



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

No: 2 April 2020

Editor's Note

Aren't we the luckiest of all in this difficult Covid 19 period? Despite the lockdown, we can legitimately carry on tending our plots, enjoying the sunshine and exercise, and even chatting with other tenants, while still observing the social distancing which is so vital at this time.

Several tenants have contributed their own thoughts about what gardening at Sunnyside during this period has meant to them – nice to hear their voices in the newsletter.

The Tea Hut is currently off bounds for the purpose of not transmitting the virus amongst us and the toilet is 'use at your own risk' - the cleaning rota has been suspended, so please leave the facilities clean if you do use them. The minutes of our Annual General Meeting plus the year's accounts, which are normally posted in the Tea Hut, are now on the Sunnyside website.

Keep safe,

Lin Phillips,
Editor, A18 lin@sunnysideallotments.org.uk 07835 623981

Chairman's Notes

Well, here we are in tricky times that are rather more serious than we are used to. The challenge is to stay healthy, follow the government guidelines, and to do what we can to look after our plots. Please have a look at the advice from the National Society of Allotment Gardeners – in particular about **not lighting bonfires**, and precautions for not passing the virus on; [Covid 19 Emergency Measures – The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd](#)

I would like to welcome the many new plot-holders who have joined over the past few months. I know that many of you have dealt with the Council remotely and paid the rent online or by post - this may mean that you have not explored the content of the Tenancy Agreement, which is on the back of the form and lets you know your responsibilities as a tenant. There are 36 clauses, and for your convenience and entertainment I give the link here <https://www.berkhamstedtowncouncil.gov.uk/uploads/allotment-tenancy-agreement-and-rules.pdf> The rules are for the good of all and are not intended to be onerous.

A few points for newcomers and reminders for old hands:

There is nowhere on the site (SSO and SSN) for depositing rubbish. Each plot-holder should dispose of their own by, e.g., composting green waste and removing problem items (old buckets, plastic, etc.).

Cars should not be driven on the paths when it is wet, and certainly not parked on them unless you are delivering or collecting.

Hoses lying about can be a trip hazard – please keep them disconnected and stored away when not in use.

The SAS website <http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/> is a good source of helpful information.

Future Allotment Society events would normally include our annual and ever-popular Open Day, which this year would be on Sunday 9th August. However, it is quite possible that we will have to defer or cancel this year; we are waiting to see the direction of further government advice before letting you know.

Keep smiling, and good gardening!
John Eaton



By permission of Brian Dumpleton



Sign of the times

The History of Sunnyside's Tea Hut

Some friends and I became enthusiastic tenants of B15 in 1994. At first, we had no plan to establish a communal space for everyone to use, but it grew, like Topsy. It began with three or four of us, but soon others joined us. It was hard work, and we soon realised that our priorities were to provide some chairs, then some shelter, and, as winter approached, hot drinks to keep us going. We acquired one of those little blue camping gas stoves. Tradition began to be established – tea and chat at 11am. But it really took an awfully long time to boil enough water for several cups!

In 1998 we decided, with the help of Ted, Lionel and others, to build a new shed, partly to house our increasing number of tools and partly to provide space under cover to make the tea. As with all Ted's constructions, it was substantial and built to last. It was officially opened by the Town Warden. Ted built the tables and benches, and we were offered the Calor gas cooker. We acquired a hooter, which Ted insisted had to be loud enough to be heard on Sunnyside New, to signal that the kettle was on.

In 2007, Ted built the awning – being inveterate recyclers, we 're-purposed' the awning originally used to cover the W.I. market stall.

Over the years, the Tea Hut has been pressed into service for different occasions; for mulling wine for Christmas drinks events, for heating soup and rolls for working party lunches, and for refreshments on Open Days. It has hosted social events such as Lionel's 90th birthday tea, a Pasta Party, a Russian Dinner, and Ted's 70th birthday lunch. We have entertained groups of visiting artists, the local constabulary, and toddlers from the Baptist Church playgroup. For ten years, it was home to the allotment rodent operative, ie. Stripey Cat – for whom the fridge had to be kept on in winter to provide a little rising heat to his shelf above.



Stripey cat

The Tea Hut has become a focal point where tenants can meet for a break, to get gardening advice (sometimes conflicting!), or just to set the world to rights. It is rustic and informal, but it has undoubtedly been a valuable addition to our allotment community.

After having run the Tea Hut (together with Ted) for a long time, I have now given up my tenancy of B15A. The Tea Hut will continue, managed by the SAS Committee, and the day-to-day running will be taken on by a group of volunteers. If you enjoy meeting at the Tea Hut for a brew and could spare a little time to help keeping it in good order, please leave me your phone number and I'll get back to you.

Angela Wheeldon 07531 409171, or on angela@sunnysideallotments.org.uk



Open Day 2007



Ted at work on the Tea Hut 2007

Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary & newsletter layout and production :	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	Andy James	865061
Newsletter Editor:	Lin Phillips	862882
Other members:	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852
	Steve Atkinson	

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@

Working Parties

The past winter was the worst I can remember for rained-off working parties, starting in October (rained off after an hour), then February (postponed twice, then abandoned).

We usually work to an annual programme of maintenance tasks, to keep Sunnyside in good order, and add particular projects to the list as they are needed.

So thanks to all those volunteers who helped get these jobs done in October, November, January and March, including those new volunteers, and to those who provided the soups and lunches for the workers. At least Sunday March 8th was dry, so it was possible to get some final jobs done for the year.

John Goffey, B16

Water Report

Water supplies were turned back on at the beginning of March. As usual, some leaks have appeared after four or five months' lack of use. The hose taps (Lockshield valves) on SSO are all left open all winter to prevent frost damage due to water blocked in between the buried stop valve, the ball valve, and the hose tap. Sometimes when water is back on in the spring, water leaks out of the top of the tap when under back-pressure when a hose is in use.

In most cases, this is easily corrected by tightening the hexagon nut just below the square-ended spindle. If water leaks from the tap itself, then a new washer is required. If the washer cannot be replaced, a new tap is required. The current design of Lockshield valves, which SAS purchase and install on behalf of the Town Council, have a smaller square end to the spindle, and the existing Lockshield valve keys do not fit. The Lockshield feature is mandated by BTC as an anti-vandalism feature; consequently, if the tank nearest your plot has to be fitted with a new (smaller) hose tap, allotment holders will need to obtain a new smaller key.



Suitable keys which fit both sizes of tap are available at Screwfix (Item: 84379) - see picture above. If a new smaller hose tap is fitted to the tank you use, please **DO NOT REMOVE** the cylindrical shield which prevents the larger keys from accessing the square end of the spindle. This shield is the only thing holding in place the seal which prevents water leaking out of the top of the tap when in use.

The situation is similar on SSN, although there are fewer buried stop-valves, meaning most hose taps are left closed all winter. At present, there are none of the smaller Lockshield hose taps on SSN.

John Goffey, B16

REMINDERS

Children and Allotments

Children are very welcome on Sunnyside, but parents do need to be mindful that allotments are full of dangers, so be careful and keep a keen eye out for hazards. And please don't let your own children run up and down the paths of other tenants, however full of energy they are. Better to provide a watering or weeding task, or picking fruit, perhaps.

Keeping paths in order

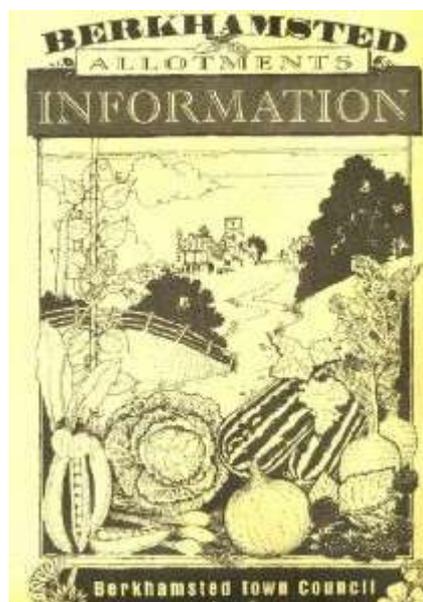
Just a reminder that each plot-holder is responsible for keeping the paths round their plot mown and edged, and free of stones, which can damage mower blades. The minimum width for paths is 27". Some tenants have historically been very helpful and mown their neighbours' paths as well, which is always much appreciated – all part of being a considerate tenant.

Water-saving tips

Remember to use water wisely; water in the morning and evening, to avoid most of it evaporating, as it will do in the middle of the day. Run-off from sheds and greenhouse roofs is a valuable source of water, and contains lots of trace elements loved by plants. If you have a shed on your plot, you are required to put up guttering to collect rainwater, and you can link a series of butts with hosepipes to increase your storage capacity.

The Council used to give all new tenants an Allotment Information Pack containing loads of useful information including water-saving tips; these days you can view it online:

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



Gardening in Difficult Times – thoughts from 3 Sunnysiders:

(1) When Geoff showed us an overgrown allotment last July, with grass and weeds up to our necks, he must've thought we had bitten off more than we could chew. Despite our lack of green fingers, he agreed to let us have B20. We did not regret it. Our family have felt so welcomed by our allotment neighbours and passing friendly faces alike. We have especially enjoyed our teatime chats at the tea hut.

We knew we felt lucky to have the opportunity to dig and grow in this peaceful place, but we now have a new appreciation thanks to lockdown. Home schooling is a challenge, but the allotment provides an outdoor classroom, exercise yard and head space. In these strange times, it's a place of continuity and tranquillity... and it's more important than ever, with this lack of social contact, to see your friendly faces.

Paul, Sian and Delilah, B20

(2) Life on the allotment goes on. Birds still pull out my onion sets and mice eat the peas I planted. This year, however, is a bit different - can't just pop to the garden centre for plants; everything has to be grown from seed.

That's the downside. On the upside, no planes, hardly any trains, and no car noise, so we can hear the birds singing and the bees buzzing. From the messages I've seen, we're helping each other more than ever. Good old British bulldog spirit - long may it last, even when things are back to 'normal'. Happy growing, everyone.

Jean and Tom Alexander, SSN 59/60

and (3) On one of the first lockdown days, I took a few photos of my SAS neighbours and a friend who is helping me with part of my plot. What a lifeline the allotments are, with the possibility of chats, the age-old problems of growing food, and the optimism for future harvests.

Chris Locke, B31A



Taking a break



Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

A19 David Rance
 A25B Thomas Hall
 A35 Elke Loschel
 A36 Ann Bird
 B9B Steve Atkinson
 B19A Frances Ede
 B26 David Grundy
 N2 Alexander Taylor
 N5 Jennie Tucker
 N30 Alistair Wood
 N31A Colleen Duggan
 N31B Chris Thornton
 N50 Eve Martin
 N51 Jacqueline Harrison
 N52 Clare Donohoe
 N60 Tom & Jean Alexander
 N65 Chelsea Mundy

Goodbye to:

A35 Grahame Landers
 A41B Dennis Casserley
 B9B Matt Rippy
 N12 Eryn Buchanan
 N33B Jennifer Bates
 N61 Lee Payton



Membership of Sunnyside Allotment Society

If you haven't paid your £4.00 Sunnyside Allotment Society subs yet this year, please do so as soon as possible. In order to be included in this year's membership, payments must be made by May. Either give it directly to Andy, our treasurer (4 Field Way) or request bank details by emailing: andy@sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

Allotmenters' Liability Insurance

SAS is a member of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (their website contains a lot of useful information for gardeners – contact Jenny Sippings for the password.) Membership of the NSALG now includes allotmenters' liability insurance, so all paid up members of SAS are eligible to contract in to the free allotmenters' liability insurance scheme. This scheme offers £50k liability cover to any member plot-holder accused of accidentally causing injury or damaging property.

This cover is well worth the cost of SAS membership in itself. In addition, SAS members can participate in our autumn group seed-ordering scheme with King's Seeds, which offers considerable savings on the annual cost of seeds.

The Sunnyside Allotment Society works on your behalf, co-ordinating work to maintain the communal areas of the site and hosting the annual Open Day and other events. SAS is also required to report to the Council on matters of vacancies and waiting lists, and represents the interests of tenants at regular Council meetings. Members also receive this exclusive quarterly newsletter! .

✂

Subs for 2020 (£4.00) can be sent with this slip to Andy James (4 Field Way) or paid online. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Plot Number: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ cash/cheque (please circle)

