



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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3/2008

Here we are again in the silly season for politicians and editors but in the rewarding season for gardeners. The results of planting, watering, and weeding should be showing as we hopefully harvest our crops. We hope that they haven't been prey to the rats, the rabbits or the slugs, that the rain hasn't come at exactly the wrong moment, or that the sun hasn't shone too hotly at the precise time when we were unable to water. You will read in this edition that SAS also has some problems weighing rather heavily and of plans to overcome them. But pleasures always outweigh disappointments, the taste of the first new potato, the delicious broad bean or succulent pea and the sight of the colourful self sewn hollyhocks on Sunnyside Old, waving in the breeze, make it all worth while and bring us our rewards.

We are heading for our Open Day, coinciding with National Allotments Week, and by the time you read this it will have taken place. It creates a lot of hard work for our committee but it is deemed worth it, to show the public the pleasant open space of Sunnyside Old and New and how productive it can be. We are no longer looking for tenants, they are waiting to join us, so it is up to us to make sure and show that we make the best use of our plots.

The Chairman of SAS, Freda Earl has contributed these points to this newsletter and her information about the water situation is very important for us all.

Allotment Rents

At the full Town Council meeting on 28th July, it was decided that allotment rents would be increased to £2 per pole from £1.34 and the charge for a pressure hose would rise from £8.60 p.a. to £15. These will both take effect from 29.9.08

Rabbits at Sunnyside!

You will all be very pleased to know that at long last, after frequent discussions with the Town Council, Network Rail will shortly be installing rabbit proof fencing along the railway boundary. This will mean that tenants with plots adjacent to the railway will have to remove any obstructions, such as compost bins away from the fence. Where there are sheds near the boundary, there needs to be space for the arm of the mini digger to reach behind to make a shallow trench. If this is not possible, unfortunately sheds will have to be moved away from the fence or the tenants can themselves dig the trench.

We cannot give an exact date when the work will be starting but tenants on both Old and New sites will need to be prepared to allow Network Rail's contractor Lan Environmental Services, unimpeded access when the time comes.

Barbecue - 28th June

We were very lucky with the weather again this year at our annual gathering and lots of gardeners and their families came along. Thanks go to Sunnyside Rural Trust for lending us their building and wonderful lawn to sit on and to Patrick Stileman for organising the cooking equipment. The date for next year will be decided at the next AGM.

Roadways

We are very grateful for the help tenants have given in restoring the roadways to a reasonable level state after last winter's water supply removal. But there is still room for improvement on the middle roadway on New and from B road to C road on Old. They still need loose stones in the trenches, covering with soil and sowing grass seed. Grass Seed is available from Sunnyside Old. Ted Dyer, John Driver, Freda Earl or Angela Wheeldon can help you. The appearance of the roads is very important to Sunnyside and it is difficult for the contractor to make a good job of cutting them while they still need attention. Your further help would be much appreciated



Above: One of the fantastic views of Sunnyside exhibited at the Open Day. See back page for more pictures of the day.

Eviction of Tenants

Members of the Allotment Management team have agreed on the process to be followed when tenants who repeatedly default on terms of their agreement are evicted. We are reminding tenants that the procedure is as follows

Letter 1. A warning; stating that the plot is not being kept in a “good state of cultivation and fertility” in accordance with the contract and must be brought up to a suitable standard within one month to avoid eviction.

Letter 2. A second warning after one month; stating that there has been failure to reach the required standard so far and if there is no improvement within one month, steps to eviction will take place.

Letter 3. Eviction letter after one month; stating eviction will take place in 30 days and all equipment must be removed.

We would also like to remind tenants that the annual allotment invoice should be paid within 40 days. If this is not done, a reminder will be sent giving a deadline of one month. Failure to meet this date will result in automatic eviction.

Thefts and Vandalism

On such open sites as ours, this is a perennial problem. There have been reports of thefts from allotments, there has been apparently wilful damage to a water tank in the winter by removing the arm of the ball valve and recently there was a very unfortunate incident on Sunnyside New when damage was done to a tenant’s produce by a vehicle running halfway down his plot. The police have been informed about this incident and Ted Dyer would also be grateful to hear from any tenant who might have information.

How can we help? Firstly, we can make sure that all gates are firmly closed. We do not want people with ill intent to be able to drive straight onto the allotments. Secondly, we need to be aware of strangers. The only public area is ‘A’ road on

Sunnyside Old. If someone is seen wandering about they should be told this and gently set in the right direction. Thirdly, any thefts should be reported to the police so that the incident is recorded. We are a Neighbourhood Watch area.

Open Day

Sunnyside Allotments are not just for tenants. On our annual Open Day we meet family members and other groups of people like Sarah’s artists who come and enjoy Sunnyside throughout the year. Open Day is now on Sunday so we don’t see the two pre-school groups who come. They are fascinated to see vegetables growing especially peas and sweet corn which seem to be their favourites. We are pleased to see that the “Peas grow on plants not in freezers” line which was appropriate in the recent past has now been pre-empted by “My Mummy grows tomatoes in our garden” It seems to be true that more people are growing vegetables instead of flowers. The organic gardener’s mantra “Feed the soil not the plants” is even more relevant if you are growing in a small space at home .

It rained all the week before. Wet helpers stood under umbrellas scrubbing the plastic chairs and tables. Wet people trundled complaining mowers up and down the paths so that visitors could follow the signposted routes to the tea hut and the art exhibition and the “more gardens this way”. Wet tenants strimmed and weeded until the whole of Sunnyside looked its best

The conversation at the tea hut was whether it would be better to have sunny periods with heavy showers or general cloudiness without rain. And, of course, what would we do with the cakes if it poured all day and only our faithfuls came? Not that our opinion counted at all. The weather did what it wanted...

...and it wanted to be nice. We had a day with enough sunshine and no rain. Brilliant!

Open Day is when Sunnyside shows itself at its cheerful, friendly, productive best. It is when visitors ask about the waiting list and think that this place is an asset to the town. We

give pleasure to people and build up support if we ever need it

Huge thanks are due to the people who worked so hard helping with the preparations, the raffle (which made nearly £100 for the Hospice), the produce, the cakes and refreshments and to Sarah Moruzzi and her students who put on an art exhibition showing us the allotment through fresh eyes.

Sarah has kindly donated one of her own watercolours for us to use as we see fit as a thank you for our hospitality over the year.

It was all worth it. Thank you all for helping and thank you for coming. See you again next year

Road Closure

The bridge over the railway line on Ivy House Lane is due for major works starting on September 1st.

Crash barriers and railings will be added to protect the railway line and pedestrians. The work will take approximately 9 weeks and will mean that the road will be closed to vehicles from the top of George Street/Bank Mill to a point on the upper side of the bridge towards the gates. Pedestrians and cyclists will still be able to gain access. Notices have been posted on the site Notice boards if you need further information.

Tenancy Changes

Goodbye to:

Mr Jon Cronin	A30A
Mr Spiros Taylor	N5

Welcome to:

Marc Gilmour	N5B
Kevin Walker	N69
Melanie Wattret	N8
Christian Wallace	N1A, N1B
Sandra Bulpitt	N64B
Luke Constable	N64A
Angela Freer	C25
Annick Mulcahy	N1C
Lucy Leunson	N4A
Adrian Scarborough	B34A
Deirdre Ahern	B11A
Wendy Calder	N4C
Fiona Powell	B14A
Matt Kennedy	N33B
Nick Hood	A25A

News from the Garden Chair!

As I write this people are preparing to plant out their winter greens which means the year is over half way through. So far there is less trouble with rats than last year. Our two feral cats have been released after their period of acclimatisation. The tabby, who answers to Stripey, shows signs of turning into a proper allotment cat and has found the tea hut. His companion who has been much more retiring from the start has vanished without trace but we have a feeling that he is out there in the bushes somewhere. Judging by the amount of food being eaten they are working hard to feed themselves. There have been dead rabbits and shrews surplus to requirement. They have been put out on the grass for the fox and possibly the red kite. It is good to have a clean unpolluted food chain. If you do see the second cat which is white with a pink nose and small tabby patches please tell us.

Water

Water is not cheap and those pipes we did not re-lay last autumn have been leaking merrily. It was not until a new meter was put in at the top of Birtchnell's Copse that the water company realised that water had been pouring away without anyone noticing. A temporary over ground pipe has been laid to feed Sunnyside new until the water authorities can lay a new main across the road at the top of SSNew and the old leaking pipe running through the copse has been abandoned.

Even with free labour from the tenants the Town Council has had some heavy expenditure on maintenance and improvement over the last years. This has led to a serious disagreement at AMT (Allotment Management Team) between the allotment reps and the Town Council about what should be paid for by the rents and what by the ratepayers. Figures were produced to show that the costs of the allotment were one third paid by tenants and two thirds by the Council and the Council was not happy. The allotment reps objected strongly that the basis of charging had been altered without notice and the heavy capital costs were lumped in as part of a five year running total. If you want a detailed explanation I will be happy to provide one. The position at the moment is that the rent will be raised to £2 per pole with £1.50 per pole if you choose to have a pressure hose. There will be a paper presented at the next AMT about the basis of charging and we hope that the Council will see sense.

Important reminder

There was a proposal to remove hose pipes altogether. That is why the allotment reps agreed to a big price rise. Siphoning is free. It was set up to save people carrying water a long way and up and down steps. It is not meant to be a cheap way of getting water onto your plants from a hose. To remind you – water is siphoned from the tank to YOUR TANK. You then bale it out with a bucket or can. You may not siphon direct onto your crops.

Freda Earl

Your current Committee Members

Chairman :

Freda Earl 865661

Vice Chairman:

John Driver 862734

Secretary :

Jenny Sippings 865890

Treasurer :

John Powell 878640

Fiona Duck 874334

Angela Wheeldon 874440

Brenda Baynes 865853

Ted Dyer 872684

Anna Dolan 870918

Prue Schofield 878559

John Eaton 865307

Newsletter articles

We are always on the lookout for interesting articles for the newsletter.

If you would like to contribute please contact Brenda Baynes our Editor on 01442 865853 or email her at brenda.baynes@btinternet.com.



Above: A well earned rest in beautiful gardens.



Above: The teas and cakes were enjoyed by everyone.



Above: The produce stall was popular with the visitors - thanks go to all gardeners who donated produce.



Above: Visitors of all ages enjoyed the pleasant weather.



Above & right: There was a fantastic selection of work exhibited at the open day, by students of Sarah Moruzzi.

Thanks go to John Driver for recording the day on his camera.



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).