

grass CUTTINGS

APR: 2026



CHAIR'S REPORT

Hi everyone, Happy Spring — I think it's safe to say it's nearly sprung!

We've had a great and productive start to the growing season on site. You'll notice lots of activity from the practical task group and be pleased to hear we have lots of plans over the coming months to improve the site.

Something I touched on heavily at the AGM was volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of the allotment. We rely heavily on volunteers across everything we do. From the entire committee, to Roger cutting the paths, the trading hut, the hoe down being cleaned and maintained, the water meter being read, coffee mornings, Grass Cuttings — I could go on. I know many of you volunteer already and we are continuously grateful for every volunteer on site. If you have any time at all in your week to support the ongoing activity of the allotment please get in touch.

If you were at the AGM, you'll know that we have recently been successful in a grant award to support Bio Diversity. Myself and Tina (our Secretary) are going to lead a small working party — please reach out if you would like to be involved in this. From planning to practical activities, we will have lots to do.

As always, if there is anything you would like to discuss please reach out.

Louise Virabi, Chair

INTERESTING GARDENING PROGRAMMES:

To improve your gardening knowledge give the following programmes a try. You can get lots of advice and tips for growing vegetables and flowers.

Beechgrove Garden

30 minute programme
Usually Friday evening BBC2

Gardener's World

An hour's programme
Usually Friday evening BBC2

Both are available on BBC iPlayer

Gardeners Question Time

45 minute radio programme
Friday afternoon Radio 4
Available on BBC Sounds

AGM SUMMARY

The AGM was a great success. We had an excellent turnout and feedback on the new venue was positive. Thanks to everyone who came on the evening, whether you were there in person or online. We know that not everyone can make the AGM and we'll make sure you receive the minutes as soon as possible.

The AGM covered lots of topics, not least all the successes we've had over the last 12 months including the new website, the new bi-weekly newsletter, the installation of the memorial bench, our coffee mornings, the practical task group and our approved lottery grant.

We announced upcoming projects including signage, data storage, hard path improvements, and bio diversity improvements.

The AGM also touched on the high turnover of plot holders across ours and other Trafford sites and how we predict to see a reduction in this area, as well as reporting on another successful year at the Trading Hut.

Finally, we said goodbye to Phil as Treasurer and Valerie as Social Secretary. I know everyone will agree in thanking them both for their years of support on the committee. We officially welcomed Jayne and Anne to the committee and Matt was voted as treasurer. All other committee members remained in situ.

If there is anything you would like to discuss from the AGM or have any questions please let me know.

**Louise Virabi,
Chair**



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TRADING HUT

Our Trading Hut reopened in the middle of February for the annual sale of seed potatoes and onion/shallot sets. The weather wasn't particularly great, it was cold and wet, but a steady stream of hardy plot holders turned out to buy. Thank you for your support.

Now the growing season is really upon us, we have bags of compost — peat-based (Clover) and peat-free (Melcourt, Sylvagrow, John Innes). We also have two different sized growbags.

To help vegetables and flowers grow well, we have a range of fertilisers including: Growmore, Fish Blood and Bone, Bone Meal, Calcified Seaweed and Rose Fertiliser. They're sold in 3kg bags and are much cheaper than prices at the garden centre. We also sell liquid seaweed food.

Along with good quality bamboo canes in 4ft, 6ft and 8ft lengths, there's grit, perlite and vermiculite to add to your compost, labels to mark up your plants, lawn weed and feed, and bird food.

Items and current prices are listed on our website www.shas.org.uk. We take cash or card.

Come along one Sunday morning 10.30am to 12noon (or it's the first Saturday of the month), dates are advertised on the site gates. Say hello to our lovely volunteers and see what we sell. And if you need some help/advice, do come in and ask.

All members are welcome whether you have a plot or not.

**Janet Cripps,
Trading Hut Manager**



HOE DOWN KEY

The lock on the Hoe Down recently broke and has been replaced by a combination lock. Adjustments have been made to the door to make it more accessible to get the lock on and off. The code for the lock is **2026**. Please do not share the code with anyone outside of allotment membership. Recycle your old key at the local recycling centre. They'll be a box in the Hoe Down for old keys.



FREE TO A GOOD HOME

We have used plant pots of various sizes which have been donated by members. Reusing plastic plant pots: great for the environment and your wallet.

There's seed packets of different vegetables/flowers which members don't need. Some packets might be open, some might be a little out of date — but when did that stop us gardeners sowing them! Roger's legendary parsnip seeds are available now. On occasions people bring in surplus seedlings/plants which are looking for a new home.

Garden tools are often donated by plot holders who no longer need them. Some might require a little TLC but anybody's welcome to take them.

Tennis balls — may sound strange — but these are perfect for the ends of canes to prevent eye injury and helpful in supporting netting.

Gardening magazines — we've lots of them in the Hoe Down. They contain very useful gardening knowledge.

Call into the Trading Hut when we're open to see what is available.

Note: While we welcome donations, it would be appreciated if you could brush off excess soil/cobwebs from plant pots and tools. If anything is broken, please dispose of it yourself.

NEW PLOT HOLDERS

Welcome to our new plot holders, we wish you a long, productive and enjoyable allotment experience.

Michael Hughes / Plot 10
Rachael Kinsey / Plot 51a
Helen Rex / Plot 61b
Victoria Stevenson / Plot 1

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URGENT COMMUNICATIONS

As part of our review on communication, we've been reflecting on how we communicate urgent or time sensitive information to plot holders.

We have investigated several options that are low cost or free, easy to manage and adheres to GDPR and believe we have now found a solution.

Over the next few weeks, we will be rolling out a new WhatsApp Broadcast. You will not be able to see anyone else on the broadcast group (apart from me!) nor will you be able to send messages into it — this will only be used for urgent and time sensitive information. If for any reason you do not want to be part of the broadcast channel please let us know by emailing me at chair@shas.org.uk.

If you don't think we have your mobile number then please email as soon as possible to membership@shas.org.uk.

The broadcast group will be in situ by the end of April.

A FEW REMINDERS

SECURITY Gates should always be locked after entering and leaving the allotment site.

CHILDREN Children are welcome on site but please make sure they stay on the main paths and do not venture onto other people's plots. Allotments have hazards, we do not want any injuries or damage.

GRASS PATHS Roger has started to cut the paths. Overhanging plants and bushes must be cut back. Clear any wood, stones or bricks from the edges of paths as these can damage our mower.

DOGS ON SITE Dogs should be kept on a lead at all times. Do not let them stray onto other people's plot and clear up any mess they might make.

WATER TAPS Ensure water taps are turned off properly after use, and do not allow the water butts to overflow which wastes water.

BIRD NESTING SEASON Avoid trimming the hedge between May and August.

VEHICLES Should not normally be brought onto site. If absolutely 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.

BONFIRES Bonfires are not allowed on site between 1 April and 30 September.

RUBBISH Please do **not** dump unwanted/broken items in the old manure bays, the wet weather shelter, or by the buildings. Take it home for disposal.

If you think there is anything other plot holders might find useful, keep it on your plot and email details to allotments@shas.org.uk or post to the SHAS Facebook group.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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

Matt Shrimpton 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

Janet Cripps Trading Hut Manager, Plot 44b
E tradinghut@shas.org.uk

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

SHAS Website
www.shas.org.uk



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sunday 10 May / Plant/Seed Share and Tool Exchange

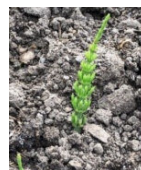
Sunday 5 July / Annual Summer Picnic

Sunday 5 September / Tool Exchange

COFFEE MORNINGS are held the 1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday of the month. Dates are on the gates. Come along for a chat.



HORSETAIL



Horsetail or Mares Tail, has started to grow. It is an invasive plant which spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) or spores. The plant can resemble either a thin green blade of grass which

starts to develop whorls, or a light brown segmented stem with a cone at its tip. Remove when you see it to limit spread. Be persistent – the plant will weaken over time. Dispose of horsetail in your green bin, **do not** put on the compost heap.