

Grass Cuttings

The Newsletter of Sale Horticultural & Allotment Society – September 2004

Chairman's Report

Hello again, it is time we brought you up to date with the happenings in SHAS;

Your new committee are beginning to function and hopefully understand how to best to keep our society working. We still need help no matter how small from you our members – volunteers are very hard to find!!!

Our finances are now in a more comfortable state mostly thanks to Jonathan's control.

Nicola is sorting out the active and dormant allotment tenants with the target of offering plots to members who want to work on the plots; we have 16 on our waiting list. Our next main social event is the Buffet / Awards Night on Saturday 23 October at St Mary's Church Hall, and as previously, admission is by ticket. Sylvia, our Society Secretary has given full details in her article in this Newsletter- again we will require a few helpers to make the evening a success.

Our Amenity Building fitting out is almost complete, thanks to **Ken Bostock** and **Jim Johnson** and a pal of mine, **Peter Ford**. We are about to start the finishing painting and install final attachments and accessories. Subject to volunteers being available we hope to complete by early October. It our intension to have an official opening by a Trafford Dignitary sometime in November-more news in our next Newsletter.

Our Trading Hut now has new doors thanks to Alec Royle's Joinery and we have a new security system on all our buildings.

We hope to see you at our Buffet Social /Awards night St Mary's Church Hall on the 23 October, so please contact Sylvia or any committee member for tickets.

Best regards **Don Jackson**

Sylvia writes:

Congratulations!

As a result of the annual plot inspections by Trafford, when plots are judged on productivity, variety of produce and tidiness, one of our members, Keith Jones, was highly commended for his plot (no 3). Other members commended for their efforts were: Angela Maskew plot 2A, Mr P Howarth & Ms B Dai on plot 37, Ken Bostock, plot 36, Mr L Kay plot 48 and Clina Kirkham, plot 25



Clina on her plot

Gala-Hot Pot Supper Evening

As Don has said, on Saturday 23rd October we are having our annual awards and fun evening. Admission is by ticket only, with the tickets available on a first come first served basis. The cost will be £6.50 - this price also includes your first glass of wine or soft drink free. There will be an award ceremony, quizzes, bingo and a raffle, all accompanied by suitable background music. We look forward to seeing you there:

Sylvia Steer

Allotment Secretary's Report:

Plots

I said in the last newsletter there were a number of plots in an unsatisfactory and uncultivated condition and that with the number of people waiting for plots we cannot justify this. I am very aware that the poor weather hasn't helped as weeds have in many cases grown far faster than crops! Even so it is clear that some plots have not been cultivated for a substantial period. Some of these plot holders may indeed be considering giving up their plot, as they have not been able to continue working them. If you are not able to manage or are intending to vacate your plot, please get in touch with me as I have a number of people who are keen to begin digging ready for the spring planting season.

Footpaths

It is a matter of concern that a number of plot holders have been allowing the boundaries of their plots to extend on to the designated footpaths. In many cases this amounts to only six inches. The problem is that, particularly where there are fixed structures such as sheds and manure bays, the width of already narrow paths is restricted. In a number of cases these paths have become virtually impassable to plot holders wishing to access the manure bays with a wheelbarrow. Over the next few months the committee will be redefining many of the paths with pegs and twine. It may mean you need to reinstate footpaths and edgings or indeed move sheds/manure bays etc. In the meantime I would ask plot holders to show consideration to others by being careful not to encroach on the paths, and to recognise that in many cases crops can grow a substantial distance over paths. All fixed structures must be positioned **at least** six inches in from the path to allow for the mowing of the paths.

Cars on site

It has recently come to my attention that some plot holders are parking their cars beside their plot whilst they work. The paths are not wide enough to allow plot holders with wheelbarrows to pass a parked car. You may bring your car on to the site to drop off and collect items from your plot and then you must park it on the road.

Finally on a recent plot inspection I was favorably impressed with a number of new plot holders who had worked very hard to bring very poor plots up to a very good standard. We shall shortly be recognising these plot holders with a small prize for the most improved allotment by a newcomer.

Lets hope for a better summer next year!

Nicola Lewis

The Membership Secretary writes:

Memberships

We are intending to tidy up our membership database by the middle of October 2004. Members who have not renewed their membership this year will be deleted from our records and will no longer receive Newsletters or communication from our society. And be deemed non-members. All membership rights will be rescinded. All plot holders should have by now already renewed their membership. Any who have not are in breach of their tenancy agreement and could therefore lose the right to work their plots. Any who have not renewed please do so before 15th October 2004.

Amenity Building

Progress on the building has been rapid since power has been connected. All walls and ceiling have been insulated and clad in wood. Painting is now in progress and the inside of the building is looking very good. We have a problem with water ingress under the concrete walls, if any members have a remedy for this problem we would be very happy to hear from them. Once again many thanks to all helpers who have given their time and experience to move the work program forward and also thanks to all those who contributed to the fund to enable the work to be carried out.

Regards

Ken Bostock

Treasurer's Report

The three months since our last newsletter seem to have flown by. The financial situation of SHAS continues to improve week by week and I am now confident that the control processes we put in place after the previous treasurer resigned have enabled us to not only steady the ship, but to know how much each event or activity costs and/or contributes to the overall cash position and have put us on a sound financial footing. What a difference six months can make! With the money that we have saved on general administration costs on previous years and increased sales in the trading hut we have been able to fund several cash projects this year.

Machinery-we've spent around £450 on the maintenance, repair and in some cases replacement of lawnmowers, strimmer, hedge cutters, generators, rotavators etc. They are available for all plot holders to use and for the remainder of this year all we are asking for is a contribution towards the cost of the petrol. From January 1st next year we will be funding their running costs slightly differently-watch out for future announcements. Contact Kevin or David for details on how to get access to the machinery.

Waste-We've spent £150 on rubbish removal from the plots earlier in the summer and are finalising the arrangements with a local rubbish removal and recycling firm to work in partnership with us in the future. For a further one time this year, the society will pay for the removal of green and none green rubbish from the site. Plot holders will be able to obtain sacks from the Trading Hut to fill with green waste and place along with bulk non-green waste near the gates for collection. **PLEASE PHONE A COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR DETAILS AFTER 30th SEPTEMBER or watch out for special notices**

Security-As Don said in his article, significant amounts have been spent on changing locks and having new doors built and existing doors repaired on the trading huts and tool sheds. This was funded by the successful claim made

on the insurance policy following last years break in. There is still a surplus for further improvements.

Gala Hot Pot Evening - I have bent the Chairman's arm and he has agreed that this year the society will be subsidising the cost of the tickets for this event. Your cost is £6.50 per ticket (see Sylvia's article)

Trading Hut - I'd like to thank all the volunteers who have staffed and stocked the hut this year and put up with ever changing methods of recording sales and banking etc. The fruits of your labours can be seen by having the highest level of sales and profits for the last 5 years!

Please note:

- There are bargains still to be had with many items reduced to half price or less with some items at ridiculous give away prices.
- Existing stock lines have been reviewed and once the current stock has been sold, some will not be renewed. However, please let me or any other Committee member know if there is any item you would wish to buy but we don't stock it. If there is enough demand then we will stock those items.
- The general pricing policy has been reviewed and many items have had their price held or reduced. We will try and ensure margins are as small as possible whilst still maintaining some profit in order to benefit the society.
- Remember -this is **your** shop to cater for **your** needs. As far as possible, we will keep prices competitive but we know that sometimes we will be dearer than Wilko's or another supplier. I would encourage you to still buy from us knowing that any money we make is not wasted but invested in the society and the plots. It is your way of donating funds throughout the year.

Remaining open Sundays this year are: 19th September, October 3rd and October 17th.

Regards, **Jonathan**

David Taylor writes:

EQUIPMENT

All equipment has recently been serviced, repaired or replaced and are in excellent working order. It is important that when any machinery is used it is cleaned and left in good condition. Any defects must be reported immediately.

For safety reasons, suitable clothing must be worn at all times: i.e. long trousers, goggles and gloves when using the strimmers.

Long grass is to be cut with a rotary mower and cylinder mowers used on short grass. Strimmers are to be used on extra long grass and weeds etc.

If any abuse of the machinery is seen or reported then consideration will be given to withdrawing this facility. This equipment is expensive to purchase and maintain and we expect all users to treat it as if it were their own.

The charges for the use of the equipment is currently £1.50 for the mowers and 50p for the strimmer (extended use would require a higher donation) but as the treasurer has said, this is under review for next year.

Note: It is the responsibility of the user to take all precautions with regards to safety, as SHAS nor its elected officers does not accept any responsibility for injuries or damages sustained whilst using any of the available machinery.

Regards, David