Saffron Walden Horticultural Society

Founded 1819

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2026



- Your Society needs you! Come and socialise on Monday 30th November.
- Pictures and prize winners from the Autumn Flower and Produce Show
- The daffodils…
- A Community allotment, a group of friendly volunteers, fruit and veg to share…
- A Greener George Street - from concrete to colour
- Society Shows and talks in 2027
- An interesting lecture in Cambridge to mark the centenary of the National Garden Scheme

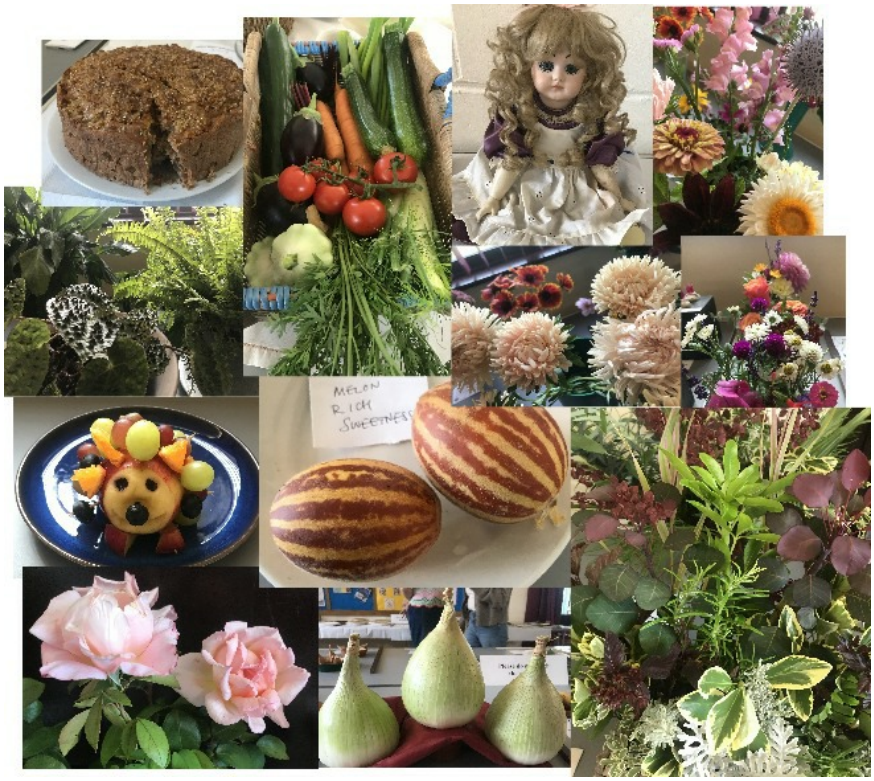
Dear Member,

You might remember from our last Newsletter that we're always looking for more members to join the Committee…
Well, now is the time! On Monday 30th November we will be looking for people to help for the coming year. You don't need experience, and you don't need to be an expert gardener (I'm certainly not!). You do need a willingness to join in at Show Time, offer help when needed to organise talks and other events, and be able to attend most of the half dozen Monday evening committee meetings where we discuss what needs doing. New blood and new ideas are always welcome.
We're one of the oldest Horticultural Societies in the country, and very much looking forward to bringing friendship, knowledge and enjoyment to our local community for many years to come.

Interested? Call me on my mobile, 07914 697676 and I can tell you more…
Or email hilary@mikehibbs.net

Autumn Flower and Produce Show

Thank you to everyone who took part, whether by exhibiting, helping on the day, or just coming along to look at the lovely displays!



The Autumn Show was great fun (it always is) and the exhibits were many and varied. The hot dry weather this year meant that some things didn't grow well - but that was offset by some plants and vegetables that we don't usually see. Melons, enormous onions, and hot red peppers grown entirely outdoors…

We were pleased to see several new exhibitors, and some lovely entries in the children's section.

The prizes were presented by the Mayor of Saffron Walden, Jeanette Curtis, with the help of the Deputy Mayor, Lucy Abercrombie.



Some of the prizewinners with Mayor Jeanette Curtis and Deputy Mayor Lucy Abercrombie

Sarah Butcher had an excellent afternoon, winning three trophies - for most points in show, most points in vegetable and fruit classes, and most points in flower classes. Congratulations to a genuine all-rounder! Sarah was also runner-up for most points in all three shows in 2026.
David Livermore was awarded the John Coe Memorial Trophy for best bloom in the dahlia classes (Ruskin Dean was runner-up) and the Ellis Rooke Cup for most points in all three shows in 2026, as well as being runner-up to Sarah for all her three trophies. Sharon Davey was joint runner-up for most points in the flower classes. Charlotte Heales won the Harry Green Trophy for the best rose, and Ellie Cranfield took home the Saffron Walden Plate for the best exhibit in the vegetable classes. Hilary Shibata (me!) won the Walker Trophy for most points in the domestic classes, with new member Maddy Carter the runner-up. In the Junior section, Ariella Quantrill was a big winner - she won the Scrivener Cup (runner-up Juliet Crosse) and (everyone's favourite) Eric the Hedgehog, as well as the Tom Green Cup for most points in junior classes in all three shows in 2026. Jack Hollidge, Matthew Davies and Oscar Norris were joint runners-up for the Tom Green Cup. Congratulations to all the winners, and well done to everyone who exhibited and put on such a lovely show!

The daffodils…

Many of you will remember that before lockdown, as well as all the daffodils and spring flowers on display there was always a special mystery daffodil competition at the Spring Show. And now the mystery has returned!
It's a very simple idea. Everyone starts with the same daffodil bulb provided by the Horticultural Society at the Autumn Show, and nobody knows which of the hundreds of daffodil varieties it is.
Lucky members have already taken their mystery bulb home, planted it in a pot, and will be looking after it over the winter. By the time spring comes round it should have grown into a fine bloom - and they will all reappear, in their pots, at the Spring Show on Sunday 21st March 2027. And may the best daffodil win!

COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT IN SAFFRON WALDEN



Though for the past 30-odd years I've lived less than five minutes walk away, I had no idea that this small plot of land was there. Hidden away behind houses and surrounded by back gardens, it's a wonderfully secure and peaceful location. It's also a lovely way to be involved in growing and

sharing food for those who can't take on the responsibility of a big allotment. Our member David Oelman is one of the people who run and manage the community allotment, and so I asked him to write a short piece about it for the newsletter.

Though I'd known about the Community Allotment for many years, it wasn't until we moved to a new house with a smaller garden that I got involved. The basic rules are very simple. The idea is to hold everything in common. We grow different things, all organically, and we each take a share in the produce. This year the tomatoes, onions, garlic, leeks and various beans have done well, and there are several mature fruit trees - apples, pears and plums. We have a couple of sheds, lots of tools, and three greenhouses.
It's a friendly, social, community space for like-minded people to get together and share ideas, share work and produce, or just have a catch-up. An hour's exercise in the open air helps maintain and improve fitness, and the friendship of fellow allotmenteers makes a great difference to the experience. There's a table and some chairs, and even a hammock, and we take time for a break and a chat.
The site is owned by the local Quakers but is run and managed by the people who use it, not necessarily Quakers. Quakers in the town had a significant historical connection to allotments, primarily through social welfare work during periods of economic distress.
Currently there are a small number of us doing the gardening, and we would like some new inspiration and enthusiasm. If you are interested in joining us, we would be happy to meet you and tell you more! Contact me at davidoelman@hotmail.co.uk

A GREENER GEORGE STREET

FROM CONCRETE



… TO COLOUR!



Saffron Walden is a beautiful town - but like most places, there are parts of it that could do better… Now a group of independent businesses on George Street are working together to make their street greener, cooler and more welcoming. The aim is to introduce more planting, small trees and seating. Adding greenery will bring real environmental benefits - providing shade, helping to reduce summer heat, improving air quality, supporting biodiversity and helping absorb carbon emissions in what is currently a very hard, built-up streetscape.
The group will be seeking support from local organisation and funding bodies, and have set up a GoFundMe page to give the local community a chance to get behind the project and show their support. For more details, go to https://www.gofundme.com/u/greener-george-street

SAFFRON WALDEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY SHOWS, TALKS AND OTHER EVENTS IN 2027

Poisonous Plants

Tuesday 9th March, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:45)
At the Saffron Community Link

Spring Flower Show

Sunday 21st March 2027
At Sewards End Village Hall
Daffodils galore to welcome the Spring!

All Things Roses

Monday 12th April 2027, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:45)
At the Saffron Community Link

Summer Rose and Floral Show

Sunday 13th June at Sewards End Village Hall

Autumn Flower and Produce Show

Sunday 12th September at Sewards End Village Hall

The History of Easton Lodge

Monday 27th September 2027, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:45)
At the Saffron Community Link

Talk - details to be announced

Monday 25th October 2027, 7:00 pm (doors open at 6:45)
At the Saffron Community Link

Entry to Saffron Walden Horticultural Society Shows is free.
Entry to talks organised by the Society is £2 for members, £5 for non-members.

We will also be arranging a special garden visit, and a Members' Garden Party - dates and details to be announced in the Spring.

I've visited many, many beautiful and inspirational gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme - but I had no idea it had been going quite so long! Members night be interested in this lecture in Cambridge. You will have to get your tickets in advance, so hurry, it's only a few days away.



In the run-up to Christmas, don't forget that membership of the Horticultural Society gives you a 10% discount on purchases over £10 at the Saffron Walden Garden Centre in Wimbish, and at Springwell Nurseries in Little Chesterford. Remember to present your membership card before your items are rung up at the till. If for any reason you don't have your membership card for 2026-27, you can collect it at the AGM & pre-Christmas Social on Monday 30th November; or send a stamped self-addressed envelope to me at 4 Mount Pleasant Cottages, Debden Road, CB11 4AE and I'll send it in the post. That's all for now, and we look forward to seeing you at the Saffron Community Link on Monday 30th November.

With best wishes from your Membership Secretary,

Hilary Shibata