



Kemble Community Gardens
Chair's Report January 2023

The Community Gardens have continued to flourish over the past year. The allotments are, for the most part, tended enthusiastically and continue to provide an abundance of fruit and veg. The site is well used by both villagers and visitors for dog walking and relaxation. It is becoming increasingly recognised that green spaces are so very important for people's mental and physical wellbeing and thus it continues to be essential that we continue to protect and nurture this delightful green space in our village both for humans and the wildlife that have a home in KCG.

Once again, this year the committee have worked hard to conserve the gardens and plan for their future, and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them all for their support. Particular thanks must go to Bob, who continues to maintain the communal areas so beautifully and also to Luke, whose skill at writing legal letters is regularly put to good use in the ongoing negotiations to secure the long term lease of the site.

It is disappointing that, one year on from CDC's decision to cancel the building on K2, we still have not secured the lease of the site to KEPC. Firstly, we were offered a fifteen year lease which we challenged, and then a fifty year lease with annual rental cost of £285pa but with a twenty five year break clause. This hardly seemed equitable when, under the terms of the green space designation, it was agreed that, once the building on K2 was completed, the remainder of the land would be gifted to KEPC for use as community gardens. In November KEPC challenged the twenty five/fifty year lease but, as I write, we have not had any feedback from CDC on the proposal to transfer the entire freehold to KEPC. This approach is in line with the commitments made in the Local Plan and reflects the community's expectations for the sustainable stewardship of this local asset in perpetuity. In the lease negotiations both KEPC and our district councillor, Mike Mckeown, have been staunch supporters.

It is more than likely that, at the end of the negotiations, there will be an annual charge for the lease of the land. In anticipation of this the committee feel that rent for an allotment should be increased to £35 for a full plot, £18 for a half plot from January 2024.

I have no doubt that the land will be leased to KEPC for use by KCG and we were given the go ahead to fundraise to enable us to improve the area for biodiversity and the community which resulted in the Spacehive fundraising campaign, <https://www.spacehive.com/kemble-community-gardens>. The current amount raised is £5456 of a target of £9282. Thanks to the 124 people who have backed us so far to raise this amount! We need to raise the total amount in the Spacehive account by the end of March otherwise all funds will be returned to the donors. We raised £567 at the fundraising event in October (yet to be added to the Spacehive account) and we have funding bid in to the 'Build Back Better' scheme of £1,500 and a bid of £2,000 to the lottery fund. Additionally, KEPC have agreed a grant of £4900 to fund the construction of a wild life pond although we are not able to add this to the Spacehive account. We are planning a Quiz Night in the village hall on March 9th to raise more funds - please come, support KCG while having an enjoyable time. There is the possibility that we will need a further funds boost just before the end of March so please watch this space.

Jill Steeden

Chair Kemble Community Gardens.

