

SALE HORTICULTURAL AND ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

# GROSVENOR ROAD ALLOTMENTS HANDBOOK



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# 'WELCOME'

**Whether you are the enthusiastic tenant of your first allotment plot, a seasoned allotmentee, or a member waiting to be offered a plot, this Handbook has been produced to provide general information about the Grosvenor Road Allotments, the Sale Horticultural and Allotment Society (SHAS) who manage the allotment site, and gives guidance on what is expected from you as a plot holder.**

SHAS was founded in 1988 and is committed to promoting amateur horticulture in the local community growing vegetables, fruit and flowers. Our allotment site, known as 'Grosvenor Road Allotments', is located on the corner of Grosvenor Road and Glebelands Road in Ashton-on-Mersey, Sale, about 5 miles south of Manchester city centre and the post code for satnavs is M33 6NN.

SHAS members are inspired by a wish to 'grow your own' and at the same time enjoy the exercise, fresh air and the sense of community that comes with being an allotment holder. We have approximately 100 plots, ranging in size from under 50 square metres to over 300 square metres.

Most of our members are already plot holders, some are waiting for a plot to become available, while other members do not want a plot but enjoy supporting SHAS by attending our various talks and events, taking advantage of the competitive prices charged for gardening products in our Trading Hut, and volunteering to help within the allotment community.

## **How the site is managed**

The Grosvenor Road Allotments site is leased from Trafford Borough Council by the Sale Horticultural and Allotment Society (SHAS), which is responsible for managing the site by renting out the plots, collecting and paying the annual rents to Trafford Borough Council, and managing and maintaining the site on the Council's behalf.

SHAS is run by a Management Committee, on behalf of and for the benefit of, plot holders and all our members. Committee roles include Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary and Plot Manager. Other Committee members take on roles as deemed appropriate for the management of the allotment site.

Committee members are elected annually at the AGM, which is normally held in March or April and any member of SHAS is eligible to stand for election to the Committee.

We encourage all members, but especially plot holders, to get involved in the allotment community and volunteer to help out where needed, for example cutting grass and hedges, clearing rubbish, tidying buildings, joining working groups, supporting and, or helping to run activities and events, or even joining the Committee.

The names and contact details of our Committee members are published in our quarterly newsletter 'Grass Cuttings' and can be viewed on our website.

Our website is [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk).



# JOINING SHAS AND GETTING A PLOT

Membership of the Society entitles members to rent a plot, vote at the AGM, receive newsletters and other communications about the allotments, and to purchase items from our Trading Hut.

To rent a plot, you must be a member of SHAS. You can apply to become a member by completing and returning a Membership Application Form (available from the Trading Hut or online at [www.shas.org.uk/Documents](http://www.shas.org.uk/Documents)), and indicating on the form that you want to rent a plot. If you are already a member contact the Membership Secretary and ask to be added to the Waiting List.

When a plot becomes available, it will be offered to members in order on the Waiting List.

Plots are rented out on an annual Allotment Tenancy, with the rent calculated each year with effect from 1 January, by the size of the plot and the rental rate set by the Council. The current standard rental rate and any applicable discount can be found on our website.

The Allotment Tenancy is issued in the name of one named individual, 'the Tenant', who is responsible for maintaining the plot in good productive order, and adhering to the rules of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement and any other rules and guidance issued by the Management Committee. The Tenant can nominate additional members to be 'Joint Plot Holder', but this does not confer on those members any automatic rights to take over the plot should the Tenant relinquish it.

## Allotment Tenancy Agreement

All plot holders must abide by the terms of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement and any other conditions which the Management Committee considers necessary to preserve the allotments from deterioration. In summary this requires the plot holder to:

- *Use the plot as an allotment garden for the purpose of growing vegetables, fruit and flowers only, and not sell the produce of the plot for personal gain*
- *Keep the plot in a tidy, well-cultivated state*
- *Not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbouring residents or other tenants, for example by causing excessive smoke or obstructing paths*

A full copy of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement is issued to the plot holder when they take over the plot.

By accepting a plot and paying the annual plot rental, a plot holder accepts the terms of the current Allotment Tenancy Agreement.

This Handbook is to be read and used in conjunction with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement.

The current Allotment Tenancy Agreement and Allotment Handbook can be viewed and downloaded from the 'Documents' section of our website [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLOT

On becoming a plot-holder you can start to plan your plot to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers and, if you are intent on gardening organically, enjoy the safety and satisfaction of chemical-free produce.

## Site access

Access to the Grosvenor Road allotments is via three locked gates — two on Grosvenor Road and one on Glebelands Road. The Plot Manager will issue new plot holders with one key, which fits all three gates. There is a small charge for the key. For the safety and security of the site and our members gates should always be locked when entering or leaving the site.

## Vehicle access

Vehicles should not normally be brought onto the site. If it is necessary for you to bring a vehicle onto site, for example to deliver or remove heavy or bulky items such as a shed, you should use one of the two end gates and not drive beyond the hard standing areas just inside these gates. You should avoid driving onto the grass paths.

If you feel it is absolutely necessary to drive a vehicle onto any of the grass paths to get closer to your plot, this must be done with agreement from the Management Committee, you must ensure that the ground conditions are suitable and that the exercise is safe in all respects. Once your task is completed your vehicle should be removed as quickly as possible. Should your vehicle get stuck or cause any damage, you will be liable for all costs incurred in making good any damage caused.

## Health and Safety

Plot holders need to be mindful of potential hazards when on site eg. tools and equipment lying on grass paths, strimmers and mowers being used and minimise any risk to themselves and other plot holders.

Children must be supervised and their health and safety on site is your responsibility. Children should not be allowed to run onto or over other people's plots.

If you bring your dog on site, please keep it on a lead at all times. Any mess should be cleared up by the owner.

If you intend to bring a radio on site, please use headphones so as not to disturb neighbouring ploholders.

BBQ's and pizza ovens are not allowed.

## Grass paths

The Management Committee takes responsibility for mowing the main paths. However, it is a requirement of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement that you maintain a minimum 0.5 metre strip of any paths around your plot in a neat and tidy condition, and trim back hedges, overhanging branches and plants on your plot.

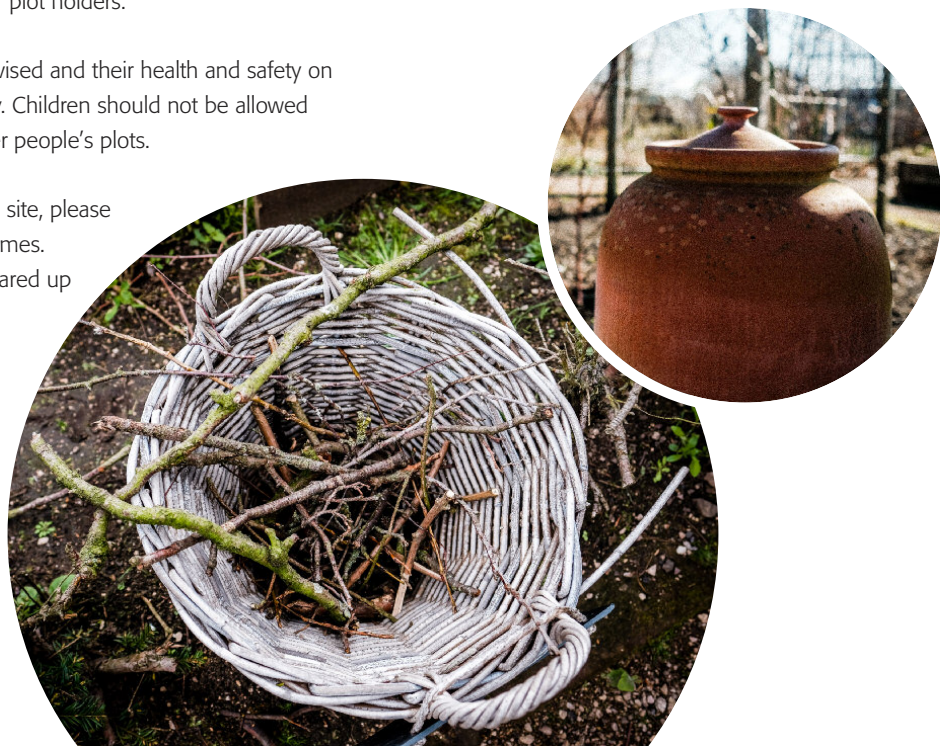
## Boundary hedges

If your plot is bordered on any side by a boundary hedge, it is your responsibility to trim the side of the hedge facing your plot to keep it in a neat and healthy condition and so keep the site as secure as possible. Trafford Borough Council is responsible for maintaining the side of the boundary hedge facing the public highway. Problems with overhanging trees on the site boundary should be reported to the Management Committee.

## Fruit trees

It is your responsibility to keep the trees on your plot pruned. They should not be allowed to overhang grass paths or neighbouring plots.

No new trees other than fruit trees should be planted. If you plan to plant new fruit trees on your plot, they must have a dwarf root stock.





# LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLOT

## Soil health

Looking after the soil to maintain soil structure and fertility is crucial to the sustainable cultivation of plots. The regular addition of green waste compost, animal manures, leaf mould and other organic material will help this process. Adding a thick layer of compost will also help deter weed germination and hold moisture in the soil.

Plant waste should be composted in a heap or bin as much as possible. Perennial weeds eg. couch grass, horsetail, dandelion and docks need to be 'killed' before adding by for example drowning, as they will regrow in the compost heap. Alternatively, remove from site and dispose of in your green bin.

For a good compost mix both brown and green waste in equal quantities to maintain a healthy balance of nitrogen and carbon. A successful compost heap should exclude some rain, retain some warmth, allow drainage and let in air. It is preferable to stand it on the soil which gives access for soil organisms and drainage. If you can, turn your compost regularly with a fork to introduce oxygen and help your compost break down. It can take anywhere between six months to two years to produce well-rotted compost.

Composting is also great for garden biodiversity, with many kinds of fungi and soil micro-organisms contributing to the process. Worms, woodlice, slugs and other invertebrates feed on the decaying material which in turn, provide food for birds, hedgehogs, toads and other valuable wildlife.

If you inherit a weed-infested plot try covering weeds with cardboard (remove any tape and labels), compost, or black membrane to exclude light and roll back a bit at a time to clear them. Carpet is not a good weed suppressant and should be avoided as the dyes and synthetic fibres in the carpet can leave harmful residues in the soil.

## Wood chippings

Wood chippings are delivered to the Glebelands Road entrance bays on an ad-hoc basis. They are useful for mulching or to make pathways on your plot, but please make sure they don't spread onto the surrounding grass paths as they can damage lawnmowers when the grass is cut. Leaf mould is also delivered to site on an ad-hoc basis.

## Getting rid of rubbish

You must take responsibility for your own non-compostable rubbish and dispose of it appropriately off site. Under no circumstances should rubbish be dumped on vacant areas of land, on communal areas or in the bays located in the middle and at each end of the site, or under hedges.

## Bonfires

From an environmental point of view bonfires are not encouraged, but if you feel that you must have a bonfire because you cannot compost or otherwise dispose of your garden waste off-site, you must follow these rules:

- *Bonfires are only allowed on site between 1st October and 31st March — by order of Trafford Borough Council*
- *Only burn dry material, to avoid creating excessive amounts of smoke, which is unpleasant for other plot holders and the general public*
- *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*
- *The use of accelerants such as petrol to start a fire on any area of your plot is prohibited*



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLOT

## Water

Water is a valuable resource and if possible you should collect as much rainwater as you can for your own plot – for example by installing a water butt to collect rain water from a shed or greenhouse.

Free standing pipes and dip containers are located around the site along the main pathways. These taps are fed from a metered water supply, and should be used sparingly. The use of hosepipes is discouraged but if they are used, they must not be left running when unattended. The use of sprinklers is not allowed.

The water to these taps is turned off during the winter months, generally November to March, to avoid damage to the supply pipes from freezing.

## Sheds and greenhouses

You must seek approval from the Management Committee if you want to erect a shed, greenhouse or polytunnel on your plot. Please contact the Plot Manager to discuss.

- *New sheds should be no bigger than 6ft x 4ft (1.8m x 1.2m)*
- *Greenhouses should be no bigger than 6ft x 8ft (1.8m x 2.5m)*
- *Polytunnel size by agreement*
- *Any new sheds and greenhouses should have polycarbonate glazing*

If any glass panes break in an existing greenhouse or shed, these should only be replaced with polycarbonate glazing.

Any structures, including sheds and greenhouses, are to be kept clear of plot boundaries to allow the mower to cut the grass paths, and their position should not be detrimental to neighbouring plots. Structures should be sited 3 feet from site boundary hedges/fences. Remember that if your plot includes a hedge you need to be able to safely access the area for hedge maintenance.

It is your responsibility to keep any buildings or structures on your plot in a safe and tidy condition and to remove any broken glass from site immediately.

## Equipment

The Management Committee is responsible for maintaining the site using SHAS owned strimmers and mowers.

Unfortunately, theft, damage and repair of society owned strimmers and mowers has been a major financial problem in the past and therefore the use of such equipment is restricted to named users.

## Wheelbarrows

SHAS owned wheelbarrows are available for use on site. They are kept in the secure white shed directly opposite the middle gate on Grosvenor Road, which must be kept locked at all times. Contact the Plot Manager for the access code. Wheelbarrows must be put away tidily in a relatively clean condition to be considerate to others using them.

Please note the shed is a shared space. You are welcome to store tools in there if you have no shed on your plot, but this is at your own risk.

## Plot inspections

Plot inspections are made by a team from the Management Committee throughout the year, usually in April, June and September, to ensure they are being well cultivated. A record is kept of the state of each plot.

There is a six month probationary period for new plot holders.

If, during an inspection any plot is found to be left uncultivated or unproductive for an excessive period of time, we will contact the plot holder and, if necessary, invoke the Eviction Procedure. The Eviction Procedure can be viewed and downloaded from the Documents section of our website [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### The Trading Hut

The Trading Hut (located by the Grosvenor Road gate opposite the bowling green in the park) has become a focal point for many activities on site over the years. It is open during the growing season (February until October), on either Saturday or Sunday mornings from 10.30am to 12 noon. Opening dates and times are posted on the site gates and can be found in the Trading Hut section of our website.

We stock a range of fertilisers, composts, lawn care, and garden sundries at competitive prices. Stock list and prices are on our website. We have information about some commonly used fertilisers and how to use them. During February/March we sell onion sets, shallots and seed potatoes and in September garlic bulbs and over wintering onion sets. In addition plot holders can leave unwanted plant pots and other gardening items for use by others.

We are totally reliant on the support of volunteers to operate the Trading Hut. Volunteers help man the counter when the hut is open and assist with bagging up stock items and restocking shelves. If you can spare some of your time to help out, you'd be most welcome. You do not need any specific skills, just an enthusiasm to help out. Please contact the Trading Hut Manager if you are interested in helping.

### The Hoe-Down

Our amenity building, the Hoe-Down, located opposite the Trading Hut, is available for use by all our members, providing a rest area, a kettle and toilet facilities adapted for disabled members. The Hoe-Down is kept locked for security. Members can access it at any time (except when the water is turned off and it is closed for winter) by purchasing a key from the Trading Hut. The Hoe-Down is kept clean by volunteers, so please help by ensuring that you always leave it tidy and locked after using it.

### Grass Cuttings

Our newsletter 'Grass Cuttings' aims to keep members up to date with what is happening on the allotment site. It is produced four times a year and is distributed by email to save on printing and postage costs. Current and previous copies of Grass Cuttings are available on the website.

### Facebook

We have a private Facebook group open to any SHAS member for allotment cultivation related posts. If you wish to join please search SHAS — Sale Horticultural and Allotment Society and request to join. You will be asked to confirm your plot number before you're approved. Information of interest to all plot holders/members will be circulated via Grass Cuttings/email. You do not have to join the Facebook group to receive such information.

### Social Events

We aim to hold a number of social activities, talks and demonstrations throughout the year. Events are organised by the Social Secretary with input and support from other Committee members and plot holders. These are advertised to members by email, Facebook, Grass Cuttings and on the website.

### Volunteers – Practical Task WhatsApp Group

In addition to needing regular volunteers to help run the Trading Hut, we are also dependent on members to help out with various other practical tasks throughout the year, such as joining working parties to clear up areas of the site or helping with events and activities. If you wish to join the SHAS Practical Task WhatsApp group contact the Plot Manager with your name and mobile number.





## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Privacy Policy

The SHAS Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, share, and protect your personal information. It also sets out your rights relating to your personal data and how you can exercise those rights. A copy of our Data Protection Policy can be viewed and downloaded from the Documents section of our website: [www.shas.org.uk](http://www.shas.org.uk)

### SHAS Allotment Insurance

SHAS has Public Liability insurance which covers the named individual plot holders ie. 'the Tenants' who are responsible for paying the annual plot rental.

Separate SHAS insurance covers damage to our communal buildings, such as the Trading Hut and the Hoe-Down, and theft of SHAS owned equipment eg. lawnmowers. It does not cover damage to plot holders sheds or greenhouses nor theft of your own equipment. If you want to cover the buildings/equipment on your plot, contact your household insurance provider about extending your domestic policy.

### National Allotment Society (NAS)

SHAS is an affiliated member of the National Allotment Society – or National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) to give it its full name.

Through our membership, plot holders gain a number of benefits such as access to the Kings Seeds discount scheme offering seeds and other gardening items at a discount of up to 40% off their normal prices. If you are interested, please call in to the Trading Hut, where we usually have a few copies of the NAS magazine and the Kings Seeds Catalogue.

