

# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4/2000

## Autumn Activities

The fruits of our summer labour have nearly all been gathered in and plots are being dug, cleared and manured ready for next season – endorsing the opinion that often gardeners live to a ripe old age because they are always optimistically looking forward to the future! Certainly a walk round both sites, old and new has shown much activity, with a variety of produce; black juicy grapes hanging on the vine, golden pumpkins and bulging marrows. Dahlias, chrysanthemums in colourful abundance, all achieved by constant effort in the fight against nature, with its weeds and wild life. Sadly 'tis an unweeded garden that grows to seed' and you will read in this newsletter about a number of allotments which have had to be given up because the standard of tidiness has not been acceptable. But these apart, the general appearance is to be admired and gives much pleasure.

Much of the praise for this must be attributed to Ted Dyer, who is unfortunately standing down as Chairman in a few weeks time. We all appreciate and know how much time and physical energy he gives, not only to the overall care of both sites, but also to those individual tenants whom he spots, that need a helping hand. He will be a hard act to follow, having been Chairman for three years and Council Representative for over twenty years. We hope a member or members will be ready to take on his tasks, as listed below by John Savage in his job description of the Chairman's present role.

## Message from Your Chairman

Having been elected Chairman at the inaugural meeting of the society in February 1997, and continued in the role for the 1997/8/9 general meetings, I feel that it is time for a change. I am therefore not standing for re election as Chairman at the forthcoming AGM, but if it is your wish I shall be happy to serve on the Committee.

I am also standing down as your representative on the Council's Allotments Management Committee, but would be prepared to be deputy to whomever is elected to fill the position.

The letter that you have received from the Council gives you the opportunity to nominate a representative for the Allotments Management Committee and I would urge you to take this opportunity to make such a nomination. At the present time your Vice chairman and Deputy Allotments Representative is Peter Chapman.

## John Savage writes

As mentioned above Ted Dyer intends to stand down from being Chairman and Representative on the Council's Allotment Committee. Without his drive and enthusiasm we would not have made nearly so much progress in establishing the Society, but he has acquired so many jobs that members may feel daunted at the prospect of taking on either of these positions. However many of Ted's activities could and should be taken on by other members (including Ted!) rather than the Chairman and Allotment Representative.

The Chairman is primarily required to take the chair at the AGM and Committee meetings, but he or she would probably wish to initiate projects such as pipe laying, tree planting, plot clearances. Undoubtedly some queries and complaints from allotment holders, neighbours, etc. will be referred by whichever committee member has received them.

The Sunnyside representative on the Council's Allotment Management Committee attends meetings of the Committee, meets prospective new tenants and shows them vacant allotments, hands out Council discount vouchers to new tenants and termination of tenancy forms to allotment holders who wish to give up an allotment, liaises with the Town warden for maintenance of paths and hedges and with the Council on Tenancy changes so that our records are up to date.

In addition Ted mows side paths, writes part of the newsletter and arranges distribution, moves the flag for horse muck deliveries, arranges deliveries of farmyard manure, makes minor repairs to ball valves, notice boards, gates etc, arranges collection of rubbish, organises work parties for plot clearances and does the backroom work for meetings.

Nominations for Chairman or Allotment Representative should be given to the Hon Secretary, Jenny Sippings by 5th November, accompanied by consent of the nominee. Candidates for Allotment Representative can of course submit an application direct to the Council if they wish.

## Allotments Management Committee

As mentioned overleaf the Committee has taken action against tenants who fail to cultivate their gardens or keep them tidy.

However there is some good news as the Committee agreed no increase in rent should be imposed. This means that the rent per plot cannot now be increased until 2002 at the earliest.

Relocation of the water tank on sunnyside New has been agreed and work will start on 28th October with pipe laying (see below)

Pressure will continue to be applied to obtain a new tank at the Ivy House Lane end of 'A' road on Sunnyside Old.

You will have read the Council's letter with your rent invoice which gives you the opportunity, subject to the availability of tap, to pay a water levy and be able to use a pressure hose from Spring 2001.

The council's offer to sell black plastic to tenants for plot coverage has been publicised with notices being posted on both old and new sites.

## Water Supplies

Arrangements are in hand to relocate a water tank on Sunnyside New but here is agreed to lay a new water pipe to the new tank position on plot 49.

A digger is to be hired on 28/10/2000 to excavate the trench for the pipe and hopefully the pipe will be laid in and backfilling completed. It would be helpful if tenants could lend their support to this work and assist with activities on the Hazel Coppice of which more below.

## SAS contact numbers

|           |                |        |
|-----------|----------------|--------|
| Chairman  | Ted Dyer       | 872684 |
| Treasurer | John Savage    | 873877 |
| Secretary | Jenny Sippings | 865890 |
| Committee | Peter Chapman  | 871470 |
|           | Rod Cottrell   | 384963 |
|           | Fiona Duck     | 874334 |
|           | Ken Harbord    | 865757 |
|           | Ian Stowe      | 876815 |

## Allotment Clearance

As we now have a significant number of plots which need to be cleared to make them more attractive to prospective tenants, it is proposed there should be a n allotment clearance day on Saturday 11th November and volunteers are needed to help.

Please turn up and help as many hands make light work and will enable us to clear more gardens.

Further clearance days will be arranged in the early months of the new year and your support will be welcomed.

Whilst we have a digger on site on 28th October we will endeavour to dig up tree stumps from last springs clearance work.

## Hazel Coppice

As part of the society's ongoing maintenance of the Hazel Coppice, we plan to tidy up the area and replenish the wood chip at the base of the trees.

Volunteers with barrows will be needed to transport and spread woodchip and clear up the grass from the site. Ken Harbord has continued to strim the coppice and hopes to have completed the job by the end of the month.

## Seeds Scheme

Contributing Society members have had the opportunity to order their seeds for the next year via our Society.

Jenny Sippings has kindly agreed to administer the scheme this year and we hope that those tenants who take part will find they get good results at a lower price.

Thanks, Jenny for the time and effort which you have put into the scheme which hopefully will generate more income for the society.

Coffee time!





## Annual General Meeting

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Society AGM is to take place on Saturday 25th November 2000 at 10.30am. The venue is the same, at the Gable Hall, Prince Edward Street. Please make a note in your diaries and come along to the meeting and have your say on how your Society is being run. Last year's meeting was the best supported so far and hopefully this time, even more tenants will be able to come along.

The agenda for the meeting is enclosed with this newsletter and it would be helpful if you would bring it with you.

Angela Wheeldon will be putting on the Society's display which shows our activities at Sunnyside. This display was shown at the Civic Centre for the Town's annual Meeting and subsequently at the Environment fair in order to improve the town-folks awareness of allotments and to attract new tenants.

Tea and Coffee will be available at the end of the meeting.

## Photographs

We are now in need of more photographs for future displays. Have you taken photos of your prize vegetables? Do you grow unusual crops? Do your children enjoy helping on your allotment? Do you use raised beds or go in for companion planting? If you are willing to let us have copies of your photos for use in future displays, please deliver them to Angela Wheeldon either at the shed on B15 or to 10 Chapel St.

## Congratulations

Jane Miller has recently given birth to a baby daughter, Samantha. We understand Mother and baby are doing well and we look forward to seeing Jane at work on her garden again.

## More news from the hen house.

Angela Wheeldon writes: The chickens have been in residence for 7 months now and they are about 1 year old. They have grown into fine big birds and have continued to lay 5 or 6 eggs per day. As the days get shorter they will lay less.

We have seen signs of foxes about, but so far no evidence of any attempt to get into the chicken run. The chickens are shut into the hen house at night but the fox is a resourceful creature. As food gets scarcer in winter we will need to keep a watchful eye.

We have learned quite a lot about hens and their habits. For example, you need four hands to administer antibiotics 'by beak' – two to hold the bird, one to open the beak and the fourth to squirt the liquid down the throat! The hen will know when you want to pick her up to give her the dose and will nimbly slip through your fingers. We've learned that they don't much like bread or potatoes, but they do love their greens. Their current passion is for spinach! Raspberries, blackberries and elderberries are also a treat. We've discovered that they like snails and crunch their shells with gusto – which is good. But unfortunately they show no such enthusiasm for the huge slugs which have plagued the allotments this year – which is a pity!

## Tenancy Changes

### Sunnyside Old

In:

Fred Jackson A42

John Piller B27

Out:

Fiona Gates A4

Komeran Gadjar A44

Matt Goodliffe B6&8

Betty Patterson B10 &14

Charlotte Seeberg B16

Lisa Pedley B20

Peter Allen B22

Billy Tanner B23

Rosemary Burnett B27

Fred Anderson B26

Mick Lowen B29 & 31

Sally Rasiah B32

Alison Gudgeon B33 & 35

Chris Hawkes C26/28/30/32/34/36

### Sunnyside new

Nick Upton 71

Nicky Wright 70

Vi Loverage 27

Mr J Taberam 49

## Untidy gardens

The dramatic fall in the number of tenants is directly due to a lack of activity on their plots, which has resulted in their tenancies being terminated by the council. This is a direct result of their failure to comply with the provisions of their tenancy agreements with the council.

Others have been relieved on promise of action to tidy up and cultivate their plots. Failure on the part of the tenants concerned to improve matters on their plots in the near future will result in their tenancies also being terminated. Individuals who have lost their plots will not be allowed to take back their tenancies without their case being considered by the Council's Management Committee. There is no guarantee that a former tenant will be successful as their former plot(s) may have been re-let in the meantime. Each case will be considered on its merits.

## Annual Subscription

The £2.00 annual subscription to the society falls due from the AGM where John Savage, our treasurer will be happy to take your money. Alternatively you can pay your subscription to any Committee Member or directly to John at his home 'Vaucluse', Gravel Path (next to Netherfield).

### **Gardeners Clippings**

In a previous Newsletter mention was made of a portable gas heater which was available for disposal free to a good home. Contact Ted Dyer if you are interested, otherwise it will be dumped as it is taking up valuable storage space!

A quantity of small hand tools was left on 'A' road some weeks back, but no enquiries have been received leading to their return to their owner. If any tenant has lost any small tools please contact Ted Dyer with details.

### **Rubbish Clearance**

Some rubbish has been placed on the dumping points, but as yet no arrangements have been made for its collection by the Borough council. If you have any unwanted metal, plastic, glass etc, please take them to the collection points (detailed in the last Newsletter) by the end of October.

### **Berkhamsted Tool Hire Discount**

We wish to remind tenants of the availability of 10% discount on the cost of hire of tools and equipment from the Hire Shop. Claim your discount by advising the shop of your SAS membership and give your name.

### **The Chairman Writes:**

The last Newsletter was the first under the control of Brenda Baynes, who did an excellent job. I am sure that we all look forward to further improvements as she continues with her arm twisting to obtain contributions from tenants to spice up the content.

If you wish to contribute items for future Newsletters, please let Brenda have your articles prior to the next Newsletter which will be coming out in January 2001. Brenda resides at 51 High St and would welcome hearing from you.

### **Change of Address**

Just a reminder that if you do change your address please notify the Town Council and your Society treasurer John Savage so that both records can be updated.

The Society cannot communicate with you if we do not know where you live.

### **Promoting Allotments**

If you know anyone who would be interested in taking an allotment at Sunnyside, please do what you can to encourage them to come and join us. With the recent loss of a large number of tenants, we need to find ones to replace them. Our Society exists to promote Allotment use and we do not wish to see a situation where a future Council might resurrect the idea of building on Sunnyside.

Please spread the word and see if you can persuade at least one new tenant to join us.

'It is unhealthy to live by brainpower alone, everyone needs some simple physical work', another Chinese saying!



Conker time!