



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk
email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 2 April 2013

Looking back at last April's newsletter I see that I was moaning about murdered broad bean plants. This year I'm grateful to see how healthy my plants in the cold greenhouse look and shan't plant them out until I have time to protect them from predators. Spring seems to have arrived yesterday (April 6th) so we gardeners can emerge from our burrows.

My 'silly' plant for this year will be Cucamelons (seeds still in their packet), 'grape-sized 'watermelons' that taste of cucumber with a tinge of lime'.

Only one contribution from allotmenters this time – but thanks for that.

Chris Locke

From our chairman:

I would have hoped to talk about the green shoots of spring, but that will have to be deferred until the temperature is properly above zero. Luckily, digging and preparation can be warm work.

Brief points:

The Council wishes to demonstrate and confirm its legal position regarding rights of way on the allotment sites and will close-off parts of the allotment for 24 hours on Monday 15th April. There will be notices and a form of barrier. Allotment tenants will still be able to reach their plots.

The Council has a policy for allotment non-fruit trees (in brief – there shouldn't be any) and will consider how to resolve the issue where trees exist. Factors to be taken into account include overshadowing and the interests of the tenants. So please remove any saplings before they become a problem and consider replacing non-fruit trees with fruit trees (not more than 4m high).

If anyone has a rabbit problem, please report.

Rubbish removal is the responsibility of each tenant, but if you have problem please tell a member of the committee.

Remember to look at our Web site <http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/>

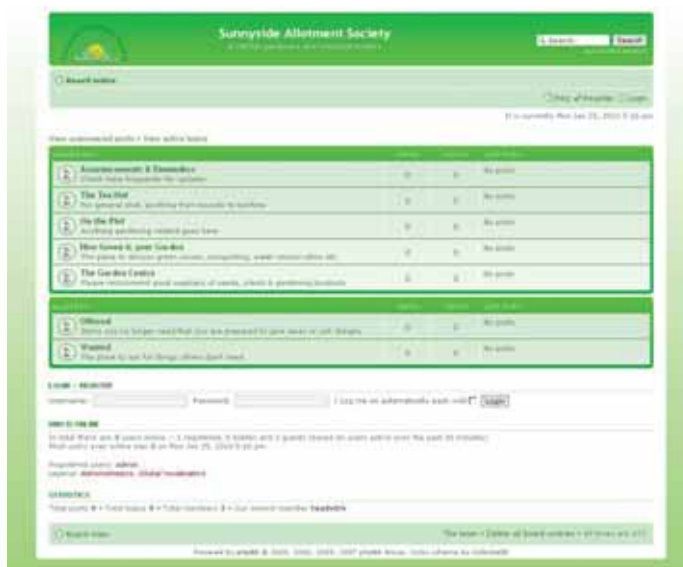
The waiting list is short, so if you know anyone interested they should apply to the Council.

John Eaton

Sunnyside online forum community

Someone suggested a question and answer section in the newsletter, but we already have a platform for this which is our online discussion forum which you can find here: <http://forum.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/>

The more people who participate the more successful it will be.



The first thing you need to do is register on the forum. You need to invent a username for yourself and a password which you will need to remember! If anyone needs help with this please contact: jenny@sunnysideallotments.org.uk. Then start posting.

There are several different areas to post in which should be self-explanatory eg. "On the Plot" for any gardening topics, "The Garden Centre" for recommending good suppliers for seeds, plants etc. There is also a members only section for SAS members, where you can discuss specific Sunnyside issues (however there should not be discussions about individual plots or tenants).

More on paths

By the time you read this the weeds should be growing well again, as will the grass... timely then to remind tenants that to keep their paths in good order, they need to be mown at least 3 times a year. And even if you haven't the time to re-establish a weedy path, repeated mowing will help no end.

Good turf is an excellent soil stabiliser, which helps to support and define the edges of your plot, so please don't use weedkiller too near those edges or heaven forbid, cut into them

Before tidying up the edges and kerbs, it's best to run a line, easily made up with two camping pegs and some string.

To be sure of maintaining safe access to your plot from all sides, you may need to liaise with your neighbours when setting the lines, as a wheelbarrow needs about 2½ feet width, much the same as we do!

Now all the plots on Old and many on New are fully tenanted, the maintenance of boundaries allowing common access is becoming important again. Some pegs have been used here and there to help demarcate older boundaries where paths might have become eroded, overgrown, or disused.

Finally, again, please do not leave stones, weeds and detritus on paths and avoid particularly building compost bins and sheds directly on the edges of paths.

Reminders from some of our tenants

As we have a lot of new allotment holders we think it would be a good idea to mention the following (again).

We know that some of these points are covered in the Allotment Handbook which everyone is supposed to receive when they join - but there is no harm in mentioning them in the newsletter as well.

Mowing

Allotment holders should keep the grass cut on their paths. The Council mows the grass on the main access A, B and C roads on Old and the main roadways on New. Ted's lawnmower is his personal property and he kindly lends it to people. The petrol is donated by various allotment holders - it doesn't come out of the allotment funds. If allotment holders want to use Ted's lawnmower or anyone else's then they should make a contribution to the petrol.

Bonfires

Some sensitivity should be used when lighting bonfires. If it is a nice sunny breezy day no one wants to be engulfed by the smoke from a bonfire. The rule is that bonfires should be lit later in the afternoon or early evening when it has got a lot cooler. Bonfires should not be left burning when allotment holders go home as this is an obvious fire risk.

Do not burn wet material; only dry, woody stuff should be burnt.

Weeds and vegetables that have gone past their best can easily be composted. If you bring material from home to compost, do not include any cooked food as this attracts vermin. Kitchen waste should be dug into your compost heap.

Roadways

Reminder not to park on roadways except for loading and unloading, now that there are more tenants about. Car parking is available on both sites. There are now quite a lot of young children on plots—please drive **slowly** along roadways.

Tea Hut

The Tea Hut is Angela's personal shed and the door should be always kept shut. Even if someone is just having a drink at the table, the door should be kept closed.

Tenancy changes

Welcome to:

Old

A17B	Katharine Green
A17D	Karen Sutton
B9A	Alison Mansfield
B33A	Olga Ashcheulova
B35B, A1A	Helen Pope
B37	Jane Miller
C1	Emma Przygodzka, Helen Hanbridge
C27A	Gary Elkington
C27B	Katie Grange

New

N7A, N7B	Jamie Bradley
N30	William Hicks
N40	Keith & Sue Brown
N52	Chris & Olivia Bertham
N56A	Andy James
N64B	Stuart Rogers

Goodbye to:

Old

B35B	Val Stephenson
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It's almost April and the crocuses are just coming into flower. I tend to change the desk top on my computer to match the seasons. The snowdrops are over and have been replaced by species crocus from the front of the Berkhamsted School in Mill Street. The photo I have used was dated 2nd March 2007 – just shows how late the season is this year.

I have been up at the allotment all winter on my respite time on Wednesdays and Thursdays but I can't say I saw many other people wrapped up like Eskimos. They are reappearing now though. Osteopaths and Chiropractors know that a warm Easter is good for business as people rush out from their armchairs to overdo the gardening. Maybe there is something to be said in favour of a cold east wind.

Our local woe water, the Bourne Gutter is flowing this winter. Woe waters are supposed to predict disasters. They know nothing about train crashes and volcanoes, but they do respond to last summer's wet weather. If we were peasants dependent on last year's crops for our survival most of us would be getting a bit thin and pale by now instead of cursing and going to the shops to buy vegetables. That would be woe enough.

The robin has been watching me carefully, looking for wriggly things to eat. He has sat on posts and sung to me – no doubt about it, he was communicating. With typical human arrogance we think he is being friendly. His song is territorial and what he is actually saying is "This is my patch and when you've finished making yourself useful sorting out that compost heap, will you just GO AWAY and let me get on with eating what you've found. All this hopping out of the way every time you make a sudden move is getting on my nerves."

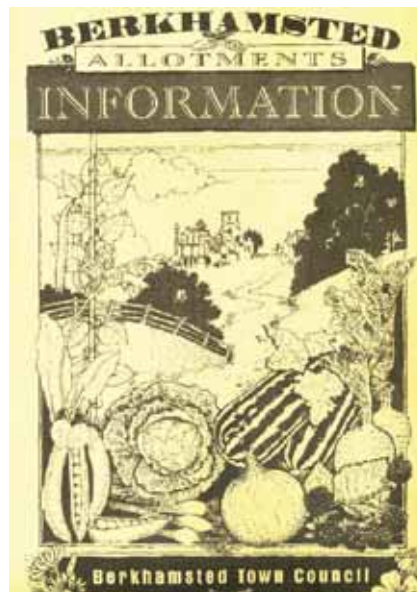
(Contributed by Hoe-hoe)



Spring planting underway

Allotment Information Pack

As you can see from the list on page 2 we have welcomed a lot of new tenants over the past 2 or 3 months. The council should give all new tenants an 'Allotment Information Pack'. You can collect this from the council offices or view it online here: <http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/about/allotments-information-pack/>



Untidy gardens

The allotment reps inspect allotments three times a year. We are sympathetic to problems, if we are told about them. A list of those needing warning letters is handed to the council. No one likes being inspected. We do not want the plots to be highly manicured but they cannot be allowed to go back to 'rough', **paths must be cared for and weeds must not be allowed to seed all over neighbouring gardens.**

If you are finding it difficult to cultivate the whole of your plot you can reduce your holding. Please talk to the council about it or John Eaton on our committee. This is the Town Council's agreed process:

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.

Remember the letters are cumulative from year to year.

The first **inspection** will take place shortly.



Rows and rows of potatoes!

Your current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Vice Chairman & Minutes Secretary:	Lin Phillips	862882
Secretary:	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	John Powell	878640
Newsletter Editor:	Chris Locke	877326
Other members:	Wendy Calder	862728
	Andy James	865061
	Annick Mulcahy	862572
	Angela Wheeldon	874440

Water keys

The council has found that some tenants have been issued with the wrong key for allotment tap. If you have one that doesn't work you can exchange it in the council offices.

Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs 2012-13

All members are invited to pay the SAS a membership sub which at present is £3 pa. Of this a fee, of presently £2 per member, is paid to the NSALG (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners) and the names of paid up members registered with them. The seed scheme is one of the benefits of membership. However there is much more to this organisation. If you are interested visit their web site <http://www.nsalg.org.uk/>, it covers a large range of relevant subjects. A magazine is issued quarterly by them (together with other literature and anything of interest) and is available in the tea hut.

Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs

Subs for 2012/2013 (£3.00) can be sent with this slip to John Powell (20 Castle Hill Avenue) or left at the tea hut on B15. (Cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society please).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Plot Number: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: _____ cash/cheque (please circle)