has been and gone so, as promised, here's an update on what's been happening during April.

Very sadly our Chairman, Martin Duncan, decided to resign on the advice of his doctor. Martin took on the role of Chairman a little over 3 years ago as no one else wanted the job. Over the years he led the Committee with remarkable determination and put in long and tireless hours to get things done for the good of us all. For this we thank you Martin and we hope you enjoy your new found freedom (although if the ride on lawnmower idea gets the go ahead, I bet you'll be queuing up for a turn at grass cutting - behind me haha!)

We have several new members who we would like to welcome, both at Pillings; Charlotte Favill has taken on Plot 26C (my new neighbour) and Dominic Chumo is on Plot 17. We hope you both enjoy your allotment experience.

Staying with Pillings, the letterbox that we told you about in last month's newsletter has now been put up at the Trading Hut (thank you Terry Dunlop), so if you have anything that you want to pass on to the Committee, please make use of it. It will be checked on a regular basis and is there for the use of members from all sites, not just Pillings.

Last month we also mentioned that we were looking into hiring a mini digger to, amongst other things, clear out the dyke at Pillings. Costs have now been obtained and the work will be happening in approximately 4 to 6 weeks time. Our thanks go out to Bob Kendrick for offering to do this for us.

We have received a complaint about the land surrounding the Trading Hut saying that it looks messy. As a result, the area has now been weeded and there are also plans to tidy up the parking area.

The main water pump at Pillings is being a little temperamental at the moment in that it needs priming every time it's used. Just to assure members, we are trying to sort this out and hopefully it will be back to normal working order very soon. We are also planning to add a water point for those members at the bottom end of Pillings who currently have quite a trek to the nearest water point. More on this will follow.

Moving on to Burley. We discussed the rubbish issue there, specifically the car seats abandoned in the hedge near one of Peter Clegg's plots, and it was agreed that a skip would be organised to get rid of all allotment junk (not household). This will be happening later this month.

It was also agreed that we would work on providing additional parking at Burley and Elm, where spaces are minimal. The work is planned for early Autumn and the spoils from this will be used at Pillings to save on disposal costs. Also, Martin and myself are in the process of selling the bricks and blocks sitting on that site, so hopefully they will be gone in the not too distant future!

We would like to pass on our appreciation to the Hibbitt family who have recently erected a fence for us at Elm using reclaimed timber, although the results look like a brand new fence. Many thanks guys for doing this!

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
Burley Road:	Georgina Messenger Alan Cunningham Vacancies x 2
Elms Close:	Jim Hardwick
Willow Crescent:	Jim Hardwick Vacancy

FORTHCOMING COMPETITIONS

Georgina Messenger and Fiona Pearson have very kindly offered to organise this year's Scarecrow Competition for us (thank you ladies). The judging for this will be taking place on Saturday 24th August 2019 and entry forms, I believe, will be available in July. Full details will follow in June's newsletter (or possibly beforehand via Facebook and the website, so keep checking)!



The Best Allotment Competition will also be taking place again this Summer. I'm still trying to get my head around the organisation of this one, so all I can say for now is that it will definitely be happening, so you have plenty of warning to get sprucing up your allotment! Further details will be advised soon, again probably via Facebook and the website, but I'll make sure that the Trading Hut carries paper copies for those of you without the technology.



DOGS

Sorry to nag, but please remember to keep your dogs on a lead when they're not in the confines of your own allotment.

Unfortunately Jim Hardwick wasn't able to make this month's meeting, so we don't have too much to report. However Willow plot holders will already be able to see the results of Jim's labours in clearing pathways, clearing the ditch and cutting the grass. Well done Jim and welcome to Committee life!

Now onto the really important stuff. As you know, we asked you to let us have your suggestions for improvements that you would like to see on site, and here are the answers we received:

- Drinking water taps.
- Standpipes for hand washing.
- More water points/troughs.
- Track and parking improvements at the far end of Willow, together with extended roadway.
- More car parking spaces - all sites.
- A wooden fence along the back of Plot 14B at Burley which backs onto the Ladywell car park.
- Install new, more secure, fencing and entrance gate at Willow along the concrete road, similar to the type installed at Pillings.
- Erection of a new fence along the North perimeter where the Willow Crescent houses back onto the allotments.
- Installation of a secure storage unit (site safe) for members to store expensive equipment in (rotavators, etc).
- A small kitchen attached to the Trading Hut to sell tea, coffee, cakes and also to sell produce from allotments, with funds being transferred back into the Society.
- Provision of some recycled items for members to purchase, eg corrugated iron, pallets, wood, large plastic barrels, to enable DIY raised beds, water containers to collect rain water or to make cold frames.
- Drainage pipe to remove excess ground water from far end plots at Willow.
- Better site notice boards (Parish Council type).
- Sit on mower for grass cutting or more powerful driven lawnmower.

A couple of these items have already been mentioned above, ie parking improvements at Burley and Elm, the additional water point at Pillings together with tidying up the Trading Hut area and dealing with the dyke and, before Willow members shout, we are also very aware of the work needed to the turning circle and the extended roadway, which will definitely happen soon (promise!).

However, we would welcome your comments on all the other suggestions before we take any action. We have a few ideas of our own regarding the practicalities of some of them, but we want to know what you think, so please either email me, drop a letter through my letterbox (8 Mallard Court), or make use of the new postbox outside the Trading Hut. The sooner we know what you want, the sooner we can get moving with it!

Lastly, May's committee meeting is being postponed into early June, because I'm off on holiday (yipee), so June's Newsletter will be a week or so late and also not so long!!

Penny Paton
OHGAS SECRETARY



THE TRADING HUT

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



Members are urged to drop by the Hut, where top quality products are sold at very favourable prices. If you only need a small quantity, we can oblige, but it's very much a case of use it or you'll lose it! Wilko's may have cheaper prices but you won't get the banter and remember that all money raised goes back into the Society!!

Also, if you're interested in taking a turn at serving in the Trading Hut (alongside a Committee member), please let Dick know, as I'm sure he would appreciate some more helpers.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

CHAIRMAN OR CHAIRWOMAN

As you know, we need 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!

Although Rob Bowley is happy to hold the fort in the meantime, he does not want the job on a permanent basis, so we desperately need a volunteer!

If you think you might be interested, or you're definitely 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!