



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk  
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## Editor's note

It's autumn, with a welcome slowing of the pace of gardening jobs on the allotment; a time for reflection, and then planning for next year!

This issue fully illustrates the range of activities that Sunnyside Allotment Society members get involved in each year, from the summer Open Day to the winter programme of working parties and the Christmas drinks event, right through to our Annual General Meeting. Thanks to everyone who has put in time and energy over the year on these various projects.

Also, thanks to everyone who has sent me photos of their autumn plots and produce; it is your contributions that bring the newsletter to life.

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Lin Phillips, Editor

## Chairman's notes

The gardening season is nearly at an end, so we can enjoy eating the fruits of our labours and prepare to clear our plots for possible manuring.

Through the winter, there are a number of working party days (Sundays) when various tidying-up and improvement jobs are tackled by volunteer tenants; more details further along in this issue, and thanks to John Goffey for coordinating the work.

The Society AGM will be on **Saturday 20th January 2018** at 10.30 a.m. in the Sunnyside Rural Trust premises, Ivy House Lane, so please try to come along to support your committee (or otherwise) and make your views known. One agenda item is to elect and/or re-elect committee members. The committee needs new members, with fresh ideas on the various aspects of the Society that we manage, so if you would like to join, please contact Jenny Sippings, the secretary.

John Eaton



Hawk Moth caterpillar and adult moth, by Jeanne Woodcroft and John Eaton

### Cheap at the Price

You will have received your invoice from the Town Council for the annual rent on your plot. If you haven't already done so, do send or take it along to Berkhamsted Town Council as soon as possible (cash no longer accepted - payment by BACS or cheque only).

Also, our annual subscriptions to the Sunnyside Allotment Society will be due from January. The cost of your sub to SAS includes our group membership of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens (NSALG; do have a look at their website, for a wide range of information and advice – Jenny will let you have the NSALG password, if you email her for it). Membership of SAS also supports the Society in raising the needed funds for ongoing maintenance and new projects around the allotments.

### King's Seed Orders

Membership of SAS also entitles you to take part in the annual King's Seeds group order, which offers seeds and garden sundries at greatly reduced prices. Andy, our Treasurer, has recently sent out the catalogues to all tenants who are paid up members of SAS, and order forms are due back to him by 30th October. Once he gets all the orders delivered to him, he lets us know and we can pick them up from him.

If you would like a catalogue next year, remember that SAS subscriptions run from January to December, and you need to pay before the end of May, though the easiest time to pay is at the AGM in January, when Andy will be there to accept payments.

### Tenancy changes

*Welcome to:*

A15	Susan and David Howe
B29	Steve Atkinson
C7A	Peter Lawson
N2	Thomas Grange
N27A	Katie Mack
N33B	Jennifer Bates

*Goodbye to:*

A37B	Jonathan Randall
A37B	Kelly May
A44	Sophie White
B24	Ian & Sarah Knight
N56A	Clara Mc Donnell

### 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@



Sweetcorn by Geoff Halls

### What size is an allotment?

There is no legal minimum size for an allotment. The [Allotments Act 1922](#) defines 'allotment gardens' as 'an allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent, which is mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetables and fruit crops for consumption by himself or his (sic) family'.

An allotment is traditionally measured in rods (perches or poles), an old measurement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. These days, the standard size of an allotment is 10 poles, the equivalent of 300 square yards or 250 square metres, or about the size of a doubles tennis court.

And one acre equals 160 square poles, rods, or perches, or 1840 square yards. So by my reckoning, this works out as 16 standard plots per acre, but I'm happy to be corrected! (Lin)

**Please Note:** To offset rising printing costs, an electronic version of future editions of the newsletter will be sent to all those people that supply an email address to Jenny Sippings – ([jennysippings@virginmedia.com](mailto:jennysippings@virginmedia.com)).

## Sunnyside Open Day 2017

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make my first Open Day a resounding success. It was a team effort supported by wonderful weather. We had just about finished setting up at 11am when Sunnyside Church service finished, and it felt as though the whole of the congregation descended upon us. Visitors continued to arrive in a steady stream until about 3pm.

Once again Cynthia and Jamie did an excellent job on A Road, greeting visitors as they arrived, talking to them about the site and explaining what was on offer, as well as selling old tools and gardening books. Lin and Jane, assisted by Sam, managed the running of the plant stall. Thanks to Lin's kind offer to look after donated plants in the lead-up to the Open Day, we had a huge number of plants for sale, most of which sold. As usual, the produce stall up on B Road had a large number of jams and chutneys for sale. Very little produce had been donated by opening time (I was starting to panic), but our members came up trumps by providing us with a steady stream of produce throughout the day. B Road looked like a garden party, with visitors and members alike enjoying the tea and cakes in the sunshine; at times there was nowhere left to sit! Accounts are still being finalised, but we raised about £900 for our funds.

Thanks to Mayor Councillor Mrs Carol Green who kindly attended. Following a tour of the site, she drew the raffle. We raised £88 for the Hospice. In addition, this year's event was attended by PCSO Katy Braham, who is part of the Safer Neighbourhood Team. She spent her time marking and registering tools and offering security advice. Also, we were joined by Andrea and her team from the Sunnyside Rural Trust, who appreciated being part of the event and the opportunity to explain the role of the Trust. We hope to see Katy and Andrea at next year's Open Day.

Thanks again to all of you who helped out, donating produce, cakes and plants, or preparing the site; the gazebo and furniture team; the refreshment team; and everyone else who gave their time to making the day a success, including those who came and spent some money!

It takes a team effort to make the day work, but this year we had fewer volunteers, and it is thanks to a small group of people (some of whom did not get a break all day) that the day was so successful. If you had a great time, please consider volunteering next year.

Thank you, Wendy Calder, Open Day Co-ordinator, N4



### Facebook group

Please join our group for allotment gardening chit chat.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1466477513362340/>



### Autumn Jobs and Reminders

- Time to empty and clean the greenhouse to maximise winter sun and get rid of slugs and snails; replace pots, supplies and overwintering plants.
- Check the downpipes on your greenhouse or shed to make sure water is being collected: all such allotment buildings are required to be fitted with guttering and at least one water butt.
- Check that your plot is clearly numbered.
- Sow hardy varieties of broad beans – they do better in a fleece tunnel, for winter protection.
- Draw up soil around brassicas to reduce wind rock, or stake tall sprouts.
- Avoid driving on the allotment roadways when they are wet and muddy, as the grass gets damaged and the roads become impassable.
- Get weeds hoed and cleared before they set seed and blow all over your plot and those of your neighbours.
- Keep mowing your paths until the end of the growing season, and remove anything that could be an obstruction to others.
- Start preparing the ground for next year by adding manure or compost. The following local farmers have supplied manure to tenants in the past – please let me know if you have another good supplier:

Dave Burgin 01442 832997

Phil Marks 01442 823357

Nigel Durrant 01442 403351



### Autumn and Winter Working Parties

Every year we organise five Sunday working parties of tenants who volunteer to undertake maintenance and/or improvement work on the communal facilities of both the SSO and SSN sites and Birtchnell's Copse (the wooded area at the top of the SSN site). The areas included are the car parks, the toilet, the leaf and wood-chip piles, the roads, hedges and notice boards, the SAS sheds, the two hazel coppices, and the water mains and tanks. One of the dates is reserved for maintaining Birtchnell's Copse.

Typically, we meet at 10 a.m. at the Tea Hut on SSO, and carry on until the planned work is done – which is frequently early afternoon. With a hot soup lunch provided, it makes for a pleasant and not too strenuous day, working as part of a team. The working party days this season will be 5 November, 3 December, 7 January, 4 February and 4 March.

Without the commitment of a small group of tenants who turn up and get stuck into these jobs, our lovely allotment sites would not be maintained to everyone's advantage. We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you can turn up on any of the dates and give a hand for even a few hours, it will be greatly appreciated, and you will very likely enjoy yourself!

John Goffey, working party organiser, B18

### Toilet Rota Trio

Welcome to Fiona Duck, who has joined Cynthia and Philippa on the toilet cleaning rota. It works best with three on the rota, so that each one only needs to take charge every three months. Many thanks to each of them for managing this largely invisible but essential task for us all on Sunnyside.

### Christmas Drinks 2017

Once again there will be a get-together with food and a glass of mulled wine at the Tea Hut – this year, on Sunday 17 December, from 12.30 till 2.30pm. Do bundle up and come along, and bring a plate of food to share (savoury snacks are particularly needed) for an opportunity to mark the closing of the year with a chat with fellow tenants, and a warming drink.

### Time for Reflection

“Don't underestimate the therapeutic value of gardening. It's the one area where we can use our nascent creative talents to make a truly satisfying work of art. Every individual, with thought, patience and a large portion of help from nature, has it in them to create their own private paradise; truly a thing of beauty and a joy forever”.

Geoff Hamilton, Paradise Gardens