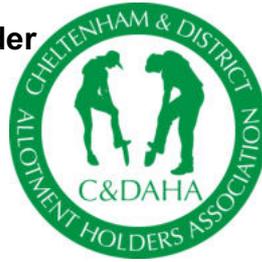


Cheltenham and District Allotment Holders' Association

President: Alderman Christine Ryder

www.cheltenhamallotments.org



Affiliated to the National Allotment Society and the Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies.

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

CHAIRMAN: Mr M D Hunt, 6 Arle Close, Cheltenham GL51 8JZ. Tel: 01242 230609

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Mrs D M Ashdown, 20 Cromwell Road, Cheltenham GL52 5DW. Tel: 01242 582008

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TREASURER: Mr C A Smith, 15 Dunster Road, Cheltenham GL51 0NL. Tel: 01242 523740

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ms K Smith, 15 Alma Close, Cheltenham GL51 3NA. Tel: 01242 257718

C&DAHA Spring Meeting – Monday March 8th

This meeting is cancelled. Due to the current Tier 4 lockdown, meeting indoors are not allowed. It is unclear when the situation will change, but in the current circumstances it is not possible for more than two people from different households to meet outdoors and people from different households cannot meet at all indoors.

Membership Subscriptions – see page 8

Membership subscriptions for 2021 become due on 1st January 2021. The subscription is £6.50 for the year.

Advantages of membership include:

- **The Seed Scheme (savings of approx. 40%)**
- **10% discount at:**
 - Dundry Nurseries, Bamfurlong Lane,
 - Cleeve Supplies, Tobyfield Rd,
- **insurance giving public liability cover related to your plot and allotment related shows/events you attend,**
- **a Newsletter four times per year,**
- *****three meetings per year – two with a guest speaker.**

(Please inform your neighbour plot holders who are not members of these benefits).

***Meetings are currently suspended due to the coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic. We hope to be able to resume them as soon as the C&DAHA committee feels it is safe to do so.

Please note that this is the last newsletter that you will receive if you have not renewed your membership for 2021.

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook, look us up under 'Cheltenham & District Allotment Holders Association', [here](#) is a link.

Information on the Internet

Visit <http://www.allaboutallotments.co.uk/>, this website contains a wealth of information about allotments.

Website Passwords

C&DAHA Website

The new password for access to the members' area of our website is **LolloRossa**, a variety of loose-leaf lettuce that I am growing this year.

National Allotment Society Website (nsg.org.uk)

The Username is: s448b

Password: 1848327

Email addresses

If you are a new email user or have changed your email address, please let me know. This ensures you receive this quarterly newsletter promptly as well as the occasional bulletin of topical news. Please notify changes to newsletter@cheltenhamallotments.org

Allotmenters Liability Insurance

Allotmenter Liability Insurance is provided by the National Allotment Society as part of our association's affiliation to them. Details of the insurance cover can be found here: <https://www.nsg.org.uk/join-us/allotmenters-liability-insurance/>, please note that members details are only passed to the insurer in the event of a claim.

Dates for Your Diary

C&DAHA Meetings for 2021

Monday September 6th – TBA

We hope that by the time of the next newsletter, we will know whether this meeting can be held.

Monday December 6th – Annual General Meeting

All meetings start at 7pm and are held in the Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham. All members are invited to attend.

Dundry Nurseries Potato Festival

Due to the current situation, the Potato Festival will not take place in 2021, however potato tubers will be on sale from January to April 2021 as usual. Members can order potatoes from Dundry Nurseries by email or phone if they wish and they will be notified when the potatoes are ready for collection.

Dundry Nurseries also have loose peas seeds, broad bean seeds, shallot sets, and onion sets for sale by weight and a good selection of packets of vegetable and flower seeds. They also stock both of the excellent Bathgate and Melcourt peat free composts.

Dundry Nurseries are currently open from 10.00 to 16.00 every day. See their website for details, including their Potato List <http://www.dundrynurseries.co.uk/> see also their Facebook page for day to day news <https://www.facebook.com/Dundry-Nurseries-Cheltenham-Glos-168941303132847>.

Malvern Spring Festival – 5th to 9th May 2021

Sadly, this has been cancelled for this year. If you have already bought tickets, they will be transferred to the equivalent day next year, or you can ask for a refund, or you can donate all or part of the ticket price to their charity, details on their website <https://www.rhsmalvern.co.uk/>

MyHarvest

A research team at the University of Sheffield are working with members of the public growing food in allotments, gardens and other own-growing spaces across the UK to understand the yield of typical UK staple fruit and vegetable crops. If you would like to participate or see the results of their work so far, details can be found on their website myharvest.org.uk.

Request for Committee Members

The current C&DAHA committee does not have representatives from all the allotment sites in Cheltenham. We would like to have people on the committee from every site so that we can fully represent the views of our members. The committee meets for about 2 hours 4 times a year. If you could spare that amount of time, please let one of the

members listed at the top of the front page know. We need members from the following sites:

Blacksmiths Lane, Reddings Road, Hatherley Road, Charlton Kings Parish Allotments (Croft and Sappercombe), Severn Road, Hayden Lane.

Winter Events

Claire's Allotment Sale – 5th December 2020



A charity second-hand tool sale was held on Midwinter allotment site in December. The weather was kind and, it provided an excuse for Claire to tidy her shed and some bargains were had. Claire was able to make a donation of £80 to Cheltenham Open Door from the tool sale. They sent a nice email of thanks to her.

Thank you for your very kind and generous donation of £80 to Cheltenham Open Door. Your generosity will help us make a difference to the lives of local vulnerable, disadvantaged or lonely people. As we receive no central funding, the donations we receive directly fund the vital work we do in our community.

Since 1992, Open Door has been committed to relieving poverty, hardship and distress. From our base at 39 Grosvenor Street, we offer friendship, food, support and somewhere to relax. We never judge and we make no charge for any of our services.

You can find out more about our organisation at www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk. You can also read our 2020 Christmas Newsletter on the site, which highlights some of the work we have done over the past 12 months.

C&DAHA 44th AGM

Because of the situation with the coronavirus, the AGM could not be held as an in person meeting in the usual way but was held by post. Minutes of the 43rd AGM, notes to members, the Treasurer's report, accounts and a voting form were sent out to all members in November 2020 with a date of 7th December given as the deadline for any responses.

The following was unanimously agreed by the membership:

- The 43rd AGM minutes were correct
- The change to the Rules of Membership "The annual General Meeting will be held in the month of December but may be deferred for up to 3 months in exceptional circumstances."

- All officers and committee members were voted in for the year 2021.
- In 'Any Other Business' it was suggested that the committee re-address the Rules of Membership and put forward a proposal for next year's AGM.

At the AGM, the 2020 Committee awarded Colin and Rosemary Smith LIFE MEMBERSHIP as a recognition of their long service and dedicated support of the Association (running the seed scheme, accounts, logistic set up for committee meetings, catering, printing, very active members of our committee, representing us at the National Allotments Society) between them they have a huge knowledge of allotments.

The allotment association has been running since 1976. It was formed as a result of a change in legislation in 1972 where Statutory Allotment Committees were disbanded. As a result, Cllr Roy Marchant suggested the Association be formed with Donald Trapp as Chairman and the Cheltenham Allotment Holders Association (CAHA) was formed. It was renamed as C&DAHA to include support of allotments in Districts such as Bishops Cleeve. The C&DAHA became recognised by the Borough Council as the Representative of Allotment Tenants.

A brief history of Colin and Rosemary Smith's involvement with allotments and fantastic commitment to the Association.

Colin moved to Cheltenham and took an Allotment at the Midwinter site in 1966. Colin has been part of an interesting history of how allotments have evolved. His plot was next to Ralph Redden (Treasurer at the time), who introduced Colin to the idea of joining the Committee, where he has served for 35 years. Colin started out as Auditor from 1986 to 1989 when he was voted in as Chairman, Donald Trapp stepped down due to ill health. That year Colin worked alongside Mike Hunt as Vice Chair, Alderman Roy Marchant as President with Vice Presidents Alderman T Ruck, Cllr G Wakely and Cllr K Hamond, Mr R Redden as Treasurer, Terry Ashdown as Secretary and committee at the time of Mr J Tallett, Mr N Hibbins, Mrs L Curtis, Mr I Hawkins, Mr C Newark, Mr Mitchell-Gears, Mr A Nelson, Mr J Shields and Mr D Bishop. It was a busy time for the Committee, Representing Allotment Holders as the Borough Council made decisions about changes to allotments. New allotments being prepared at Hayden Nursery, an extra 30 plots for Midwinters and a proposal for a new site in Springbank. These were to accommodate the loss of the Pates site as a school was to be built there, along with the reduction of the Hesters way Allotments.

Sadly, in 1990 more original committee members suffered from health problems and our long-standing Secretary, Terry Ashdown passed away. This meant that there was a reshuffle at the 14th Annual General Meeting in December 1990. It was then Colin became Secretary, Ralph Redden continued as Treasurer, Mike Hunt took over as Chairman and, proposed by Alderman R Marchant, Diana Ashdown (Terry Ashdown's wife) took over as vice chair.

In April 1991 the Springbank Allotments were opened and named 'Terry Ashdown Allotments'. Colin lived just round the corner so applied for one, it took 2 years on the waiting list before he finally moved from Midwinter. Around the same time

Ralph Redden moved to Asquith Road. Ralph and his wife Kitty were involved in the National Allotment Society (NAS), which our Association affiliates to, Ralph asked Colin if he would help on the Malvern Show National Allotment Society Stand. Colin's involvement supporting the NAS continued on from that day.

Rosemary took her Allotment at Terry Ashdown Allotments in 1994 where she met Colin. In 2002 they went to Tatton Flower Show together, fell in love and have been married now for 17 years. Rosemary was our Auditor from 1994 until 2002 and then joined the Committee.

Colin continued as Secretary until the sad loss of Ralph Redden in 2008. Colin was voted in as Treasurer in 2009, as well as Membership Secretary, he also took on running the seed scheme. Colin and Rosemary also took over organising the displays for the the NAS Stand at the Malvern Show gaining many 1st and 2nd awards over the years, as well as assisting on the stand during the shows. In 2015 the NAS awarded them Life Membership for their continued efforts for the Society at the Malvern Show.

Both Colin and Rosemary are a formidably hardworking team, promoting and supporting allotmenting. Rosemary has great organisational skills and enthusiasm on the committee and behind the scenes, catering at Association events and running the raffle with Diana Ashdown. Rosemary also has been warden on Terry Ashdown Allotments for the last 9 years on behalf of the Borough Council. Colin's puts in a lot of effort and dedication each year with the seed scheme, membership collation and as Treasurer.

They are both an asset to the Committee and highly deserving of the Award of Life Membership.

In response Colin and Rosemary feel very honoured to be made Life Members, with grateful thanks.

Thanks to every member's assistance with the AGM under these extraordinary circumstances.

Layla – C&DAHA Secretary

Newsletter Editor: We had intended a surprise presentation when two of the Committee went to collect their seeds in early December, but as many of you will know, the delivery of seeds from Kings Seeds was rather delayed this year, so the presentation took place on a very wet day on 20th of January when I met Michael Hunt at Colin and Rosemary's house, I took the photo and Mike presented the certificates.



As you can see social distancing was observed at all times.

Pointless Vandalism at Ryeworth from Max on Ryeworth Allotments

This year has not been a good one for some on Ryeworth Allotments, allotment holders have suffered more than usual damage from deer, rabbits, moles and badgers, then even worse thefts of produce, now to cap it all, some serious damage to property. A photo and some words below from Max.



A photo of the damage to Max's greenhouse overnight on the 13th January.

From the start of the lockdown a number of allotment holders had noticed that greenhouses had been entered and apparently used as shelters for smokers where contents had been moved outside and young plants trampled on. Progressively these incursions worsened with theft of garden furniture - some of which was recovered from adjacent fields - and culminating in break-ins to several sheds and the damage to Max's greenhouse and contents. On the same night the Fire Service was called out after a fire was started on another plot close to Max's own.

These incidents were reported to the Council and the Police with little expectation of support - fully justified!!

The belief is that a gang of bored youngsters are wandering around during the lockdown looking for something to do. As Ryeworth has a public right of way running through it, the site cannot be secured.

Max spoke to a Police representative at one of their mobile community vehicles and was assured that they were aware of the issue and that there was a dedicated unit investigating such gangs. Unfortunately, COVID pressures were restricting manpower to follow up on such complaints as would otherwise be possible. Be warned.

Tips, Tales, Offered and Found

Plant Supports

Anthony Boyd is a gardener and inventor and is looking for some people to test a plant support for him. If you are interested and are receiving this newsletter by email, see separate attachment for details.

Eel Worm in Potatoes – from Michael Hunt

I am on Midwinter allotment site and have been there since 1976 and grown potatoes every year with success apart from the blight on some years, until recently. About five years ago I noticed some of the potatoes were having small tunnels going throughout at about 2mm diameter with a reddish colour, this was not due to slugs, though slugs would use the small hole to make an easier entrance through the skin. What was this invader that was destroying my crop of potatoes? I did some investigation and came to the conclusion it was potato eelworm and I am not sure where it had come from, but I suspect muck, I may be wrong.

With that conclusion I decided, when buying my seed potatoes from Dundry Nurseries, I would select eelworm resistant potatoes to prove whether my conclusion was right, which it was, All the self-growing potatoes left in the ground were riddled with eelworm tunnels and the resistant ones hardly touched. I noticed on the resistant tubers that the eelworm would try to gain entrance, but would only penetrant about 3-4mm, or would leave a scar on the tuber where they tried to break through the skin on a baby potato, which became a large scar as the potato grew. I have now grown these resistant varieties for the past three years with great success even able to bake the potatoes in their skins without hidden problems within.

A number of allotment holders on midwinter site spoke to me last autumn, asking if I knew what was attacking their potatoes, I think it is spreading, I don't know of any treatment apart from resistant seed.

It would be interesting to know whether other sites or allotment holders have had similar experience and how they have managed it.



Holes that the eelworm has gone in or out of?



Peeling reveals the extent of the damage

Soils, Carbon and Climate Change

Bob Lawson has sent me some documents he's written on looking after your soil. I include his summary on page 7. The two documents that he has written are included with this newsletter, see separate sheets/attachment. Some of you might be interested in this documentary 'kissthegroundmovie.com' available online or on Netflix (thanks to a member of our Committee for suggesting it).

From Dennis Sutton

These potatoes were accidentally left in the storage over the summer 2020. Dennis found them when he went to store his 2020 crop.

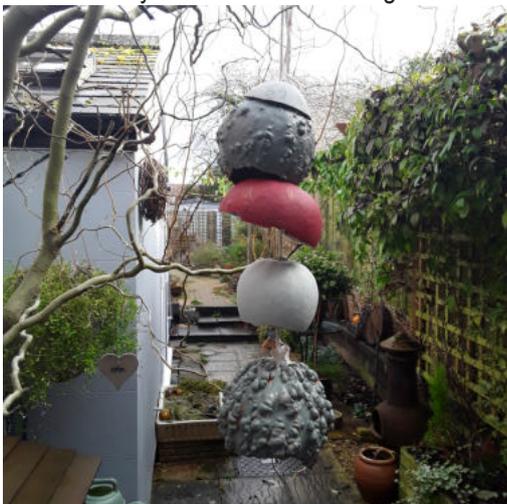


Editor: - I must say that the second photo reminds me of my hair at the moment – all over the place and in dire need of cutting 😊.

From Sappercombe Jan

In 2019 Jan grew ornamental gourds on her allotment. She had an amazing crop of knobby white ones. They decorated the house for a while and when she grew bored with them, they were relegated to the garden where some dried out in the sunshine. She was able to cut into them quite easily and take out the old, dried seeds (saved, of course, as an experiment to see whether they come true next time).

A coat of paint and a piece of string, and they have made mobiles to add interest in her yard. Perhaps not 'useful' information but they make her smile during lockdown days.



Kate's Allotment – Winter

Well, we've had wind, rain, snow and frost. On Boxing Day, a trip to the allotment for some green stuff, revealed the winds had done their worst with the felt on my shed roof. Luckily my kind hubby did some temporary repairs which should hold until we have better weather in the spring.



The large amounts of rain that have washed into my beds, have revealed that my assertion in the last newsletter that my 'compostable' bags had completely broken down was somewhat wide of the mark as this picture shows



I shall be clearing these pieces up for some time to come I think and sticking with paper bags for my kitchen waste caddy.

I continue to get some nice winter produce, savoy cabbage (Sabrosa F1) and broccoli (Rudolph) in the first picture and leeks (Below Zero) in the second, with young leeks still coming on, these will probably keep me supplied until the next crop are planted out.





Below is a little winter experiment, I don't know why I haven't tried this before.



In the largest pot, lettuce 'Winter Density', which I have picked a few times so far and to the left of it pea shoots (Hurst greenshaft), which I have also picked a couple of times, Infront of the largest pot, lettuce 'All Year Round' which is just starting to grow and just showing through in the pots to the left of it, Lamb's Lettuce and Rocket. There is also a pot containing Red Amaranth, which is just showing signs of growth.

Getting into the swing for the new year – potatoes chitting, this year 'Pink fir Apple' on the right, 'Sarpo Kifli' on the right of the left-hand egg box and 'Markies' on the far left (bought to try because apparently they make the best chips!).



Each year brings a new challenge, I wonder what this year's will be.

Relevant Suppliers

Gardening Gloves

For gardening gloves and hand care products, have a look at www.lovelyhands.co.uk, Claire Wiseman is based in

Cheltenham and runs 'Lovely Hands' as an on-line business.

Specialist Garden & Pet Bedding Supplier

E-coco Products UK are a specialist supplier based in Bredon. They supply peat free composts for orchids, citrus, chillies and many other plants and organic substrates for chicken bedding and other small animals. You can contact them through their website e-cocoproducts.co.uk, Email ecocoproductsuk@gmail.com, Tel: 07792 116164.

Recipe – Indian-style potato and fishfree fillet bake

Adapted from a recipe in Waitrose weekend paper. I like this very much, it's very tasty if you like something a bit spicy.

Ingredients to serve 4

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 400g potatoes cut into 3cm pieces
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp chilli powder (more or less according to taste)
- 500g Passata
- 1 ½ tbsp mango chutney
- 450g butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into 3cm pieces
- 150g kale, roughly chopped
- 150g pack Bonsan Kofu Fishfree Fillet (this is a marinated tofu product, so I think any marinated tofu that you like would be fine).

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Put the olive oil and potatoes into a large, shallow roasting tin and toss well. Roast for 10 minutes.
2. Add the spices and chilli powder, toss well and roast for a further 5 minutes. Add the passata, mango chutney, squash and 150ml boiling water, then stir everything together. Roast for 20 minutes until the potatoes are cooked and tender and the sauce thickened and reduced.
3. Stir in the kale and flake in the fishfree fillet (or other marinated tofu). Return to the oven for 10 minutes until cooked through and the kale has wilted.

Delicious served with a chunky cucumber salad, thick dairy free yogurt (Greek soya yogurt or coconut-based yogurt are both good) and some basmati rice.

Many thanks to all who have provided input to this newsletter 🌟🏆

SOILS, CARBON and CLIMATE CHANGE – from Bob Lawson

At the 2015 Paris Climate conference, the UK and most other countries signed up to the '4 in a 1000' initiative. The purpose of this initiative was to increase the soil carbon content by 4% per year. As the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) takes place in Glasgow in November this year, it's quite likely that we will hear something more about what the UK is doing to help this initiative.

About 80% of terrestrial carbon is stored in the soil, with the rest in trees and plants. Soil is a complex mixture of minerals, air, water and dead and living organisms. It is an interconnected ecosystem of plants, animals, bacteria and fungi. The dead organic material or humus (the remains of plants and animals) which can be up to 8% carbon, is fed on by many of the soil animals particularly worms which break it up and incorporate it into the soil where it helps soil structure, but in time it will be decomposed by bacteria and fungi, releasing minerals (plant nutrients), water and carbon dioxide, the latter a greenhouse gas, into the air.

Under particular conditions the dead plant material forms peat, a huge carbon and water store. Recent research has shown that much of the sugar produced by green plants is transported to the roots and is used by mycorrhizal fungi. These fungi grow through the soil as fine hair like structures, the mycelium, which grow into the root structure and extend the roots many times over, supplying the plants with water and minerals from a much greater volume of soil than the roots themselves reach. Most plants have these fungi growing on their roots. An exception seems to be cabbages. As an example, bluebell plants are associated with up to 12 different mycorrhizal fungi. The fine fungal threads make a carbon containing sugar/ protein compound (glycoprotein) as a protective layer called glomalin which is 30 to 40 % carbon, so is a large soil carbon store. As the young roots grow the older fungal threads die and the glomalin breaks off into the soil where it can stay as a stable carbon store for at least 50 years. Glomalin produces collections of soil particles i.e., minerals and humus as aggregates that stabilise soil structure. These fungi are extensive in permanent grassland and woods where they have been called the 'wood wide web' as they connect to other trees and plants. They are also very important in cultivated plants.

References for this summary were two main books: 'The Carbon Fields ' by Graham Harvey

and 'Wilding ' by Isabella Tree, together with pamphlets and extracts from other books. These books are both extensively referenced.

Two helpful FWAG conferences were 'Dealing with Climate Change ' where the main speaker, Joel Williams, an international farming consultant spoke on 'Soil Management and the Transition to Soil Health'. The second was on Agri-forestry where Stephen Briggs from Whitehall Farm in Cambridgeshire talked about his mix of orchard trees and arable crops.

The newly published book 'Entangled Life' by Merlin Sheldrake confirms the overwhelming importance of mycorrhizal fungi to both plants and healthy soils.

In June 2020 ROTHAMSTED RESEARCH published information based on 50 years of data with new research on soil structure and the genes in soil microbes. As a summary: in healthy soil with added carbon compounds, as any form of compost or dead plant material, and a low nitrogen content, the microbes produce carbon containing polymers which act as a sort of glue binding particles together forming soil aggregates. These stabilise the soil structure, maintaining the fine spaces between the soil particles, so allowing water storage and greater circulation of air and minerals. With the use of artificial nitrogen and phosphorous based fertilisers, the genes in the microbes have switched from using nitrogen in compost to using carbon compounds so releasing it as CO₂ and also destroying the porous nature of the soil by narrowing the spaces, so lessening its natural fertility, productivity and water holding capacity. So, intensive use of artificial fertilisers has caused soils to release the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide rather than store it and has produced unhealthy soils less resilient to weather extremes like drought. The Rothamsted Research report is several pages long but can be read in full at <http://bit.ly/3hkOATu>

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION 2021
Please ensure you fill in all sections

TO: Ms. K A Smith, 15 Alma Close, Cheltenham, GL51 3NA

Please find enclosed my **£6.50** joining fee/membership renewal subscription for 2021 (cheques should be made payable to C&DAHA, payment by bank transfer should be to: The Cheltenham & District Allotment Holders Association, Sort code: 08 92 99 Account No: 65189063, on no account should you send cash through the post).

Name..... (Please print)

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email address.....

Telephone No: Daytime..... Mobile.....

Allotment Site..... Plot No (s).....

Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you are applying by post in order to receive your membership card.

Consent: C&DAHA will hold the above data in electronic format. The data will only be used for the purposes specified in our data protection statement (see below).

By submitting this form, you are agreeing to this data being stored and used as described below.

✂.....

Data Protection Statement:

To conform to the General Data Protection Regulations the Association is required to obtain your consent to hold your contact details. The holding of a mailing list under the regulations is **“considered as legitimate and expected”**

We will always store your personal details securely.

Data held: Your name, address, telephone number, email address, allotment site and plot number.

How we use the data: We will use it to provide the services we offer you, namely:

- to send out the C&DAHA newsletter by post or e-mail,
- to send you magazines, details of upcoming events or other relevant information
- to make available the monthly blog
- to enable you to participate in the King’s seed scheme.

The data will also be used by the committee for the Allotmenters Liability Insurance offered by the National Allotment Society. The data will be forwarded to the National Allotment Society who will store it securely. The National Allotment Society will only send a member’s details to the company providing the insurance in the event of a claim.

Time frame data stored: Data will be kept for two years after termination of membership.

Sharing data: Your data will be shared with Kings Seeds, The National Allotment Society and the National Allotment Society’s insurance provider in the event of a claim.

Member rights: You have the right to have your name removed from the list, to obtain all details held about you, to have your history deleted, to change your details and to complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office. Please inform the Treasurer if you wish to exercise any of the above rights.

Consent. The Association is required to hold evidence of your consent to its holding of the contact information. Submission of a membership application form, including membership renewal using the seed scheme form, will be considered to be your consent to our storing the information you have given and for us to contact you to send you information related to the Association’s activities. You should keep a copy of your renewal form along with a copy of this document.

Chairman of the Cheltenham and District Allotment Holders’ Association May 2020