

Summary of SHAGS Committee Reports for AGM

Wednesday 9th August – 7.30 in the Ted Allen Room

Chairman's Report

(Mike Cobley)

Already two thirds of the way through the year and another AGM ...

We have had a busy and productive year this year with nearly 100% occupancy on all our sites and despite the harsh winter conditions through until March many plot holders have had bumper crops. The grass has certainly grown well. Many thanks to all our hardworking site reps who have maintained the main pathways, kept our sites looking their best and helping wherever required. We held a very successful Site Reps meeting in March, the first for 5 years and sharing mutual problems we produced some good ideas. We have started replacing some of our petrol mowers and strimmers with battery powered machines, but the charging problem persists where only our HQ site at Piggottshill has a mains electricity supply.

Harpenden Town Council has continued to support SHAGS with our annual grant and an annual maintenance budget of around £4000 plus some additional help from the Rangers with some of our larger tasks. The HTC annual inspection took place on 17th July and we received a good report on our stewardship of the sites. There has been improvement works carried out to the main driveway at AB with clearance of the overhanging bushes and the broken fencing removed. A manure compound has been constructed. At OR the stone embankment is due to be removed shortly. TW has a new machine shed.

The shop has continued to do good business throughout the Spring and Summer and our new shop manager, Steve Case has enthusiastically taken over and organised more computerised stock control systems to make ordering easier. For many years our seed potatoes have come from one long term supplier, but we received notification that the company was closing down in October, following the death of the proprietor. A new stockist has been found.

SHAGS is run entirely by volunteers, and we are always looking for new blood to join the committee. Currently we still are looking for a Vice Chairman to take over from Roger Glanville, who has been unwell and doesn't want the Chairman job when I give up. I have said I would like to relinquish the position next year after five years in the job as I will be approaching my 78th birthday. Any volunteers? Sadly, this year we lost 2 stalwart members, Pauline Payne in February and Irene Boogerman in May.

Thanks to all the hard work by the committee members and to all the potholders who have put on such a good show this summer.

Mike Cobley

Treasurer's Report

(Carole Pamphlett)

(See separate documents)

Letting's Secretary Report

(Alex Davis)

Across the 8 sites we have over 400 plots. We have 300 + plot holders and 40+ associate members (including honorary members).

As of the end of July we had 98.6% occupancy. There were 6 vacant plots across all 8 sites

21 New plot holders have joined in 2023.

Waiting list are consistent with last year. The Harpenden Rise waiting list is now at 20; this reflects the lack of allotment sites in north Harpenden and few plots becoming available at Harpenden Rise.

Most other sites now have no, or small, waiting lists. Churchfield, Harpenden Rise, Sibley Avenue and Top Stret Way are all fully let.

It is good to see that we continue to attract a wide variety of new plot holders. There is a common interest in growing their own produce and enjoying being outdoors. The sites also being peaceful places also seems to figure in new plot holders initial reactions.

Please continue to welcome and support our new plot holders.

Renewal Process

The Annual renewal process ran well this year. Thank you to all plot holders who responded so promptly to the renewal reminders.

The renewals bring in most of the society's annual revenue.

The overwhelming number of renewals are emailed out and many plot holders pay by bank transfer. This simplifies the administration of the process.

We continue to look at ways to improve the process so any suggestions or feedback welcome!

Machinery Manager's report

(Roger White)

Machinery Report

In the last year the Society has purchased more Stiga battery powered mowers and trimmers at a cost of just over £2000. These machines have been allocated to sites where Site reps have arranged charging of the batteries. Generally, these machines seem to be performing well and are providing plot holders with easy-to-use equipment to help them maintain the communal pathways between plots. A small number of petrol machines have been deemed uneconomic to repair and therefore taken out of use.

It was noted during the Council site inspection in July that HTC have moved entirely to battery powered equipment for use by their staff.

Communications and Webmaster

(Rod Cooley)

- The Plot So Far publication, Spring and Summer newsletters, minutes of meetings, seed potato descriptions, and general communications, including the 2023 AGM notification, have been added to the website as well as regular updates on the society shop called "Shop News".
- Throughout the year there have been queries to the society from the website contact form. These have been passed onto society officers.
- Contact details for the committee members and site reps have been regularly updated on the website.
- Many email communications from site reps to their plot holders have been sent over the past year.
- The 2022 photo competition photos were collated and sent to the competition judges for choosing the winners in time for the awards ceremony. This was done co-working with Jane Keech.
- Photos of the 2022 awards ceremony winners at the awards ceremony were taken and put on the website. Photos of the Mayor at the awards event were sent to Jane Juby the Mayor's secretary, for the Mayoral year book.
- The 2022 photo competition winning photos were put on the society website as well as the winners of the photo competition and the winner of the scarecrow competition, co-working with Jane Keech and Linda Gahagan.
- Plot holders have been requested to submit photographs for the 2023 photo competition. It was decided not to hold a 2023 scarecrow competition as few new scarecrows had been installed. This has been done co-working with Jane Keech.
- Unfortunately, this year we have had to add more of our former members to "ABSENT FRIENDS" on the society website.
- The Society website www.shallotments.weebly.com is still completely free to the society as well as the society email address shallotments@gmail.com

