

Chairman's report 2021

2020 was very different to previous years, due to the Covid crisis. It has meant problems for some who have been ill, others who have been shielding, and those with front line workers within their family. Fortunately the council relaxed their inspections, so those people who have been unable to tend their plots have not had to give them up. On the positive side the allotments have remained open, which has been a real boon to members, particularly those with children at home. We have all had a private space to take exercise and enjoy the fresh air. We have mercifully had no problems from break-ins or vandalism.

The association has had to do things very differently too. We were unable to hold a normal AGM so we had no option but to publish reports and inform members via our website and email.

The shop was closed for a while but we then we looked into the possibility and the acceptance of re-opening on a click and collect basis.

We were able to do this thanks to Peter, who has put in an enormous amount of work on the website and in the shop, including the installation of solar generated electricity throughout all the buildings. I will leave it to Peter to give further details on this, the expansion of the range of products, the revamp of the shop, and the recruitment of more garden members.

We also set up our own Facebook page, so that members can swap ideas, stories and photos, and as another avenue to pass on association news. We now have 70 members. I know some people are wary of Facebook, but ours is a private group, why not try it?

Roger Wilkins decided to stand down as trading secretary this year and I would like to thank him on behalf of everyone for his many years of unstinting dedication.

Roger also stood down from the committee as did George Peters, but we have welcomed new members: - David Carpenter, Andy Perman and Shirley Weeks.

The plant sale at the Drayton United Church, at which we usually have a table and make a little money for our funds, could not be held. We were also unable to stage an Open Day. However, we were able to hold our annual bonfire, although this was strictly to get rid of burnable waste, rather than a social event.

We initially thought we would be unable to get an outside judge for the annual cup competition, so we instituted some small competitions :- plot of the month, best plot sign and later, longest runner bean and largest pumpkin. Fortunately John Bannell, an experienced judge, agreed to judge the annual competition as he has done in the past. We will be announcing the results shortly by email, on the website and Facebook page.

We had two newcomers in 2020, Clare 64c and Debi 20b, and several more so far in 2021:- Mandy and David plot 6, Heath and Jake 14, Layla and Katherine (Kat) 28, Weronika and Piotr 2a, Riley and Elisabeth 44b, Sarah and Danny plot 12 and Lea, Emma, and Laura on plot 3a. One plot is awaiting allocation.

I would like to mention Stan Pitts, one of our longest serving members, who has given up his plot after many years; we hope we will continue to see him as a garden member.

I believe the time is coming for someone new to take over as chairman and bring fresh energy and ideas to the post, so should I be re-elected this year, I propose to stand down at the next AGM in 2022.

Finally I would like to thank all the committee members, particularly Roger Wilkins and Peter Cheyne, and, of course, all our association members: - Salisbury Road plot holders, Knowsley Road plot holders and Garden Members who continue to make this such a successful and friendly community.

Goff Gleadle
March 2021