

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Meeting date: 24th March 2026 19:30 – 21:00

Location: St Mary Magdalene Church Centre (Oak Room), 44 Moss Lane, Sale M33 6GD

& Teams online meeting

Attendees: Total attendees 30

In person: 25 Online: 5

AGM Agenda	1
Welcome.....	1
Apologies	1
Approval of 2025 AGM meeting minutes.....	1
Chair report - Louise Virabi	1
Website and Communications.....	1
Site Improvements.....	2
Grants.....	2
Committee Changes	2
Lifetime Memberships.....	2
Traffic Safety	2
Looking Ahead	3
Proposed changes to constitution	3
Inclusion of ‘Election Process’ as highlighted in clause 9E.	3
Change of Plot Secretary to Plot Manager	3
Membership report - Bernadette Miller	3
Income from plot rental	4
Plot rentals:.....	4
Membership fees:.....	4
Plot Management Report - Rosemary Budd	5
New plot holders	5
Vacant plots arose from:	5
Enquiries and letting plots	5

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Managing of plots and the site.....	6
Financial Report - Phil Gorman, delivered by Matt Shrimpton.....	7
Trading Hut Report -Janet Cripps.....	7
Social Report – Valerie Mulligan	8
Voting of committee members	9
Any other business (AOB)	9
Hedges	9
King Seeds scheme	9
Foodbanks	10
Benefits of allotment.....	10
Tool Sharpening.....	10
Closing.....	10
Additional Information	11
Attendees.....	12
In person.....	12
Online.....	12
Apologies	13
Financial Report Year Ending 31st December 2025	13
Opening Balance 1st January.....	14
Income	14
TOTAL INCOME	14
Expenditure.....	14
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	14
Closing Balance 31st December	14
Bank Balance	14
Notes.....	15

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

AGM Agenda

Welcome

Committee Chair, Louise Virabi, welcomed all to the meeting, including members present in person, and those attending remotely on-line, 30 members in total.

Apologies

[See additional information](#)

Approval of 2025 AGM meeting minutes

2025 AGM minutes of meeting were circulated before the meeting.

✓ VOTE: APPROVED

Chair report - Louise Virabi

Website and Communications

- The Secretary has built a new, greatly improved website, hosting key documents including the Constitution and AGM materials, with more to follow. Members can make contact directly via the site, and it supports new member recruitment by making it easy to find and apply for an allotment.
- Email communications have been streamlined through a free platform, bringing consistency to outgoing messages and ensuring continuity when committee roles change hands.
- A fortnightly newsletter has been introduced alongside the established Grass Cuttings publication, to keep members better informed between issues.
- Work is ongoing to find a solution for urgent communications (such as break-ins or welfare concerns) that cannot wait a fortnight. WhatsApp broadcast lists are under consideration, subject to GDPR compliance.

Site Improvements

- A memorial bench has been installed on site at the request of a former member's family.
- Litter-picking equipment has been purchased and is available to borrow from the Hoe Down.
- Sunday Social events, including plant and tool swaps, have been well received and have helped rebuild community spirit following the disruption of the COVID years.

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Grants

- Following last year's constitutional change to register as a not-for-profit organisation, the committee successfully applied to the National Lottery and has been awarded £1,544 for a biodiversity project on site. The funds are already in the account.
- Volunteers will be needed for this project, which could involve tasks as straightforward as putting up bird boxes or installing hedgehog habitats. Anyone willing to help is encouraged to come forward.

Committee Changes

Matt, Jayne, and Anne have all joined the committee over the past year and have settled in well.

Lifetime Memberships

The committee has agreed lifetime memberships for three long-serving members:

- Chris Abbott, who led the society through the COVID period and played a key role in securing a lease extension with the council, avoiding a rental increase for members. He continues to support the Trading Hut.
- Tony Turnbull, a committee member of 23 years, who continues to support the site even after retirement from the committee.
- Jane Lucas, a committee member of approximately 15 years, known for her dedication and responsiveness to members' needs.

Traffic Safety

In collaboration with Friends of Ashton Park and local councillor Ben Hartley, the committee is supporting a petition regarding speeding traffic on Grosvenor Road. A QR code linking to the online petition will be posted at the site gates.

Looking Ahead

Key priorities for the coming year:

- New signage boards around the site
- Moving to an online platform for secure data storage
- Resurfacing work on paths at the Glebelands Road gate area using limestone chippings
- An open day in partnership with Friends of Ashton Park
- Introduction of a requirement to seek committee approval before planting fruit trees on plots, in order to address the growing problem of unmanaged large-rootstock trees being difficult to remove when plots change hands

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Proposed changes to constitution

Inclusion of 'Election Process' as highlighted in clause 9E.

Clause	Current wording	Proposed wording
9e)	To elect an Executive committee by simple majority of paid up members voting to serve the membership for the forthcoming year.	To elect an Executive committee by simple majority of paid up members voting to serve the membership for the forthcoming year in accordance with the Election Process.

✓ VOTE: APPROVED

Change of Plot Secretary to Plot Manager

Clause	Current wording	Proposed wording
Multiple	Plot Secretary	Plot Manager

✓ VOTE: APPROVED

Membership report - Bernadette Miller

For year ending Dec 2025

Members year end 2025 134

- 98 Active Tenants
 - 54 Concessions members (over 60s)
 - 44 Full members
- 11 joint plot holders
- 1 Complimentary
- 9 Life members *1 is a tenant
- 15 Social Members

Plot rentals:

SHAS manages the site on behalf of Trafford Borough Council (TBC), for which we receive a management fee, which makes a good proportion of our income. TBC set the plot rental rates SHAS must pay. TBC has not increased allotment rents since 2017, and we were fortunate whilst negotiating the new lease in 2024 with TBC to delay our rise until 2027. This was mentioned in last year's AGM although an exact figure wasn't known. TBC gave notice of the increase from 0.41p to 55p per square meter towards the end of December 2025. Your notice of this change was written within your invoices for 2026, rentals. If a tenant wishes to know what the new rental fee looks like towards the end of 2026, please do reach out to enquire and I will advise.

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Membership fees:

The income, from memberships in 2025 is £1100 an increase of £248 since 2024.

This increase is explained from a decision made at the 2024 AGM where it was agreed membership in 2025 should rise again to £10 from £7.50 for plot holders and £5.00 for non-plot holders. The membership fee increases have supported the ongoing increases in site costs for things such as insurance, NAS membership charges, utilities and equipment.

2027 will see Trafford Borough Council enforce the rental fee increases and as membership has increased for the previous two years it is proposed that we keep our membership fees the same £10 plot holders and £5 non plot holders for another 12 months.

No change to membership fees for 2027 £10 plot holders and £5 for non-plot holders

✓ VOTE: APPROVED

Finally, thank you to all for prompt payment and thank you to the committee with special thanks to Rosemary Budd and Tony Turnbull who have answered many questions and provided reassurance.

Plot Management Report - Rosemary Budd

New plot holders

Last year was busy for plot management. In 2025 we welcomed 15 new plot holders, 1 of whom has left. This compares with 2024 when there were 22 new plot holders, but 8 have since left. Already in 2026 we have welcomed 7 new plot holders. This means that in calendar year 2025, just over 1/5th of plots changed hands. Taking 2024 changes into account in the last two and a quarter years that's 44 new plot holders, just over 40% of plots changing hands. Two existing plot holders changed plots.

Vacant plots arose from:

2 evictions due to neglect, one person appealed the decision but lost the appeal. Many plot holders, despite having a discussion of how much time is needed to manage a plot when before they accepted a tenancy agreement, underestimated the amount of work needed. Some found they couldn't balance the needs of the allotment with the demands of family or employment, others gave up for health reasons. One chose to leave for a behavioural matter. Sadly, one plot holder died. Two plot holders gave up as they plan to move house in next 12 months, and they kindly gave up so someone else could take advantage of the coming growing season.

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Enquiries and letting plots

In 2025 we had 22 enquiries about plot vacancies and how to apply. Interestingly only 6 led to plot applications, all of whom now rent plots. We currently have no plot vacancies and there are 6 people on the waiting list, 2 of whom don't want a plot currently. In addition, there are 4 existing plot holders who have expressed interest in specific plots if they become vacant. Several people on the waiting list took up my offer of visiting the site to have a general look round. This meant I could find out what size plot they were interested in, why they wanted a plot and I could talk about the needs of a plot throughout the year. I struggled to find anyone to rent three of our larger plots owing to the amount of neglect and their size. Two of these were where we had had to issue eviction notices. I resorted to help from the practical task group to make the plots more attractive to interested plot holders. The work was varied, clearing vegetation especially brambles so you could see the shape of the plot and rubbish, in one instance this was likened to an archaeological dig. The largest change we made to a plot was dividing a full plot into two halves, creating a wood chip path separating the new plots and removing a fruit tree to increase the area available for cultivation. Thank you to anyone who helped chop up some of the branches which were left in the middle manure bay which came from this work. In another we removed a contorted hazel tree and beech tree which shouldn't have been there, plus a hawthorn which opened up the plot up to more sunlight.

Managing of plots and the site

When we submit our payment to Trafford it is always good to report that all our plots are rented out. As you know we undertake inspections 3 times a year to be able to flag up any plots that are having difficulties for whatever reasons. Last year we issued 6 neglected plot letters and checked up on 3 others which looked as if plot holder might be struggling to manage their plot. Our practical project team and I seem to have done a lot work this last year. Tasks are highly varied:

- Water standpipes were repaired
- a water butt was moved to the front of the Hoe Down for easy access for wheelchair user
- petrol was fetched for the land mower so the person who volunteers to cut main grass paths can do the job when weather permits
- a wheelbarrow tyre was donated and shortly after was used to bring a wheelbarrow back into use
- Tools left by people vacating their plots and donated by an ex-plot holder were sharpened and made available at the equipment swap event

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

- Vegetation that had been dumped, which it shouldn't have been, in one of the bays at Glebelands Road end was cleared, as was bindweed in the other bay so the mature leaf mulch was more accessible and less risk of contamination with bindweed. Both those bays are now in use for leaf mulch.
- Many of you will have seen the ridiculous amount of rubbish stored in the bay by the trading hut from plots that we had to clear, with bits added by other plot holders.
- The scrap metal was collected by a scrap metal person, but we still needed a large skip to dispose of the rest. Packing the skip was a work of art, useless pallets were cut up to fit in neatly, timber, and plastic dominated the rubbish with some glass. Luckily, we found room on top to add a lot of laurel and privet recently cut from trees on the edge of our boundary - with permission of Trafford.

Members of the practical project team in 2025 have volunteered a considerable number of hours in 2025. I want to end with a big thank you to those members of the practical project team who have helped over this last year.

Financial Report - Phil Gorman, delivered by Matt Shrimpton

Year-end accounts were circulated ahead of the meeting and reviewed. Details of the financial report have been removed for this publicly published version. SHAS members can email secretary@shas.org.uk for a copy.

Trading Hut Report - Janet Cripps

The Trading Hut is well supported by members, not just as a shop – but also a social side. People buy things, come into chat, ask for advice and share knowledge.

The card machine has been in operation for a full year now; sales are split – half cash, half card. Sales totals have remained similar to last year.

Overwintering onions/garlic – sold well in autumn and this spring the seed potatoes are sold out.

The Trading Hut also has a free to a good home section that includes pots and tools.

Peat compost is still popular, but we are encouraging people to use peat-free compost and growbags. This is something that will have to get used to as peat will be phased out at some point however the date has been changed numerous times.

The Trading Hut couldn't run without the help of volunteers, thank you to:

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

- Chris Abbott for jointly managing the Trading Hut with me and dealing with the financial side of the operation
- The many volunteers who volunteer their time to man the Trading Hut on a Saturday or Sunday and those who give their muscle power to off-load the deliveries of stock
- Special thanks Peter - key holder for several years, helping with deliveries and manning the shop, sometimes at short notice. Peter gave up at the end of last season.
- We also welcome Anne to the team who will share the opening of the Trading Hut with Randel, Janet and Chris

Last year we started Weekend Socials, linked to the opening of the Trading Hut, which were popular. This year they have restarted for 1st Saturday of the month and 3rd Sunday 10.30am to 12 noon. It is a way of bringing plot holders together to share gardening knowledge and we encourage everybody to come along. The first one of the year was well attended by new and more seasoned plot holders, and we had some homemade cakes.

Social Report – Valerie Mulligan

Valerie opened by noting this would be a brief report, and that it was her final AGM as Social Secretary.

She reflected that she first became involved at an AGM in 2020, chaired by Tony Turnbull, at which attendance was so low the meeting nearly failed to reach quorum. With the position of Social Secretary vacant, she volunteered to take it on for what she anticipated would be a couple of years, with the aim of building a sense of community among plot holders. COVID then intervened, putting events on hold for some time.

Once restrictions lifted, Valerie went on to organise:

- Talks from guest speakers, including Moira Sawyer, and visits from the Potato Man and the Bee Man
- Pumpkin and scarecrow competitions
- Apple Day (though the 2024 event was affected by poor weather)

Not every idea came to fruition, with a planned cookery book among those that did not get off the ground, but Valerie reflected warmly on the events that did.

Six years on from what she had originally planned as a two-year commitment, Valerie confirmed she was stepping down from the committee. She expressed her belief that new

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

blood brings fresh ideas to an organisation, wished the committee and society well, and said she looked forward to enjoying future events as a member rather than an organiser.

Louise thanked Valerie for her dedication and hard work on the committee.

Voting of committee members

Information of nominees was distributed ahead of the meeting.

Name	Proposed Role
Louise Virabi	Chair
Tina Cooper	Secretary
Matt Shrimpton	Treasurer
Bernadette Miller	Membership Secretary
Rosemary Budd	Plot Manager
Janet Cripps	General committee member
Deborah JAYNE Slim	General committee member
Anne Wemyss	General committee member

✓ VOTE: APPROVED

Any other business (AOB)

None proposed ahead of meeting.

Hedges

Concerns raised about the cutting of the hedges on Grosvenor Road. As part of our lease with Trafford Council they are responsible for this hedge cutting the top and road side. Members of the committee have requested this to be done multiple times by the council. It is encouraged that those with plots against the hedge maintain their side as best as they can.

[Post meeting note: Trafford Council have since confirmed via email that they do not have our site as part of their contracted hedge works and will look to include this into the scope of the next contracting round. As we are now into the bird nesting season the council will not undertake any works to hedges and trees until September.]

King Seeds scheme

Noted by a member that they have been using the King Seeds discount and think it is very good value but it can be a challenge to find the correct link

ACTION: Tina to add King Seeds Information to the website, including the link for easy access.

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting

Foodbanks

Question from member asking if a community area was going to be set up to grow food for local foodbanks. It had been discussed and as a committee this is something we would like to support however we would need volunteers.

In previous years the committee has left produce boxes outside the Trading Hut for plot holders to add their surplus veg to but there were issues with people taking from the box. Also this has not been picked up again since the challenges we have had with weather the last few summers have meant lower yields so less surplus.

Foodbanks also often can't use fresh produce as their members may not have access to cooking facilities or have the knowledge or time to prepare vegetables. Windfall apples were collected last year.

Some members have volunteered to take surplus food to the foodbanks.

Benefits of allotment

A new member who joined just over one year ago has commented that getting an allotment was the best thing they did and their whole family is getting involved.

Tool Sharpening

We have found someone who can show others how to sharpen and care for their tools so this will be arranged for a social activity.

Closing

Closing from Louise to say how thankful we are to have this great site with a true community and such a wide variety of seasoned members as well as newer and those with families.

A member proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for all their work.

2026 SHAS AGM Minutes of Meeting