



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

No: 2 April 2014

Spring is sprung and there's no time for you to read (nor me to write) so I'll leave the rest of the newsletter to others.....although I must just say how impressed I was by my neighbour's wondrous forced rhubarb, obtained with the help of 2 car tyres and a metal bucket on top. Good enough to eat raw, she said. Oh and a little boast – I picked my first asparagus this year on April 1st.

Chris Locke

Chairman's Notes

No need for me point out that Spring is here and the sun is shining, seeds will probably grow if you plant them. So, crack on, catch up on winter jobs not yet done and look forward to bounty. The ground seems easy to dig and fairly dry, given the rain we've had.

You may have noticed that the Council's contractors have removed or trimmed non-fruit trees. There are still some trees along the railway boundary to be worked on, but special safety precautions will be necessary due to the power lines so we await developments.

The Allotment Tenancy Agreement requires that the plot is kept in a 'good state of cultivation' (para. f) and the first inspection this year has recently taken place. If there is some reason why you are unable to tend your plot, please contact a member of the committee or the Council.
Good gardening

John Eaton

Plot Numbers

Whilst every allotment has a number many of the plots do not indicate this. In an endeavour to remedy this John Powell has volunteered to make number plates for members to place in a recognisable position at the roadside end of their plot.

A sample can be seen in the tea hut together with a list for you to place a request. A small donation to the Society's funds would be appreciated.

Calling all Berko Blades

Despite the recent thefts and the inherent irony of this article, we would like to establish a list of mower owners who would be happy to loan the use of their mower to other allotment holders and /or help cut the grass of neighbouring plots.

If you have a mower and would like to be part of this scheme, please let me know and once we have a list we'll put it in the newsletter so that mower-less tenants (as I now am!) can contact a mower owner.

Then we can all look forward to immaculate paths and that warm feeling that generous acts always bring!

I can be contacted on 07974 957926 or at scarbs@gmail.com

I look forward to a deluge of mail and calls.
Cheers,
Adrian Scarborough B34A



February and March working parties

The February working party coppiced the bottom half of the Millennium Coppice on SSOld to provide hazel peasticks and bean poles for tenants. Some of the material was bundled ready for use.

We started to clear the brambles at the end of SSNew 10 where they were encroaching onto the roadway.

In March, the main job was to shore up the back of the wood chip/leaves area on SSNew and to realign the path up between the plots. We still need tenants to use the material here before any more work is done – the leaves have rotted down well to provide ideal soil conditioner or useful addition to your compost heap.

More bramble clearing was done on SSNew 10. On SSOld more of the hazel coppice arisings were bundled into sticks for peas and bean poles. Most of the prepared material has now been taken but more of the coppicings are still available at the bottom of the Millennium Coppice on C37, next to Sunnyside Rural Trust garden, so please help yourselves.

We also laid stone at the end of B Road where it had become very muddy due to tree work vehicles and others using it when wet.

Both working parties enjoyed a good alfresco lunch. Thanks to Annick and Lin for providing the soup, and to Hazel for preparing and serving the food, and to Trish and Neil for organising the work.

Angela Wheeldon

Calendar Photos

Cynthia Fulks is going to produce the calendar this year and the theme will be Dig for Victory, 2015 being the 70th anniversary of the ending of WWII. If you have any information about the allotments or the local area in the war please let us know. We would also like wartime recipes.

We also need photos of the allotments taken throughout the seasons.

Please email any photos (full resolution) or any other information to:

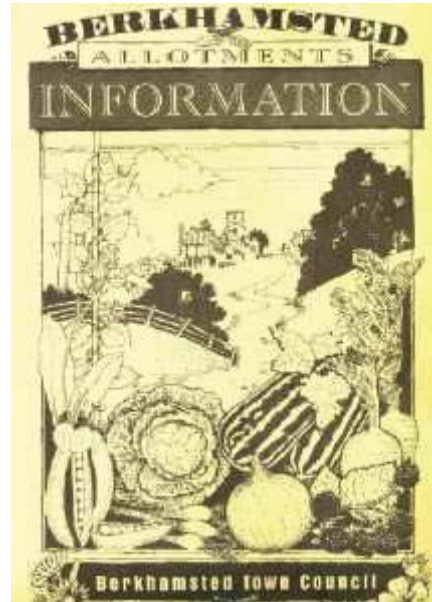
cynthia@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

Allotment Information Pack

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/>

This contains lots of useful information for new tenants and existing tenants too!



Water Saving Tips

It's hard to believe we had so much rain over the winter as the ground already seems quite dry.

On our website we have some very useful water saving tips which you can find here:

http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/Downloads/water_tips.pdf

Don't forget if you put a shed on your plot you are required to put up guttering to collect rain water. Run-off from shed and greenhouse roofs is a valuable source of water. You will need to acquire a water butt and it is advisable to keep the butt covered to prevent evaporation.

To increase the amount of water collected, run a series of water butts joined by pipes, so that once the first one is full, any excess water will run into the next butt and so on to the next.

Plants do better on rain water, taking up all the trace elements.

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).

Open Day 2014

Our annual Open Day may seem a long way off but now could be a good time to start planning ahead. It's on **Sunday 10th August** – a date for your diary. It is a good opportunity for us to show off the allotments. We get visitors from the town and we also get keen gardeners from other allotment sites too. They all enjoy seeing the town from a different perspective, and they appreciate being able to wander between the gardens and swap experiences with you as you work on your plots, so please try to spend some time there if possible. A warm welcome, a nice cup of tea and some homemade cake followed by a chance to buy some very local produce rounds off their visit nicely.

So what can you do? When you are planning what to grow, perhaps you could include a few extra vegetables, plants or flowers which would be ready to sell on the Produce Stall. And if you make jams and preserves, a few extra jars for the Stall would be gratefully received – they always sell like the proverbial hot cakes! (The rhubarb is just waiting to be made into rhubarb and ginger or orange jam, and rhubarb chutney can be very tasty.) But it is also a good opportunity for tenants to get to know each other by getting involved in the preparations and helping on the day itself.

This year there will be another guided walk around the sites – very popular last year. Also a Quiz for Kids called Discover Sunnyside. We aren't running a scarecrow competition this year but visitors do love spotting scarecrows as they walk round, so why not exercise your artistic talents and create something really eye-catching for your plot? Something for the children to do at the start of the summer holidays perhaps.

So please put the date in your diary. Further details about the Open Day including how and when you can help will be in the July newsletter.

Angela Wheeldon



Properly composting brassica stems (rather than burning) can be speeded up many times over simply by...

- 1) knocking all dirt out of the rootball (bang hard against an edge);
- 2) snapping the stem in one or two places (grip, bend & twist);
- 3) stripping leaves & stalks off.

No. 2 allows invertebrates in to start the breaking down process off.

You can then either pile them up separately over winter to weather or add to your normal waste heap.

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
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Other members:	Wendy Calder	767289
	Cynthia Fuls	879410
	Andy James	865061
	Adrian Scarborough	384974
	Angela Wheeldon	874440

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

Steve Poulton	N35A
Lawrence O'Shea	N42
Helen Reeley	N44
Anthony Phillips	N67



Fenced paths

If you have fenced off your plot to stop rabbits then please remember that this creates a much more difficult path maintenance & grass cutting exercise on 'both' sides... not just yours. J

Nothing makes the allotment site look cared for more than mowed paths and close cut edges... please don't leave the job to a non existent ghost of a neighbour or someone who didn't ask for this bothersome task.



Sunnyside New pathways - proposed reinstatement work.

Several of the original connecting pathways on Sunnyside New have fallen into disuse by becoming overgrown, incorrectly fenced off or being used for storage, even for allotment compost heaps or weed waste. Starting with the narrow path at the rear of plots 30 to 48 (and the rear of plots 49 to 66) it is intended to clear and seed a better path, removing carpet and materials dumped in the past. Mowing / strimming will then be possible.

Please if you have blocked any access or have items on allotment access pathways please remove them to make this remedial work easier. Whilst some paths are gated they should not be fenced off or incorporated into plots some of which appear to have lost their boundaries.

Reseeding will take place as required and damaged or collapsing fences righted.

Manure

The following suppliers can deliver to your plot. Chris Locke has spoken to Phil Markes who runs the farm shop opposite Tring Tesco's; his manure is a mixture of farmyard manures (horse and cow) and can be delivered for £35.

Dave Burgin 01442 832997

Phil Markes 01442 823357

Sunnyside Allotment Society subs of £3 are now due. Of this, £2.25 is paid to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and members' names are registered with them. The seed scheme is one of the benefits of membership and also the quarterly magazine which is available in the tea hut. Their website www.nsalg.org.uk has a range of interesting topics.

Sunnyside Allotment Society Subs

Subs for 2013/2014 (£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)