

# SUNNYSIDE VIEWS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE JOY OF ALLOTMENTS

## Dates for the diary

**Sunday 15 October** is our next working party. Others will be held on **18 November, 12 January, 11 February** and **10 March**. Lunch will be provided for all volunteers. Christmas Drinks - well there are only 8 weeks from the end of October to Christmas - are being held on **Sunday 17 December**.



## Emailing you ...

We are trialling a new way of emailing you - please make sure your email address is up to date and check your junk folder - if you see an email in there from the Committee go to your toolbar, select the email and select "not junk" - then there is no danger of missing any update. Thank you.



## Notes from the Chair ...

The good thing about my harvest this year is that there is no need to engage labour and heavy goods vehicles to take away the produce. Yes, another mediocre result, but good for the soul - maybe. I hope you had better luck. I will be taking the advice I give others when the plot seems too much - reducing to a half.

The diary section shows that we are getting back to normal with Working Parties, Christmas Drinks and an Annual General Meeting. The Working Party jobs will be coordinated by John Goffey and as always thank you to John for taking on this role.

Good gardening, stay well.  
John Eaton

## In this issue ...

We take a look at some of the steps being taken to safeguard our plots from vandalism or theft - and your help is greatly appreciated. We also look back on the summer that was and meet Paul and Sian from B20 in our "Getting to know you" feature. And remember this is your newsletter and your ideas and contributions are always greatly appreciated. Contact me on [cli.mic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:cli.mic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk) at any time. Thank you Clive (A17).

## Calling all tenants ...

We are a community on Sunnyside so can you help? We are looking for people to join the committee as minute taker and also volunteers to join the toilet rota - contact a committee member if you can help.



## Congratulations !

What were you doing in 1992? It was the year of the Barcelona Olympics! Angela (A23) can remember exactly what she was doing - decorating her house at



the time. But unsure of reaching the high ceilings she approached a local decorator - Malcolm to help out. Their friendship



blossomed and now 31 years later they have tied the knot with a short ceremony held in early September. Congratulations to you both from everyone at Sunnyside.

## Vandalism or theft !

### Council and committee take steps to increase allotment security following spate of incidents

Three separate incidents over the summer - as well as attacks on other sites across Berkhamsted - has led to both the Council and the Sunnyside Allotment Society Committee joining forces to increase security where possible with fresh advice and new techniques being adopted to undermine the confidence of offenders.

In an open letter to all tenants, Town Clerk, Sue Severn, outlined a series of measures that she hoped tenants would start adopting to protect themselves. She also stated that renewed effort is being made with the local police to step up site security.

And the Committee have also stepped in. Cameras have been purchased which will be placed strategically around both Old and New sides to capture vital evidence which will be handed to the police to help with any prosecutions.

The Council urge that no valuable items should be left in sheds or if necessary they should be kept out of sight. If possible sheds should be left unlocked to avoid damage to shed doors and any damage or theft must be reported by ringing 101. Tenants are advised to make individual reports and not to tackle anyone by themselves - instead call the police.

Meanwhile the cameras purchased by the Committee will boost the number already installed by the Council. These will be controlled by the Committee and have been purchased with the approval of the Council. Again these will be used to pass on any evidence and for no other purpose.

And you may be able to help too.

"If you are a victim then firstly contact the police immediately and don't look to tackle any offenders yourself" comments John Eaton, Committee Chairman.

"But also you may be able to help us. If you are a victim then let a member of the committee know - we may be able to help with any damage as well as knowing what is going on to inform our discussions with the Council.

"And if you have a wildlife camera on your plot then similarly let us know - it could hold vital evidence that we can pass to the police" said John.



## From plot to plate

*Sunnyside is awash with fruits so here's a blackberry jam recipe*

### Ingredients

- 1.8kg of blackberries.
- 1.5 kg of jam sugar (the one with added pectin)
- Juice and pips of one lemon



### Preparation

Step 1 : layer sugar and blackberries together in a large bowl the night before and set aside at room temperature. Next morning give everything a quick stir again.

Step 2: tip the mixture into a large wide-based pan, scraping out all the juices and any undissolved sugar. Stir in the lemon juice and put the pips into a tea-leaf strainer or piece of muslin before adding them to the pan (cooking the pips with the fruit extracts natural pectin helping the jam to set)

Step 3: Start the berries over a low heat until all the sugar has dissolved, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 mins. Turn off the heat and spoon some of the hot syrupy jam into a chilled saucer. When it cools push it with your finger - it is ready if it wrinkles, too runny heat for another 5 min.

Step 4: Skim off excess scum and leave for 15 mins. Add to sterilised jars. Keep for up to 6 months.

## Open day success ...

Over £950 raised as Sunnyside tenants threw open the gates for this year's open day back in August.

Despite the weather forecast at times suggesting it could be a wet day, the clouds parted long enough for the annual Sunnyside Open Day to take place back in August. Over £950 was raised after expenses which included £250 being raised for charity. The rest will be used to improve communal areas across both sites or to help fund communal events. We also had a winning scarecrow to celebrate (pictured) and some new potential tenants for the future. "I walk through here every day on the way to the station - never thought it had such a great community feel" commented one visitor who then looked to register for a plot. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time on the day and particularly to Kate Rankin who as always was the driving force.



## Don't stop for winter

*Summer has passed and its time to cover your plot in tarpaulin for the winter. Or is it? - here are tips for winter growing.*

### Greens for the plate ...

*Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale and cabbages are all great crops to grow during the winter.*

### Frost can be a friend ..

*Some bulb plants such as garlic and spring onions need a good strong frost so plant in the autumn for harvesting in spring.*

### Don't forget the flowers ..

*Autumn is the time to plant spring flowering bulbs like daffodils or crocus.*

### Remember the greenhouse ...

*There are a variety of seeds you can sow in the autumn and winter if you have a greenhouse but remember to keep the frost out - bubblewrap is a great option.*

### Patience is key ...

*Anything you sow in the autumn and winter for planting out in Spring will be slow growing so be patient.*

### And don't overdo it ...

*Soil needs replenishing so for many a simple layering of manure across the top of the soil and then cover will bring rich dividends when next Spring arrives - don't exhaust all of your plot when it comes to autumn planting.*

**Please visit our website for more advice and guidance**

## Oh what a summer ...

**So maybe days in July were as cold as an average day in October at times - but you still all turned out to make it a successful growing season**

We asked you all what had been your most successful crop during the past summer months and once again you didn't disappoint. Yes we had badgers hitting the sweetcorns, some strange looking carrots it has to be said and some reported beans that would make better door stops. But for most it was a successful year - here's a selection of your successes!



Flowers and potatoes for newcomers Louise and Jon (A38)



Pears did well for Helen (N41B)



A new greenhouse brought tomato delight for Jo (A19)



We look forward to the wine from those grapes Elke (A33)



Just one of many trips for John and Carol A6B



Champion broccoli for Diana A24



## Our joiners and leavers ...

Since our Summer Edition of Sunnyside Views we have welcomed 8 new tenants. And said a fond farewell to 7 people.

### Welcome to ...

Charlotte Latimer	B28A
Winnie Mac	B11C,D
Chloe Knight	A27A
Simon Green	B32B
Thomas Walsh	A7
Anita Nielsen	N1C,D
Zara Bullock	N48
Natalja Drapce	N62

### Goodbye to ...

Steven Gibbon	A7
Helen Beesley	B11C
Elliott Brooks	B32B
Victoria Lajer	N1C,D
Adele Whitmore	N48
Cynthia Fuls	A30
Ntiana Chasiridi	N9

## Time to bring the subs on ... Council writes to tenants

By late September all tenants should have received their latest invoice from Berkhamsted Town Council. This will include your tenancy fees plus a water fee if you have requested to use hose pipes. Payment should be made by 29th September. You will also note that for the first time this also includes your SAS subs for the year. This £4.00 a year charge provides us all with public liability insurance as well as providing you access to the seed ordering scheme - details of which are later in this edition.

## Getting to know you ...

Over 150 people have plots across Sunnyside - so *we* took time out to find out a little more about some of our fascinating tenants. This time we sat down with Paul who shares his plot (B20) with Sian his wife and their young daughter.

**Hi Paul can you introduce yourself please ?** I was born in Bristol while my wife Sian was born in London but her heart is in St Lucia where her mum is from! Our daughter was born in Berkhamsted.

**What was your first car ?** Ford Escort - without go-faster stripes or boom music box in the back window I hasten to add. A more sedate Seat Ibiza for Sian.

**Why did you take on your plot ?** An open day in 2015 no less piqued our interest but we waited until our daughter's green fingers were big enough to dig before taking the plunge in 2019.

**What has been your most successful crop ?**

Potatoes, potatoes and potatoes - so versatile and keeps us going through those winter months.



**What has been your most unusual crop ?** Sweet potatoes, cucamelons and edamame beans.

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

Needs a weed (Ed Note: we think you are being a bit harsh on yourself there it is fine looking plot!)

**What advice would you give to any newcomers?** Start small and take pride in your victories. And oh beer traps are great for keeping slugs under control - and what a way to go!

**Your favourite garden centre?** Has to be Woods in order to support our local retailers but also HH Garden Centre near Nettleden is well worth a visit.

**And finally how would you describe Berkhamsted?** Friendly, attractive and full of energy - just like my wife !

## Order ! Order !

Did you pay your £4 subs for this year. If you did then you should shortly be receiving or will already have received an order form from our Treasurer Andy James. The brochure is now online via the [National Allotment Society](#) website - your membership number and password are in the letter sent with the order form.

Deliveries are sent to Andy for you to collect usually in December. Seed potatoes normally arrive in January and live plants will be sent to tenants directly at the appropriate time.

Kings Seeds, who are affiliated to The National Allotment Society, run the scheme and prices here are about 40% less than the normal price.



## Rubbish Amnesty !

August saw a novel idea - a rubbish amnesty run jointly between your Committee and Berkhamsted Town Council. The equivalent of almost 6 skips of rubbish were removed by the Council as many of you took the opportunity to either clear plots you had inherited or move rubbish accumulated over the years.

## Lets talk compost ...

Many could talk for days about compost and some have web sites devoted to it but lets avoid the technical speak and go for a simple guide ...

Some say 3 separate bins for compost, some say keep it covered at all times and others just pop down to the local garden centre for hopefully peat-free bags of the stuff. But compost is a friend to us all. So here's a simple guide from the National Allotment Society (NAS) if you want to make your own.

"Compost production works best when there are a couple of heaps on the go at the same time - one you are adding to and another that you have filled and left to decompose - a process that usually takes up to a year". Plastic or wooden containers both work but the ideal size is at least one cubic metre - anything less will work but will take longer.

The NAS go on to say that for good compost you "should mix carbon-based waste (browns) half and half by volume with nitrogen-based plant (greens) remains". The green material provides nutrients and moisture while the browns decompose more slowly and provide the energy source for the microbes that carry out the composting process. Browns also absorb excess moisture and facilitate vital air-flow within the heap.

Woody material should be chopped up while turning the heap with a fork now and then which will introduce oxygen and help the materials to break down. Similarly break down any large plants or thick stems. Always make sure the heap is damp before forking over as this will reduce the risk of harmful spores - or wear a face mask!

So what are good browns? Dead leaves, old straw, dry plant stems, shredded paper in moderation, wood ash or torn cardboard. Small twigs are also excellent but avoid brambles.

And for the greens? Grass cuttings - but in moderation - fruit and vegetables (raw), tea leaves and coffee grounds, pea and bean tops, bedding plants and flowers.

And weeds? All weeds can be added apart from those with seeds, bindweed or anything with disease - send these to the council green waste. And oh - rats ! Add chicken wire if you can to keep the pests out - not essential but helps !

[Please visit our website](#) for more advice and tips.

## Did you know

"St Anns Allotments" site in Nottingham is the oldest and largest allotment in the UK. They are over 600 years old and measure over 75 acres.

## Your Committee

Sunnyside Allotment Society Committee is there to represent your needs and interests. Please click on the links below to contact any member.

### Chairman:

[John Eaton](#)

### Vice-chair:

[Diana Ball](#)

### Secretary

[Jenny Sippings](#)

### Treasurer:

[Andy James](#)

### Newsletter editors:

[Clive](#) and [Julie](#)

### Other members:

[Angela Wheeldon](#)

[John Goffey](#)

[Kate Rankin](#)

## And finally ...

Andy (N57) would like names for his new pet !



## Committee updates ...

### Over 30 on the waiting list for plots; have you updated your contact details ?

"Over 30 people currently on the waiting list for vacant plots but only one full plot and two half plots are available" says a report going to the Committee in October. And what is more those plots becoming vacant are quickly filling up - *allotmenteeing* in the area it seems is alive and well!

And tenants are reminded of other important updates. Are your contact details up to date? Keeping your phone number, address and your email address up to date is vital to keep you in the loop on important announcements and a key part of your tenancy agreement. Change of details should be shared with the Council and the Committee. And if you don't want a plot please don't just leave - let the Committee secretary know - and the Council - so the plot can be re-let and doesn't fall into a state of neglect.

And finally the Council have taken a decision that they eventually want all allotment tenants in the area to be affiliated to the National Allotment Society. This is why they are now collecting *subs* instead of the Committee not least because this makes sure we are all covered by public liability insurance.

## Brain Teaser Time ...

Tom (A25) returns with his latest brain teaser - his wife Gemma setting the standards as always - can you beat 123 ?

							TRIPLE WORD SCORE		THE BOARD SHOWS 4 ROWS OF LETTERS FROM A TYPICAL SCRABBLE GAME. USE EACH ROW TO FORM A WORD OF 2-7 LETTERS AND WRITE IN THE BLANK SQUARES PROVIDED. THEN ADD UP THE SCORE FOR EACH ROW. DON'T FORGET TO USE THE DOUBLE AND TRIPLE WORD AND LETTER SCORES - AND ADD A 50 POINT BONUS FOR EVERY 7 LETTER WORD. GEM'S TOTAL: 123
C <sub>3</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>4</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>	M <sub>3</sub>	S <sub>1</sub>		RACK 1	
A <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>4</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	T <sub>1</sub>	RACK 2		
							DOUBLE LETTER SCORE		
I <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	Z <sub>10</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>		RACK 3	
G <sub>2</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	N <sub>1</sub>	A <sub>1</sub>	I <sub>1</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	L <sub>1</sub>	RACK 4		

**Next Edition January 2024.** All contributions to [cli.mic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:cli.mic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk). Thank you Clive (A17)