

## SHAGS MID SUMMER NEWSLETTER June 2023

The recent spell of hot and sunny weather has at last slowed down the grass growth making a little less work for our site reps cutting the grass on our headland paths. Long grass highlights some of the less well tended plots on all our sites, The annual inspection by Harpenden Town Council is booked to take place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July so it would be very much appreciated if all ploholders can make an extra effort to get all plots in good order, edges neatly trimmed and pathways cut. About the same time the judging team will be making their inspections in preparation for the 2023 Awards

There have been a few problems with some of the mowers and machinery available on our sites. The wheeled trimmers that our large sites use are an American made machine and some of the spares and consumables are getting very difficult to obtain in UK and Europe, some parts have a 6 month waiting list. Our most recent battery machines, 4 mowers and 3 trimmers have seen good service and have proved popular with many members, being lighter to use, no problem in getting started as long as the battery is in place and easy to clean without oil or fuel leaking out if machines are tipped on their sides. A reminder that all our mowers are for use on pathways and NOT for clearing grass and weeds on plots.

You will have received the general notice about using outside help on your plot, We felt we had to temporarily stop this practice to protect ploholders as our existing Public Liability policy does not cover members using a 'contractor' or someone who is being paid to do any work. We have a new scheme formulated, which is going to HTC for their approval so by our next committee meeting we hope to reinstate use of others help on plots.

Basically any contractor should have their own £2m (minimum) public liability cover, with a copy of their current policy certificate lodged with SHAGS Secretary.

- Ploholders are responsible for supervising any help.
- No keys or security codes to be passed to third parties.
- Machinery is not available to non ploholders.
- Society Rules about watering, rubbish disposal must be followed.
- SHAGS accept no responsibility for outside help and ploholders should have a contract or arrange their own PL insurance cover for paid help.

Headland paths must be kept clear at all times, especially now as the hedge cutting contractors will be making a start after 30<sup>th</sup> July. The headlands are not part of your plot and not to be used for siting compost bins, tools and equipment and dumping rubbish. If you have items for disposal please don't dump in the hedges or on a neglected or apparently vacant plot as this just makes more work for the site reps to clear up.

We have vacancies for site reps on several sites currently and volunteers are always welcome for grass cutting tasks and general site maintenance duties. Urgent help is required at Harpenden Rise where our site reps are all under doctors' orders, Marcia has been unwell, Harriet broke her leg and Roger had a heart attack. At Churchfield, Keith has been suffering all season with his back. At Sibley Ave Peter & Helen took on the role temporarily 18 months ago and no one else has stepped up to take over. Please step up and help where you can.

It is getting close to the 2023 A G M booked for WEDNESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 7:30 in the Ted Allen Room at Piggottshill. All members are invited and the AGM paperwork is now in preparation. If anyone is interested in joining the Committee please contact our Secretary Jane Keech [allotsec@outlook.com](mailto:allotsec@outlook.com)

IRENE BOOGERMAN R.I.P.

We were saddened to hear that Irene Boogerman died on 16<sup>th</sup> May, just 2 weeks after her 69<sup>th</sup> birthday after a brave battle with pancreatic cancer. She was the widow of former Chairman, Ralph Martin and had been on the committee as part of our publicity team, then took over the editorship of 'The Plot So Far' in its paper form and up to the first electronic issue. Her funeral is due to take place with an open cremation and her ashes will be spread in Antwerp harbour, a return to her Belgian roots. The family hope to hold a memorial gathering, locally, later this summer. A brass plaque has been fitted to the memorial bench at Piggottshill in her memory.

