



# SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## Editor's Note

A slightly belated Happy New Year to you from me, and here's hoping for a better one this year (though I said that last year too).

For the first time, this issue contains a couple of interviews with long-standing tenants, thanks to a good idea from Clive M on A Road; an excellent way of adding personal interest to the newsletter.

We have lots of great photos, including some of the new Tea Hut area, nearly completed, and a few of the Tea Hut in the Olden Days!

Also, best wishes to John Goffey, who has not been well recently - I hope you're feeling better, John. Those of you who turn up for working parties will know John as the organiser, and you may also have had the pleasure of sitting on his lovely lawned plot (B1) under his fruit trees at one of our picnics or Open Days.

Please note that working parties will be held on the second Sundays of February and March 2022 this year – Jenny will put together a list of tasks.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Lin Phillips

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## Chairman's Notes

2021 was yet another year of living with Covid. Most people have wisely been jabbed, and outdoor allotment life has enabled separation as well as exercise.

We were able to have a scaled-down Open Day and a Christmas drinks event, but again we are not able to have an AGM in the usual way. So, once again, we will have a remote electronic meeting. Reports and accounts will be sent to all members and comments invited. The minutes will follow and be circulated as a formal record.

Is there any good news? Yes, of course: the old, well-used Tea Hut shelter has been re-built with a level floor. There is still some work to do in the surrounding area, but massive thanks are due to Simon and Clive for the construction effort.

A few other points as usual:

When the roadways are wet, please avoid driving on them.

Please look out for, and report, any dumping of wood-chip or other rubbish. Please also remember that all plot-holders are responsible for their own green waste and rubbish - there is no dumping area.

Hazel coppice cutting will happen soon, and a future working party will deal with the sticks.

The seed orders have arrived, so let's all look forward to a better 2022.

Good gardening  
John Eaton

### Christmas Drinks

With the Tea Hut area well on the way to completion, and before the latest variant had become rampant, it was decided to go ahead with a Christmas get-together on December 19th. Tables were put up on B Road, and about 50 people came along with food and drink to share, along with some delicious mulled cider made by Steve Atkinson.

It was also an opportune time for John, our Chairman, to thank and congratulate Clive Smith and Simon Nicolle for all their very hard work on the Tea Hut site.

So we mingled carefully, enjoyed the Christmas cheer (no carols this time, but maybe in 2022...), exchanged Season's Greetings and felt glad to be a part of Sunnyside allotments.

Kate Rankin, A9



Christmas drinks 2021



Steve's mulled cider is dispensed.

### Christmas Trees sold

Thanks to those 2 allotments holders who bought a Christmas tree each from my plot. They were grown from seed sticks about 10 years ago. The proceeds, which amounted to £50, have gone to the St Francis Hospice.

Martin Rochford SSN 47



A few words from our Chairman





## Award-Winning Sunnyside Rural Trust

Congratulations to our neighbours at Sunnyside Rural Trust, who were recently awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service with special recognition; the equivalent of an MBE for charities.



Sunnyside Rural Trust is justly proud of their award:

"This award is significant recognition of our work and to all our volunteers, team members and 150 trainees at our 3 sites we extend our gratitude for their commitment and care. The Queen's Award represents a tremendous achievement for our charity, and we are all immensely proud to receive it - the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK. In addition, our efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic have been recognised and our volunteers will receive a unique enamel pin and the award will have a special inscription."

In addition, the Trust received a number of other awards in 2021 recognising the work they do, including;

Hero of Hertfordshire Award

High Sheriff of Hertfordshire Award

Reaccredited as Gold Standard in Investors In People  
Green Flag award from Keep Britain Tidy.

In 2019 they linked up with leading garden designer Tom Stuart-Smith, and became part of 'The Orchard Project', based at Serge Hill in Bedmond. This led to the Trust growing over 7000 plants for his iconic Horticultural Hero show garden at the RHS Hampton Court show.

Sunnyside Rural Trust offers training and employment services to young people and adults with learning disabilities, to build their self-esteem and skills, at 3 main sites in Dacorum - Hemel Food Garden, Berkhamsted Activity Centre (by our allotments), and the Northchurch Centre.

It was founded in 1990 as a small horticultural project for young people and adults with learning disabilities. It is now a thriving charity and social enterprise, offering training and work experience for over 150 vulnerable people in fields which include beekeeping, looking after chickens, growing a wide range of plants and produce, landscaping, and garden maintenance. From sowing seeds and nurturing plants to making produce to sell in the farm shop or market, the aim is to do it in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

Well done, Sunnyside Rural Trust!

(information from Dawn Watson, Publicity and Communications Officer, Sunnyside Rural Trust)

## Communal Tasks



Jo weeding Ted's bench



Andy clearing the gutters of the SAS workshop



Clive S and Clive M have continued the work in SSN carpark



## Tenancy Changes

### *Welcome to:*

Lesley Johnson	A4A
Joanna Bryant	A15
Tim Stiles	A19B
Kenneth Peters	A28
Charlotte Winder	A29A
Helen Beesley	B11C
Chris Hoyland	N13
Helen Edwards	N27A
Peter Withers	N46
Sally Rasiah	N58A
Kirsty Carlton	N58B
Jacqui Thomasen	N70

### *Goodbye to:*

Heidi Abbott	A4A
John Savage	A29A
Linda Ablett	B12A
Joshua Luckhurst	N27A



A cold morning on Sunnyside in December - Clive M



## **Membership of Sunnyside Allotment Society - Don't forget to renew!**

All plot-holders are associate members of the Society and receive this quarterly newsletter; however, by paying an annual subscription you also become a member of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG).

### **Allotmenters' Liability Insurance**

SAS is a member of the NSALG - their website contains a lot of useful information for gardeners (contact Jenny Sippings for the password). Membership of the NSALG now includes allotmenters' liability insurance, so all paid-up members of SAS are covered. This scheme offers £50k liability cover to any member plot-holder accused of accidentally causing injury or damaging property. This cover is well worth the cost of SAS membership in itself. In addition, SAS members can participate in our autumn group seed-ordering scheme with King's Seeds, which offers considerable savings on the annual cost of seeds, as well as raising money for SAS funds.

The Sunnyside Allotment Society works on your behalf, co-ordinating work to maintain the communal areas of the site and hosting the annual Open Day and other events (when possible!). SAS is also required to report to the Town Council on matters of vacancies and waiting lists, and it represents the interests of tenants at regular Council meetings.

### **Payment of subscription**

I am now inviting payment of your £4.00 Sunnyside Allotment Society subs for 2022. If you wish to be a member this year and be included in the seed-order scheme, I need to receive your payment before the end of May. As the Tea Hut is currently closed, I would prefer payment by BACS transfer (please contact me on [andy@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:andy@sunnysideallotments.org.uk) if you do not have the bank details), but if this is not convenient you can send payment to me at 4 Fieldway, HP4 2NX (cheques payable to Sunnyside Allotment Society).

Andy James -Treasurer, N57

### Leeks and how to avoid problems

This year I have been unlucky enough to have not one but two sources of leek misery: leek rust and leek miner. I have looked these up online and come up with the following advice for the coming growing season:

**Leek rust** is common, but like all fungi, it thrives in wet conditions. You can reduce the chances of an infection by working on your soil's drainage, and by being sure to plant your leeks far enough apart so that there's plenty of room for the air to circulate as the plant grows, helping to prevent the fungus establishing itself.

Keep plants growing as strongly as possible, without any stress. Water during prolonged dry periods, watering the soil around the plants, rather than over the foliage, as the disease spores need a layer of moisture on the leaves to germinate.

Also be careful to avoid over-fertilising using nitrogen-based fertiliser, because like all fungi, leek rust thrives on lush leaf growth. Instead, go for potassium and/or potash-based fertilisers.

There are no fungicidal products approved for control of diseases on edible plants. Rotate your crops regularly to prevent build up of leek rust spores in the soil, and consider planting some of the more rust-resistant varieties of leek like '[Autumn Giant](#)' or '[Porbella](#)'.

**Prevent leek rust by providing optimal growing conditions, and if you do spot it, destroy affected leaves immediately. But once you have trimmed away the outer leaves, the inner portion is unaffected - so trim, cook, and enjoy.**

### Leek miner

In the life cycle of the leek miner, there are two generations a year with summer and winter rests. The fly overwinters as a pupa, sat within the plant tissues of its host plants.

In the spring, from March to the end of May, adults (from the 2nd generation of the previous year) emerge from their pupae. Timing of the emergence seems to be temperature-dependent.

Mating occurs within 48 hours after the adults hatch. The adults feed from the leaves, leaving distinctive small white / yellowish spots in vertical lines on the leaves. The adult females then lay eggs, inserting them into the leaves. This is the starting point of the first generation of the current year. The eggs hatch into maggots, which eat tunnels inside the plant, heading down towards the roots. Once fully grown, they pupate, with the brown pupae at the base of the hole they've eaten in the plant. The flies do not usually hatch out between the end of

May until September, to protect them from hot summers.

The adults of the first generation of the current year leave at the end of August and through September, following the same process as above. The distinctive track marks on the leaves indicate eggs are being laid. Maggots can be found inside vertical tunnels inside the leaves and flesh of the plant. Small brown pupae are found at the base of the tunnels near the surface but inside the plant.

So the only practical control is to cover the crop, especially in the danger periods of March to June and September to November, with insect-proof mesh or fleece. If the infestation is detected in the crop, affected plants should immediately be uprooted and burned. Do not compost infested plants, as the pupae will still be able to hatch, spreading the infection. And do make your allotment neighbours make aware of the problem and how to handle it. This will, at least, reduce the fly population and threat.

Lin Phillips, A18



### Your Current Committee Members

<b>Chairman:</b>	John Eaton	865307
<b>Secretary &amp; newsletter layout and production :</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
	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@



### 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 Tom and Gemma ...

*What number is your allotment plot?*

A25 Old Sunnyside.

*Where were you born?*

Aylesbury.

*Why did you take on the allotment?*

We went to the last open day in 2019 - we were hooked!

*What year did you take on your plot?*

February 2020

*What's your most successful crop so far?*

Elephant garlic.

*What's your most unusual crop so far?*

Tromboncino.

*What three words would you use to describe your allotment?*

Work in Progress!!!

*What advice would you give any newcomer to Sunnyside ?*

Ask for advice - there's plenty!

*In a few words how would you describe Berkhamsted?*

Friendly with great pubs.

*Your favourite local garden centre?*

Woods – well, you have to shop locally!



Tom and his amazing elephant garlic



What do we do with all these tomatoes? Jules

### Getting to know Jules ...

*What number is your allotment plot?*

A17 Old Sunnyside

*Where were you born?*

Brighton

*Why did you take on the allotment?*

After three years of thinking about it - we took the leap!

*What year did you take on your plot?*

May 2020

*What's your most successful crop?*

Tomatoes - we were seeing them in our sleep eventually!

*What's your most unusual crop?*

Well, most of our vegetables last year looked a tad unusual...

*What three words would you use to describe your allotment ?*

"Trying things out."

*What advice would you give any newcomer to Sunnyside?*

Start small and pace yourself.

*In a few words how would you describe Berkhamsted?*

A friendly little town.

*Your favourite local garden centre?*

Tring.

Clive M, A17



## The tea area over the years ...



Christmas drinks 2001—before the tea area was built



June 2003 Gazebo was used for Open Day



Open Day in 2007



Artist's impression 2008



Halloween Party 2017



Laying the floor under the new pergola



The new tea area December 2021