



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk
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Editor's Note

Over the past two years, there have been fewer opportunities for members of Sunnyside to get to know each other and for new members to become part of the community here. Fortunately, times are changing (we hope!) and we can now start to plan some social events – details below. Also, there is a bit of information about the Committee, what it does, and how you can meet Committee members and get involved. Hope you enjoy the read,

Lin Phillips

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Chairman's Notes

Our AGM was, unfortunately, a remote event but the record of the proceedings will shortly be available at the SAS website (<https://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk>). We will aim for a real one next time.

As we approach normal times, the Tea Hut is back in service; we hope to have a Diamond Jubilee Celebration on 12th June and an Open Day on 7th August, as well as an invitation for a coffee with Committee members on 15th May.

The system of plot inspections has restarted, so we all need to keep our plots clean, tidy and under cultivation. There is a process of warning before notice of termination, but please be aware that, because of allotment demand, the time-scale is shorter than in the past. And please ensure that stones are kept off paths, to avoid damaging mowers.

Some plot-holders like to use woodchip for mulching, etc., but previous 'communal' woodchip piles on SSO & SSN have always degenerated into weed-infested problems and encouraged dumping. In future, if you (and maybe others) want some chippings, it will be up to you to contact a supplier and then meet any delivery and promptly shift it all onto the plot/s; ie. not leave it on common areas (paths and car parks). The Committee will consider if some joint ordering arrangement can be set up, but it has not happened yet. If you do arrange your own supply, watch out for the quality of the chippings, and do not allow the supplier to dump without your supervision. We do not want to restart random dumping. There used to be a woodchip pile looked after by Sunnyside Rural Trust on SSO on C Road; they said tenants could use some (by individual arrangement), but there are no chips there at the moment.

Incidentally, at a recent Council meeting, we heard that there was a shortage of chippings because they were being exported to France for biomass purposes - I cannot say whether this will affect us. I suppose it might leave only cowboys in the market, so can I ask you to notify me and Jenny about any deliveries you plan. Get those booster jabs!

Good gardening
John Eaton

Your last chance . . .

Thank you if you have already paid your subscription to become a full member of the Sunnyside Allotment Society – you can look forward to receiving your copy of the Kings Seed catalogue in early September.

If you haven't paid, you are missing out on the opportunity to save money on your seed order for 2023 and raise money for the Society at the same time.

Registration with NSALG for this year is completed in May, so if you wish to be able to participate in our seed order this year I need to receive your £4 subscription by the end of April. Payment can be by cash, cheque (payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society) or bank transfer – please contact me for bank details (if you are not sure if you have already paid then just ask me!). Either send payment to me at 4 Fieldway HP42NX or leave at the Tea Hut.

Happy Gardening!
Andy James, N57 andy@sunnyside.org.uk
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Who is on the plot near to me?

Over 150 local Berkhamsted residents work on our allotment plots - across both Old and New sites. That's an awful lot of characters; experience to learn from; stories to share. This new series is therefore about us - a chance to get to know just a little bit more about each other.

Getting to know ... Deidre Ahern

What number is your allotment plot ?

B11A Sunnyside Old Side.

Where were you born ?

Herne Bay in Kent.

Why did you take on an allotment ?

At the start I initially shared an allotment (thank you, Debbie Crooks) with a couple of friends - Kate Rankin and Philippa Jones. It was an opportunity for us all to try out the idea before becoming tenants. I was advised that half a plot would be fine for my needs - that was very good advice.

What year did you take on your allotment ?
2008.

What is your most successful crop so far?

Probably runner beans, White Lady being my favourite variety.

What is your most unusual crop so far?

I don't have a greenhouse and haven't attempted anything unusual.

What three words would you use to describe your plot?

Work in progress.

What advice would you give any newcomers to Sunnyside?

Plant as you clear! Then maintain what you have cleared and please don't use weedkiller. Also remember to leave some room for plants that attract bees and butterflies!

In a few words, how would you describe Berkhamsted?

A town with a lot of history; loads of access to the beautiful countryside around us; the Grand Union Canal; and yet all just a short train ride from London.

What is your favourite garden centre?

I have two: Batchelors and Little Heath - not really garden centres, more nurseries, but definitely worth a try!

What shop would you like to see added to the High Street?

We have some great independent shops already, and it is vital we support them. The cafes and eateries we have are fantastic - we are really spoilt for choice.

Getting to know ... Simon Heywood

What number is your allotment plot?

B4, again on Sunnyside Old Side.

Where were you born?

Cheshire. Our excellent rhubarb comes from there.

Why did you take on an allotment

Well, it was Jeanne who took the initiative in our household. She is more experienced, in charge, and has been working on the allotment more often and for much



Deidre's plot—B11A

longer than me. We added B6 and B8 because of the accidental plum grove that straddles those two plots and the moments of idle pleasure I imagined. It has proved to be an almost unbeatable spot for a picnic and/or snooze.

What year did you take on your allotment?

1999 - I think. That would be a few years after moving to Berkhamsted. It was very overgrown, and there was a clear and present danger of developers taking the land at the time. The danger persists, I guess.

What is your most successful crop so far?

Apples. Currants of all colours.

What is your most unusual crop so far?

We try to pick varieties that are expensive or unusual in the shops. Most currants and berries certainly fit that frame.

What three (or four) words would you use to describe your plot?

At ease with itself.

What advice would you give any newcomers to Sunnyside?

Pace yourself. Take time to take pleasure in what you have wrought.

In a few words, how would you describe Berkhamsted ?

Increasingly cosmopolitan, thank goodness. Easy going, too. Long may that last. Thoughtful, independent-minded people is what I enjoy. I like to think that the allotments attract that type.

What is your favourite garden centre?

We don't spend too much time in garden centres. Having successfully given up the car, we mostly finish up in Woods when we need to see some gardening products in real life. Also, they do deliver.

What shop would you like to see added to the High Street?

Have not really given that one much thought. What is needed seems to be here. I think we missed an opportunity to create a warren of small shops when the old police station was redeveloped.

Interviews by Clive M, A17



Simon and Jeanne enjoying the summer picnic

HM the Queen's Platinum Anniversary Celebration at Sunnyside

There will be a Platinum lunch party for tenants and their friends and families here at Sunnyside on Sunday 12th June, from 12 till 3-ish. Please bring enough food for your group and to share with others, and a few chairs would be helpful, too.



Tables will be set up along B Road, with seating and tables for guests on B17 – across from the Tea Hut. The Committee will provide some main dishes, and drinks, both soft and alcoholic, will be available for a contribution. Further information will be sent out closer to the time.

Your Allotment Society Needs You! – Meet the Committee, Sunday 15th May

For the last two years, the Society's Annual General Meeting has had to be an electronic exercise, and so the opportunity to meet and talk to the members of the Committee has been lost. Similarly, there are quite a few new tenants who have not had the chance to meet others at the Tea Hut, or get to know Committee members and find out what they do for the Society, or how they themselves might get involved.

So we will be hosting a 'Meet the Team' session every now and then up at the Tea Hut on B Road, Sunnyside Old (now open again!). The first one will be on Sunday 15th May from 10-11am. Several members of the Committee will be on hand, with tea or coffee, very happy to meet members old or new, to explain their particular roles and the areas of responsibility where we could do with some help.

The jobs that Committee members do include editing the Newsletter (that's me, Lin Phillips), reporting to the Town Council (John Eaton, our Chairman), and keeping our plot allocation records, minutes, plans of work and much, much more (Jenny Sippings, Secretary). Also, John Goffey maintains all the valves and taps on the water tanks, as well as organising the working parties. Kate Rankin organises the soup lunches for working party days, Andy James keeps our finances in order, and Diana Ball is allocating plots as they become vacant to new members. Kate will be and planning and running the summer Open Day along with others. Other tenants do very valuable work, too, from Cynthia Faulks and her team, who keep the toilet clean, to Clive Smith and others who undertake building works and road maintenance for us all.

Some of these areas of work really need more person-power, and they are actually more fun, too, if shared. So please be aware that your particular skills and interests would be very welcome here at Sunnyside. Talk to any member of the Committee about what you might get involved in, and/or do come along to meet some of us on the 15th May.

Sunnyside Allotments Open Day Sunday, 7th August 2022

After a gap of two years, we will once again be holding our ever-popular Open Day during National Allotment Week. There will be stalls for produce, plants and tools, as well as a huge selection of savouries and cakes to enjoy along with a tea or coffee. Hopefully, we will be putting on a guided walk around the two sites, and there will be a scarecrow competition! As usual, we will be holding a raffle, proceeds going to the Hospice. Closer to the time, Kate will be pulling together a group of volunteers to help on the day – further details by email. For now, do put the date in your diary!

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

Claude Camilleri	A19A
Alison Bostedt	A31A
Diane Skidmore	A31B
Sally & Angus McIver	A42B
Melanie Lee	A44B
Alexander Nash	B12A
Andy Dolwin	B19A
Lesley Taylor	B28A
Uma Holmes	B31B
Elliott Brooks	B32B
Emma Law	N55A

Goodbye to:

Kenneth Peters	A28
Geoff Halls	A31
John Cartwright	A42B
Louisa Moran	B28A
Beverley Hancock	B30
Anna Penning-Rowsell	B31B, B32B

We are particularly sad to say goodbye to Geoff Halls and his wife Anne, who have moved to Bristol to be closer to family. Geoff was a committee member for many years and responsible for allocating plots to new tenants - thanks Geoff.

Toilet Rota – new volunteers needed

Do you or your family benefit from our lovely toilet on A Road? It is kept in its good condition by a small group of volunteers, who for the past several years have been co-ordinated by Cynthia Fulks. Currently there are four on the rota, so each volunteer only has to do one month in three.

All that is needed is for each person to go along once a week during their month and clean the sink, toilet, floor, etc. (if they are going to be away, swaps can be arranged). The co-ordinator simply sets the rota and ensures that supplies of cleaning materials and toilet paper are kept up – the costs can be reclaimed from SAS funds. However, Cynthia and possibly some of the volunteers are having to give up their duties, so fresh help is essential to ensure the toilet is kept up to standard.

So if you can offer a weekly clean for a month, every three or four months, please contact me, Lin Phillips. Thank you!

Eight years on, the pleasure I get from my allotment just grows and grows (excuse the pun) ...Alison Down N36



Working Parties 2021-2022

The weather was not always kind for our working parties this season, but nevertheless we held five altogether, with the October and March ones the best attended. At the March working party we had 20 people there at one time or other, and Kate provided a delicious lunch for those who could stay.

Over the season the following tasks were done:

- The border of the wildlife area was trimmed back
- The sheds around the tea area were cleared
- The area around the toilet was weeded.
- The Tea Hut was tidied and cleaned. A work surface and a new sink were also installed.
- The old tea area was completely disassembled, ready for the new structure.
- The new tea area was built (pictures were in the last edition of the newsletter) by Simon Nicolle, who took a week off work, and Clive S.
- The heritage orchard on the western boundary of SSO has been pruned and weeded, and the wild area has been cut down, removing encroaching brambles.
- SSN notice-board was renovated and put up again.
- SSN car park has been tidied by removing all the brambles, erecting a fence along the boundary, planting some fruit trees on the bank, and creating additional parking places. The Council paid for the hire of a digger to clear the bramble roots – although some were still missed!
- The digger was also used to remove the sycamore trunk from the Grantham Mews parking area, and volunteers cleared the area above the parking area.
- Hazel Coppice - thanks to Bernard, who coppiced half of the Millennium Coppice, and then to volunteers who turned the arisings into bean-poles and pea-sticks.
- B19A has been cleared of brambles and tidied up, and is now let
- Angela has continued to work on the Bee Garden by Grantham Mews gate.
- Additional work has been done to the roadway in SSN to give better grip for when the ground is wet.
- The SAS shed gutters have been cleaned out.
- The area around Ted's bench has been weeded.

We have also had the sons of some of our tenants – Jacob and Ben – doing some voluntary work for their Duke of Edinburgh award. We also benefited from the help of their parents!

The work they did included:

- Removing some of the brambles in SSN car park
- Clearing the pathway by A44, which was completely overgrown and strewn with litter
- Preparing bean-poles and pea-sticks in the hazel coppice.

Thanks to all our volunteers this season, whether you turned up to working parties or did work at other times.

Anyone who helped with the hazel coppice or helped in other ways on communal tasks are welcome to take some bean-poles and pea-sticks. Other tenants: we ask you to make a small contribution to SAS funds – please contact andy@sunnysideallotments.org.uk for details of how to pay.

Jenny Sippings, A26



Ben and Jacob hard at work



Summer Ad Hoc Working Parties

There are always jobs to be done to maintain the communal areas of Sunnyside; more than can be realistically done on our winter working party days. Thanks, though, to everyone who comes along, and also to those who just turn up outside of the formal dates and get stuck into one of the tasks that need doing.

We don't hold regular working party days in the summer, as tenants are busy on their own plots during the growing season, but this year we will try holding a couple of ad hoc working parties - details yet to be worked out. So watch your emails for details!

Plants for the Open Day

It's not too early to start saving spare plants for the Open Day plant stall – herbs always sell well, as well as any herbaceous plants. So, if you are splitting any big clumps, please pot up a few sections and keep them at home or on your plot until a day or so before the Open Day; Kate will be letting you know where they can be delivered to at that point.

Welcome to the Tea Hut

Our Tea Hut on B15 is once again open after two years of closure, and the new tea area is ready for you to sit and enjoy a well-earned break. If you hear the hooter go at 11am or 3pm this means that one of our volunteers has opened up the Tea Hut and put the kettle on. The Tea Hut will be closed again about half an hour later.

If you would like to join us for tea, then please bring up your own mug to keep in the Tea Hut. However, there are a few visitors' mugs hanging overhead when you enter the door facing the cooker if you forget your own or bring a friend.

The routine is that you make your own drink and then wash up your own mug. A donation of 50p is suggested, or contributions of cake or biscuits. Tea, coffee, sugar, etc., are bought from these donations, as well as refills of the gas bottles. If you prefer more unusual teas or beverages, then please bring these yourselves. At the moment we haven't got a fridge, so in the week you may need to bring your own milk, although there is a tin of powdered milk in the Tea Hut.

We hope you will make use of this great facility. All are welcome.



Stones and hazel - using materials to hand —Will Facey



The new tea area being used for a working party lunch in March



Welcome pack on SAS website

For new tenants and old, there is a welcome pack with loads of information on our website – <https://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/about/allotments-information-pack/>

Water Matters

For the benefit mainly of new tenants, here is a description of the water supply arrangements which we have on Sunnyside Allotments.

Firstly, the water system is managed and maintained by SAS volunteers on behalf of, and with the agreement of, Berkhamsted Town Council. Both SSO and SSN have metered supplies, and on behalf of SAS I read the two meters every month from April to October and supply the readings to BTC - who pay the water bills. SAS also provides basic maintenance, which normally amounts to fixing leaks, replacing broken float valves, replacing washers in the hose taps, and occasionally replacing a hose tap.

This year we are removing all those float valves which have a right-angled bend in the arm and replacing them with new all-metal valves which have a straight arm. This has already been done on SSN, but is yet to be completed on SSO. The old float valves suffered break-ages of a key plastic component, and we had experienced a failure rate of one in four before obtaining BTC's agreement to replace all the ones that have not already been replaced - a total of twelve. This should give us better reliability, but tenants on SSN should be aware that two of their seven tanks have no independent means of shut-off, meaning their supply can only be shut off at the meter, affecting all tanks. The water piping network on SSN is fed from the main in Ivy House Lane at the top of the site, so that some water can still drain into the tanks lower down the hill even when the supply is turned off. This can lead to airlocks in the piping.

We do our best to avoid replacing hose taps because BTC insist on the 'lockshield' anti-vandal feature; the existing valves are no longer available, and the approved replacement taps require a smaller key. So far there are two such hose taps on tanks at SSO, plus a third one fitted to the standpipe at the Tea Hut (B15). These taps do not require much force to close them, so please do not over-tighten when shutting them off, as this reduces the life of the internals and these valves are not repairable.

John Goffey, B16



Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary & newsletter layout and production :	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	Andy James	865061
Newsletter Editor:	Lin Phillips	862882
Other members:	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852
	Steve Atkinson	

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



Jacob and Ben clearing the path between the graveyard & A44



Dramatic skies over Sunnyside —above Clive M & below Clive S



Strange bird spotted on SSN55A



Penny's walk through bean structure—A37