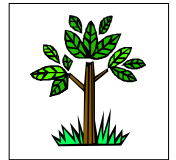


Grass Cuttings



Newsletter of **Sale Horticultural & Allotment Society** – April 2012

Chairman's Report

Welcome to our Spring edition of Grass Cuttings, our March AGM was attended by 35 members which is a record! Many thanks to those who could make it, the proceedings were normal as usual, I am pleased to advise that all your committee agreed to continue their voluntary work for SHAS.

No doubt many of our members are well into their preparations in their gardens and allotments, 2012 seems to be following a similar pattern as 2011 weather-wise; warmer than normal and only a little rainfall. As you have been reading in the press, most areas are about to have a hosepipe ban, fortunately we in the NW should be ok for the present but Trafford MBC Allotments are subject to a hosepipe ban for preservation and cost saving; watering cans are ok. We in SHAS are encouraging the collection and use of rainwater off all sheds and greenhouses and I am trying to obtain additional damaged wheelie bins from TMBC for this purpose.

We have a small team of grass cutters for our main pathways where lately some plot holders have been leaving debris, and in some instances this has caused damage to our mower blades which are expensive to repair. Please be more careful and take your debris and unwanted items to the local refuse site/tip. It is each plot holder's responsibility to maintain their bordering paths and make them safe for walking.

I am pleased to note more wildlife, particularly birds, evident on the allotments and in our gardens, no doubt being helped by Autumn and Springwatch TV programmes – well done. Many thanks for your involvement in SHAS and please keep up to date by using our SHAS Website. Let us all have an enjoyable growing year.

Best wishes
Don Jackson

Sunflower Growers Wanted



Those of you with a scientific bent may be interested in taking part in the Manchester Science Festival's research into Sunflowers

Apparently Manchester born Alan Turing, the WW2 code breaker, began this research into the sunflower which displays one of the occurrences in nature of the Fibonacci series. This is a number sequence well known to your older children in maths lessons. It relates to the wonderful spirals found in the seed head of the sunflower. They need an enormous sample to carry out this research. The previous attempt in the 1930s only had 300 or more, Manchester Science are looking for thousands. So can you help? Information can be found at Turning's Sunflower@mcrscifest.

Committee contacts

| | | |
|--|--|----------|
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| Sylvia Steer secretary@shas.org.uk Plot 13a | Secretary | 282 8664 |
| Tony Turnbull memberships@shas.org.uk Plot 21 | Membership | 973 1946 |
| Peter Baggaley treasurer@shas.org.uk Plot 7 | Treasurer | 962 5642 |
| Louise Black Plot 36 | Plots | 283 7415 |
| Alf Edwards Plot 41 | Trading Hut | 282 0048 |
| David Taylor Plot 27 | Equipment | 973 0867 |
| Jane Lucas Plot 39a | Newsletter | 973 9704 |
| SHAS Website | www.shas.org.uk | |

Annual Bedding Plant Sale

Saturday 12th 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 12th 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 13th May. Call in and see what's left.



Trading Hut Life

Now is the busiest time of the year and here in the Trading Hut we have just taken delivery of bagged compost (John Innes and Clover), grow bags, lawn fertilisers and general fertilisers. Seed potatoes, onion and shallot sets have been flying off the shelves and we have just a few left, so hurry if you haven't bought any. Compare our prices to Wilkinson's, B&Q and garden centres. Save money and at the same time support your society.

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 have, the fewer sessions each has to cover. 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

The Society's AGM was held on 6th March at St Mary's Church Hall, thank you to all those members who attended. The following is a summary of the key officer reports:

Chairman Don Jackson expressed the regret of the society at the death of our allotment secretary Linda McLachlan and also a long standing member and former committee member Ray Besso. Don outlined the year's event and thanked the committee and helpers for their work during 2011.

Treasurer Peter Baggaley presented the annual accounts for the year ended 31st December 2011. The accounts had not been audited due to the illness of the auditor. The Chairman would rectify this as soon as possible. The main expense of the year had been £1900, the cost of installing electricity to the huts. The unaudited account were accepted by the meeting and can be seen on request.

Membership Secretary Tony Turnbull reported an increase of 9 members over 2010. There were 91 active plot holders and 85 non plot holders. Plot rents had been increased by 6% in 2011 and were due to rise by another 5% in 2012. He proposed to review membership fees in committee ready for the next AGM. In particular he suggested we examine the following:

- Should plot holders pay the same as social members?

- Should members who receive Grass Cuttings by email pay the same as those who receive printed copies?
- What should membership fees be used for?

He asked any member with an opinion or ideas on this issue to talk to or send an email to a committee member. Tony thanked Paul Howarth for continuing to look after our web site.

Trading Manager Alf Edwards welcomed the installation of electricity to the trading hut. He reported an increase in sales over the previous year. We no longer stock weedkillers, insecticides, herbicides or tomato feed as we can not compete with local shops in these items. On the other hand, our prices for dry fertilisers, seed potatoes and onion sets are very much cheaper.

Plot Secretary Louise Black reported 11 plots had changed hands since the last AGM and the waiting list now stood at 26, the earliest being from 2009.

New Plot Holders

Towards the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012 we welcomed eight new plot holders may we wish them a successful and rewarding future, they include:

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|------------------|----------|
| Andy Blacker | Plot 17a |
| Jason Iftakhar | Plot 53a |
| Louise Jeffries | Plot 57b |
| Dave Knight | Plot 38a |
| Sheila McNabb | Plot 25a |
| Andy Smith | Plot 17b |
| Ian Smith | Plot 59b |
| Janette Thornton | Plot 2 |

Water Conservation

Who hasn't been enjoying the unseasonally warm weather? While we have all been busy making the most of the sunshine we would like to remind everybody that in view of Trafford's ban on the use of sprinklers, we stress the importance of conserving any water in any way possible. Water butts are an obvious solution but if anybody has other ingenious ideas please share them.

Plot Inspections

The timetable for Plot inspections is April, June and September and will result in warning letters and monitoring of those plots which are neglected.

Bee-keeping Update



The society's bee keepers, Jan and Kathryn report that the past twelve months have been very successful, the bees produced 24lbs of honey. The beehive is currently residing within the grounds of St. Martin's Church grounds where they continue to thrive; their numbers increasing during the recent mild weather. Jan and Kathryn, who are being mentored by a local experienced bee keeper, continue to gain confidence and the bees are receiving plenty of TLC. Good news for the much needed pollinators.

Path Maintenance Again!

Now that the grass cutting season is upon us please be extra careful about maintaining the paths around plots. Pieces of wood, bricks, stone and metal objects damage the mowers and



can result in expensive and time consuming repairs. Overhanging fruit bushes and protruding canes cause obstacles are difficult to mow around. David and the society's volunteer grass cutters do a fantastic job and appreciate everybody's help in this matter

Fruit Trees only!

A reminder that 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.

SHAS would like to say a **Big Thank You** to the volunteers who help make the society the success it is, particular thanks go to Roger Snowden who has been busy painting the exterior woodwork and metal door of The Hoedown. We pay a special tribute and farewell to Kevin Brooks who has been a plot holder at SHAS for many years.

Finally, if you have any newsworthy items or horticultural advice that could be included in the SHAS Newsletter why not send your contribution by email to jane.lucas10@ntlworld.com or by 'snail-mail' to the Trading Hut post box.