

SUNNYSIDE VIEWS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE JOY OF ALLOTMENTS

Thank you !

Thank you to everyone who commented on the new look newsletter. So pleased it is hitting the right notes for you. This is very much your newsletter so if you have any ideas then all we need is a simple phone interview or a few bullet points. Email me anytime. Clive (A17)
climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk



Dates for the diary

Sunday 6 August is the day when Sunnyside Allotments will throw open its gates to all comers for its annual Open Day. Details later in this edition. Christmas Drinks - well there are only 147 days from the end of July to Christmas - are being held on **Sunday 17 December**.



Notes from the Chair ...

Well the weather has been either cold and dry or warm and wet - but never at the right time for me. And what's more my broad bean saga continues. After the jackdaws had had enough, the rats it would seem have now finished off what was left. Another previously reliable crop goes the way of others ! Is the farming life really for me?

But we are in full growing season now and great to see so many of you enjoying your plots. Just a few points from me though. Firstly hosepipe etiquette. If you pay to use pressurised hoses then please disconnect them from the taps when you have finished and please don't leave hoses on the paths where others can trip on them.

And take note of what Berkhamsted Town Council say about a recent spate of break-ins. We so far it seems have been lucky compared to other sites in the town but please be careful. The police are stepping up controls and cameras are being used so lets see how it goes.

But it is not all gloom. Far from it! Open Day is nearly here and the sun is shining most days so lets do what we all do best - continue to work together as a community of gardeners and enjoy our plots.

Thank you, John.

Calling all artists ...

Thank you for the work you have submitted so far to help us redesign our society logo.

More entries are very welcome.



Please remember any design needs to work in all sizes. [Details can be found on our website](#)

Remembering Penny

Sad news reached us all in April when we learnt of the sad passing of Penny MacGregor.

Penny joined Sunnyside Old in 2021 and

was such a great friend to so many of us. In fact only this time last year we featured Penny in the newsletter feature "Getting to Know You" and Penny



was a delight both on the day we interviewed her for the piece and whenever you stopped by. She turned her plot (A37) from a bramble tangled mess into a lovely structured garden full of flowers and healthy produce. Ken a neighbour who overlooked her plot wrote "the plot was a disaster when she arrived ... she transformed it ... I will continue to see her there waving back at me, without a care".

Getting to know you ..

Over 150 people have plots across Sunnyside - so *we* took time out to find out a little more about some of our fascinating tenants. This time we sat down with Andy our Sunnyside Society Treasurer no less !

Andy where is your plot please: New 57 A and B.

What is your birthplace ? Perivale in North West London - close to Wembley Stadium and my beloved Brentford FC. I was at Wembley in 1966 and attended some World Cup matches. We saw England v. France and went straight to the Wembley Box Office for Quarter Final tickets - there were none left but we got semi final tickets for the grand total of 7/6 (about 37 1/2p in new money).

What was your first car ? A M1 Ford Escort Van - a company car!

Why did you take on your plot ? I faced redundancy after the Buncefield fire back in 2005 so instead of taking up golf I turned to gardening.

What year did you take on your plot? 2006 but had I one with my father-in-law in the 1980's in Harrow on a site that is now a housing estate.

What has been your most successful crop ? Soft fruits. I did though lose a bumper strawberry crop a few years back to deer - although they did leave a deposit in the compost heap as payment.

What has been your most unusual crop ? Some strange shaped potatoes and beetroot - thanks to the stones !

What three words would you use to describe your plot ? Just keeps giving !

What advice would you give any newcomers ? Get one bed going and carry on from there - and enjoy it!

Your favourite garden centre? Kings Seeds - I manage our yearly seed orders - and Waterperry Gardens, Oxford is well worth a visit.



Every drop matters ...

Saving water can be so easy if we all follow a few simple tricks and tips in making the most of this precious commodity.

Roots not foliage ...

It sounds obvious but it is the roots not the foliage that need watering - a watering can is best for hitting the right spot.

Early drops are best ...

Watering early in the day before it gets hot is far better - water lasts longer and slugs and snails are less likely to attack plants in the evening if the ground isn't soaked.

Create water zones ...

Group plants together that have similar watering needs - that can help you and will definitely help your plants.

Layering up ...

Adding a layer of mulch - chopped up leaves or composted wood chip for instance around your plants will help retain moisture.

Capture your own ...

Or if you have a shed or greenhouse then add your own guttering and water butt - there are free parts on the wood store (B Road) that can help.

Hoses for a premium ...

Please remember there is a premium payable to the Council if you are using a hose.

Please visit our website for more advice and guidance.

Open Day Needs You !

Sunday 6 August is the date of the Sunnyside Allotment Society Open Day and not only are we looking for volunteers to help out ... but also we want entries for best scarecrow.

Bring out your old clothes! Throw off those fashion buys from days gone by. This year the Sunnyside Society Open Day on 6 August will feature a best scarecrow competition - so time to put your best creative foot forward and get designing. The competition is particularly open for children of tenants who regularly visit the site..

And can you spare time on the day to volunteer with either setting up or attending stalls. Remember all money raised goes to our mutual benefit by funding improvements to the site so if you have any fresh produce; gardening tools you no longer require or maybe any chutneys, cakes or jams you have made - please bring them along to sell on the day.

Please give up some time on the day if you can and do not forget those scarecrow ideas. All details can be found in emails about to hit your inboxes.



After the work is done ! Jo (B21A), Emma (B33A), Puri, (N5) Jo (A15), Jenny (A26), Steve (B29), Angela (B16) and Kate (A9) enjoy a welcome free lunch and cuppa - and maybe a drop of free alcohol too - after the Summer Working Party toils - thank you to everyone who joined in !

From plot to plate

Broad beans are on so many plots this year so why not try out this recipe which serves 4.

Ingredients

- 1 onion finely chopped
- 1.5 cups of risotto rice
- 1 cup of white wine
- 1.5 cups podded broad beans
- 4-5 cups chicken or veg stock
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 cup of mascarpone cheese and 1 cup of parmesan cheese
- Handful of grated herbs to taste.



Preparation

Step 1 : heat a large pot over medium heat; add a splash of olive oil; and once hot add the onion and stir for 10-15 mins.

Step 2: Add rice and let it crackle in the pot for a few mins. Splash in the wine and let it bubble until all is guzzled up by the rice.

Step 3: Add pepper, salt and your first ladle of stock. Continue to add in the stock and after 10 mins add the beans. Keep ladling the stock and stir every few minutes.

Step 4: After a further 10 mins fold in the lemon juice and zest and the cheeses. Serve with herbs.

A little at a time ...

Lesley Johnson (A6A) took on a new plot in April last year so what is it really like for a newcomer to Sunnyside

"Knee deep nettles, brambles and bindweed in April to weed free beds in November" its been quite a journey for Lesley as she tackled her first allotment plot. "I strimmed back the nettles - a cordless strimmer was my first and most expensive purchase - hacked back the brambles and dug out every inch of bindweed I could find." Then she wisely covered her beds to keep them weed free.



"My second lesson was my most important - don't think you need to do it all at once. If brambles are an issue then dig out the crowns that are erupting in your beds first and importantly clear enough to get planting when the weather is right and then deal with other nuisances as they come up.

"And don't - just don't tear everything out. My best harvest has been from the brambles, raspberries and rhubarb that were already on the plot while some of the "weeds" growing - it would seem everywhere - were in fact ox-eye daisies and they are so beautiful. Some may even - ahem - have come home with me and are now in my garden there."

"And finally start with things you like to eat and which are easy to grow. First year for me I did well with tomatoes while my runner beans and courgettes took some time to get going - and my broad and French beans never got going". "And be realistic. I am not organised enough to have serried rows of vegetables - no matter how good they look - but does it matter? Now in my second year I am venturing wider with my choices of what to plant and looking at hugekultur and forest gardening so watch this space. I know it will take time to learn but that's the fun for me.

"If in doubt ask and my last words of advice - be prepared to turn into an allotment addict - I know I am now one".

Our joiners and leavers ...

Since our Spring Edition of *Sunnyside Views* we have welcomed 5 new tenants. And said a fond farewell to 8 people.

Welcome to ...

Jennifer Main	A27A
Gary Brine	A28
Steven Warr	A37
Mark Roberts	B30A&B
Matt Chamberlain	N67

Goodbye to:

Sarah Hukins	A27A
Chloe Dorrington	A28
Lesley Taylor	B28A
Susan Dobinson	B30A&B
Elliott Brooks	B32B
Jonathan Priestley	N62
Les Bushell	N67

... and we said a sad farewell to Penny MacGregor who sadly passed away in May 2023.

Not blowing in the wind ... please !

We are in full blown growing season - everything is sprouting up everywhere and nowhere is this more true than with long grass and weeds. Now some might call weeds the new "hero plants" and in so many ways so many can be. But left out of control - particularly at this time of year - they will not only take over your plot but their seeds will blow across onto others. Please keep weeds down and if you can't cope for whatever reason then always ask for help - use the Sunnyside Facebook Page or stay traditional and ask - we are all in this together.

Buzzing on B Road !

Who would have thought that a pile of anonymous looking plastic trays would be home to over 10,000 bees - Sunnyside's very own bee keeper Hannah takes up the story

"Being ready to think 10 steps ahead; being prepared to take the occasional sting; and perhaps at the time living on Beehive Lane where all good indicators that I was ready to step into the world of bee-keeping" says Hannah who last year joined the Sunnyside community to further her passion.

Now Hannah is the proud owner of over 10,000 bees which last year alone produced about 80lbs of honey. And it was Hannah last year who came to the rescue when a plot was hit by a swarm but as she points out "who wouldn't want a free swarm".



And it was talking to Hannah about how she went about tackling the swarm that first attracted our attention. "There are many reasons why bees swarm" says Hannah "but usually it is a form of survival for the bees and last year was no different".

But the more you talk to Hannah the more you learn about the unique community spirit of these wonders. For instance have you heard of the "waggle dance" - one of the bees carrying out a figure of 8 dance to share with others where patches of flowers can be found yielding nectar and pollen. Or when dealing with a swarm you firstly relocate the Queen to a new hive and then a group of bees will stand near the entrance and fan their wings in order to send the Queen's pheromone into the air to attract the rest.

"Beekeeping was a dying art" concludes Hannah. "Now it is on the up again so if interested find a local club and register for a beginners course". And for 100% pure Berkhamsted honey contact Hannah on berkobees@gmail.com

Taking your orders !

Saving money while raising funds to use on the site - now that sounds like a plan! We are talking seed orders and last year nearly £200 was raised which went towards the tea hut refurb: this year's scheme will soon be here. Andy James (N57) and Society Treasurer explains.



"If you paid your £4 subs by the end of May you will, in September, receive an order form and a letter from me explaining how the seed order scheme will work this year. There will be an option to read the catalogue on-line or on paper."

"All I need are your orders and payment by the end of October. Deliveries come to me for you to collect in December. Seed potatoes usually arrive in January and live plants will be sent to you directly at the appropriate time."

Kings Seeds, who are affiliated to The National Allotment Society, run the scheme and prices here are about 40% less than the normal price.

Thank you as always to Andy for taking charge of our orders and deliveries.

Committee Room News

More than 20 people waiting for plots; several tenants given warnings for untidy plots; and new approach to seed orders to be launched.

Your committee met in May and as well as agreeing the format for a new look Open Day in August (covered elsewhere in *Sunnyside Views*) your intrepid committee members sat in a chilly tea hut and covered a variety of items.

Jenny reported that more than 20 people are currently on the waiting list while some tenants had received warnings from the Council for untidy plots and others had received more informal warnings. The message is clear though - keep it tidy as many are waiting in the wings.

At the same time the Committee noted that the first Summer Working Party had attracted 10 people who tackled a range of communal tasks not least preparing the summerhouse for a fresh lick of paint and many tackled a mountain of thistles and brambles in communal areas. A second Summer Working Party is planned for late summer before a return to the monthly winter get togethers. Thank you to everyone who arranged, attended and of course prepared lunch on the day.

Other items discussed included the new contractor now hired by the Council to keep the communal roads in order and a new potential look to seed orders this year - online catalogues no less so watch this space - details are covered in this newsletter.

Your committee is there for you. If you wish to raise any items then please approach a member of the committee and for more details visit sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

Facebook ... have you joined our page ?

Don't forget to join the [Sunnyside Allotment Society Facebook group](#) - everything from tips to well the strange and obscure.



Cameras ! But no action - we hope !

June saw Berkhamsted Town Council write to all tenants following a spate of damage and burglaries from allotment plots across the town. Tenants are advised to take home valuables while cameras are being installed as a pilot. Phone 101 if you are burgled or 999 if an incident is ongoing. Don't tackle any culprits yourself. The Committee will continue to work with the Council to monitor progress.



Did you know

In 1907 The Small Holdings and Allotment Act made it compulsory for all local authorities to provide land for allotments where there was demand from local residents. The Act remains in existence today. There are around 300,000 registered allotment sites in the UK according to The National Allotment Society. The average waiting time for a plot is between 3 to 6 months. In 2022 rent costs ranged from £130 per year in Kent to a mere £8.00 in Cumbria.

We all need friends ...

Companion planting - planting two or more plants close to each other in order to provide protection is a great organic idea - but how does it work ?

Who would have thought that one plant could actually protect another? Well that's the idea behind companion planting and with careful planning the concept can not only add organic protection but at the same time will add colour and variety to your plot - so give it a go!.

So what is companion planting and how does it work? Well its an idea that has been a stalwart of polyculture - the practice of growing more than one species in the same place at the same time - for as long as gardening has been around. And protection is only part of the story. Used in the right way, the technique can also help pollination, provide homes for those insects we want to invite in and of course maximise your valuable planting space. Its origins stretches back thousands of years and is far more effective than pouring dangerous chemicals onto plants that only ever serves as a short term solution with long term detrimental impact on your soil.

But what about companion planting when it comes to vegetables? Lets take a few examples. Probably the most obvious is the deterrent of carrot fly. We know these pests are attracted by the smell as your carrot plants form so grow something close by which has a stronger odour - onions being the most obvious.

Similarly coriander can deter insects such as aphids and ants while many suggest that mint plants sprinkled around your plot can actually deter mice and rats.

There are many more examples. Tall plants can act as a wind barrier for smaller ones; while some plants will attract insects who then bring larvae which feeds on aphids and similar pests that suck the strength out of your crops. So next time you want to protect your crops forget about the chemical quick wins. Instead add interest. Group your plants to create a dynamic and interesting plot.

The Sunnyside Allotment Society website provides more advice - <http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/companion-planting-chart.jpg>.

Your Committee

Sunnyside Allotment Society Committee is there to represent your needs and interests. Please click on the links below to contact any member.

Chairman:

[John Eaton](#)

Vice-chair:

[Diana Ball](#)

Secretary

[Jenny Sippings](#)

Treasurer:

[Andy James](#)

Newsletter editors:

[Clive](#) and [Julie](#)

Other members:

[Angela Wheeldon](#)

[John Goffey](#)

[Kate Rankin](#)

[Steve Atkinson](#)



Coming next time ...

Sunnyside Views is back in October 2023 and all contributions are welcomed. Next time we look at blogs - *Jessie at Plot 37* and *Grow Veg* - and many more. Which do you like to follow on YouTube and elsewhere? Send your faves and any contributions to climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk This is your newsletter - thank you. Clive A17



Royal Calling ! Thousands are visiting a plot designed, built and hosted by six members of Sunnyside at this year's RHS Hampton Court Palace Festival. Under the banner of sustainable floristry the team are promoting the theme of "reusing and recycling" to celebrate the idea of rejuvenation felt by spending time outdoors focused on nature. You can still visit until Sunday 9 July. Pictured are the team members - Sarah (A23), Jenny (N4), Cindy (N38), Puri (N5), Juliet (A17) and designer Julie (N5) as well as a peek at their show plot in all its glory ! More pictures can be found on sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

Brain Teaser Time ...

Tom (A25) returns with his latest brain teaser - his wife Gemma setting the standards as always.

<input type="text"/>	 <p>TRIPLE LETTER SCORE</p>	<p>THE BOARD SHOWS 4 ROWS OF LETTERS FROM A TYPICAL SCRABBLE GAME. USE EACH ROW TO FORM A WORD OF 2-7 LETTERS AND WRITE IN THE BLANK SQUARES PROVIDED. THEN ADD UP THE SCORE FOR EACH ROW. DON'T FORGET TO USE THE DOUBLE AND TRIPLE WORD AND LETTER SCORES - AND ADD A 50 POINT BONUS FOR EVERY 7 LETTER WORD. GEM'S TOTAL: 151</p>							
P ₃	M ₃	C ₃	O ₁	S ₁	O ₁	T ₁			<p>RACK 1</p> <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>			<p>RACK 2</p> <input type="text"/>						
L ₁	T ₁	B ₃	R ₁	U ₁	D ₂	E ₁			<p>RACK 3</p> <input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<p>RACK 4</p> <input type="text"/>								
U ₁	N ₁	P ₃	M ₃	P ₃	I ₁	K ₅			
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A ₁	P ₃	E ₁	I ₁	D ₂	S ₁	M ₃			

Next issue October 2023. Thank you everyone !