

grass CUTTINGS

OCT:2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A few — but not many — musings from me.

It seems no time since we were all enjoying the onset of Spring. Now we are at the back end of the Autumn and putting our plots to rest for the Winter awaiting the arrival of longer days. The Trading Hut is now closed but our seed potatoes/onions/shallots are on order for next year and will be here in just over three months.

The weather lulled us into a false sense of security — a long hot start to the season which was followed by copious quantities of rain! We have had a better end to the season but on the plots it was definitely a 'W' year — warm wet weather with weeds.

The grass paths have never stopped growing — Roger and the mower have definitely covered a few extra miles this year.

My personal memory of this summer's weather, perhaps unfairly, will be going to a rained off Roses cricket match at Old Trafford to be soaked on the way home and then going to the Ashes Test in July with waterproof trousers and coat — both of which were needed.

Looking forward to next year, I definitely intend to

follow up on Maureen Sawyer's excellent talk to us in September with a visit to her organic garden in Stretford. Her energy, enthusiasm and knowledge were both inspiring and humbling — thank you Valerie for organising this. It was a good evening.

Our contribution to the Hideaway in Partington in August/September was good so a big thank you to all who made the effort and sacrifice. It is much appreciated. I have been there delivering our vegetables — the need is all too obvious and it is clear they are set up so everything goes to a deserving home and nothing is wasted.

Finally, Rosemary Budd has agreed to be co-opted on to the Committee to replace Dave Knight who stepped down in the summer. We were pleased to welcome her to her first committee meeting in September. She and Louise Virabi will be managing the plot inspections from now on.

This is the last Grass Cuttings for the year so although it is a bit early, I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Chris Abbott,
Chairman

BURNING RUBBISH

Fires are allowed from 1 October to 31 March.

The Council have in the past received numerous complaints from neighbours of allotment sites so we would remind everybody that in the best interests of plot holders and neighbours you adhere to the rules which are laid out in our Handbook and if you decide it is necessary to have a bonfire:

- Only burn dry material, to avoid creating excessive amounts of smoke
- Do not light bonfires if the wind will blow smoke over the surrounding houses
- Keep the duration of the bonfire to a minimum
- Bonfires must be attended at all times while lit
- Ensure that bonfires are completely dead before being left unattended



RECYCLING

We are all increasingly aware of this pertinent topic. You may want to do a little more. If so then please drop off your **plastic milk bottle tops** only at the Hoe Down or the Trading Hut (when it is open), and I will collect them to raise money for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

If you wish to do a little more, then **all hard plastic** eg. yoghurt pots, margarine and ice cream cartons, coffee jar lids etc. can be taken to Urmston Sorting Office, 9 Higher Road, Urmston M41 9AA. These products are then sold to be melted down and the funds go to a rehabilitation unit for brain and spinal injuries at Salford Royal Hospital.

Please do not ask me to do this for you as my house frequently looks and feels like a recycling warehouse! However, if you wish to learn of more recycling opportunities in the area please ask me in person (Plot 8) or by email.

Valerie Mulligan, Social Secretary

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PUMPKIN COMPETITION

Judging of the pumpkin competition took place on Sunday 15 October. The variety of pumpkins entered ranged from huge traditional golden orbs, to small but perfectly formed and the warty variety. There were eight entries in total into the 4 categories of Heaviest, Fattest, Smallest and Ugliest, with the winners as follows:

HEAVIEST Louise Virabi
With an impressive weight of 14kg (30.86 pounds)

FATTEST Randel Barrows
With a girth of 111cm (43½ inches)

SMALLEST Louise Black
With a dainty weight 170gms (6 ounces)

UGLIEST Olly Horn
Whose pumpkin was covered in warts and lumps

The winners received a tub of Heros to enjoy after eating their pumpkin soup!

We hope to run the pumpkin competition again next year and would like to encourage more people to take part, so perhaps now is the time to start planning for the next growing season.



NEW PLOT HOLDERS

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

Tina and Tim Cooper Plot 28a
Karen Vickers Plot 30b



And here's a recipe for using up all the lovely pumpkins and butternut squash you've grown this year.

PUMPKIN SOUP

1lb 8oz pumpkin or butternut squash peeled and chopped into 1inch cubes

1lb 4oz sweetcorn (frozen or fresh)

2oz butter

1 onion finely chopped

10 fl oz whole milk

1¼ pints vegetable stock
seasoning

- 1 Melt 1oz butter in pan and allow the onion to soften.
- 2 Add pumpkin and half the sweetcorn. Stir, season, put lid on and allow vegetables to sweat for about 10 minutes.
- 3 Pour in the milk and stock and simmer for about 20 minutes with the lid partly covering the pan.
- 4 Heat the grill and melt 1 oz butter. Mix the rest of the sweetcorn with the butter and some seasoning then toast on a baking tray for about 8 minutes remembering to turn half way through.
- 5 When the soup is ready pour into a liquidiser or use a stick blender to mix into a thick textured purée.
- 6 Serve with toasted sweetcorn sprinkled over the top.

G(L)UT BUSTER RECIPE BOOK

I'm still on the look-out for more recipes for the allotment cookery book so now that the growing season is over, I'm really hoping you will have time to hunt some out and send me your favourites to:
valeriemnne@gmail.com





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'THE ORGANIC KITCHEN GARDEN'

In September, Maureen Sawyer enthralled us for two hours with an explanation of her gardening philosophy illustrated with slides of her garden. An organic gardener of more than twenty years standing, she has a wealth of theoretical knowledge and practical experience from her own large local garden where she follows the 'no dig method' of gardening. Unfortunately, it appeared to be an inconvenient evening for many SHAS members, but it was enjoyed by members from other local allotment associations.

For those who were not able to attend here are some of her top tips:

Feed the soil not the plants

Use your own compost or manure. Make liquid fertiliser with nettles or comfrey leaves. These also speed up decomposition in the compost heap.

All herbs are beneficial

Chives protect against aphids, apple scab and rust in roses and encourage healthy carrots and tomatoes.

Oregano protects against mosquitoes.

Garlic is rich in phosphorous and also repels aphids.

French Marigold Tagetes, variety Naughty Marietta, helps repel soil nematodes and whitefly from tomatoes.

Ladybird larvae, lacewings, centipedes and spiders are all beneficial insects.

Hopefully we will be able to invite Maureen back to give another talk in the next growing season as so far we have only skimmed the surface of her astounding wealth of knowledge.

TRADING HUT

After another successful Trading Hut season, we are now closed for the winter. Once again, many thanks go to all our volunteers who helped out during the year keeping the shelves stocked. Thanks also to plot holders and members who purchased items, without your support we would not be able to operate.

The Trading Hut continues to be a place where people can come to ask for advice and share gardening tips — every day's a school day when the Trading Hut is open!

Seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots are on order and the Trading Hut will reopen in February 2024. Details to be sent nearer the time.



COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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KINGS SEEDS

As part of our membership of the National Allotment Society we are able to purchase seeds from Kings Seeds discounted at around 40% of their normal website prices.

If you are interested in ordering from Kings Seeds, and do not have an account, please contact our Seed Secretary Janet Cripps, email: janetcripps@ntlworld.com who can set you up with an account where you can view and download the catalogue and order online.

