



Shingley
Town Council

Allotment Newsletter

Issue 13#
July 2025

How the seasons, and indeed the years, roll round! **Welcome to another summer bumper edition of your quarterly allotment newsletter** and what wonderful growing weather we have enjoyed despite the challenges of collecting and conserving water.



There was an abundance of soft fruits, plus other crops, on show during the annual plot inspections in June, more of which will feature in this edition.

*Helen Mawson, Deputy
Town Clerk*

Allotments & Green Spaces Committee and Allotment Holders' Forum 2025/26

The Committee held its first meeting of the municipal year on 9th July. Councillor Amanda Garcia Patchett was elected chair (Councillor Rhona North, the previous chair, having been elected chair of the council). All are welcome to attend council meetings. Dates for the A&GSC, in the Ives Room, Kirkgate Community Centre are Thursday:

9 October 2025*, 7-9pm

22 January 2026, 7-9pm

12 March 2026*, 7-9pm

*both preceded by the Allotment Management Forum from 6pm

Meeting papers are available on the town council website, together with back copies of this Newsletter and allotment policies.

Shingley TC - Shingley Town Council

Allotment Plot Inspections 2025/26

The inspection team enjoyed wonderful weather when carrying out this year's inspections on 17 June (Caroline Street and Hirst Lane/Carlton Avenue) and 18 June (Red Beck). On both days it comprised Councillors North and Obani, Helen Mawson, Deputy Clerk and Chris Cooper, Site Representative (Caroline St). The prolonged hot/dry weather, followed by bouts of considerable rain experienced this year was considered when assessing each plot's standard of cultivation.

23% of plots were rated as "excellent" compared to 18% last year with 62% rated as "good or excellent" compared to 54% last year. These tenants are making the best use of their allotment plots and have been congratulated.



L-R a tenant discusses his allotment with Councillors North & Obani and Site Representative Chris

14% of plots were rated as "poor" compared to 19% last year and 38% rated as "average or poor" compared to 44% last year, which is where scope exists for much better utilisation.

Tenants of plots rated as “poor” have been given two months to show considerable improvement (unless specific reasons have been advised), and in some cases have been offered a range of options to assist them in getting the best from their plot.

Re-inspection of those plots, plus those that have been consistently “average” will take place on 4/5 September.

The Town Council welcomes feedback on your experience of the inspections (which are carried out in line with the Cultivations Standards Policy and includes the assessment sheet completed by the team for each plot) and invites comment on how this may be improved.

New Red Beck Site Representative

Please welcome Lisa, one of our relatively new Red Beck tenants, to her role as Site Representative, assisting Rosie at Red Beck.



Lisa says “Gardening has always been my hobby, so I was delighted to have been offered a plot last year. My allotment’s very much my happy place - I love being outdoors, growing things and experimenting (with a fair few wins and losses along the way!). I love to grow all sorts, but generally stick to what I like to eat - potatoes, tomatoes, beetroot, peas and butternut squash. This year I’m trying out aubergines!

I’m really pleased to be joining the Red Beck team alongside Rosie and looking forward to helping out where I can.

When asked for any top tips Lisa shared “*I use old bottles with the bottoms cut off to water straight to the roots, and I’ve even been known to train bindweed up a cane to keep it under control! I also try to make the most of small spaces by growing vertically wherever I can.*”

Lisa can be found on plot 73 if you want to go along and have a chat.

Hose Pipe Ban (officially a Temporary Use Ban (TUB))

I am sure you are aware that with effect from 11 July a hosepipe ban is in force. This applies to allotment sites as well as domestic premises. The use of mains-connected hosepipes for watering gardens, lawns and plants is prohibited. Watering with cans or buckets filled at the tap and using hoses connected to stored water (rain barrels or greywater) can continue. Water saving tips:

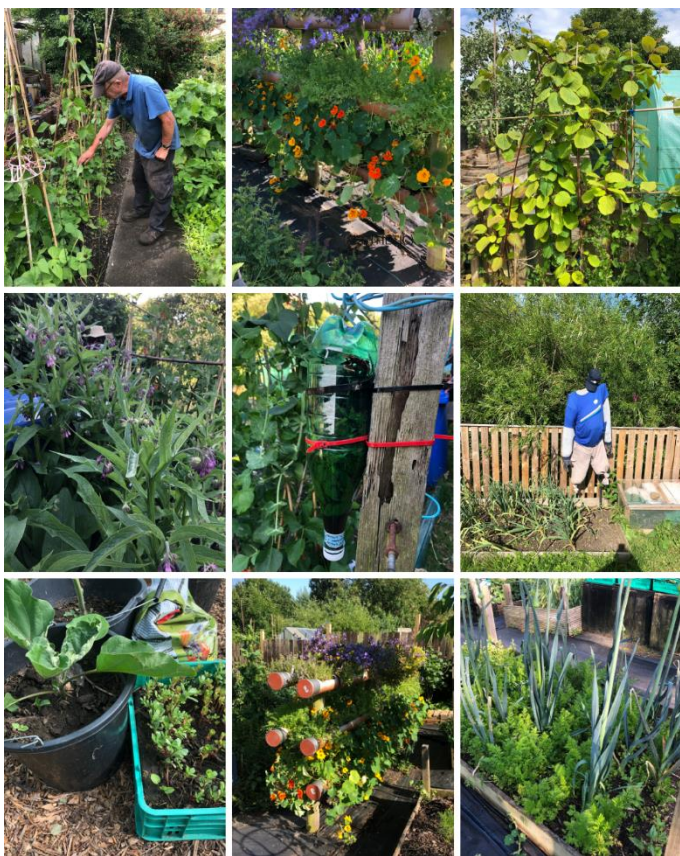
1. **Deep, targeted watering** using drip or soaker lines fed from stored water
2. **Mulching:** 5-8 cm of straw, wood chips, or leaf mould reduces evaporation by up to 75%
3. **Shade cloth** (30-50%) over vulnerable beds to lower plant water stress
4. **Drought-tolerant plants:** Mediterranean herbs, succulents, and native perennials
5. **Greywater reuse** for ornamentals and non-edible plants
6. **Collect kitchen water:** Use rinse water for houseplants

Please make sure you are collecting rainwater for use on your plots (and ensure that any collection vessels are covered). Here’s an idea where you don’t have buildings to attach gutters to:



Adventurous Planting and Ingenious Uses

One of the best things about being on the allotment inspection team is seeing all the different things that are growing and your innovative uses of natural and recycled materials. This year I thought I'd share some of them with you. Thanks to everyone whose plants, plots and creations I'm highlighting and apologies to those that I haven't included this time. Please do send me your ideas, successes and learning for me to pass on.



Top L-R: Dave hasn't bought any bean seeds in over 20 years, each year he dries his own. An example of companion planting and kiwis growing in Saltaire

Middle L-R: Janet makes her own liquid fertiliser by soaking the leaves from comfrey growing on her plot (this is then diluted to feed her crops) and Fran's scarecrow does his best to protect her plot from hungry pigeons!

Bottom L-R: Mohammad is growing aubergines for the first time this year, together with purslane which the family love in salads when picked young (but there are many other uses for this easy to grow leaf). Lee & Kat show how to increase your growing space upwards and through companion planting.

National Allotment Week

This is organised by the National Allotment Society, of which the Town Council is a member, to raise awareness and celebrate everything that makes allotments special. The theme for this year is *Cultivating Health and Wellbeing Together* and will run from 11- 17 August. The Red Beck Allotment Association and Horton Housing, supported by the Town Council, are opening their plots to the public on the **afternoon of Sunday 17 August**, showcasing their activities, including beekeeping. Please let me know if you would like to open your own plot and we will make sure visitors find you.

In addition, NAS have launched a special photo competition just for allotment holders **My Happy Place** – it's easy to enter!

Just send a photo of your personal "happy place" on your allotment – that special spot that brings you peace, pride, or pure joy. Whether it's a colourful flower patch, your favourite bench, or a view that lifts your spirits, they want to see what makes your plot special.

How to enter:

- Submit one photo with a short caption (1-2 sentences) explaining why that spot means so much to you.
- Post your photo on social media with the **#NationalAllotmentsWeek25** and **#NAW25** OR
- Email your image and caption to marketing@thenas.org.uk

There's one £200 gift voucher and two each worth £150 to be won. Winners will be chosen based on heart, creativity, and how well their photo captures this year's theme and must be submitted by Monday 11 August 2025. Don't forget to share your photos with the Town Council too. Here's my selection from the ones I took during the inspections because it demonstrates Alex's kindness in sharing her little oasis with nature.



Harvest Market

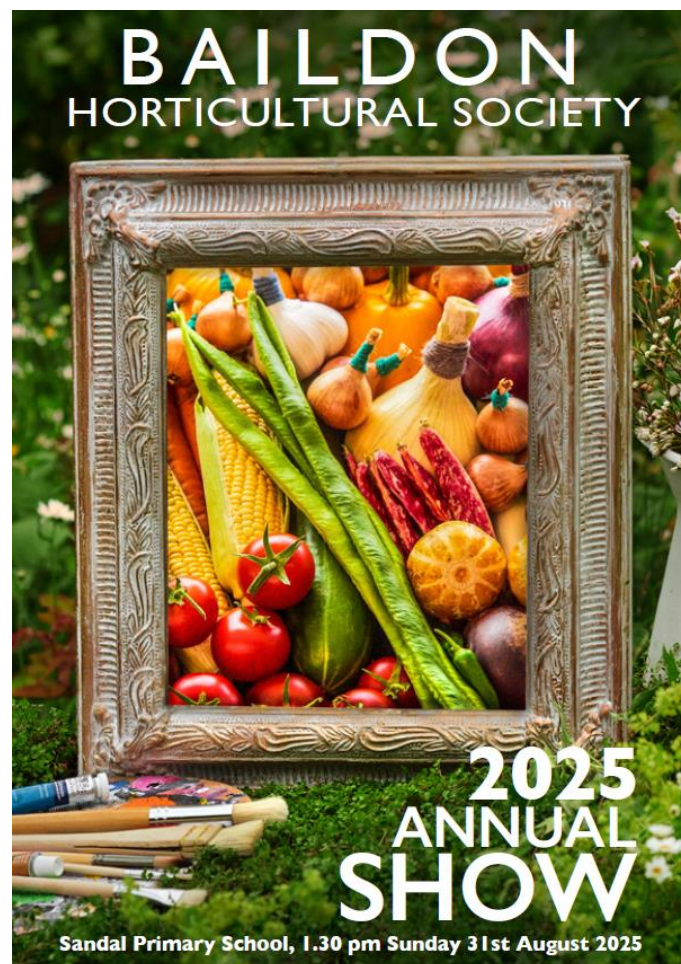
Plans are being made for the Town Council's Harvest Market on Saturday 11 October. Taking place in the new Shipley Town Centre market and the Underground market opportunities exist for allotment tenants to take a stall and donate/swap/sell any of your surplus produce or plants. Please contact the Town Council office if you are interested.

Growing to Show

The West Yorkshire Organic Group's 2025 show is taking place in the hall of Shipley College, Exhibition Building, Exhibition Road Saltaire on **Saturday 13th September** 10am to 3.30pm. The full programme and list of the classes that you can enter can be found on their website : [WYOG Home](https://www.wyog.org.uk/)

Baildon Horticultural Society invite you to take part in their local horticultural show which is open to everyone. Taking place on **Sunday 31 August** there's a class for everyone.

The show is friendly, community-focused, and a great opportunity to meet fellow growers across the area. Attached is their full show schedule, including entry details, class lists, and dates. If you've ever considered showing some of your produce maybe now is the time.



Red Beck Allotment - Boundary Works

Network Rail preparations for the new train cleaning depot, to be built adjacent to Red Beck allotments, continues. A new retaining wall, being constructed on the allotments boundary, requires piling and pinning due to the camber of the land. This work will commence in August, taking up to four weeks to complete. Contractors will be on site Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm.

There will be a 20m "exclusion zone" in place for some stages of this work and any tenants directly affected by this will be advised of the timeframe and arrangements.

Community, Heritage and Future Technology Centre, Caroline Street

The new Shipley College building, funded by the Shipley Towns Fund, is currently out to tender with several local companies interested. Work will not commence before October 2025. A 12 month build schedule is anticipated. Town Council representatives have met with College colleagues to discuss issues relating to the allotments (particularly access for tenants and deliveries) and public toilets and will continue to meet and work through these issues once the contract is in place and allotment tenants will be updated at a public meeting which will be arranged.

Self Management of Allotment Sites

Only two plot holders shared their thoughts, following last edition's article and both were supportive of management remaining with the Town Council, for two different reasons. This was reported back to the A&GSC which agreed that a poll of views would be conducted every second year to ensure that this remained the preference.

Allotment Rent Invoices 2025/26

There has been a delay issuing, via email, this year's invoice (£51 full-rate plus a contribution of £22 to the provision of water where available). These are payable before 31 December 2025 if you want to avoid a surcharge for late payment or even termination of the tenancy agreement. Let the office know confidentially of any difficulties that payment might present.

Membership of the National Allotment Society (NAS)

As well as access to the [Allotment & Leisure Gardener magazine](#) through the Town Council's membership of NAS, they also issue a monthly eNewsletter which contains news, gardening checklists, articles, and competitions. Let me know if you would like to be included in a distribution list for me to forward this to you each month.



Staying in Touch

Shipley Town Council can be contacted at deputyclerk@shipleytowncouncil.gov.uk or telephone 07517 742566. There is a **WhatsApp group for allotment plot holders** where you can share hints and tips and ask other plot holders for advice. To join send Chris, below, your phone number. Ideas and articles for this Newsletter are always most welcome.

Your site representatives are:

Red Beck - Lisa, plot 73 (07776 817987) and Rosie, plot 37 (telephone 07870 362975)
Caroline Street - Mr Chris Cooper, plot 21/22 (Chrisinsaltaire@sky.com)