

# grass CUTTINGS

JULY:2023

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The growing season has moved on a lot since the last Grass Cuttings and our AGM in April. As there is a lot of interesting material in this edition, it has been very gently suggested to me that 'short and sweet' should be the order of the day for my report.

We held the 2023 AGM on 25 April which was only 6 months after the last AGM held in October 2022, because we have now returned to our usual March/April meeting. Thank you to all those who came to the meeting. I have noted below a few points for the benefit of those who were not able to attend.

The lease continues to be an on-going issue although some progress is at last being made.

Since the last AGM in October five plots had changed hands and the waiting list currently stands at 12 with most people waiting less than a year for a plot

An increase in the membership fee for 2024 was discussed and it was agreed that this be increased to a flat fee of £7.50 for all members. Members also suggested that consideration be given to increasing the fee to £10 per member in a future year and that members be reminded of the benefits of membership which include social events, buying from the Trading Hut, access to discounted seeds from King's Seeds.

The accounts showed some exceptional items of maintenance work around the site ie. cutting of the hedges and two skips to clear rubbish from the sheds.

It was noted that as the accounts were for the benefit of the membership only, depreciation of fixed assets would no longer be included. It was also noted that £10,000 had been moved into a savings account which would attract a nominal interest rate.

The election of Executive Officers and Committee members as detailed on the agenda was passed unanimously.

Members suggested a skip be made available, this would be considered, as would a way for plot holders to recycle/reuse items no longer wanted by other plot holders instead of items being thrown away.

The annual plant sale, which had not taken place for a few years, could be restarted in 2024 if sufficient interest amongst plot holders was expressed.

We are again hugely indebted to Roger Snowden — as always he does an enormous amount to maintain the site, to Stephen Bingham for converting our basic text contributions for Grass Cuttings to the polished document you read and to Paul Howarth for his work on the website.

I close with thanks to Dave Knight for his work on the Committee as our Plot Inspector and founder of our Facebook page. Since the AGM Dave has decided to stand down from the Committee.

**Chris Abbott, Chairman**

## YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

Would you be interested in joining the allotment committee and take an active role in helping to manage and maintain the allotment site alongside other committee members? We don't ask for any particular skills just a willingness and enthusiasm to be involved.

Joining a committee does take up a certain amount of time and we all have busy lives, but if you can contribute some of your time and life experience, you will find it a rewarding experience and one which goes a long way to ensure that we can continue to maintain the site as an attractive area for all of us to work in and enjoy.

**If this sounds of interest please contact any member of the committee and we'd be very happy to discuss this with you.**

## NEW PLOT HOLDERS

Welcome to our new plot holders. We wish you all a most enjoyable and productive allotment experience.

**Adam Broadhead Plot 17b  
Roger Pooley Plot 62b**



## FOR INFORMATION

Hoedown Keys are available from the Trading Hut at a cost of £6.

Thanks to a great suggestion there is now a supply of feminine hygiene products in the Hoedown for anyone who might need them.



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## ALLOTMENT PICNIC SUNDAY 9TH JULY

Once again quite a number of plot holders joined in the allotment picnic, coming along not just to hear the results of the Scarecrow competition, but to also enjoy an afternoon socialising with old friends and new. A good time was had by all, we had spells of sunshine and everyone was very pleased that it did not rain until nearly 4.30pm. So, all in all another extremely successful event. If you couldn't make it this year, maybe you'll be able to next?



## SURPLUS FOOD DONATIONS

We are repeating our support of the Hideaway in Partington this summer with donations of surplus fruit and vegetables. The centre provides much needed support to households in an area of high deprivation. You might remember that last year we received a note thanking us for our support which was published in the October edition of Grass Cuttings. If you are able to help, please leave your surplus produce in the container outside the Trading Hut by the following dates and it will be taken to the Hideaway the next day: **13 August, 20 August, 28 August, 3 September, 10 September**. Dates are on the gates and the Trading Hut door.

If you have produce available at other times please contact Peter Jackson, Plot 15a, [JcksPA@aol.com](mailto:JcksPA@aol.com). Should you have too much fruit and want to donate a large amount please contact Peter. We can help you pick the fruit if necessary.

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

### 'THE ORGANIC KITCHEN GARDEN'

Wednesday 20 September 7.30pm

The Salvation Army, Ashton Lane, Sale

An illustrated talk by Maureen Sawyer

(a BBC Gardener of the Year for the North of England)

This will be a 'Friends and Family' event so you are welcome to bring others along with you. The charge will be £2 payable at the door (cash only) and includes refreshments.

Although the room is quite large fire regulations limit the size of the audience so please email me: [valeriemnne@gmail.com](mailto:valeriemnne@gmail.com) with your name and the number in your party so that I have a record of numbers — we do not want to have to turn anybody away at the door.

## PUMPKIN COMPETITION

Judging for the Pumpkin competition will take place on Sunday 15 October. We will be looking for the fattest, the heaviest and the ugliest pumpkins. Further details will be emailed to members nearer the time.

**Valerie Mulligan, Social Secretary**

## TRADING HUT

The Trading Hut will be closed throughout August, but if during that time you need anything, please email Chris Abbott ([cdkabbott@btopenworld.com](mailto:cdkabbott@btopenworld.com)) or Janet Cripps ([janetcripps@ntlworld.com](mailto:janetcripps@ntlworld.com)) and they will sort it out for you.

We re-open on Saturday 2 September when, subject to delivery, we will be selling overwintering onion sets and garlic. Varieties and costs will be emailed out when confirmed.

The Trading Hut's last opening day this growing season will be Sunday 1 October.



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### SCARECROW COMPETITION

This year we had 9 entrants for the Scarecrow Competition. Our returning independent judge was again very impressed by the high standard of entries and the ingenious interpretations of the Royal theme, which all made for a very difficult decision in the judging.

After much deliberation our judge considered it impossible to differentiate between the top two scarecrows so they were awarded joint first place:

#### Tony and Dorothy Waddington Plot 49a 'King Kong II'

Truly scary if one had come upon him unawares! The costume had been carefully and imaginatively put together with an excellent choice of materials. The aeroplane and Barbie doll he was clutching gave the clue to his enormous size.

#### Janet and Paul Cripps Plot 44 'King of the Mountains'

An imaginative use of materials from the bin lid and hose reel wheels to the hosepipe handlebars and the super muscular arms. His triumphant stance was regal and effective.

#### 3rd place went to: Rosemary Budd Plot 19b 'King Canute of the Mares' Tail'

A real allotment gardener's interpretation of the theme as we are all plagued by pernicious weeds, impossible to hold back. The toilet brush sceptre was memorable. The face was cleverly constructed with lots of attention to detail and plenty of re-cycling.

Many thanks to all those who entered. Watch out for an announcement on next year's theme.



King Kong II



King of the Mountains



King Canute of the Mare's Tails





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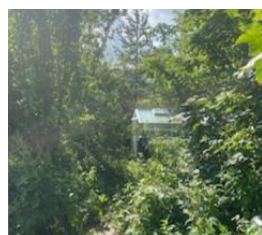
## COMMUNITY PLOT

July 1st saw the gathering of our amazing volunteer working party to help clear Plot 9c. The plot has been disused for some time and as you can see from the before photos was largely inaccessible so firstly, a big thank you to Janice and Roger who helped clear the way for the rest of the volunteer party. Without that help we would have struggled to get stuck in!

Secondly, a huge thank you to Hilary, Craig, Jill and Rosemary who spent hours removing the labyrinth of brambles and weeds. It was no easy feat but what an amazing accomplishment. Lastly a big thanks to not only my kiddos but Craig and Hilary's daughters who helped plant the first of our lettuce seeds for the plot, as well as all those who donated plants for the greenhouse.

It is hoped that the plot can be used not only as a space for our allotment community as a place of relaxation and reflection, but also as an area to grow low maintenance fruit and vegetables for the food bank. This little project is one I think we can all contribute too. Whether that be ideas, seeds, time, old garden furniture you have hanging about. Whatever it is please get in touch. I hope that at some point we will all be able to enjoy spending time there, sharing ideas and a cup of tea (or a beer!). Thank you all so much.

**Louise Virabi, Plot 27** [Louise.virabi@outlook.com](mailto:Louise.virabi@outlook.com)



## ALLIUM LEAF-MINING FLY ON THE ALLOTMENT

One of our plot holders noticed recently that a number of their onions had contorted leaf growth and the bulbs were rotting, so, being a member, they contacted the RHS, sent photographs and asked for advice.

The RHS say that the problem is most likely to be caused by the Allium Leaf-Mining Fly (*Phytomyza gymnostoma*). The fly attacks all types of onion as well as leeks and garlic. It has two generations a year with the larvae tunnelling in the leaves during April/May and again in October to November. Infested plants often become attacked by secondary rots that cause the plants to collapse. When the larvae have completed their feeding, some will go down into the soil to pupate, but they are also often found inside the leaves or bulbs of the plants. More information on the allium leaf-mining fly can be found at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/biodiversity/allium-leaf-miner>

It is a difficult pest to control and the only effective way to manage it is to grow under insect proof mesh such as Enviromesh, which

## COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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**Janet Cripps** Newsletter, Plot 44  
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**SHAS Website** [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)



needs to be in place when the adult flies emerge looking for somewhere to lay their eggs in March and April, and late September to November. Good crop rotation is also important as if grown in the same piece of ground in successive years, and insect covering is used, there is a danger that adult flies will emerge from the soil and be trapped underneath the mesh covering.

Any infected plant should be disposed of through council green waste and not your compost bin which does not reach a high enough temperature to kill the pupae.

The fly is now widespread in England and some parts of Wales. Since many of us grow onions the chance of one or two flies laying their eggs on your onions in future is high. So, be warned!

