



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk  
email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 2 April 2017

## Editor's Note

Welcome spring! What a glorious time to be on the plot! More and more tenants are about now on Sunnyside, enjoying the air, making plans for the year, and getting stuck into planting and sowing (and weeding).

This issue has lots of seasonal tips and information – hope you enjoy it. I look forward to seeing you around on the allotments.

Lin Phillips, Editor

## Chairman's Notes

Spring seems to be here and the weeds are waking up and getting ready to overtake the plants - so get working with the hoe.

One of the Council tenancy conditions is that we have to keep plots cultivated and in good order. If not, there is a system of two warnings before we are asked to leave. The standards are not supposed to frighten people off but to make things fair for those on the waiting list and to keep seeding weeds under control. Plot inspections take place about three times a year and the first one will happen soon. I carry out the inspection with another committee member and we aim for fairness. If there are reasons why any tenant is having difficulties in maintaining their plot, they should contact a committee member.

The Council have recently done some road surface repairs at the Grantham Mews entrance of SSO, so I hope it will be firmer and less muddy. Currently the gate is awaiting a new gatepost before being re-installed.

The construction work on the society shed is finally underway on the left-hand edge of SSO going uphill, between B & C roads. The old woodpile on B9 is gradually being sorted, with decent wood being transported and stacked near the site of the new shed, and the rest of it burnt. So, thanks to all who have, and will, help with this project. If you need any lengths of wood, have a look under the tarpaulins at the new site, but please re-cover the pile once you have finished.

Good gardening,

John Eaton



## Maintaining Paths

You can practically watch the grass grow at the moment! So, this is a reminder that we each have a responsibility to keep paths mown and edged. Also, please make sure to keep stones off the paths, as they can damage mowers.

## Oh Deer!

We all love to see the deer roaming free on Ashridge – but it is a different matter when they visit your plot and help themselves to your crops! Last year they had all my broad beans and munched the tops of the potatoes, so I plan not to lose any crops this year. So, what options are there?

We could try growing more – but deer are not very good at sharing so a more practical solution is needed.

The most effective deterrent appears to be a physical barrier. Last year, fallow deer were spotted as well as the more common muntjac - these larger deer are able to jump over many fences, or have the strength to trample over them. The British Deer Society web site gives minimum specification for deer fences as 1.5m high with mesh size 220x200mm for fallow deer and 1.5m high with 75x75mm mesh for muntjac. Erecting this around your plot is a fairly major undertaking, so what else might help?

Some people claim that a radio tuned to a speech channel such as Radio 4 is a useful deterrent - these and other sonic devices are available from various on-line stores, or at Maplins – but there is no evidence of their efficiency. Plastic tape (such as that used by police to rope off incident areas) allowed to flap in the wind also has some effect – it is also very noisy when you are gardening on a windy day! Some chemical repellents have been suggested (e.g. mothballs, scented soap, human urine, human hair) but most of these lose any efficiency after rain. Lion dung – particularly fresh – has been shown to be effective: maybe we should just get a lion!

In conclusion, it would seem that, other than turning your allotment into a high-security fortress, most measures are not guarantees of success but may result in you losing less produce to your invaders.

Andy James, N57A&B

(information taken from the British Deer Society web pages at [www.bds.org.uk](http://www.bds.org.uk))

## Tips for Conserving Water on your Plot

As the season warms up and our plants get going, we are going to be out in force, keeping them watered. Water is a precious resource, so let's use it wisely!

- Add organic matter – compost or manure - to your soil, to allow it to store water.
- Mulch round plants: 3-5" will significantly reduce water loss as well as suppressing weed growth. Use wood-chip, bark, grass cuttings, compost, black plastic or strawy manure, mulching after a heavy rainfall.
- Keep on top of weeds, which compete for available moisture, with a hoe. Regular hoeing will ensure a fine dry tilth layer, which will itself act as a mulch and prevent water loss.
- Plant spinach, lettuce and other leafy crops which prefer moist growing conditions in shallow trenches which can be used for watering.
- Do your watering out of the heat of the day; ie in the morning or especially in the evening, so that plants can absorb the water in the soil overnight.
- Sink recycled plastic bottles with their bases cut off near the roots of large, thirsty plants like courgettes, to direct water down to where it's needed.
- Collect rainwater by attaching guttering to your shed or greenhouse and leading to at least one water butt. If you are using water from the tanks, only use a hosepipe to fill water butts, not to spray directly onto the crops.

Lots more info and tips on the Sunnyside website.



### Keeping your tools safe

Hertfordshire Constabulary will be launching its seasonal crime prevention campaign, Operation Gnome. They remind us to keep our gardens, sheds and allotments secure; to lock our sheds, preferably with two 'hasp and staple' locks (one near the top and one near the bottom of the door). Tools and other gardening equipment should be visibly marked with your postcode and house number - this can deter thieves and help police identify the rightful owner

For more detailed advice about keeping your home and garden secure, visit [www.herts.police.uk/](http://www.herts.police.uk/)



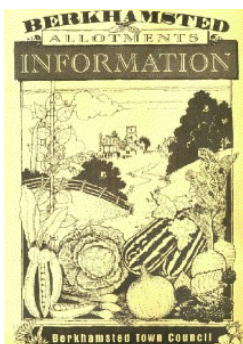
Never too young to start on the allotment - Michelle Howard and baby Herbie, N43

### Allotment Information Pack

The Council should give all new tenants an Allotment Information Pack; if you haven't had one, do ask at the council offices, or view it on our website:

<http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/about/allotments=information-pack>

It contains lots of useful information for tenants, both new and old.



### Sunnyside Open Day, Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2017

I do hope all of you have put 13th August in your diaries and will keep it in mind as you work on your plot and do your spring cleaning.

The success of Open Day has always been dependent on the generosity of our members. As usual we will be selling produce, preserves and plants, so, when you are making jams and chutneys, please include an additional jar or two for the stall.

Last year, Cynthia and Jamie ran a very successful plant stall on A Road, and we are looking to do this again this year. So please sow a few more seeds than you need and propagate some extra plants for the stall. Also, when you are doing your spring sorting out of your garden, please save any clumps of perennials, and pot them up for the Open Day. If you have nowhere to keep them, just bring them along to A 18 and Lin will be happy to look after them for you, or let Angela keep them in her informal nursery until the day.

This year we are also hoping to sell gardening books and small tools. Please keep this in mind while you spring-clean your bookshelves and sheds. All books and tools left over will be donated to appropriate charities. In addition, we would appreciate donations for raffle prizes, plus any unwanted packets of seeds.

It has been suggested that we offer a tool sharpening service. Does anyone have the equipment, and would that person be prepared help out on Open Day?

Finally, do we have any computer graphic artists among our membership? I am hoping someone is able to make some plans of the allotments, showing points of interest and suggested walks.

In the next newsletter, I will be giving more details of the help required in the run-up to and on Open Day. A form will be included to record your availability; please return it to me in good time so that I can plan cover for each of the preparation tasks, activities and stalls.

Many thanks

Wendy Calder, 01442 767289

### Future Events in 2017

Other dates for your diary: the Christmas Drinks at the tea hut on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> December and the annual Sunnyside AGM on Saturday 20th January 2018 (the committee have decided to hold this at the beginning of the new year rather than in November).



**Your Current Committee Members**

<b>Chairman:</b>	John Eaton	865307
<b>Vice Chairman &amp; Newsletter Editor:</b>	Lin Phillips	862882
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jenny Sippings	865890
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Andy James	865061
<b>Minutes Secretary:</b>	Cynthia Fulks	879410
<b>Other members:</b>	Wendy Calder	767289
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Kate Rankin	

You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: @sunnysideallotments.org.uk apart from John Eaton who is: johne@ and John Goffey who is: johng@

**Tenancy changes**

Welcome to:

Kate Badham	A1A
Matt Rippy	B9B
Alice Rowley	N1C, N1D
Andrew Philip Durrant	N4A, N4B
Amanda Perry	N26
Emma Jolly	N40
Anthony Burchett	N41
Neil Webb	N42
Sam Mathewlynn	N60
Robin Wiblin	N61

**New Facebook Group**

Please join our new group for allotment gardening chit chat.  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1466477513362340/>



**News about Loos!**

Firstly, Sunnyside Rural Trust has kindly said that SAS tenants may use their two composting toilets – one is behind the large shed above the SRT building on SSO, and the other one at the top of SSN. Of course, we should be considerate and leave them in a good condition, when we leave.

Secondly, our much loved (and much used) toilet on A road, SSO, is in dire need of volunteers to keep it clean and tidy – without this it would be soon unusable. If you or your family do use it, please would you consider taking on the job for one month only? I am working on a rota so that each month would be designated the responsibility of one user, who would clean it weekly for that month – it's not a big job, and instruction will be provided! So, if you do value having the use of our loo, please will you contact me so we can agree which month would suit you best. Thanks!

Lin Phillips, A16 & A18 07835 623981

**Sunnyside Allotment Society Subscriptions**

If you haven't paid your £3.00 subs yet this year, please do so as soon as possible. Either give it directly to Andy, our treasurer, or leave it in an envelope for him in the tea hut. By being a member, you support the Sunnyside Allotment Society, which works on your behalf co-ordinating work to maintain the communal areas of the site, and hosting the annual Open Day and other events. The SAS reports to the council, raising issues and representing the interests of tenants at regular meetings. As well as receiving this newsletter, members can participate in the group seed ordering scheme with King's Seeds in the autumn, which offers considerable savings on the annual cost of seeds.

Out of your individual subscriptions, the SAS pays a group membership fee to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG); lots of interesting articles and advice are available on its website. Just contact Jenny Sippings for the password.



Subs for 2016/2017 (£3.50) can be sent with this slip to Andy James (4 Field Way) or left at the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Plot Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ cash/cheque (please circle)