

## KASHS Newsletter - Autumn 2025

### **Watergate**

The driest Summer for decades has brought benefits and problems. The sunshine has brought out the bees and butterflies, which benefitted many of the fruit trees. Weeds and slugs have been under control, however, the shortage of rain meant that KASHS members, wanting to look after their crops, used a lot of tap water.

When Yorkshire Water imposed a hosepipe ban, which does not apply to allotments, we sent out messages to discourage hosepipe use and posters suggested water saving measures. Despite this, our water use continued at an unprecedented rate and when we took the meter reading, we found that we had a huge bill, so urgent action was required.

The Committee held an extra-ordinary meeting to discuss what action needed to be taken, and we all agreed the need for an immediate hosepipe ban, but with a clause to protect our members with disabilities. Unfortunately, the message about allowances for the disabled was not communicated until after the initial hosepipe ban, and debate on WhatsApp, although largely positive, did have a negative element to it.

Members adapted quickly to the measures, using watering cans and water butts. These actions dramatically reduced water usage and the meter reading went down from an average of 35 CuM2 a week to 7 CuM2, and our last reading was 1 CuM2; a great result.

At our last Committee meeting, we decided to introduce a number of measures that should reduce the waste of water. Whilst hosepipes can still be used, we ask that members use a trigger attachment and refrain from using sprinklers, so that water use is supervised at all times, and can be targeted at the base of the plant. All large structures such as sheds, should have a gutter and water butt to harvest water. A free water butt can be obtained from Yorkshire Water.

We will install water collection systems to all the committee sheds, and we will be asking Knaresborough Town Council to contribute towards large water containers for communal use. We are lucky enough to have a member who is employed in water conservation, so we look forward to drawing on his expertise in the near future, and sharing those ideas and plans with you.

### **Rents, Resizing and Renewal of Tenancies**

#### Stockwell Road site

Two factors have featured heavily in our consideration of rent increases for the coming year;

- Water costs, which have more than quadrupled on the previous year
- The imposing of a 5% increase on rent the payable to Knaresborough Town Council

To recoup these additional costs, plot holder rents need to rise overall by an *average* of 29%, or around £16 per year. This has been calculated on a price per square meter, so the larger your plot, the larger the increase, this will be in addition to a £3 per year, flat rate increase to the fixed charge element.

Despite this increase, we believe that the allotment cost continues to represent good value, and we very much hope that it remains affordable for all, with the average plot costing £71 per year (less than £2 per week). If we can significantly reduce water costs, this will help prevent significant rises next year.

Individual rent notices will be issued no later than the first week of October, for payment by 31<sup>st</sup> October. If you have any concerns regarding the affordability of your rent, please contact Rob or Kirsty, in complete confidence.

#### Hawthorns Site

There will be no rent increase for plot-holders at Hawthorns – this is because there has been no rent increase from the Council, and the site has no mains water.

The waiting list for an allotment in Knaresborough continues to grow. We now have over sixty people on the list, with the wait time now exceeding three years so, as larger plots become available, we are splitting them. A smaller plot is cheaper to rent, easier to manage and enables more people to enjoy the benefits of having an allotment.

If you are considering downsizing, please contact the committee. Similarly, if you are thinking of giving up your tenancy, the more notice you give the better, and giving a new tenant the winter to get started and prepare the ground can make a huge difference.

#### **FEVA**

This year's FEVA Open Day was a great success. The lovely weather brought out the crowds and the feedback from our visitors was overwhelmingly positive.

One big improvement was driven by Kym, who worked hard to improve activities for children, with the introduction of a very popular hook a duck stall, Sky River Face Painting and ARTventurers. Activities. Carrie's vegetable animal stall was as popular as ever, and a glut of monster courgettes meant some magnificent beasts were produced!

Rob's quiz once again guided people round the site, and this year included a children's section. As people worked their way around the site, members engaged enthusiastically with the children, pointing out ponds and wildlife, bringing the plots alive for our younger visitors, and putting smiles on their faces! The tombola stall, run by the Bolton family, was well supported with prizes, and was busy all afternoon. Community Stars teas and cakes were as popular as ever, and the Prickly Pigs tool store, run by Chris Powell, did brisk business. We were also delighted to welcome contributors from Knaresborough Forest Park, who updated visitors on the progress of the project. May thanks go to all our exhibitors and contributors.

The event has made given a much needed boost to our finances, with the tombola stall raised £131, seed sales by Jan, Elsa and Maggie raised £58, and the produce stall, which was so well supplied with jams, chutneys, honey, buns and cakes, and supervised by Sue, Jan, Yvonne and Sarah, raised a whopping £432!

We have three large baskets of seeds left that we are keen for members to use, so please get in touch if you would like some.

Ultimately, the FEVA Open Day only works if it has the support of our members, and once again everyone pulled together. Many thanks to all those who tidied their plots, assisted others, and attended on the day to welcome the public; you really brought the site to life.

### **Knaresborough in Bloom**

Congratulations to John Whitehead who won the annual Knaresborough in Bloom Best Allotment award; for those of you who know John, this will come as no surprise. The huge amount of time and attention he gives to his plot is very evident in the quality of his vegetables, fruit and flowers, which are outstanding. John is also a regular contributor towards site maintenance.

Next year, we hope to encourage more members to enter this competition.

### **Social events**

Jan Neale has been co-opted onto the committee and is keen to develop the social side of KASHS.

Apple Day On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September we held our annual Apple Day. There was a steady trickle of people all day and many litres of apple juice was collected, using apples donated by absent plot holders.

Bonfire - Saturday 2 November Please start gathering any material suitable for the bonfire, and keep it on your plot for now. This is an ideal opportunity to tidy up your plot and prepare it for the winter. We also plan to light the pizza oven, weather permitting, which will be available for members to use. More details nearer the time.

January Quiz Night We thought we would give this a try, and use it as a fund-raising social event, with family and friends all welcome. We have not got a date or venue in mind yet, but would first like to know if it is something that members would be interested in. If you are interested in attending, or have any ideas/experience around venue, planning etc, please get in touch.

### **Toilet**

The water has now been turned off (we apologise that members were not given prior notice of this), and we shall be padlocking the toilet until spring. When it re-opens, we have decided not to implement a key system, and it will be open and easily accessible to all.

### **Jobs for the winter**

Throughout autumn and winter, we will continue to have a regular Friday working group to maintain the site. However, we desperately need your help. Regardless of your ability and skills-set, we can find a job for you. We meet at 08 :30 and tend to finish between 10.30 and 11.00. We will call a separate Saturday group for jobs such as hedge-cutting and bonfire building - more details to follow.

We have three major projects to complete before the spring. The first is the construction of a shed and polytunnel. This will involve clearing a piece of ground, laying a level base and then rebuilding the shed, which is currently in pieces by the toilet. This will be used to store tables, chairs, cups and other things we need for FEVA. This will free up space for tools in our existing sheds. If we have sufficient funds, we intend to buy a polytunnel. This will give KASHS members, who don't have a greenhouse, the opportunity to grow seedlings and plants that require extra heat and protection.

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