



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

No: 2 April 2019

## Editor's Note

Spring is with us, and plants and seeds are shooting; a lovely time of the year, and so full of promise. Some interesting contributions in this issue, in particular images ranging from the traditional medium of coloured inks to a photos taken from a drone! . And lovely to have pictures of spring blossom, too. Thanks to all those who have sent contributions to this newsletter - I hope you enjoy reading it.

Lin Phillips, Editor (A18)

07835 623981

## Chairman's Notes

Once again, spring is providing hot, cold, wet and dry weather, but the wise gardener will know that seeds have a better chance in the ground than in the packet. Weeds, of course, demonstrate versatility and resilience – so rise to the challenge.

There are some useful pieces of wood and various fittings on the racking near the SAS sheds on SSO, so please help yourselves and donate to the SAS funds, via the Tea Hut.

Allotment security is tricky to deal with, because no shed or container is impregnable. Sheds should probably be locked to provide some sort of deterrent, but please don't leave items of value that you would really miss. If there is a break-in, please report it to the police and tell a Committee member

A project to install two more water tanks on SSN has been completed, so more tenants are nearer to water sources.

As you know, the Tenancy agreement stipulates that we all keep our plots in good order. This requirement is enforced by inspection and, if necessary, Council warning letters and then termination. The first inspection this year will take place soon, so if there is any reason why you are not able to maintain your plot (eg. illness) please mention it to a member of the Committee so that due allowance can be made.

Finally, as the grass starts to grow, a reminder to keep paths mown, edged and free of stones, as they can damage mowers.

Good gardening,  
John Eaton



Dave Rance put these photos on the Sunnyside Facebook group, taken by a friend of his by drone



### Manure Suppliers

Try the following, and do let me know if you have another source:

Dave Burgin – 01442 832997

Phil Marks – 01442 823357

In addition, there is free organic donkey poo ready to collect from Lock House, Wharf Lane, Dudswell (on the verge, by the gate to the property). It is already bagged up, but not rotted down, so you would need to store it for a year before using.

### Open Day 2019

This year our annual Open Day will be on **Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> August**, at the beginning of National Allotment Week, so do keep the date in your diary. Planning usually starts well in advance, with publicity from June onwards. Visitors to the Open Day enjoy seeing the allotments, as well as talking to gardeners who are working on their plots. A cup of tea and some home-made cake at the tea hut is always very welcome, as is the chance to buy freshly picked produce, preserves, plants and garden tools.

Kate Rankin (A9) will be coordinating all the various tasks leading up to the event and on the day itself. She will be sending out a call for assistance closer to the event. If you would like to talk to her now about any ideas you have and how you can help, do contact her at [kate@sunysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:kate@sunysideallotments.org.uk), or on the plot.

### Water-saving tips

Hard to believe, but we will soon be spending much of our time with watering cans and hosepipes, keeping our crops watered. Remember to use water wisely; water in the morning and evening, to avoid most of it evaporating as it will do in the middle of the day. Run-off from sheds and greenhouse roofs is a valuable source of water, and contains lots of trace elements loved by plants. If you have a shed on your plot, you are required to put up guttering to collect rain water, and you can link a series of butts with hosepipes to increase your storage capacity.

You can find more ideas here: [http://www.sunysideallotments.org.uk/Downloads/water\\_tips.pdf](http://www.sunysideallotments.org.uk/Downloads/water_tips.pdf)

### Your Current Committee Members

<b>Chairman:</b>	John Eaton	865307
<b>Secretary:</b>	Jenny Sippings	865890
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Andy James	865061
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Lin Phillips	862882
<b>Other members:</b>		
	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852

You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: [@sunysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:@sunysideallotments.org.uk) apart from John Eaton who is: [johne@](mailto:johne@) and John Goffey who is: [johng@](mailto:johng@)

### Winter Working Parties

The Sunnyside tradition of volunteer working parties during the winter months dates from the days when Sunnyside Old and New and Birtchnell's Copse were very neglected and needed rejuvenation lest the land should fall into the hands of developers. Many allotment plots were cleared and then let, and soon there was a waiting list for plots. It is not everybody who can find the time to volunteer to work on anything but their own plot.

Twenty or so years later, winter working party tasks now tend to be rather different; instead of clearing overgrown plots for letting and planting hazel coppices for bean-poles, we now focus on maintenance tasks, cutting back overgrown paths and encroaching wildlife areas, harvesting our bean-poles. We also embark on new projects to improve common facilities such as the Tea Hut, the toilet, and the new SAS community sheds.

During this winter, working parties achieved some improvements in these areas and in Birtchnell's Copse. In fact, this year we put in quite a lot of effort on SSN to try and even up the benefits of our work between the two sites. The last working party of the winter in early March was rained off, and only indoor work tidying sheds could be done. This is the second year running that the last working party of the season has had to be abandoned because of the weather, so let's hope we have better luck next season.

In the meantime, thanks are due to all those volunteers whose efforts helped to improve Sunnyside allotments during the past winter's working parties, and to the ladies who produced lunches for the tired and hungry workers.

John Goffey, (B16) Working Parties Organiser



Photo by Jeanne Woodcraft

In February members of Helen Gray's family and some of her friends met to scatter her ashes and to plant a Lanes Prince Albert apple tree in her memory. It's the first of our Hertfordshire Heritage orchard trees planted on what was rough scrub ground at the top of Western path up to C road. Helen loved her allotment and this has now become her final resting place—a place where her family can come and remember her.



Cherry plum tree by Deborah Figueiredo

### Gardening as Mindfulness

Last April Melanie Reid, Columnist of the Year and tetraplegic gardener, wrote an article about the Gardening for Disabled Trust and about her own experience of gardening with disability; here is a short excerpt:

“Alongside the pots and my raised bed, I can wheel my chair and peer and smell and touch. The simple magic wielded by building a wooden box and filling it with soil is intoxicating. You lift up plants to the height at which it’s easy for the less-abled to access them, and in doing so offer something hugely benign and therapeutic. Gardening gives solace – there is no more life-affirming way to fill that stillness than watching plants grow.

In fact, gardening’s just mindfulness with all the cobbles removed. Cures all ills. Causes no harm. Creates quiet joy and eternal hope (and the odd disappointment, granted; my lupins have never yet outgrown the rabbits). Stimulates physical health; rescues poor mental health. Vitamin N for nature. Gardeners as a result are a bit like musicians – in my experience you hardly ever meet a nasty one.

I’m lucky enough to have Heidie (my gardener), but for those who don’t there’s the Gardening for Disabled Trust, a voluntary organisation dedicated to helping people get back into their gardens. The charity awards little grants; small gestures whose benefits far outweigh their capital worth. Paving slabs and a raised bed for someone with MS; gravel replaced with artificial grass to allow a wheelchair user back into the fresh air; non-slip steps and handrails to let a devoted gardener into her garden after a stroke; a shed for an elderly person unable to walk far.” (from Spinal Column, Melanie Reid, Times Magazine, April 2018)

And from the Gardening for Disabled Trust website:

“Gardening for Disabled Trust aims to help people back into gardening in spite of disability. We give out grants so that people can adapt their gardens and make gardening possible. Our clients tell us that it can change their lives, enhance their well-being and help them defy their disability.” (see the website for lots more information)

### Mentoring for new Tenants

A new scheme has been proposed to provide a helping hand for those allotment newcomers whose experience of growing their own food is minimal. This will involve a few established Sunnyside gardeners volunteering their time to help newcomers feel welcome and go forward by giving them friendly advice and encouragement, and maybe plants, tools and a bit of practical help, too.

In a surge of enthusiasm but little or no experience, new tenants often opt to grow their own vegetables but glaze over the rather picturesque dishevelment of weeds, tumble down sheds and overgrown brambles, and wait for summer’s warmth before working on the site. Others swing into action immediately, digging, clearing and exhausting themselves into a standstill. The adventure slides into a fury of disillusionment as the weeds thrive.

This is where the Mentors come in! It’s a plus-plus for us all; Sunnyside continues to look enchanting and welcoming to everyone. The depressing sight of neglected allotments vanishes. Newcomers and established gardeners communicate, and their enthusiasm for Sunnyside thrives – and not the weeds. What could be better?

If you are interested in volunteering, or in having such a mentor, please contact me, Jeanne Woodcraft (B4) at [jeanne@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:jeanne@sunnysideallotments.org.uk)

### Tenancy Changes

*Welcome to:*

A5A	Josephine Waterman
A14	Brett Bates
A16B	Nicola Fulcher
B13A	Gary Spanswick
N1C,D	Victoria Lajer
N10	Henry Ashton
N12	Eryn Buchanan
N13	Maria Horn
N44	Jacqueline Williams
N58	Joanne Berry

*Goodbye to:*

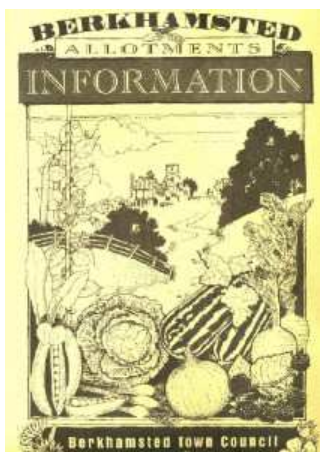
A14	Martin Reeder
A29A	Denise Griffiths
B13A	Alison Mansfield
B20	Nigel Swatridge
N5	Nicola Lockie
N11	Stephen Gilbert
N58	Celeste Hiley



Cherry blossom

### Allotment information Pack

The Council used to give all new tenants an Allotment Information Pack containing loads of useful information including water-saving tips; these days you can view it online:



<http://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/about/allotments=information-pack>

### International Compost Awareness Week – 5 – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Did you know about this annual celebration of compost? There is a lot of information about compostable materials on their website, which is;

[www.homecomposting.org.uk/](http://www.homecomposting.org.uk/)



Sunnyside Allotments by Debbie Crooks. A38

### Sunnyside Allotment Society Subscriptions

If you haven't paid your £4.00 subs yet this year, please do so as soon as possible. Either give it directly to Andy, our treasurer, or leave it in an envelope for him in the tea hut. By being a paid up member, you support the Sunnyside Allotment Society, which co-ordinates the work to maintain communal areas of the site, hosts the annual Open Day and reports to the Council, raising issues and representing tenants at regular meetings. Paid up members of SAS may also participate in the group seed-ordering scheme with King's Seeds in the autumn, making considerable savings. In fact, the savings made could easily pay for your annual SAS subscription!

Out of your individual subscriptions, the SAS pays a group membership fee to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG); a host of interesting articles and advice are available on its website. Just contact Jenny Sippings for the password.

Membership also includes you in the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) Liability Insurance for Allotment Holders (see their website for details of this benefit).

**In order to be included in this year's membership, payments must be made by May 15th.**

✂

Subs for 2019 (£4.00) can be sent with this slip to Andy James (4 Field Way) 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)



Sunnyside Allotments by Debbie Crooks. A38



Cherry blossom by Clive Smith



New beginnings



Photo by Jeanne Woodcraft



New community orchard by Clive Smith

