

# The Plot

January 2012

A newsletter for members of Kettering Allotments

## Rent Paid?

We hope that all of our members received the reminder to pay rent last month. The rents were due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. It is not too late to pay, but if rent is not paid by the end of January, it will be assumed that the member has given up. Therefore the plot may be re-let to someone on the waiting list. There was an increase in the rents for 2012. The committee agreed to this reluctantly, but we need to balance our books. The new rents will be **£2.50 per pole** (or £2 per pole for pensioners).

**The membership fee is also increasing to £2 per year** from January. This was agreed at the last AGM in March.

**If you have any questions or problems concerning your rent please phone our treasurer Mr Dai Johnson on 01536 483398**

## New fence for Northfield Avenue

A new fence has been erected on the boundary of the Northfield Avenue allotments. The project was funded by Kettering Borough Council. This is the section from the allotment gate to the railway bridge. The piece of land that this encloses has now been added to our lease. Previously that piece of land was maintained by KBC. Although some of this land is not suitable for gardening because of trees and

topography, we expect to be able to create at least two new allotment plots there. Many thanks to Kish Lad at KBC and the field stewards at Northfield Avenue for coordinating this project.

## New Police Phone number

for non emergencies = **101**

Use **999** for emergencies or dial **112** for emergencies if you are using a mobile.

## Lock the Gates!

A reminder to lock the gates to our fields at all times. We have had fly tipping and unwelcome visitors on our plots recently. The gates and locks cost a lot of money. It is a shame that some members can't be bothered to lock them.

## Questions from members

The following question has been sent to us. Perhaps you know the answer? Please email us if you do.

Our Brassicas are covered in grey fly. Takes 6 washes with water to clean the leaves before we can cook them. We haven't got powerful hoses on allotments.

Garlic Spray used on the original plants has been recommended, but I have never seen this on Garden Centre shelves in this area.

How can we make it ? I speculate that it's crushed Garlic Bulbs mixed in ? amount of water with ? amount of washing up liquid to stop the spray being washed off when it rains.

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## A newsletter for members of Kettering Allotments Communication

If you are intending to give up your allotment, or wish to reduce the area, please let your field steward know as soon as possible. We can adjust the records, send correct rent reminders and allocate plots to those on the waiting list.

### Contact us

Email us on the address below

[pumpkinking@ntlworld.com](mailto:pumpkinking@ntlworld.com)

If you wish find out more about our association please visit the website

[www.ketteringallotments.co.uk](http://www.ketteringallotments.co.uk)

### Safety First!

We all want to enjoy our allotments and remain safe. Trips to A&E are a nuisance, so the committee has adopted a **Health and Safety** policy.

A key aspect of this policy is that we are all responsible for safety on our fields. **If any member notices a new hazard, it is essential that it is reported and made as safe as possible.** We all need to read this policy and be aware of its content. The policy is now available on our [website](#), along with a [hazards checklist](#). If you have any suggestions for additions or improvements, please contact the secretary.

In some ways, Health and Safety is

what used to be called “common sense”. However, we all know somebody who seems to lack “common sense” and will benefit from a gentle reminder. Some gardening activities are hazardous, so we need to take care (called risk assessment).

### Margaret Rd Gate

A reminder about the noise made at the Margaret Road Gate.

Please consider our neighbours. The resident works nights and needs to sleep in the mornings.

Please try to open the gate quietly, **switch off car radios** and do your best not to disturb the neighbours.

### Novice Gardeners

New allotment members often ask their neighbours for advice. This especially applies if the plot is overgrown with weeds when they take it on. Some suggestions are now on our website – click [here](#). Perhaps you can add some other words of advice?

### Green Manures

Several members are using green manures to improve their soil. The following contribution about green manure comes from one of our members, Diane Bulley.

I have been reading the Environment Section on [www.happynews.com](http://www.happynews.com) about 'Fertiliser Trees' being grown alongside Maize crops in African countries, giving a 40% crop yield increase.

[www.ketteringallotments.co.uk](http://www.ketteringallotments.co.uk)

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These 'trees' (native plants) seem to be about 4' high, result in improved water retention. They provide fertiliser to benefit the poor soil 600,000 farmers have to contend with, over that whole Continent. They should help to prevent famine in the future. Chemical fertilisers and animal manures are too expensive for them, or non-existent.

As we also have a possible drought problem in 2012 I am going to try this method on my plot. Making the gaps between the rows 8" wider, and sowing drought tolerant seed thinly in the middle, to dig in when the plants are about 12" high.

Russell has advised against using Green Manure Mustard Seed because this carries some Brassica infections. I am thinking now that any drought tolerant seed that will fix Nitrogen in the soil, and provide a humus to retain moisture between the rows, should be alright. The Lupin family springs to mind. I grow Lupins on my plot for the Bees, and will now rummage through my Compost Bin to find all the dead stems I threw in, carrying free Lupin seeds! Everyone has spare Runner Bean seed that usually gets thrown away, this is another option. I have a lot of spare Marigold Seed in my seed box, this is a drought tolerant plant too. Any other suggestions of possible seeds to retain and use will be very welcome at Plot 59.

The other news now is that the native Butterfly population has deteriorated by 40%. I have moved 3 old Buddleia bushes over onto the clay section of my plot, as they are vigorous plants and needed much pruning. Am going to let them grow 20 feet high, to provide the right environment for Butterflies.

Diane Bulley (Margaret Road Field.)