



Newsletter

July 2009

Brenda Baynes, who has edited the Sunnyside Allotment Society newsletter for 10 years, has bequeathed the job to me. No, she is alive and well but has relinquished her plot and so no longer sits on the committee; nor does she have her ear to the ground for allotment news. Some people have an allotment garden in order to grow vegetables; well, of course we all do but for most of us there are many other benefits. I moved to Berkhamsted only 4 years ago and Sunnyside has provided me with so much more than fruit and vegetables: the chance to meet new people, to discuss such controversial topics as when to plant your onions, to collect yet another recipe for courgettes and/or rhubarb and even recommendations for reliable plumbers – particularly important for a newcomer. Thank you, Sunnyside allotmenters!

Chris Locke

Message from our Chair, Freda Earl:

Since this time last year the allotments reps have been trying to negotiate with our landlords, the Town Council, a fair way of allocating costs to set the allotment rents.

We are making some progress but we are still being asked to pay a share of the council's office costs. This does not apply to any other Town Council activity so I see no reason why it should apply to allotment tenants. The three allotment reps have managed to get rid of some of the more ridiculous charges (which were probably only put there to make us feel good about getting rid of them), and a couple of duplicates. The council says we are not being asked to pay the costs exactly but to know how much the allotments cost and bear it in mind when we set the rent. Not quite sure what the difference is.

The other contentious question is what, like water, is a cost for the allotments' benefit to be charged against rent and what, like No Through Road notices, is a cost which benefits the council as landowner which should not be charged to us because it would arise even if there were not allotments on the sites.

The discussion is not over and I would like some feedback from members. If you want to talk about how the rent should be decided please e-mail me on mrsfredaearl@talktalk.net or write to me at the tea hut on B road no 15. If it is locked please post your letter through the cat flap. If there is no cat flap it is not the right hut!

Freda

Transition Town Berkhamsted Exchange Days

On the 2nd Sunday of July, August and September 11.30 – 2.00 at the Friends Meeting House (by Blockbuster video rental). We are hoping that these events will encourage local residents to share and exchange resources, but hopefully it will also be a fun and relaxing place to spend a couple of hours. The day is a chance to swap any locally grown produce or plants, homemade foods, handmade goods, fashion accessories (hats/ sunglasses/jewellery etc – not clothes), arts and crafts, services and advice. Bring as many items to swap as you like. There will also be a children's swap shop and a bike repair stall. You can visit our website at www.transitionberkhamsted.org.uk and look at the Events page for more details.

Two views of a successful barbeque on June 27th.



A smaller party than usual but good food and company – and the downpour came after we'd finished eating.



Protecting crops against pests

This is something which challenges us every year.. First it's the rodents that dig up peas and beans, then they come back with friends to nip through any remaining emerging plants, after which the pigeons move in and occasionally deer. And the rabbits of course, although Stripey the allotment cat has had a marked effect on their numbers. I started by throwing bits of net over plants (pigeons tend to perch on top, the better to nibble the brassicas), upped the stakes and cut up lengths of chicken wire to bend into tunnel cloches, pegged down with canes (ok for young brassicas but unwieldy if you try and construct something for more mature plants), bought a few netting cloches (rather expensive but very good for young plants), even fenced in a small section (fine if you have long legs and can climb over it). This year I walked round the allotment to seek further inspiration. There are some very innovative barricades and I've taken photos of just a few.



Above - Olga's parcel method with fleece.

Below - Pru's lengths of hosepipe made rigid by inserting thin canes. Cast your net and fix with clothes pegs.





A similar solution but using lengths of conduit. Round conduit is available from Wickes in 3m lengths at £11 for a pack of 10.



Pru's netting cloches, soon to be outgrown



Jackie's mini-greenhouse, used here mainly to prevent blight attack on tomatoes.



More debris netting, this time supported using cunning holey balls and posts



A colourful construction: Clive and Jenny's use of debris netting (used on scaffolding), which is apparently available very cheaply on e-Bay or sometimes found in skips.



....and finally Tony's impregnable fortress with stone moat.



Sunnyside Allotment Society

SCARECROW COMPETITION Open Day Sunday 16 August 2009

We have decided to hold a scarecrow competition again this year, as both tenants and visitors have enjoyed the event in the past and we have lots of new members who may wish to take part. 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 may be additional prizes.

There will be an entry fee of £1 per scarecrow.

The scarecrows should be in place on your plot by the evening of Thursday 13th 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;
- the scarecrow should be given a name which is displayed.



✂ -----

SCARECROW COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Name: Phone No.

Address:

Plot No: Age (if child):

I enclose my entry fee of £1 per scarecrow ☐

Closing date for entries: 2 August 2009

Completed forms should be returned to Rebecca Gee, 20 Curtis Way, HP4 2LP (email rebeccagee@mac.com). Extra forms will be available on the website or from the Tea Hut.



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

OPEN DAY SUNDAY 16th AUGUST 2009

Our Open Day takes place on Sunday 16th August from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., to enable local residents to visit and enjoy the allotments, with sales of produce, preserves and refreshments. There will also be guided walks around the sites.

Please try to cut your paths so that they are tidy, bramble free and accessible to the public. The contractors will be cutting the main roadways during the week before Open Day; to enable them to do a full width cut, please ensure the end of your plot bordering the roadway is cut back as far as possible. We want to make the sites look as attractive as possible, and it would be nice if you could spend some time on your plot during that day to give visitors a warm welcome.

PRE-OPEN DAY JOBS

There are a number of tasks which need doing before the day: Cleaning furniture, displaying signs, mowing and strimming of paths and general tidying up of communal areas. Any offers of help will be gratefully accepted.

VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We will also need volunteers to man the produce and refreshment stalls and the raffle. Please return the completed form to Angela Wheeldon (10 Chapel Street or B15) or email to: jenny.sippings@ntlworld.com. We can then draw up a rota to share the tasks out. Could you also let us know if you are able to provide any contributions (see form below). Plants and preserves need to be delivered to B15 on Friday or Saturday and fresh veg/cakes **before 10.00 a.m.** on Sunday.

We are again organising a scarecrow competition which visitors and tenants alike seem to enjoy.

✂-----

Name: _____ Plot No: _____ Tel: _____

Pre Open Day help:

I can help with: _____ Please let us know when: _____

I can help at the following time(s) on Open Day (please tick the box).

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9.00.-11.00 a.m. (setting up) | <input type="checkbox"/> 11.00.- 12 noon | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 noon - 1.00 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.00.- 2.00 p.m. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2.00.- 3.00 p.m. | <input type="checkbox"/> 3.00 .- 4.00 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4.00.- 5.00 p.m. | <input type="checkbox"/> 5.00.- 6.00 p.m. (clearing up) | <input type="checkbox"/> anytime |

I will provide:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> cakes/biscuits for the refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> produce/preserves to sell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> plants/flowers to sell | <input type="checkbox"/> other |

Please return this form by **Friday 7th August**. Thank you.