

# grass CUTTINGS

## APR:2022

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There may be a war in Europe and Covid may still be around, but spring has sprung and nature is opening for business again. To help us all feel a bit better we have had some decent weather which has allowed our plots to dry and work to be done.

Our first two openings of the Trading Hut for potatoes and onions were in atrociously wet weather, those of you — and there were many — who turned up to buy, deserve nothing less than a bumper crop!

Our attempts to find a replacement for Elaine Watson to manage the Trading Hut have been paused for the time being. The result is that this year the Trading Hut is being run out of the Committee — anchored by a small number of key holder volunteers ably assisted by an expanded rota of volunteers, who have all stepped up to the plate, so many thanks to them all. We are aiming to make it business as usual. Please do come along and use it, we absolutely need your business to keep the Trading Hut operating. Can I ask you to give a few moments to read the separate article?

We had a very encouraging attendance for our first social event of the year. Almost fifty of you weathered a

wet night to be rewarded with a talk on the life of wild bees from George Pilkington. I thought it was interesting and there were many questions which is always a good sign. Thanks to Valerie Mulligan for organising a successful event. We now have firmed up arrangements for the family and friends picnic to incorporate a scarecrow competition.

We held last year's AGM in October. Our constitution envisages an AGM in March. However, the feeling at our last Committee meeting was that it might be better to look to hold this year's AGM in September as little has happened since the last one. There was also a feeling that, going forward, a late summer/autumn AGM at the end of a growing season might be more productive generally. This will be on the agenda for discussion with you all and a vote at our AGM.

Lastly, but by no means least, grass is now growing again and we wait the arrival of a new mower for Roger — so the usual request — please keep the path edges clear.

**Chris Abbott,  
Chairman**

### NEW PLOT HOLDERS

Over the past few months a number of new people have taken over plots on the allotment site. We wish them all a very happy, rewarding and productive allotment experience.

14b Kerry Dawson / 32a Graham Perkins  
33b Philippa Conway / 52b Beatrice Pickup  
60b Joe Bradbury / 62b Paul Hartley



### GRASS PATHS

The cutting of the main grass paths around the site has once again restarted. Please can all plot holders cut back any plants overhanging the paths which might get in the way of the mower, and maintain a tidy 0.5 metre (minimum) border around their plots. Any stones, bricks, or pieces of wood should also be cleared from paths around your plot as these can damage our mowers.

Your help is greatly appreciated as I'm sure everyone agrees, the main grass paths are always very well maintained.  
Thank you.

### PLOT INSPECTIONS

Plot inspections will be taking place in week commencing 25 April 2022.



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## TRADING HUT

The Trading Hut reopened in the middle of February for our annual sale of seed potatoes and onion and shallot sets. The weather wasn't great unfortunately — it was pouring down with rain — but a steady stream of hardy plot holders turned out to buy. Thank you for your support.

With the help of a great team of volunteers (thank you), we do have a plan which means that the Trading Hut will open weekly during the growing season, with the exception of July and August, when we'll only be open for a couple of weekends. The opening dates are posted on the Trading Hut door and the gates.

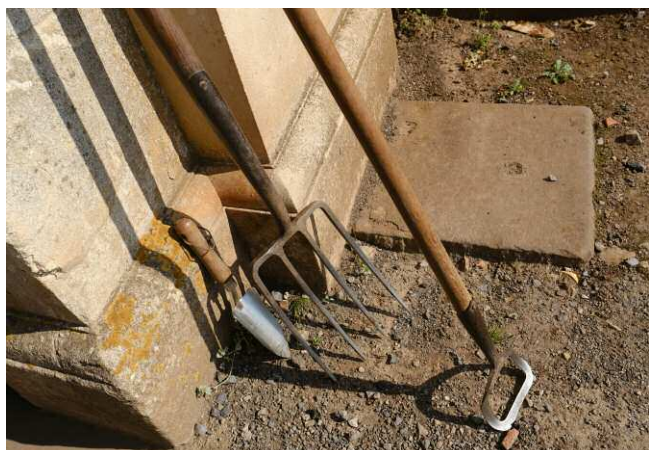
Now the growing season is really upon us, we're stocked up with bags of compost — both peat based (Clover) and peat-free (Melcourt), and the John Innes range: Seed compost, No.1, 2 and 3. We've got growbags for your tomatoes and this year we've some extra-large tomato planter growbags which are 50% bigger than the standard growbags.

To help your veggies and flowers grow well we stock a range of fertilisers including: Bone Meal, Fish Blood and Bone, Calcified Seaweed and Rose Fertiliser. They're sold in 3kg bags and are so much cheaper than you can buy at the garden centre. Seaweed Extract and Tomato feed are sold in 1 litre containers, both great ways to feed plants such as tomatoes and chillies. We have a folder in the Trading Hut which gives detailed descriptions of some of the commonly used fertilisers and how to use them. This information can also be found on our website page — **WhatsItFor**.

And when your beans need staking, we sell good quality bamboo canes in 4ft, 6ft and 8ft lengths at very competitive prices.

So why not come down one Sunday morning 10.30am to 12noon (or it's the first Saturday of the month) to say hello to our volunteers and see what we sell. All members are welcome to buy from the Trading Hut whether you've got a plot or not.

All the items and the current prices are listed on our website [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk). Please note that we only take cash (or cheque) — sorry but we're not geared up for card payments.



## FREE TO A GOOD HOME

We have a quantity of used plant pots of various sizes available if people would like to take some. Reusing plastic plant pots — great for the environment and your wallet!

At the moment, we've also got various used garden tools including spades, fork, rake, hoe which are going spare. They are in need of some TLC but anybody's welcome to have them.

Call into the Trading Hut when we're open to see what there is.

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## SOCIAL EVENTS

### Solitary Bee Talk

Despite a wet and windy evening 48 plot holders and their family and friends turned out to hear George Pilkington's talk at the Salvation Army hall in early March. Is he the David Attenborough of bees? Who knew that solitary bees had such complicated lives?

Most of us are aware of the world crisis in bee populations and pollinators and many of us have bought 'Bee Hotels' from garden centres or other retail outlets or made our own with canes, bricks, slates and old boxes, however George advised that whilst these may be aesthetically pleasing, the holes are often the wrong diameter, too long enabling predators to consume the eggs, or with rough edges that would damage bees wings. Bees do however like mud (maybe we could create muddy areas on our plots?) and certain flowers. A list of these flowers is posted on the notice board outside the Hoe Down and inside the door of the Trading Hut. It is not a comprehensive list — it was difficult to read back my notes made in the dark!

Several people have already said that they would try to include some of the flowers suggested on their plots, so we await the results with hopefully more abundant crops.

### Scarecrow Competition and Annual Picnic

Summer fun events to look forward to, our first ever Scarecrow Competition will be held at the beginning of July. Do think creatively as there is no theme — your entry can be topical, quirky, traditional or totally 'off the wall' and the more entries the better the event will be. This is a great way to involve children or grandchildren in a fun aspect of the allotments! Scarecrows should be erected by Friday 1st July as judging will take place on 2nd/3rd July by an independent judge.

Prizes will be awarded at our Annual Picnic which is being held this year on Sunday 10th July by which time all plot holders will have had the opportunity to walk round the site to admire others creativity and be inspired for next year.

## SITE SECURITY

It's important that everybody locks the gates after entering the site, even if you think you'll only be there for a few minutes. And please always remember to lock the gates when leaving. **Thank you.**

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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**SHAS Website** [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)



A reminder and details of how to enter the competition will be sent out by email at the end of May/early June. Good Luck everyone.

**Valerie Mulligan,**  
Social Secretary