



Allotment Handbook



Welcome to Sunnyside Allotments. We hope that you will derive as much pleasure, exercise, fresh air and produce from your plot as we all do, and that you will enjoy visiting this peaceful spot, away from the bustle and pressures of the town.

This handbook has been compiled by members of the committee of Sunnyside Allotment Society and is designed to give you practical information which we hope you will find useful as you start on your allotment gardening. For more information see our website: www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

Sunnyside Allotment Society
revised May 2016

OVERVIEW OF SITES

Sunnyside Allotments are located on both sides of Ivy House Lane, and cover approximately 15 acres. There are about 150 allotment plots interspersed with areas managed for biodiversity and two hazel coppices to provide bean and pea sticks in the future. There is in addition an area of woodland actively managed as a nature reserve, known as Birtchnell's Copse after the local historian. The Town Council currently leases about a third of the 15 acres to Sunnyside Rural Trust, a charity catering for the needs of adults with learning difficulties. They have a training centre building on SSOld, which they allow us to use for Open Day and our AGM. On SSNew they have planted a heritage apple orchard, stands of hazel, birch and ash for coppicing, and an area of willow for basket making. There are plans of the sites on our website.



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

Visit our website at www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk

As a registered tenant of Sunnyside Allotments you are automatically a member of the Society. As such you will receive our quarterly Newsletter and any other communications from the Society, and you are entitled to attend and vote at our annual AGM in November. There is no fee for this.

For an annual subscription to the Society of £3.50 you get the following additional benefits:

Membership of the NSALG (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners) so that you can participate in the seed purchase scheme. Kings Seeds Ltd supply seed catalogues in August. In return for early ordering, we benefit from very reasonable prices, and the Society gets a discount. You can also take advantage of a 10% discount at the Tool Hire shop on Billet Lane, HP4 1DP 01442 863073. Mannings (0800 024 8621) in Ashley Green, a good source of fencing and posts, occasionally informs us about special offers.

The subscription goes towards the running costs of the Society.

A list of current Committee members can be found on the site notice boards.

GENERAL SITE INFORMATION & FACILITIES

Car Parking on SSOld: parking is available in the Church car park off Ivy House Lane and also next to Plot A4 inside the Gravel Path/Grantham Mews gate (please do not park in the roadway outside this gate). Also next to Plot B2.

Car Parking on SSNew: a car park is available inside the bottom gate. There is limited parking at the top of the site, but parking is usually possible in the road by the top gate.

Apart from loading and unloading, please do not park on the roadways as this can prevent other tenants and muck deliveries from getting through. Please avoid driving on the roadways when very wet; they can be dangerously slippery.

Toilet: a flush toilet is available on SSOld. The padlock combination is available from the Tea Hut. Please leave the toilet as you expect to find it.

Tea Hut: On SSOld Angela Wheeldon's shed on B15 doubles up as the Tea Hut when the hooter sounds. Tenants should provide their own mugs. Donations are requested in order to replace the calor gas, tea, coffee and milk supplies. Tenants often donate cakes and biscuits etc.



Water Supply: mains water is supplied to the tanks throughout the sites. Pressure hoses may be used, but you have to pay an additional water charge for this and obtain a water key from the Council. Currently the water company do not classify allotments as gardens, so we may be exempt from any hosepipe ban (but not always), but it is our policy to make sure that water is not wasted. If you apply for a shed or greenhouse, you will be required to add guttering and a water butt in line with our policy of water conservation. See water leaflet.

Water Leaks: If you discover a water leak, it needs to be stopped as soon as possible. If it is a faulty or broken ball valve causing a tank to overflow, turn the stopcock off at the tank. Most but not all tanks now have these fitted. If it is a serious leak from underground pipes, or if you can't isolate the tank, turn off the water to the site at the main stopcocks. On **SSOld** this is just inside the Grantham Mews gate for A Road and the carpark at the west end of B Road for

B and C Roads. On **SSNew** it is outside the top gateway on Ivy House Lane. Please inform the chairman or Berkhamsted Town Council as soon as possible. Phone numbers are on the notice boards, website and current newsletter.

Roadways & Paths: The Council pays a contractor to keep the main grass roadways cut. It is important that tenants keep the edges of their plots next to the roadway well maintained and clear of rubbish so that the contractor can cut to the full width. The contractor also keeps the hedge in Ivy House Lane cut.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to maintain the paths between the plots at a width of about 27 inches. Tenants should arrange with their neighbours to share this job, including petrol costs. Paths should be kept clear of stones and other obstructions which could damage mowers or strimmers. We do not encourage the use of weedkiller, but if you do have to use it please do so on a still day and ensure that it does not spread on to your neighbour's plots or on to the paths.

Plot Numbers: Each plot should have a clear plot number. The design and materials are your choice. But the sign should be clearly visible from the roadway. This helps us when we need to identify plots, and it also helps new tenants orientate themselves. Have a look at what other tenants have done.

Materials: Allotment gardeners are inveterate recyclers. Wooden pallets make ideal compost containers and benches. Plastic barrels are useful for water butts. From time to time we acquire materials from development sites etc which would otherwise be thrown out, and we keep a keen eye on local skips. There is a central store on **SSOld** which is available for general use. All we ask in return is a donation to Society funds.

Tools: Occasionally the society is given old gardening tools. Before splashing out on expensive tools, come and see if we have anything you need. They are available at the Tea Hut in return for a small donation to Society funds.

Wood Chip: We have arrangements with some of the local arboricultural businesses whereby they offload their wood chippings on site. They want to get rid of it and we can make use of it. On **SSOld** there is a woodchip area just above the car park alongside A4, and on **SSNew** there is a heap at the end of the track inside the upper gateway above the SRT orchard and a dedicated bay beyond the bottom carpark. This is for general use. It is useful for mulching and making paths. There is also a supply of leaves for leaf mulch.

Manure: Suppliers of farmyard (cow) manure are:

Dave Burgin

01442 832997

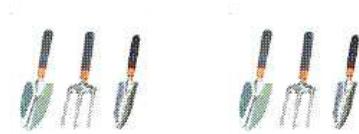
Phil Marks

Dunsley Farm Tring (opposite Tesco's) 01442 823357

Ian Gibbs

(horse manure) 07775 696500

This manure is usually well rotted and can be dug in straightaway. Deliveries are usually during the autumn and winter, but the tractors can only use the roadways when they are firm and dry, or frozen.



Horse Manure: We have an arrangement with local horse owners for an occasional delivery of horse manure to the allotments on Sunnyside Old. They muck out straight onto the trailer, so this manure is very fresh and needs to be left to rot down before use. Tenants will be asked if they want to participate in this scheme. They will be notified to clear their bins ready for a delivery.

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

Bonfires: Bonfires are not banned but the Council would encourage tenants to use alternative methods to dispose of their waste. Bonfire smoke can be distressing for anyone suffering from a respiratory complaint, and it can cause a nuisance to other plot holders and neighbouring households. Please read the Bonfires leaflet in this pack.

Organic versus non-organic gardening: The Council is keen to encourage environmentally friendly gardening. We are very fortunate to have a largely natural site which already has a wide variety of flora and fauna. It is our duty to conserve this and to do what we can to encourage greater biodiversity. This does not mean that you have to garden organically, but if you are using chemicals please be careful that they don't spread onto neighbouring plots.

Seeding Weeds: Weeds such as thistles and grasses can produce large amounts of seed. Please make sure that any such weeds on your plot are cut down before they have a chance to spread seed over neighbouring plots.

Duty of Care: We all have a duty of care to each other. This involves making sure that such things as broken glass or rusty metal are not left lying about where people could get hurt.

All tenants are responsible for the disposal of any rubbish on their plots. Chemicals should be properly labelled and not accessible to children and children must be under the control of their parents at all times when on site.

SOCIAL EVENTS

The Society organises various events throughout the year.

Open Day: this is held during National Allotment Week in August. Its original purpose was to act as a showcase for the allotment site and to attract new tenants. Now that we have so many more tenants, it has become more of an occasion when we can invite local residents to enjoy the beauty of the site and its activities with us.



Christmas Drinks: this event takes place at lunchtime at the Tea Hut on SSOld, usually on the Sunday before Christmas. It is an “al fresco” event so wrap up warmly! Tenants bring contributions to eat, and a bottle to be added to the warming mulled wine. It’s a very sociable occasion and a good opportunity to get to know your fellow allotment gardeners.



Allotment Working Parties: we hold these on winter Sundays in November, January, February and March, when we ask tenants to become involved and give some of their time to general care and maintenance of the sites. This could be mulching the hazel coppices, clearing overgrown areas, repairing or re-seeding roadways, clearing car parks, clearing and re-planting in Birtchnells Copse or whatever else needs doing. The day is hard work, good exercise, and lunch is provided.



Now enjoy your allotment gardening



Please visit our website to find out more about Sunnyside.
www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk