



Grass Cuttings



Newsletter of **Sale Horticultural & Allotment Society** –April 2011

Chairman's Report

Hello again.

Here we are at the start of what we hope will be a good and enjoyable growing season, hoping our past cold winter has done some good reducing the numbers of unwanted bugs.

Our AGM held in March was thankfully well attended, thanks to quite a few new members showing enthusiasm.

Our Society continues to flourish thanks to you our members. We have recently installed electricity in our Trading huts, primarily to make it more comfortable for our team of helpers plus also keeping our seed potatoes and onions warm and dry. Oh by the way we still have a few varieties of each available.

At the AGM I mentioned my small involvement with an English Heritage project checking the food & vegetable growing history of Ashton-on-Mersey particularly around the Glebelands and Grosvenor Road area. Pupils from Wellfield School have been involved, walking the area and learning about growing food since the mid 1800's. Maps dating from 1845 are on our Hoe-Down walls for anyone who is interested.

I am pleased to bring you up to date with our poorly committee members, each are making good progress, also thanks to all committee members and helpers who have agreed to help run our Society for another year. Good news: two members have offered to run our Pumpkin Party this year. Many thanks to them. More information will be published later. In closing, let us all have a successful growing year and please keep up the good work.

Best regards
Don Jackson

Committee contacts

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Annual Bedding Plant Sale

Saturday 14th May

Once more we will be ordering locally grown plants from Les Halman of Peover. Competitively priced, the plants will make a good display in your gardens, tubs and baskets. Please give us your support.

Simply fill in the order form attached to this newsletter and send off as instructed or return to the Trading Hut on Sunday morning with your payment.

We make up your order ready to be collected from the **Trading Hut between 11am and 12 noon on Saturday 14th May.**

Also for sale will be the usual composts for your containers

Surplus plants

There are usually some surplus plants for sale on Sunday morning 15th May.

Call in and see what's left.



The Walkden Gardens Gift

A talk by

Pat Coulburn

At

St Mary's Church

**Thursday 23rd June
2.30 pm**



This talk is free to members.
Bring a friend for £1

Trading Hut Life

While Ken has fun with a customer,



Brian does the work!



Elaine and Tom, our volunteer 'baggers' over the last four years, are unable to continue. Their sterling work has been much appreciated.

The bagging up into 3 kilogram quantities of our bulk buys is an essential service offered by the society to you the members.

Please consider offering your help to keep the Trading Hut functioning.

Bagging up could be done at any time to suit you during the week.

Alternatively could you serve behind the counter, just an hour and a half on a Sunday morning?

The more volunteers we get, the fewer sessions each has to cover. Clare Baker and Brian King are the only plot-holders to help apart from members of the committee. Please try to find the time to help out. Leave your name at the Hut next Sunday or contact any member of the committee.

AGM News

Chairman Don Jackson welcomed 20 members to the AGM

He reported a good growing year although several plots had once again suffered bad flooding. He thanked Trafford MBC for the supply of many tonnes of top soil to raise the level of the flooded land.

He thanked the committee and helpers for their work and time spent for our society.

Treasurer

Peter Baggaley presented the audited accounts (available to see on request). A new 10 year lease with TMBC will start on April 1st 2011.

A new electricity tariff should reduce our bills significantly in 2011.

The Trading Hut made a profit of £287.

Membership Secretary

Tony Turnbull reported a total membership of 167, of whom 91 were active plot holders and 76 "social" non-plot holders.

In 2010, we had kept plot rentals at the same rates as 2008 and 2009, despite a 6% increase in Trafford's charges, by reducing the amount we kept for managing the site. This year, we face another 6% increase in Trafford's charges and will increase plot rentals by just under 6%. Trafford have indicated plans to impose further increases of about 5% per year for each of the next 2 years; but there are concerns that other councils have introduced rises of up to **200%** and more. Membership fees had been kept the same for the last 4 years and the committee were not asking for an increase for next year –The meeting voted to keep membership fees the same in 2012. Tony thanked members who had paid this year's fees promptly and Paul Howarth for continuing to look after our web site.

Trading Manager

Alf Edwards reported a disappointing 11% fall in sales from the previous year after three years of growth. The price of bulk fertilisers had rocketed. The increases were worldwide and attributed to higher wages, transport and energy costs and the demand for these products in the developing world.

We would continue to keep our margins to a minimum and pass on the benefit of our wholesale bulk buying to the members. He urged members to support the Trading Hut.

Finally having electricity wired in to the Trading Hut and store will enable us to protect the stock from frost damage and also throw light on our labours.

Acting Plot Secretary

Sylvia Steer reported, in her absence, that 11 plots had changed hands since the last AGM. The majority of plots were given up in a workable condition and ready for the next tenant. One plot had been divided to make it more manageable. She commended the Helpers scheme to plot holders and asked them to consider this if short term help was needed. The waiting list stood at 21, the earliest on the list being from 2009.

Sprinklers Banned!

Despite many plots suffering again from flooding the importance of conserving rainfall in water butts for the drier times was emphasised because, **with immediate effect, Trafford had banned the use of sprinklers on allotments and urged us to avoid using hosepipes.**

Plot inspections had been made in April, June and September resulting in warning letters and monitoring of those plots which were neglected. She warned that simply keeping the plot weed free or under polythene still counted as neglect if left for a period of time like this. The whole purpose after all is to produce food. The first inspection this year would be in April.

The committee has reviewed the Eviction Procedure to shorten the time allowed to bring a neglected plot back into a satisfactory state of cultivation and production. A copy of this will be available to view shortly.

Bee-keeping

Two members had been attending a course on bee keeping with a view to having a hive on the allotment if the committee approved. They were informed that another member had expressed an interest last year and that bees were kept on Winstanley Road Allotments. They will be put in touch with the plot holder on Winstanley Road and were asked to put their request in writing to the committee once they had satisfactorily completed the course. It was pointed out that certain safety considerations need to be addressed.

Pumpkin Party

Jane Leicester and Sarah Wilson volunteered to assist along with Louise Black

at the Pumpkin Party in October. Their offer was accepted with thanks and the committee will look into the holding of a **Pumpkin Party and Barbecue on Saturday, 29th October.**



Path Maintenance Again!

Now that the grass cutting season is upon us please spare a thought for David and the society's machines. He frequently finds debris such as bits of twig and stones thrown from plots on to the paths. Fruit bushes and



raspberry canes which are allowed to overhang the path are also a hazard and he will not cut the paths where there are such obstacles.

Fruit Trees only!

The only trees that our new lease allows us to plant are fruit trees, and please ensure that any trees on your plot are kept well pruned to avoid causing excessive shading on adjacent plots or obstruction to pathways.

Finally, enjoy the **Asparagus season** while it lasts.

Cut **all** spears below ground from now until the end of May. Then allow the fern to grow to build up for next year. Yum!

