

grass CUTTINGS

APRIL 2025

CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello again. I can't quite believe we're already in April — it's been a fantastic start to the month with some gorgeous sunshine, and it's been lovely to see so many of you down on site. A big thank you to those who attended the AGM in March. It was great to see so many faces both long-standing plot holders and some new members. One of the changes we made at the AGM was the vote to enable the AGM to be accessible remotely as well as in person, which we hope will enable more people to join in.

Over the coming weeks and months we do want to facilitate some discussion with more plot holders interested in joining the committee. The committee currently has vacancies in non-exec roles. The beauty of these roles is that they enable committee members to take an active part in the running of the site that, to a degree, suits the time you have available. You may not be aware that some of the local allotment sites do

not have a committee and are managed by the Council — it is crucial that we maintain a committee in order for us to hold autonomy over the site as a collective and work toward changes that benefit us as a cohort of members. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact me directly or reach out to one of the existing committee members.



I do have to have a slight moan on two important items:

Children must stick to main paths quietly and calmly when on site — as a parent I recognise the benefits of the site and the freedoms it offers our children however we must be respectful and safe. We have received several communications from plot holders regarding children running between plots, making excessive noise or accessing parts of the plots they should not access. This not only disturbs plot holders, but it is a huge safety risk when there are tools being used. Of course, no one objects to children being outside and enjoying themselves, but we need to be considerate. Please speak with your children about this.

Rubbish: there are no rubbish bins on site. Please do not put litter into anything you perceive to be a bin, take it home with you. This includes leaving things you consider 'useful' in bays or in the wet weather shelter. Should you have something you would like to pass on, please either bring it to the swap shop in the coming weeks or post your item on the Facebook group.

As always, if there is anything you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to reach out.

Louise Virabi,
Chair

SITE MANAGEMENT

Our allotments run on volunteer time, without which we would struggle to maintain the site.

Are you able to help with the occasional practical task such as repairs to a leaky tap and other on-site property, clearing manure bays, cleaning the Hoe-Down, helping with deliveries, dividing a plot in two?

If so please join our 'Practical Task Group'.

We use a WhatsApp group to flag up tasks and ask for help.



To join email allotments@shas.org.uk with your name and mobile number and Rosemary, our Plot Manager, will add you to the group. If you don't have a mobile number and want to help just email.

Please consider joining if you think you can help in some way, any help is welcome.

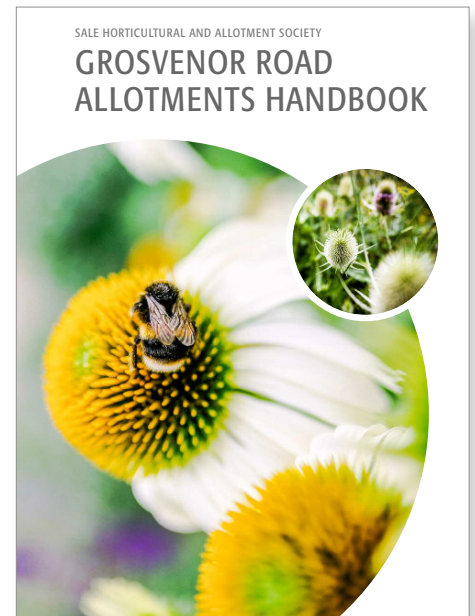


ALLOTMENT HANDBOOK

Our Allotment Handbook has been updated. You may have been a plot holder for many years, or you may be new to the allotments, but please take some time to read the new version as acceptable practices have changed over the years and it is important that you are aware of any changes.

The guidance in this Handbook supersedes any information given in previous versions. It will be updated when necessary and the up-to-date copy will always be available to view on our website.

We do hope you find the Handbook useful and if you have any comments please let the Committee know.



NEW SHAS EMAIL ADDRESS

We have launched a new tool to send out the regular allotment news emails. You will start to see emails coming from 'Sale Horticultural and Allotment Society (SHAS) secretary@shas.org.uk'. If you haven't seen them, please check your junk mail folder and mark this address as a safe sender. If you have any issues or feedback please contact our new Secretary, Tina at this email address.

NEW PLOT HOLDERS

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

Russell McGrevey / Plot 4a
Chris Perrins / Plot 15b
Charlie Barlow / Plot 30b
Tony Crank Plot / 43c
Stephen Harris / Plot 58

SECURITY/SITE SAFETY REMINDER

A reminder to ensure the gates are securely locked at all times when entering and leaving the site.

GRASS PATHS

Cutting of the main grass paths has restarted. Plants and bushes which overhang the grass paths must be cut back. Clear any wood, stones or bricks from the edges of paths as these can damage our mower. Roger does an excellent job keeping the main grass paths well maintained.

WEED OF THE MONTH — HORSETAIL

Horsetail, or maybe you know it as Mares Tail, has started to emerge on many plots. It is an invasive plant, which predates the dinosaurs and can be difficult to eradicate, but removing it regularly will weaken growth over time. It spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) or spores.

The plant can resemble a thin green blade of grass which starts to develop whorls or a curious looking light brown segmented stem with a cone at its tip. The cone contains spores which are wind-blown. Remove these as soon as they appear to limit spread. Undergrown rhizomes can go as much as 2m deep. Dispose of horsetail in your green bin, **do not** put on the compost heap. Be persistent in removing it – the plant will weaken over time.



USEFUL FREEBIES

There are some useful free items available from the Trading Hut when it is open.

Tennis balls — great for the ends of canes to prevent eye injury and helpful in supporting netting

Plastic plant pots in different sizes

Currently we have a pair of size 10 wellingtons

Fleece-like material is in a black bin by the Hoe-Down. Can be used to warm up soil, act as a barrier fence, or perhaps even help make your scarecrow.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

If you have changed your mobile number, email or postal address please inform our Membership Secretary membership@shas.org.uk so records can be updated.

PLOT NUMBERS

Please can all plot holders erect a sign of some sort showing their plot number. Something simple will suffice, it helps identify individual plots.



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SOCIAL EVENTS

PLANT/SEED SHARE Sunday 11 May 10.30am to 1pm

An opportunity to share spare plants, seedlings, seeds and cuttings with other plot holders and members. Even if you have nothing to bring you can still take something away. Everybody is welcome. It's also an opportunity to ask questions and share gardening knowledge. All plants/seeds to be brought along before 11am please. Plants must be labelled in some way to identify what they are. Seeds (either full or part packets) should be in-date and labelled with the variety and sowing instructions.

SUNDAY SOCIAL'S 10.30am – 12noon

Come along to the Hoe-Down on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month to exchange tips, commiserate over poor crops, or just rest tired muscles for a while over a cuppa with fellow members. Our first Sunday Social on 13 April saw a respectable number of members popping in and information/tips were passed on. The next one is Sunday 27 April and subsequent dates are displayed on the gates.

ALLOTMENT PICNIC Sunday 29 June

Our popular annual allotment picnic will this year include a Music Event which is being organised by Mike Barlow, one of our newer plot holders. If you or your children/grandchildren play any instrument please bring it along. Watch out for further details.

COFFEE MORNING AND TOOL EXCHANGE Sunday 14 September
Dig out your unused garden tools and equipment, useable wellies or other garden related items for them to find a new owner rather than languish in the shed or garage and end up in landfill. Perhaps you'll find something that you need.

On 2nd April Maureen Sawyer gave a talk on 'The Organic Kitchen Garden'. As usual her presentation and the amount of knowledge and experience she has to impart was inspiring.

Six Tips from Maureen

Plant Calendula to attract pollinators

Don't leave bare soil

Hand weed or hoe out weeds

Fertilise and feed the soil with chicken manure, mushroom compost, Seaweed extract, comfrey or nettles, composted bark or green manure

Tagetes, especially 'Naughty Marietta' repels white fly

Oregano and Lemon Verbena repel mosquitoes

Sadly the low number of attendees, both SHAS members and guests, meant the door receipts fell far short of our costs. The committee will be considering whether offering talks is viable in the future.

Maureen Sawyer's garden on Sandy Lane, Stretford it is open on 21 July for the National Garden Scheme.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Louise Virabi Chair, Plot 27
E chairman@shas.org.uk

Phil Gorman Treasurer
E treasurer@shas.org.uk

Tina Cooper Secretary, Plot 28a
E secretary@shas.org.uk

Bernadette Miller Membership, Plot 54b
E membership@shas.org.uk

Rosemary Budd Plot Manager, Plot 19b
E allotments@shas.org.uk

Valerie Mulligan Social Secretary, Plot 8
E socialsecretary@shas.org.uk

Janet Cripps Trading Hut and Newsletter, Plot 44b
E trading@shas.org.uk

Louise Virabi Social Media
E facebook@shas.org.uk

SHAS Website
www.shas.org.uk



SCARECROW COMPETITION

Saturday 21 June

This year's theme is Nursery Rhymes. Turn back the clock to your childhood or that of your children or grandchildren for a little nostalgia and 'Hey diddle, diddle' inspiration will surely follow.

This is usually a very popular event with truly inspired creations. If you don't have a plot you can still join in, there are empty manure bays on site where a scarecrow can happily sit or stand. All Crows to be in place by 3pm Friday 20 June to allow judging to take place. Good Luck everyone.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Bird nesting season between May and August – please avoid trimming the hedge

No bonfires are allowed on site between 1 April and 30 September

If you want to plant a new fruit tree it must be on a dwarf rootstock

Barbecues/pizza ovens are not allowed on site

Radios only allowed if used with headphones

Vehicles should not normally be brought onto site. If necessary use hard standing areas just inside the two end gates. Seek permission of Management Committee if you wish to drive on a grass path