



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

2/2006

Spring is more than a little late this year. Trees are very slow to burst their buds and daffodils will be in profusion for a late Easter. We are all waiting for some warm sunshine to get the season going but wonder how it will be, with a hose pipe ban already in force because of the last two extra dry winters. It is hard to believe with the cold wind still blowing in April, that we have had the three warmest years on record since 1998 and nineteen out of twenty warmest years on record have occurred since 1980. This is the fascination of gardening. Every season is different, bringing its own challenges and rewards. That well known gardener the late Christopher Lloyd gave good advice when he said about gardening 'live for the present, plan for the future'.

Sunnyside Allotment Society tries to give its members as much advice and information as possible. You will read below how to cope with the water shortage; our Chairman, Bruce Jones brings us up to date on the important matter of Constitution for the Council's Allotment Management team and we are indebted to John Driver for telling us about our very near neighbours, Sunnyside Rural Trust, the activity centre of a local charity for whom he acts as a trustee.

The summer lies ahead. Don't forget to join us for our social activities, our annual barbeque on 24th June, the Open day on 20th August and if you want a relief from gardening, enter our Art and Scarecrow competitions. There is plenty to keep you occupied!

Hosepipe ban

According to Three Valleys Water, allotments are not classified as private gardens and are therefore exempt from the hosepipe ban. (www.3valleys.co.uk/home) If a Drought Order has to be brought in, this may change. Nevertheless, because of two exceptionally dry winters ("no February fill the dyke"), water in the South East is in very short supply, and it is the responsibility of all of us, as allotment tenants, to use it sparingly and wisely.

In order to collect any rain that we do get, all sheds should be fitted with guttering and a water butt. Butts can sometimes be acquired at the Tip. Plastic dustbins probably don't hold as much but can be a cheaper alternative. You can also run seep hoses off a butt.

The 2006 SAS calendar is devoted to water conservation methods. If you don't have a copy, the tips are on our website at www.sunnysideallotments.org.

Finally, when several people are watering at the same time, the pressure drops and water drains from the top tanks which can't refill quickly enough. Please be considerate of other people when watering, especially with a pressure hose, and be patient while the tanks are refilling.

Demand for allotments

We are very pleased that there is a constant demand for new plots and it looks as if we will soon be fully tenanted. But there are some gardens which seem to be having very

little attention and if there are any tenants who are finding it very difficult to spare the time to work their plots it would be much appreciated if they would let Bruce Jones (866078) know whether they wish to continue. It would be better to make the decision now before weeds and brambles become a problem to their neighbours.

The haul route (Plot 57 New) was cleared on the last Clearance Day and in view of the high demand we are considering letting it. Until now it has been a haul route, but rarely used, to enable farm yard manure to be delivered to the rear of plots 30-48. If tenants who will be affected feel strongly that the haul route should remain, please contact Bruce Jones.

The last Clearance Day was, unfortunately very poorly attended, but those stalwarts who did attend, mostly committee members, are to be thanked for their efforts in helping Sunnyside to work to its full capacity and satisfy the growing demand.

Bird Boxes

Seven bird boxes, made from strong chestnut wood have been installed in Birtchnell's Copse to attract blue tits and great tits. They have been built by John Powell, following the advice of the local RSPB expert. They have been placed, facing NE, as far as possible. They will be observed in the summer and next winter's cleaning will show if they have been successful, or if they need to be re-sited.

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 – (jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com).

Allotment Management Team Constitution

You will recall from the AGM and the last Newsletter that we have been looking forward to a new Constitution for the Council's Allotment Management Team (AMT). The AMT is a Council Working Group with responsibility for managing the allotments. It is the body through which the Council performs its statutory duty as Allotment Authority.

The new Constitution provides that the AMT will '...make recommendations to the Council on matters of policy relating to all Statutory Allotment Land in Berkhamsted and may be consulted on other allotment-related matters at the discretion of the Council' It will be vital to ensure that the AMT members are 'enabled' to participate in this way by being told of emerging Council policy.

There is now a firm commitment for the AMT to '...complete and maintain a detailed allotment strategy which provides a clear way forward for the allotment service and promotes best practice, subject to the strategy being approved by full Council.'

The new constitution is not perfect. The AMT is not responsible for managing the allotment land that the Council has temporarily excluded from allotment use – the SRT leased land, the land subject to SRT annual occupations, and the Wildspace land. But it is a significant improvement as there is a commitment to consultation on matters effecting the excluded land '...which may prejudice (the) land being returned to normal allotment use.'

The AMT is to make recommendations as to the levels of rent and water charge'... and in doing so will take account of the agreed strategy for the resourcing and management of the allotment sites.'

We will keep you advised of how it all works!

New lettings

The winter months are usually a quiet time for the Site Representative, a time to catch up on

jobs on the plot. This year activity on the lettings front has continued. Sunnyside Old is full and we have just 7 plots available on New. We have advised the Council that we expect to run out of plots by the summer and that more of the allotment plots at present used for other purposes, should be brought back into allotment use (see below).

Annual Report of the Town Council

You will probably have seen the paragraph about allotments in this document that was delivered with the Spring 2006 Berkhamsted Town News.

We report elsewhere that over recent times demand for allotments has increased considerably, Sunnyside Old is full and there are just 7 plots available on Sunnyside New.

What the paragraph does not say is that in all there are about 235 statutory allotment plots on Sunnyside Old and New (excluding Birchnells Copse). And of these about 85 are occupied for purposes other than as statutory allotments.

All of the 235 plots were acquired or appropriated for use as allotments and have the protection of the Allotment Acts. Statutory allotments are defined as -

'an allotment garden not exceeding 40 poles which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself and his family'

When not used in this way an allotment is temporarily out of statutory allotment use.

Our 'challenge' to the Town Council is to perform its role as Allotment Authority and, over a period of time, bring these 85 'missing' allotment plots back into statutory allotment use to meet the demand for allotments from the people of the Berkhamsted.

Open Day Art Exhibition

For the past few years we have held an Art Exhibition on Open Day, displaying paintings done on the allotments by local art classes. This is a popular attraction and we would

like to extend it this year to demonstrate Sunnyside tenants' other (hidden?) talents. Entries can be of any medium e.g. painting, pottery, wood turning etc and not necessarily with an allotment theme.

Due to limitations of space, demand and availability of display boards we may have to restrict the number of entries. We cannot accept photographs this time, but we are thinking of holding a photographic competition next year.

If you would like to display some of your work an entry form will be sent out with the Open Day letter

Our Neighbours on Sunnyside

Have you ever wondered what that large rustic looking building above the church's top car park on Sunnyside Old is for? Perhaps you have seen mini-buses arriving at 8.30am and departing at 3.30pm each day?

The building concerned is the 'Activity Centre' of a local registered Charity set up in 1991 called Sunnyside Rural Trust (SRT) which provides day activities and training services for adults with learning difficulties. The Trust's aims include equipping their clients with skills to assist them in gaining open or sheltered employment with a particular emphasis on Horticulture, Woodland Management and Animal Care. This is an extremely popular service within the community and frequently runs at full capacity.

The charity works very closely with Hertfordshire Council and runs some projects in partnership with

Your current Committee Members

Chairman :

Bruce Jones 866078

Vice Chairman:

Ted Dyer 872684

Secretary :

Jenny Sippings 865890

Treasurer :

John Powell 878640

Fiona Duck 874334

Patrick Stileman 874457

Brenda Baynes 865853

Angela Wheeldon 874440

John Driver 862734

Billy Wall



Above and right: Ted and Angela tackle the wood chip mountain on the clearance day.

Berkhamsted Town Council and the Countryside Management Service.

SRT provides a wide range of training to recognised national standards in Gardening & Horticulture, Conservation Work, Independent Living, Food Preparation & Cooking, Numeracy & Literacy, Computer Skills, Craftwork and Woodwork. The clients of the Trust are involved in cultivation of both Vegetables & Fruit for the 'Activity Centre' kitchen which clients use to cook their own lunches each day.

Examples of the Trust's work can be seen on 'Sunnyside New' where a new conservation area is nearing completion comprising an orchard of 'old English' apple varieties native to the Chiltern area, together with two coppice woodland areas of Willow, Birch, Hazel and Ash. These will provide SRT clients with opportunities for acquiring woodland management/rural skills and craft-based activities, as well as providing useful materials for use by other allotment holders, such as plant supports, frames, pea sticks etc.

The Trust's Horticulture Projects are developed and managed by Bob Millard and Sara Greenwood whom many of you will have seen round and about both the 'Old' & 'New' allotment sites. Bob and Sara are supported by Gary Sinfield who is the Trust's Outside Activity Supervisor based at Sunnyside.

The manager of the SRT 'Activity Centre' is Rita Drew and the

Sunnyside Allotment Society are very grateful to Rita and the Trust for allowing us the use of their facilities for our Annual BBQ and Open Days plus our AGM in December each year.

If any allotment tenants at Sunnyside would like to know more about the work of SRT then please feel free to contact John Driver on 01442-862734.



Find out more at
www.marrowthon.org.uk

Marrowthon!

Sunnyside Gardeners have been asked if they would like to join in with the national Marrowthon organised by the Aplastic Anaemia Trust.

Bone Marrow failure is a serious disease affecting both children and adults, which develops when the bone marrow stops producing blood cells.

The Aplastic Anaemia Trust is raising money for a new national treatment and research unit at St George's Hospital in London. 1 million pounds is needed and there are no NHS funds available!

We are selling official packets of Thompson & Morgan Long Green Marrow seeds at £1.00 (or more!), there are details of how to enter your giant marrow in the national competition inside the pack, or you can simply grow them and eat them! It's a good cause and could be lots of fun, so please spread the word. 91p from each pack sold goes directly to the Trust.

Seed packs are in the Tea Hut or from Fiona Duck (B43) – telephone 874334.

For Sale.

Second hand Greenhouse

6ft x 6ft metal framed greenhouse available. £50.00 ono
Contact Angela or Ted at the Tea Hut on B15 if interested.

Summer House

6ft 8ins cedar wood, corner fitting, summer house in sound condition
£150 (£1500 new, 8 years old.) Buyer dismantles and collects.

Ring John Powell 878640

Teasmade

As new Teasmade surplus to requirements. Contact Fred on A27
if interested.

Tenancy Changes

IN

Mr & Mrs Hencke	N42
Nicola Fulcher	N46
Phyl Harris	N4
Tom Bath	C3
Tracey Wells	A39
Ian Davis	N30
David Green	N31
Amy Carding	N13
Nicky Stevens	N40

OUT

Robert Rieckenberg	A17B
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Date for your diary

Our annual barbeque takes place this year on Saturday 24th June, on the
patio and gardens of Sunnyside Rural Trust.

Please note: The copy date for the
next issue of the newsletter is
5th July 2006.



SCARECROW COMPETITION Open Day Sunday 20 August, 2006

We have decided to hold a scarecrow competition again
this year, as both tenants and visitors alike enjoyed the
event last year. This year we will only have one class, but the
age of the entrant will be taken into account when judging.

Competition Guidelines

There will be one overall prize for the best scarecrow and
there will also be additional prizes for the most humorous,
and the most scary.

There will be an entry fee of £1 per scarecrow.
The scarecrows should be in place on your plot by the

evening of Thursday 17th August, ready for judging on the
following day. The judges' decision is final.

The scarecrows will be judged on the following criteria:

- they should be homemade (and your child's own work as far as possible);
- they should be fit for purpose;
- they should show imaginative use of materials, especially evidence of recycling;
- their humorous and scary qualities if applicable;
- the scarecrow should be given a name which is displayed.

Scarecrow Competition Entry Form

Completed forms should be returned to the letterbox on B13, 82 George Street or 10 Chapel Street. Extra forms will be
available on the website or from the Tea Hut. Closing date for entries: 17th July

Name _____

Address _____

Plot Number _____ Telephone _____

Age (if child) _____ ☐ I enclose my entry fee of £1 per scarecrow