

Kingston Vale Leisure Gardeners' Association

November newsletter



CCTV

We are looking at various options to install CCTV to cover the car park and the entrance/exit. This is to improve site security and safety.

Community Hut

The Community Hut has been steadily deteriorating. The window catches do not work and the wooden panelling has developed gaps. We have contacted some contractors to get quotes for repair. If any member can help then please get in touch.



Oak Processionary Moth

Oak Processionary Moth or giving it the scientific name *Thaumetopoea processionea*, has become a permanent resident in South England and the oak trees in KVLGA and our neighbours are not immune from this infestation. You may have seen the specialist contractor sent by Kingston Council last summer climbing the trees by rope or on cherry pickers removing moth nests. The bad news is that removing the nests is not the end of the problems that we can face. However, there are steps that we can take to reduce the risk of exposure to the moths' prickly hairs and to do that it is important to understand how the moths can hurt us.

It is thought that Oak Processionary Moths made their way to the UK from Southern Europe accidentally and were first reported in Southeast England in 2005. Since then, they have become a permanent resident of oak trees in South East England, Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common and Kingston Vale. We were told by the contractor that they are widespread in the Golf Course. The caterpillars of the moth feed on oak leaves and travel in nose-to-tail processions (hence their name). They are a human irritant because the white bristle or hairs on the caterpillars contain a toxin that can be a serious irritant to human skin, and even cause an asthma attack or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) if the person is predisposed to such conditions.

According to the specialist contractor that we spoke to, council policy is to physically remove the nests of moths in the summer months; spraying the trees is not done because it is believed to be bad for the environment. However, if the moth hairs have already been discarded on the ground below the trees, removing the nests will not help us because the toxin can remain active for years and no amount of rain can wash away the toxin.

So, unfortunately, we must assume that all the plots close to the Golf Course and adjacent to the entrance fence have been contaminated with Oak Processionary Moth hairs which can not be got rid of. To reduce the risks of exposure and getting skin irritation or worse it is suggested you:

1. Dispose of cut grass and pruning vegetation properly, preferably take them away
2. Cover up your body as much as possible when working on your plot, e.g. wear long sleeve, long trousers, socks, gloves and hats
3. The same goes for children and adults if they are playing near or below oak trees
4. Remember using insect repellent will not help with getting stung by the hairs
5. Seek urgent medical help if you are getting breathing problems

Committee meetings

These have been taking place in person and via Zoom.

The minutes of these meetings will be made available in the member's area of the website (reply to this email if you do not yet have your log-in to the member's area) and on the noticeboard.

Car park surface

The car park surface has been improving but there is still some way to go before it is level with an even surface all the way around. We are looking at various options for improvement including around the corrals and for the driveway.

Communal areas

Our thanks to Sean who continues to arrange for the paths to be cut and to Leila who has mowed the common areas around the clubhouse and main paths.

We are looking into a long-term solution and are approaching some local contractors.



Tomato & potato blight

This year several plot holders reported that their tomatoes and potatoes were affected by blight. Two steps can help to avoid this problem next season. Firstly, be careful to rotate the planting so that the new plants do not pick up the disease from the same ground. Secondly, blight likes warm wet weather so try planting as early as possible in the season after the frost. The plants will then mature during the relatively dry summer.

Complaints procedure

The association now has a complaints policy for the first time. It is based upon modern best practice with other allotment societies. You can find the policy on the website in the member's section [click here](#). Anybody with a complaint about the behaviour of another plot holder can draw it to the attention of anybody on the Committee. A Complaints Officer will then investigate the complaint. If it cannot be resolved informally, then a Committee subgroup will meet to deal with the issue. The emphasis is on fairness and transparency.



New gate sign

The previous gate sign at the entrance to the allotments needed to be replaced. We are planning to have a new sign erected: **“Private Property No through access”**.



Water supply

Our water is metered and there is the risk of a burst pipe during the winter months.

Therefore, the water supply will be turned off on 27th November (or sooner if the weather gets much colder).

It will be turned on again in the spring.

Annual subscriptions

The vast majority of the annual subscriptions have now been paid. **Thank you.**
For the few that haven't, please pay as soon as possible.
Feel free to confidentially contact the Committee
(committee@kingstonvga.co.uk) if you have any problems making your
payment.

With best wishes from

Chairman - vacant

Vice-Chair - Environment & Bio-Diversity - Alison Forrester (plot 1a)

Treasurer - Bill Trimble (plot 41)

Secretary - Wes Henzell (plot 33a)

Site Security Officer - Sean McCormack (plot 33b)

John Foley (plot 37a)

Health & Safety Officer - Mehran Moini (plot 43b)

Sammie Wiseman (plot 25b)

Lettings Officer - Johnny Bouchier (plot 38a)



KVLGA

Robin Hood Way, SW15, Kingston Vale

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