Members' Handbook

Version: January 2026

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What is Grace + Flavour?

Grace + Flavour is a **community kitchen garden**, run as a co-operative on land leased from the National Trust. Working together we grow our own fruit, vegetables and flowers and share the crops. We are not soil association accredited but we do grow on organic principles with no chemical or pesticides allowed in the community garden.

We also have 29 allotments adjacent to the walled garden, managed on behalf of East and West Horsley Parish Councils. Applicants apply to the Parish Councils who forward them to the Allotments Co-ordinator, Michael Trower.

The purpose of Grace + Flavour is to grow food for the people who live and/or work in the surrounding areas. Crops are bought by members and others at the garden. We aim to set aside up to 10% for free distribution to those in our community who do not have ready access to fresh, locally grown produce. This tithe is distributed during the summer months. From time to time we also sell produce at local community events. During the main season we also give produce to a local food bank.

We are a not-for-profit enterprise registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC). All proceeds from sales are used to cover costs and support the garden. In addition to being of great value to our local community, Grace + Flavour also addresses ecological concerns about food miles. We aim to produce food that is tasty, wholesome and grown in a way that is in harmony with nature and respectful of animal welfare. Since we are a non-profit making organisation, our food is also reasonably priced.

Directors
Ray Beard, Anne Butler, John Fluker, Jane Hunt, Beverley Nash (Chair), Gerry Robbins, Helena Stuart-Matthews, Stephen Stuart-Matthews (Treasurer), Rob Treble, Michael Trower (Company Secretary and Allotments Co-ordinator) and John Whitlock (Head Gardener).
Appendix L contains brief descriptions of some key roles in the Grace+Flavour CIC.

There are two sub-committees:

Garden Planning sub-committee
John Whitlock, Ray Beard, Tim Bennett and Trevor Wykes.

Finance sub-committee
This will usually consist of the chairman, past chairman (for one year only), garden manager, treasurer, estate's team manager and company secretary.

Currently these are Beverley Nash, Gerry Robbins, John Whitlock, Stephen Stuart-Matthews, Rob Treble and Michael Trower.

Frequently Asked Questions

This handbook is intended as a guide to the Grace + Flavour community kitchen garden and a helping hand for members. We hope it contains the answers to all your questions! If it doesn't or you notice any errors or omissions, please contact us at *mail@graceandflavour.org*

How do I become a member? See *Membership* on page 4

When can I come to the garden?
See *Working in the Garden* and *Team Days* on page 4

What is the number for the gate padlock?
See *Access and the Padlock Number* on page 5

When can I pick fruit, vegetables & flowers?
See *When can I pick fruit, vegetables & flowers?* on page 6

Which fruit, vegetables & flowers can I pick?
See *When can I pick fruit, vegetables & flowers?* on page 6, and *Cropping Process* on page 8

How much fruit & vegetables can I pick? See *How much can I pick?* on page 8

What do the little red flags mean?
See *When can I pick fruit & vegetables?* on page 8

How much do I pay for fruit, vegetables & flowers?
See *Discount Levels* on page 9 and *Cropping Process* on page 8

What discount am I entitled to? See *Discount Levels* on page 9

Can I bring my children to the garden? See *Working in the Garden* on page 5

Can I bring my dog to the garden? See *Dogs in the Garden* on page 14

Where are the tools stored? See *Hand Tools* on page 12

Should I bring my own tools to the garden?
See *Hand Tools* on page 12 and *Power Tools* on page 12

Where can I find more information?
www.graceandflavour.org.

Membership

Membership of Grace + Flavour is open to all who live and/or work in the Horsleys. Those who do not live or work in the Horsleys but would still like to be involved are also very welcome.

Those joining are regarded as *supporting* members until they work in the garden, at which time they become *active* members.

It is free to become a member. There are three ways to join:-

1. complete the membership form on our website *www.graceandflavour.org*.
2. send an email to *mail@graceandflavour.org* with your details and confirming that you accept the constitution (Appendix K).
3. If you don't have internet access please make contact with one of the directors at the garden.

Prior to working in the garden for the first time, you will require an induction session delivered by an experienced volunteer. (See next section.)
There is no defined time commitment; the garden will take as much or as little as you can give it! There are jobs for everyone. If you cannot be physically involved, bake us a cake once in a while or make the teas on a Saturday morning. This project comes with a warning though – the garden and the team are addictive!

Working in the Garden

You can work in the garden at any time during daylight hours. For safety it is recommended that you do not work alone, but if you must, please let someone know where you are.

Prior to working in the garden for the first time, you will require an induction session delivered by an experienced volunteer. The induction will include a site tour together with an explanation of health and safety arrangements, completion of a skills sheet, provision of contact details and instructions on the practicalities of working in the garden. The induction checklist sheets are located in the potting shed. See Appendix G.

Children up to and including 13 years old are welcome at Grace + Flavour however they **must** be accompanied by an adult at all times who will be responsible for their safety and who **must** make them aware of the skills limitations as stated in the induction procedure and dangers, for example no running or climbing, to be aware of the pond, uneven ground, broken glass, tools, stinging nettles, etc.
Children aged from 14 to 16 years can be unaccompanied in the garden as long as they have written parental/guardian permission. See page 14 for the safeguarding of young people and Appendix B for parental consent form.

Full membership is open to all those aged from 16 years – see 'Membership' above for details.

Team Sessions
Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 9.30am are team working sessions in the garden. Thursday mornings during the summer are when the tithe is prepared. See also **Wednesday Weeders** (page 7).

Main Gates & Padlock Policy

Access and the Padlock Number
The gates are always *locked* shut when there is no-one in the garden or on the allotments to comply with our insurance. Please check whether you are the last person to leave the garden and allotments, if you are, please close the gates and secure the padlock in place.
Ask a regular member if you need to know the padlock number.

Opening the gate

1. Put the padlock number in and release the padlock.
2. **Before** opening the gate, pull up and hold the ring to lift the rabbit-proof flap at the bottom of the gate.
3. **Lock** the padlock to the chain and spin the numbers so the combination is not shown.

   It is important that the padlock is not left open and that the padlock number combination is never left showing on the padlock. If the padlock is left open someone might a) take it, or b) make a note of the number whilst it is open.

Closing the gate

1. Put the padlock number in and release the padlock.
2. **Before** closing the gate, pull up and hold the ring to lift the rabbit-proof flap at the bottom of the gate.
3. Wrap the chain around the post + gate, secure + lock the padlock and spin the numbers so the combination is not shown.

Compost & Waste Materials

Please remove as much soil as possible from all roots at source before moving material to the composting area.

The purpose of composting is to convert garden waste into a usable medium for use in the garden as mulch etc. All garden vegetable waste can be taken to the composting area behind the west wall to the right through Tom's gate.

Crop waste and weeds should be left in the centre of the area in front of the six main compost bins for sorting. The only exception are the roots of perennial weeds which should be taken to the bonfire area in preparation for burning.

We have six compost bins. All leafy material is put directly into no. 1 bin and all root and stalk material is mechanically shredded before being added. As layers build up cardboard or paper is added for carbon and help to keep the moisture content level. When full no. 1 is transferred to no. 2 and so on. As the medium is being constantly broken down by insect and bacterial action no. 1 has to be filled approximately 18 times to fill no. 6.

Safety
For hygiene gloves should be worn at all times.
Two people should be present when using the shredder. Ear defenders are required.

Bonfires

This section includes information, both for gardeners providing material for bonfires and for people assisting with lighting and maintenance of bonfires. For further information please contact Trevor Wykes. Rules are displayed in the Potting Shed.

Bonfires occur outside of the west wall of the G&F garden. Note that the wind direction tends to be from the NW, NE and E. Smoke should never blow towards Dene Place nursing home. Bonfires are not permitted in the allotment area.
Bonfires are discouraged during working sessions (i.e. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) and then only when the wind is not blowing towards the main garden. This does not preclude late afternoon fires. There should be no fires in extremely dry weather.

Information for gardeners

- Suitable materials for a bonfire include weeds such as bindweed, nettles and creeping buttercups.
- Sweetcorn and brassica roots are sometimes put on the bonfire - check with Ray Beard.
- Materials for the bonfire should be put in wheelbarrow sized piles around/ adjacent to the bonfire site.

Additional notes for “bonfirers”

- Don't work on your own - it can be physically tough.
- Tell a committee member of your intention to start a bonfire.
- Remember health and safety - wear gloves, goggles and safety boots.
- Keep a full watering can handy to dowse any stray sparks etc.
- Accelerants should not be used except in exceptional circumstances.
- Consider surrounding trees when deciding on the size of the fire.
- Never leave an active fire unattended.
- At the end of a session make sure the embers are smothered with soil or similar material.

Watering Rota

During hotter weather volunteers are needed each morning and / or evening to water the crops and to open and close the polytunnels.

A call for volunteers will go out via the weekly emails and / or on team days.

? should mention irrigation pilots

Wednesday Weeders

A group of volunteers come along to the garden on Wednesday during the lighter evenings to keep on top of the weeding. If you would like to join this group please email us as at mail@graceandflavour.org so we can add you to the WhatsApp group.

Policies for food, hygiene and labelling, trades descriptions, weights & measures and the sale of goods

Overview (For full details see Appendix C)
Grace + Flavour members grow fruit, vegetables and flowers together and operate a share scheme. In addition, we will sell vegetables to the public from the garden and at public events such as the village fete.

Appendix C sets out the risks and regulations associated with these activities from a legal perspective, i.e. food safety, hygiene, labelling, trades descriptions, weights and measures and the sale of goods.

It should be read by all members and, in particular, all Grace + Flavour directors and anyone involved in the preparation of vegetables for sale.

Cropping

When can I pick fruit, vegetables & flowers?
You can pick produce at any time so long as there is no red flag by the crop. A red flag indicates that the crop should not be picked because, for example, it is not ready.
How much can I pick?
At team sessions (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings), the member 'leading' the garden (usually the head or deputy head gardener) will be able to tell you how much to pick. At other times pick for your own needs.

Cropping process
Pick the vegetables, fruit or flowers. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings, the member 'leading' the garden will advise as to the quantity to be picked.

Sort into relevant quantities (this may be by weight, bunch or each) and place into suitable containers. Relevant quantities are shown on the latest price list in the Potting Shed.

Some crops, for example Swiss chard, or salad crops with roots such as lettuce, radish or spring onion will keep better if displayed with their roots in water.

Damaged, over ripe or oversized? Please ask if it could be sold for a donation!

If a non-standard price is being applied (e.g. for unusual, glut or donation items) please chalk the following information onto one of the small display slates:
- vegetable or fruit name
- quantity, for example ‘250g’, ‘Per bunch’ or ‘Each’

Display the produce on one of the tables with its mini-blackboard.

Discount Levels & Payment

As mentioned previously there is no defined time commitment; the garden will take as much or as little as you can give it! The discount on your produce is calculated according to the average number of hours you work in the garden each week.
Those joining are *supporting* members, entitled to a 20% discount, until they work in the garden, at which time they become *active* members.

You can combine your hours with that of another person who can be your spouse or partner, or any other member of your family.

Active members work in the garden, earning discounts as detailed below. It is an 'honesty system' – each member calculates their own discount. Active members have the first option to buy what we grow.

Active Member Discounts

Average of 6hr or more per week	60% discount
Average of 3hr - 6hr per week	30% discount
Less than 3hr per week	20% discount

Vegetables may be further discounted when there is a glut or they are substandard (so called "donations"). These extra discounts will be shown on individual price slate boards close to the the item(s).

Supporting members are very much welcomed and appreciated.
Those wanting to buy produce at the garden are asked to do so on Saturdays no earlier than 12 noon – this is so that active members retain the first option to buy what they have grown.

Members are encouraged to pay for produce by bank transfer. The bank account details can be obtained from the Treasurer, Stephen Stuart-Matthews.

Revision of Rates.
Vegetable prices are usually adjusted every winter and summer, taking into account inflation, seasonal changes and other factors.

The discount rates and banding are kept under constant review. Please check for updates at www.graceandflavour.org.

Reclaiming Expenses

Any spend that you wish to reclaim must be authorised **in advance** by the Chair or the Treasurer. Once an item is purchased and delivered, please use the expenses claim form on the Grace + Flavour website.

Please note: All expenses must be submitted with original receipts within 2 months of the relevant activity.

For the **expenses claim form**, go to *graceandflavour.org* and click on 'Documents and Forms' and select the relevant PDF from the table.

For **full details and instructions on reimbursement**, please go to the *"Documents & Forms"* page at www.graceandflavour.org.

- All claims submitted for the reimbursement of expenses incurred on purchases made on behalf of Grace & Flavour CIC will be vetted for compliance with these policies and procedures before being authorised for reimbursement.

- Claims which are not in the prescribed form, incomplete (e.g. missing required supporting documents), inaccurate or otherwise not compliant will be returned for correction or rejected.

- Valid claims will be authorised for reimbursement as soon as is reasonably practical after receipt. Payment will either be made by Bank Transfer directly to the claimant's bank account or by cheque.

- Alternatively, in the case of small claims, these may instead be made by cash, as agreed with the Grace & Flavour CIC Treasurer.

- Any expense not claimed within 2 months of the receipt date will be considered a Donation to Grace & Flavour CIC.

Health & Safety

Gardening is a safe occupation, however there are dangers.
For insurance purposes, all active members must complete an annual skills self-assessment form and review this annually.
No work to be undertaken in excess of 2 metres height above or 1 metre depth below ground level.
Members are advised to keep their tetanus vaccinations up to date.

First aid box	Green Box in Potting Shed, rear lobby off the kitchen.
Severe Bleed Control Kit	Black Bag with red label in Potting Shed, rear lobby off the kitchen. Only to be used for severe bleeds.
Defibrillator (AED)	Potting Shed, rear lobby off the kitchen. Please note this is removed off-site when the temperature is expected to be below 5.C.

A list of first aiders is displayed in the Potting Shed.

Accident book	Potting Shed, rear lobby off the kitchen

Health & Safety policy and Risk Assessment documents
See Appendix M. This is also available in the Potting Shed and at graceandflavour.org.

General Safe Practices
Be aware of people around you when using tools or if they are using tools.
Be cautious of approaching anyone working, especially those using power tools.
Trip hazards - Watch out for them. Do not create them. Do not obstruct paths with wheelbarrows etc. Beware of bricks, timbers etc holding netting and fleece in place.
Put down tools safely so they don't create hazards for others.
Don't run, especially when carrying tools.
No practical jokes.

Lifting and putting down
If it's too heavy, get help.
Bend your knees and hold the object close to you.
Wear gloves if it is necessary to protect your hands from the object or anything you will come in contact with whilst moving it.
Make sure your route is safe. If necessary, have someone in front of you to check.
To avoid trapping hands/fingers, put objects down on timbers. This will also help others who may have to lift it.

Clothing & Footwear
Standard walking boots are best. Wellies are OK but only if working with your hands or raking, hoeing or using a trowel. Open toed shoes and flip-flops are not permitted.

Watch where you are treading in case of sharp objects. Reinforced toe cap footwear is advised if you are working with heavy items which could crush your feet.

Gloves
Glove should be of good quality & protective for the task being carried out. Wear gloves when handling rough or sharp objects including vegetation that has thorns, stings or is poisonous.
Do not wear gloves when using equipment with wooden handles. This is because if you are wearing gloves, it is possible that you may lose grip.

Safety Goggles
These are available in the potting shed and should be worn to prevent eye injuries from stakes. Note that tennis balls should be put on the top of stakes to reduce the risk of eye and facial injury.

Hand tools
Following the theft of a large number of Grace + Flavour tools it was agreed that they would not all be stored in one place. When you have finished using a tool place it at one of the tool stations located around the garden.

If you bring your own tools please ensure they are clearly identifiable as yours and don't forget to take them home with you!

Using tools
Have a clear area of work. Avoid injury to yourself. Wear gloves when practicable.
Avoid injury to others – Who is close to you?
Handling, carrying and turning - Who is behind you? Who may you hit?
Sharp tools - Carry upright, sharp end down. Work away from yourself with blades. Pass to another person handle first.

Putting tools down
In a safe place so it is not a trip hazard. Ensure sharp points or edges are not a hazard to someone treading on it or picking it up. Ensure it won't spring up if trodden on and hit someone – the classic treading on a rake head problem.
Long handled tools such as rakes and hoes should be left with the head uppermost and the prongs facing away. Be aware of leaving any tools, buckets, containers, etc. so that they do not cause a hazard, for example on paths or other access routes.

Power tools
Follow manufacturer's recommendations.
Chainsaws are not permitted to be used at the garden.
Be sensible with petrol – only correct containers, 1 gallon only in any container, not more than 2 gallons stored on site.
Refuel only in the open air.
Required personal safety equipment when using power tools:
• Walking or preferably safety boots
• Gloves good quality leather gardening gloves
• Eye protection

Ladders
No work to be undertaken at heights in excess of 2 metres
Step Ladders
Do not work off the top platform.
No one is to work on a step ladder on their own.
Ensure it is stable before working from it. Remember the ground may be uneven and a leg may sink into the ground making it unstable.
Ordinary or Extending Ladders
The foot must always be prevented from slipping by bracing it.
The first task when ascending for the first time is to secure the top.

Hoses
Take care when watering hoses are being used about the garden. They are a significant trip hazard. Beware of hoses trailing along or crossing paths. When not in use hoses should be stored by watering points or in the sides of paths where practicable.

Safety of others
Don't create or leave an unsafe situation for example:
- badly balanced load,
- trip hazard,
- tools or other sharp objects on the ground or other locations,
- blocking paths with wheelbarrows or other items which might create a trip-hazard.

Be aware of others around you and what they are doing.

Poisonous Plants
We will not cultivate these at all but they may occur naturally. Advise a committee member of anything suspect and they will deal with it.

Use of Pesticides, etc
At Grace + Flavour we strive to be as organic as possible. Grace + Flavour avoids the use of herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, and disinfectants in the production of flowers, fruit and vegetables, or control of weeds or pests.

Gas Bottles & Gas Store
A gas bottle is used to fuel the hot water urn. Only light the urn if you are competent to do so.
Any empty or spare bottles are kept in a padlocked cage by the outside sink.

Pond
Children under 14 should be supervised by an adult when near to the pond to minimise the risk of drowning.

Water Troughs
These should be covered when not in use to reduce algal growth and the risk of infectious agents.

Evacuation Procedure
If, for any reason the garden has to be evacuated, the bell or whistle will be used to alert members who should move promptly to the car park safe area.

If you discover a fire, you should raise the alarm.
Evacuation procedures are displayed in the Potting Shed.

Safeguarding Young People in the Garden

Grace + Flavour wants to attract young people (under 18s) into the garden and is committed to ensuring they stay safe, enjoy their time in the garden and make a positive contribution.

Against that background we ask all adults and young people in the garden to adhere to our guidelines relating to Health & Safety, general well-being and Child Protection.

All adults should:-

- observe and be familiar with these safeguarding guidelines.
- avoid physical contact with a young person unless necessary, for example dealing with an injury or emergency.
- not take or arrange to meet young people outside the garden without prior permission of the parent /responsible adult.

All young people should:-
- avoid being alone with an adult other than their parent or guardian, at any time, as both may be vulnerable.
- observe and be familiar with garden safety rules.
- only attend the garden at agreed times. Team days are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 9.30am – 1.00pm.
- complete a brief induction with the Head Gardener, or alternate, including registering their contact details and those of their parent or responsible adult **(Appendix H)**. This should be done before starting work in the garden for the first time.
- stay within the garden perimeter boundary.
- **complete a time sheet (Appendix I) if participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.**

If you have any concerns about a young person and require further guidance please contact Jane King, BACP local accredited counsellor.

Dogs in the Garden

Only assistance and guide dogs are permitted in the main garden and allotments. All dogs should be kept on a lead at all times.

Tithes

Grace + Flavour's tithe objective is to give up to 10% of the total annual yield of fruit and vegetables to those who have restricted access to fresh produce for reasons such as age, immobility or infirmity. The tithe will be distributed through local community organisations. Selection of recipients is the responsibility of the organisation(s) tabled below.

Distributor	Description	Contact
Horsley Wheel of Care	Offers help, support, transport and activities which provide exercise, companionship and friendship.	horsleywheelofcare.co.uk

Food Bank

Grace + Flavour is committed to reducing food waste wherever possible. One way we do this is by donating produce that is surplus, going over due to weather conditions, left over after cropping on a working day, or not visually appealing.This arrangement also rescues good fresh produce from being composted.

Link Organisations

G+F works closely with a number of local organisations.
Please see Appendix D for details.

Notes & Comments

Please add any comments or corrections here including page reference.

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