



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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No: I Winter 2023

Editor's Note

First of all, a very happy New Year to you all; may this year bring the absolute perfect conditions for growing! (i.e., rain at night, sunshine in the day, no bugs, huge crops).

As you may know, I am retiring from the role of Editor of our Sunnyside newsletter, and this will be my last issue. I have really enjoyed the task, and over the years I have had great support from members of SAS sending in their photos and articles. These have been variously funny, informative, thoughtful, and inspiring - so thanks to all of you who have helped to make the newsletter a real reflection of our wonderful Sunnyside community.

Also, thanks to my partner, Paul, who has proofread every word since my first issue in April 2015! His attention to detail has really sharpened up the grammar, punctuation, spelling, and indeed the sense of many a paragraph.

For this issue I have allowed myself the privilege of showing a selection of winter photos I have taken over the years I have been a tenant (since 2010) - also, a couple sent in by Andy James of the latest snowfall this winter.

And finally, best of luck to my successors, and I hope they will be as well supported as I have been.

Lin Phillips. Editor

Chairman's Notes

2022 was the year that we moved towards a post-Covid normality. We were able to have an Open Day but, so far, no Christmas drinks because of the weather.

We expect to have an AGM in the usual way, on February 4th; details later.

2023 will see a change to this Newsletter; Lin is standing down as Editor after nearly eight successful years, and we are very grateful to her for putting together such an interesting read each time (together with proof-reader Paul). The next Editor (s) will be Clive Mic and Julie Woodford, who will take over for the spring edition - we wish them well. Production remains in the capable hands of Jenny.

A few other points as usual:

When the roadways are wet, as now, please avoid driving on them.

Please look out for, and report, any dumping of woodchip or other rubbish. Please also remember that all plot-holders are responsible for their own

green waste and rubbish - there is no dumping area on the site.

The hazel coppice on SSN will be managed by the Rural Trust and we (SAS) will continue to look after the coppice on SSO. Cutting will take place soon, and a future working party will deal with the sticks. The seeds are here, so let's all look forward to a better 2023.

Good gardening
John Eaton



Dirt is good for you!

Studies show that contact with the soil gives us exposure to beneficial microscopic organisms which perform numerous vital functions in the body, including improving our immune systems.

One theory suggests that we evolved in closer contact with these microbes; that our immune systems developed their ability to fight infections and to tolerate harmless allergens. However, due to overuse of antibiotics, eating pasteurised food, and children spending less time playing outdoors, we are no longer exposed to the same range or quantity of microbes.

So long as good hygiene is observed (washing hands after using the toilet and wearing gloves when gardening, particularly if you have scratches or cuts), exposure to 'good bacteria' from an early age helps to build a healthy 'microbiome'.

So, one more benefit of working your allotment!

Water

In 2022, we used more water than for some years; not surprising considering the weather last summer. The water supply network on both SSO and SSN was improved by the removal of the troublesome float valves, which had an unnerving habit of breaking their (plastic) hinges. Now all 19 tanks have the older all-metal valves, and we have been breakage-free for the entire season. While the Town Council reimbursed us for the valves, their installation was a DIY job by SAS volunteers. In all, we used 758 tonnes of water on SSO and 401 tonnes on SSN between March and the end of October. This was an 87% increase over 2021 and a small (8%) increase over the last very dry summer in 2020.

Winter has been unkind already; in late December the cold snap stretched the ability of our all-season water supply arrangements at the tea hut and the SSO toilet literally to breaking point. The tea hut supply suffered a cracked valve body, but no leak occurred. In the toilet, the supply was turned off, but a small leak occurred when the supply was turned back on. Both items await fixing. Luckily, we can still make water available at the tea hut for Working Party days, and the usual winter arrangements (rainwater and watering can for flushing) can be used at the toilet.

Sunnyside Rural Trust update

At this time of year, coppicing of our willow and hazel on Sunnyside New is carried out by trainees at the Sunnyside Berkhamsted Activity Centre. Some of the willow is then woven around the coppiced hazel rods and made into obelisk plant supports used around the site.

Dawn Watson, Publicity and Communications Officer, Sunnyside Rural Trust



A18 under snow

Working parties

Working parties started in mid-October as usual, and have been reasonably well attended so far. A lot of clearance work was done on the wildlife area (B16), which has a tendency to overrun its paths (and neighbours) with brambles during the growing season. If you did not notice, then you missed an exceptionally good year for blackberries on that plot, the best I can remember for many years.

While normally working party scope would be limited to the communal areas such as tea hut, car parks, wildlife area, toilet, etc., this year we have extended the scope somewhat to include clearance/improvement work on plots which are proving difficult to let. To bring back into cultivation a plot which has been neglected for a year or more represents a daunting task, and this year we are trying to make B30A and B more 'lettable'. As there is a waiting list for plots, it is in everybody's interest that as many plots as possible on Sunnyside be let.

Many thanks to all those who have volunteered to help on Working Party days; keep up the good work!

The last two working parties will be on Sunday 12th February and Sunday 12th March, from 10.00am. A delicious bread and soup lunch will be provided for volunteers as usual.

John Goffey, Working Parties Co-ordinator



The tree stump on B30A finally removed and later in the week taken away for disposal.



Annual General Meeting

This will be held at Sunnyside Rural Trust on Saturday, 4th February, from 10.30am. Doors will open from 10.00 am for a chance to catch up with other tenants.

This will be the first time since lockdown that the AGM has been able to be held in person, so do take the opportunity to come along to hear a report of activities and issues over the past year, and about possible plans for the year to come.

This is also your chance to pay Andy James, our Treasurer, the sum of £4.00 for your annual membership of the Sunnyside Allotment Society; see his piece further into the newsletter about the benefits of belonging.

Who will keep the SAS toilet clean?

For quite a few years, the SAS toilet has been kept clean and fresh by the good work of Cynthia Fulks, who has co-ordinated a small band of volunteers. Each month, one of them, including herself, has taken responsibility for a weekly clean (in the summer, and fortnightly in the winter). Cynthia is moving away and stepping down from this task, so a big thank-you to her for her reliable management of this key function for SAS over the years.

This means that another co-ordinator is needed urgently. It is not a huge job, just making sure that the people on the rota know which month is theirs, and occasionally getting in new supplies of loo roll and cleaning materials.

Without this work, our toilet would be unusable, so it is really important that someone steps forward! If you can do this, please contact any of the Committee, and I'm sure they will put you in touch with Cynthia to go through the details, if needed.

Mowing of paths

Unbelievably, the grass is still growing with this unseasonable weather, so do remember it is your responsibility to keep paths at the side of your allotment mowed and clear of rubbish. (The council has a contract with a mowing company to do the main roads several times a year).

Wood for use

If you have any construction projects planned, you are welcome to make use of the wood store by the big communal shed at the end of B Road, away from the Church.

It is all covered up to keep the wood dry, so if you uncover it to find what you want, please make sure you have re-covered and secured it. The corrugated iron and scaffolding poles behind the shed are not for general use, but are kept for SAS projects.

Which plot is which?

Please remember to put your plot number at the end of the plot, for navigation, inspection, and visiting purposes!



Sunnyside Scarecrow 2013

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
	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@

Membership of Sunnyside Allotment Society

All plot-holders are members of the Society and receive this quarterly newsletter; however by paying an annual subscription you also become an affiliated member of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG).

Allotmenters' Liability Insurance

SAS is a member of the NSALG - 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 covered. 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, as well as raising money for SAS funds.

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 (when possible!). SAS is also required to report to the Town Council on matters of vacancies and waiting lists, and it represents the interests of tenants at regular Council meetings.

Payment of subscription

I am now inviting payment of your £4.00 Sunnyside Allotment Society subs for 2023. If you wish to be a member this year and be included in the seed order scheme, I need to receive your payment before the end of May. I will be collecting payments at our AGM on 4th February. However, if this is not convenient you can pay by BACS transfer (account ending 13394 – or contact me for details if you do not have them) or cash/cheque (payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society) to me at 4 Fieldway, HP4 2NX, Andy James -Treasurer



Tenancy Changes

Welcome to

Lesley Johnson	A6A
Madeleine Landreth	A8A
Georgina Hallett	A29
Louise Ehles	A38A
Caroline McKenna	A40
Delia Eggleton	B9A
Georgina Page	B11A
Emma Moor-Radford	B33A
Nina Holliday	N4 A&B
Ntiana Chasiridi	N9
Steve Poulton	N34
Matthew Bedford	N64A

Goodbye to

Lesley Johnson	A4A
Diane Mix	A6A, A8A
Charlotte Winder	A29
Rory Lumsdon	A40
Ian Griffiths	A41
Melanie Lee	A44B
Matt Lingard	B9A
Deirdre Ahern	B11A
Annie Munk	B11B
Uma Holmes	B31B
Susan Pratt	B33A
Taylor Boniface	N4 A&B
Steve Poulton	N33A
Valerie Bateman & Angus McInnes	N34
Annick Mulcahy	N48
Lucy Evans O'Neill	N50



**AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE
HELD ON SATURDAY 4TH FEBRUARY, 2023 AT THE SUNNYSIDE RURAL
TRUST, IVY HOUSE LANE, BERKHAMSTED AT 10.30 A.M.**

1. Apologies for absence
2. To approve the minutes of the last AGM
3. Chairman's report
4. To consider and approve the Society's accounts
5. To receive any nominations for officers/committee members
6. Election of officers and committee:
 - Chairman
 - Vice Chairman
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Committee members
7. Election of Allotments' representative on Town Council's Allotments Management Team
8. Future developments
9. Any other business

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Please send in any nominations for officers, the committee and allotments site rep to Jenny Sippings, 82 George Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2EQ or email to jennysippings@virginmedia.com. Please make sure your nominee is willing to stand.

Subs for 2023 (£4.00) can be paid at the AGM on 4th February, or 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)



Ted's cabbage



Snow on Sunnyside Old—Andy James



Snow on Sunnyside New—Andy James



And the last word goes to Stripey, our faithful allotment cat. RIP.