



JULY 2017

**View from the Chair**

The sun has had its hat on and we have received some welcome rain (not enough).

As the saying goes, **Make hay while the sun shines**. Unfortunately some tenants have taken this quite literally and the plot inspection team has been struggling to keep up. (We lost one for 2 days in the long grass). You can see how many letters have been sent below.

Please help reduce this number by keeping your plots clear all year round as the weeds grow quicker than anything I have ever managed to grow. If your circumstances have changed or illness means you are unable to work your plot, please let us know as the last thing you want is a letter from us when you are already struggling. You can contact us via email or text/phone 07564 649137. Alternatively, pop into the shop for a cup of tea and talk with one of the committee

There is another open committee meeting coming up for anyone who missed the last one. You are welcome to pop along; it is in the huts on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 6.45 for 7pm start. Because of issues raised by tenants, we are looking at shortening and firming up the plot inspection policies and will broadcast the new policy when it is completed.

We do have a strimmer that tenants can use on a 50/50 basis to help keep your paths clear. Please call into the shop for more details.

Tony  
(MRALGA Chair)

**Letters Sent**

How we are working to improve the site and the number of letters sent:

PLOT INSPECTION LETTERS

1 <sup>st</sup> stage plot inspections	41
2 <sup>nd</sup> stage plot inspections	18
3 <sup>rd</sup> stage notices to quit	

More letters are due to be sent soon.

GENERAL LETTERS

Breach of Tenancy rules	7
Eviction notices	1
Thank you letters.	11

**Rodent Report**

12 plots were treated for rats in April/May.

**Rodent Activity Indicator:**

	Increasing
	Stable
	Decreasing

## Gardening Club

Our next **FREE** Gardening Club Talk is on **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> August from 12.30 – 2pm** when we will be presenting “**Seed Collection, Cuttings and Propagation**”. This will be followed by a Q&A session. Lunch of filled rolls will be available. Free tea and coffee.

Mike Thurlow gave two very informative talks on Companion Planting and Greenhouses and Polytunnels at our last Gardening Club meeting and answered many questions from the audience on a variety of subjects, thanks to his vast horticultural knowledge.

## Welcome to the following new tenants:

Don Beale	Plot 632A
Dawn Cox	Plot 282.1
Przemyslaw Dubert	Plot 159.1
Amanda Friday	Plot 628
Kath Jeyes	Plot 152
Nick Prince	Plot 388.1
Rui Rodrigues	Plot 178

There are currently 6 vacant plots with the possibility of a few more becoming free in the next few weeks so spread the word to friends and family!

## Security

Following a recent spate of break-ins on site we would ask that all tenants are vigilant and take extra care:

- **Where possible, please avoid keeping any valuables on site.**
- **Ensure all items are marked. Should the worst happen then at least property can be identified.**
- **Ensure the main gate is locked. (Outside of 10.00 - 12.00 Thurs, Sat & Sun).**
- **Challenge or report anyone who you believe shouldn't be on site, along with anything you feel is suspicious.**
- **Log all break-ins and thefts to the Police.**

With everyone's participation we are looking to reduce these incidents to an absolute minimum.

There have been several reports of rainwater being taken from tenants' plots. We would politely remind everyone that the only communal water is from the standing taps/tanks on site. Water taken from another plot will be considered as theft and treated accordingly.

Please remember to ask for consent before going on to a tenant's plot when they're not there.

Hose pipes are not to be attached to any of the mains water outlets on site.

Please do not wash any equipment, including tools, pots, trays or boots, in the water tanks as this can easily spread many kinds of disease.

By actively working together, along with a little consideration for our neighbours, we will continue to grow collectively.

The following article, written by our Treasurer, Carol Andrew, is being published in the next edition of the National Allotment Society magazine. She asked our last guest speaker, Mike Thurlow, to add a few words about his visit to us and, as you will read, he was full of praise for our allotment site.

MRALGA as I like to call our Association (Mile Road Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Association) Bedford has grown immensely since our inaugural meeting on 18.09.2008. We are now a fully devolved managed site and also a registered charity, No.1155301. We have a busy trading hut open Thursday, Saturday and Sunday mornings, a communal room for events and refreshments and a library of useful information. We have 3 main events each year, a Plant sale, National Allotment Week open day and our Annual Show Day, this year on 9<sup>th</sup> September. Our events subcommittee have been very busy this year organising a Christmas get together with Santa and his elves, a pruning demonstration in our very own orchard of apples and pears, a willow weaving workshop to learn how to make your own obelisk, an Easter egg hunt with lots of chocolate eggs and a rare breed of chick!



Quiz nights were organised with our talented quiz masters and our new and a very informative Gardening Club was established. A trip to the National Arboretum is also planned for later this year. This year's plant sale included talks on companion planting and making the most of your greenhouse or polytunnel by Mike Thurlow. Our members found the talks very informative and inspiring. I asked Mike to pen a few thoughts from his visit:

*"I should like to take this opportunity to thank the two Carols and members of Mile Road Allotment for inviting me to be a guest speaker at their Annual Plant Day held on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2017. It turned out to be one of the most enjoyable days that I have ever had on an allotment site. They have put in so much time and effort in creating a site that has become an important part of the local community. It was hard to imagine how the site was at risk of commercial and residential development in 2008 by the local authority and parts unused and overgrown. But their determination to self-manage eventually won through and they have worked miracles. There are 310 plots, a very few vacant. They have refurbished a sales shed, a lecture/meeting room, plant production unit and a member's room that incorporates a garden library, admin corner and a kitchen that supplies snacks and teas! The committee and members are to be congratulated for their vision and enterprise in creating one of the best allotment sites that I have ever experienced. If any National members are ever in the area why not go along and see for yourself. You won't be disappointed!!"*

Our gates will be open for visitors in celebration of National Allotment Week on Saturday 19th August. We will also be raising funds for Sue Ryder.

We are very proud of our site and its ever growing diverse community. We evolve and blossom as the seeds we grow, young and old enjoying allotment life and the many benefits of "Growing Your Own".

Carol Andrew, Trustee and NAS mentor

### Up-coming Events

**Quiz Night** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm. Jacket Potato with 2 toppings followed by ice cream. £7.50. Limited to 50 places.

**Day trip to National Arboretum** in Leicestershire on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October. Tickets including coach fare £18.

Tickets for all events are available at the site shop.

If you would like to join the events subcommittee see Dave Osborn or email [events@mralga.org](mailto:events@mralga.org)

### Annual Show Day Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Many more classes and attractions have been added this year so make sure you pick up your Show Brochure from the shop or tea room.

There will be another Plot Competition this year and everyone's plot will be eligible. Those short-listed will be judged on 15<sup>th</sup> July.

As well as Best Plot, there will also be Best Newcomer again for those new to the site. Judging will also be on the 15<sup>th</sup> July.

### Tea Room Closures

The tea room is usually open on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 – 12 but you may have noticed that it's been closed on some occasions. This is sadly due to a lack of volunteers willing to 'put the kettle on'. We really do need a core of volunteers to help in the tea room – it's just a matter of making cups of tea and coffee. There's no washing up to do as there's now a dishwasher.

If you could occasionally spare an hour or two, please call into the tea room and speak to Maria or just sign your name on the rota sheet.

### Maintenance News

It's been another busy few months for the maintenance volunteers. 9 tanks and 1 bath have been installed, 3 taps replaced, 2 trees cut down, a number of leaks repaired and all plot inspections have been completed.

The team would like to remind tenants that if you are intending to give up your plot, please make sure it is cleared of all rubbish and is left in a tidy state otherwise you will incur a charge for clearance and tidying.

### Shop News

We still have some vegetable plants, flowers and herbs for sale as well as the usual seeds, compost and fertilizer etc. We work hard to keep prices as low as possible so pick up a price list when you are next around or view online at [www.mralga.org](http://www.mralga.org).

The Shop is open Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10-12 noon..

### Tips for the Month

In July, you can still keep sowing beetroot, carrots, French beans, turnips, radishes, spring onions, lettuce and salad leaves.

You can also still plant sprouting broccoli, leeks, spring cauliflower etc. There are plenty of herbs in the shop to plant too.

We currently have plots available so please spread the word to friends and family.  
Enjoy your plot!

MRALGA Trustees