



KCCLP Newsletter Summer 2022



Welcome to Knucklas Castle Community Land Project's Newsletter and apologies for the long gap since the last one. We'll try to do better in the future!

Climate Change and Covid

Storms, heatwaves and covid have dominated our lives since our last Newsletter, forcing us to cancel some of our activities. Despite this, plenty has happened.

Orchard – Hedge Cutting

One grey December morning about a dozen people, up early and dressed for work, met Rob Edwards at the orchard. He had his Land Rover, trailer and a range of chainsaws, each bigger than the last. He cut down a length of overgrown and diseased hedge by the road. Between cups of tea and slices of cake the volunteers made sure that traffic was safe and stacked the branches as they fell.

Belated apologies to Sunday sleepers in Knucklas whose day was shattered by engine noise – all day till dusk.

The bare look is only temporary. The hedge is being cut down in stages over a period of four years. When it has regrown to the right height, it will be re-laid.

There is still some firewood in the orchard for people to take and use. Take it, cut it into logs and keep it for next winter.

The same is planned for next winter, till the job is done.

Work Parties

Since March we have held regular monthly work parties on the first Sunday of the month. They normally last for two or three hours. It's surprising how

much you can get done when there's a group working together. And there's plenty of chatter and laughter. If you live locally why not join in?

The work is for all ages and abilities. You may acquire new skills, new friends or a nice slice of cake. Don't hesitate. Come on the first Sunday at 10.30. Contact 01547 563858

Tree Bog



After 12 years of hopes raised and dashed, KCCLP finally has its own toilet. With funds generously provided by the Powys Teaching Local Health Board Charitable Fund, volunteers erected it in the allotment field. It was opened for business to cheers and a drum roll.

Willow cuttings were planted round the edges. Their roots will spread under the toilet and absorb the waste as it accumulates. This type of toilet is known as a "tree bog". The action of the willow roots should prevent the need for handling waste. The willows

will be cut each spring and the canes made into baskets, plant supports, hurdles, wreaths etc.

Users of the toilet get a view to die for - over the Cwm-Sanaham Hill, Offa's Dyke and the Teme Valley.

The toilet is open 24/7. Use it. Look after it and, if you find something wrong, tell an allotment holder or someone from KCCLP.



Steps to the Orchard

For a long time the steps to the orchard from the road have been a rickety, uncomfortable and dangerous challenge to any brave enough to use them. They have now been completely replaced by brand new steps with new gates. Good work by Rob Edwards and an improvement for the village.

Please use the steps when going between the road and the orchard and only use Tan y Coed's drive if there is a good reason why the steps are not suitable.

Willow Weaving

On 23rd March Phy Evans from Leintwardine (many thanks) gave a willow-weaving course to half a dozen beginners. By the end each had made an obelisk for climbing plants (sweet peas etc.). "Amazing how strong this stuff is." said one learner. Others were more impressed by the variety of colours that are available. Some of the obelisks can be seen in use in the allotments.

Railway Trees

In early 2022 a number of trees (mostly ash) near to the railway were identified as potentially dangerous and a large sycamore fell close by. Reluctantly KCCLP arranged for the dangerous ones to be felled or trimmed to a safe height.



Needle Felt Course

On 8th April seven KCCLP members joined a needle-felt course led by Kate McLean (thanks to her). Most were first timers. All enjoyed their day and went home happy with a beautiful cuddly badger. Another course is planned. To join, contact: 01547 520263

Easter Eggs in the Orchard

This year on Easter Sunday the orchard buzzed with excitement. Siggy and Petra (more thanks) erected a gazebo and filled it with chocolate eggs. Children took a shoe or boot and went off to find its pair hidden somewhere round about. A child who came back with a pair was given an egg. This enabled younger children to get their share of what was on offer.

Everybody, including the many adults who gathered at the gazebo, had a good time. One of the adults was heard to say: “the eggs are only for children.” Then later “That’s not chocolate on my chin.” Then later: “I shouldn’t have had so many.”

Spring Ceilidh

In the early morning on an April Saturday the Community Centre was filled by eager KCCLP volunteers moving furniture and decorating. Watched, assisted and, at times, hindered by a number of children, curious to know what was going on, they filled the hall with bright spring flowers and festive fairy lights.



That evening about 60 people came and shared a hearty supper. Afterwards with the hall cleared, Sue Harris and Bandamania organised Ceilidh dancing. Everybody had a good time. Nobody frowned at beginners' mistakes.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the event's success – particularly to Bandamania who were magnificent. If you have not heard them, make sure you go to one of their events. You won't be disappointed.

Bird Song Walk

30th April was a busy day with two events, the first an early morning birdsong walk led by Phil Ward from Radnor Wildlife Trust. Phil was familiar with the land, having visited in March and made suggestions about the management of the land.

Luckily for some of those present the bird song walk was delayed till 8 a.m. – if it had been earlier there would be too much singing to pick out the individual calls.

Phil could recognise a bird call in the way most of us recognise the voice of a family member. He was delighted to note 32 different species on and around the slopes of Castle Hill. Among the less common birds found were a pair of linnets and a green woodpecker which feeds on meadow ants – the ants that make the little earthy bumps you see in the grass on Castle Hill. A black cap sang strident above all the other birds. More monitoring is planned.

Composting Workshop



Later the same day Julie Tyler (thanks to her too), a KCCLP member living in Knighton and a qualified Compost Champion, educated a group of about a dozen Knucklas allotment holders and others. She showed different ways of making compost and how to make seed compost from it by sieving it and mixing it with loam and leaf mould. Her own system uses dalek-shaped plastic bins. Ideally you need three – two may do; one is not enough – always one on the go. Avoid using dandelions and couch grass. For turfs she suggested piling them

upside down in a mound with vertical sides a metre square. She sieves the soil from the resulting heap and discards pieces of root. Julie helped open up one of the big bays in the allotment field. It had good rich soil. She encouraged participants to use it on their allotments and to grow courgettes on the heap that is maturing

Bug Day

Janice and Phil from RWT again starred on a great day in the allotments on 16th July. About thirty local residents of all ages came, eager to learn more about creepy crawly creatures. Janice explained the markings you must know to distinguish different types of bumble bee.

Phil erected a cedar wood bug hotel on one of the sheds.

Insect nets were distributed and participants told how to use them. They collected numerous different insects and beetles from all round the allotment field, received information about them and released them.

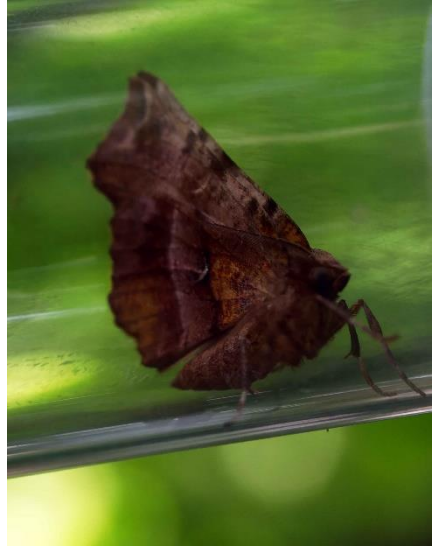


Jenny Ogden brought her renowned Giant Insects, several of which explained their lives and troubles in media interviews.

Camilla Saunders (thanks again played a selection of her bug songs. Plenty of tea, cakes and other goodies were consumed.

Moth Survey

In July a survey of moths on Castle Hill by Pete and Ginny Clarke (many thanks to them) and a couple of KCCLP members found, noted and released a total of 92 moths from 48 species. The results need to be studied and compared with surveys from earlier years.



Fund Raising for the Land

KCCLP still has £15,000 to pay for the land before February 2025. If we can raise and pay this amount, Castle Hill with its ancient monument, its woodlands, its orchard and its community allotments will belong to the community for the enjoyment of everyone for ever.

Covid has made it difficult to organise public events and in the past year our efforts to put money aside have been frustrated by the cost of the necessary works (steps/tree cutting etc.) mentioned in this newsletter.

We have a beautiful new street stall, kindly erected in the village by one of our members. There you can find plants veg, fruit, jams, chutneys and other things in return for a donation to the Project. Unfortunately we no longer have eggs. An invasion of rats has caused us to stop keeping our lovely hens. They have gone to a local member to look

If you have spare produce please don't let it rot on the ground – bring it to the stall. Someone needs it, particularly with cost of living rises.

We run occasional market stalls selling craft items made by members – birds and animals needle-felted with wool from local sheep, fine slipware fired at

Castle Hill pottery, beautifully turned dibbers from local timber, hand-sewn bags from natural fabrics, and, while wanted, face masks from fine cotton. Some of our items are available in ‘The Old Garage’ Knighton and some in Knighton Fine Art. More thanks for all the help.



KCCLP is a community benefit society set up to manage, and, in time, to own the Castle Hill land for the benefit of the public. Why not become a member of KCCLP by buying shares (minimum £20)? Or, if you are already a member, buy more shares? Contact details are below.

Forthcoming Events

Allotment Day

Sunday 31st July 1.00 – 5.00 Knucklas Allotments

Events around KCCLP's Annual Meeting

Saturday 10th September Knucklas Community Centre – details to be arranged

Apple Day

To be arranged

Knucklas Castle Community Land Project Ltd, Registered Number 30635R, Upper Treluggas, Bwlch-y-Plain, LD7 1RE 01547 520263

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