

grass CUTTINGS

JAN:2016

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Well another year has passed, overall not a bad year garden/allotments wise, most crops performed well, odd ones were not as good as normal, plums, sweetcorn and beetroot were poorer than I expected while apple crops made up for other deficiencies. There were many suggestions for these variations, the most logical, in my opinion, being lack of pollination at critical times possibly due to blips in the weather?

November and December were very wet months like many other areas, but thankfully we missed any major house flooding etc, thanks to local United Utilities river maintenance programs. However, several more allotment plots have suffered bad flooding over the last fortnight, sorry this cannot be avoided as our allotments are on a medieval Mersey flood plain.

ITV/Coronation Street activity has been and gone, leaving a contribution to our funds, resulting in your committee deciding to try to help plot holders who suffer flooding by buying 10 x 1 tonne bags of good soil to help raise their plot heights a little. We will be upgrading the floor in the Hoedown and possibly buying a new mower to help Roger cutting the major pathways, many thanks to him for his continuing help.

David Metcalf's talk on vegetable growing for both home consumption and exhibiting was interesting and gave the

attendees added methods to consider for their own crop cultivation. We were approached by the British Legion to resurrect SHAS representation in the Remembrance Day service outside the Sale Town Hall; we were given old documents from November 1960, showing when SHAS last participated.

During 2015 Elaine added several items, less harmful slug pellets, bird seed for our Trading Hut, plus we have erected bird nesting boxes to continue our aim to encourage wild life on the allotments.

Well, I cannot conclude without thanking on your behalf, the helpful and hard working committee and wish you all a healthy and enjoyable 2016.

Happy New Year to all our members.

Regards, Don Jackson



PLOT RENTALS AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

It's that time of year again, and with this newsletter you should have received your renewal form(s) for this year's SHAS Membership and Plot Rentals, as appropriate.

If you haven't received them, if you have any queries, or if you have decided to give up your plot, please call me as soon as possible on **0161 283 0783** or email tonyturnbullxyz@hotmail.com.

If you are a plot holder, could I ask you to consider paying by Bank Transfer, as explained in your letter? This will help us and should also be simpler for you as there is no need for you to send back the signed Tenancy Agreement unless you need to update any of the details. But, however you chose to pay, please note that the final date for receipt of Plot Rental payments is 29 February 2016; this is necessary for us to comply with the terms of our lease which require us to send full payment and plot holder details to Trafford Council by the end of March... so don't delay, please reply today!

One final request, if you are paying by cheque, please ensure your cheque is made out to SHAS, signed and correctly dated (not 2015!).

Tony Turnbull, Membership Secretary



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TRADING HUT UPDATE

The Trading Hut will reopen for business on Saturday 6 February at 10.30am; we found that many members appreciate a Saturday opening so we will continue to open the first Saturday of each month and then Sunday for the following weekends in this month.

We would like to thank all those people who have volunteered throughout the year, in particular we would like to take this opportunity to give a special mention to those volunteers who this year are retiring from 'active service', namely Brian King, Hazel Pritchard and Olga Odabashian, who between them have clocked up many, many years volunteering at SHAS. Meanwhile we welcome several new volunteers in the Trading Hut: George Wilkinson, Alan and Janet Wickham, Janet Cripps and Jane Leicester.

SEED POTATOES

1st earlies Aran Pilot

2nd earlies Charlotte

Main crop

Cara, Desiree and Maxine

All at 90p per kg

Blight resistant Potatoes

Sarpo Mira

£1.10 per kg



ONION SETS

Sturon. 250gm

Red Baron. 250gm

Golden Gormet Shallots. 300gm

All at 90p per bag

DAVID METCALF PRESENTATION

In early December SHAS members took the opportunity to learn some useful techniques and socialise at the same. We had the pleasure of inviting David Metcalfe, prize vegetable grower from Nelson, to give us a talk on growing through straw mulch. The advantage of growing through straw is that it prevents the soil surface sealing as a result of rain or watering. Moisture is retained in the straw and weeds do not germinate as light is omitted. The straw also provides some support for the plants.

Beds are dug or trenched, incorporating lots of rotted manure or well-made compost and blood, fish and bone worked into the surface. Then, the beds are covered with layer of straw 8/10ins deep. A dressing of dried blood is applied on top of the straw to balance the loss of nitrogen as the straw starts to rot down on the soil. The straw can be from wheat, barley, oats, or even hay for softer tops like parsnips or carrots.

The straw is parted at intervals to allow the vegetable plants to be inserted into the bed and then drawn back up to them for support. Pests such as crane flies and root flies cannot get down to the soil to lay their eggs so there are no problems with leatherjackets or maggots eating the roots. At the end of the season the surface straw can be composted while the deeper straw can be incorporated into the earth below.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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Jane Lucas Newsletter, Plot 39a

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SHAS Website www.shas.org.uk

SAVE THE DATE!

AGM

Tuesday 1 March 2016, 7.30pm

St Mary's Church Hall

Moss Lane, Sale

Please come along and support your committee.

SHAS ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Saturday 7 May 2016

Plant lists and order forms will be mailed soon.

