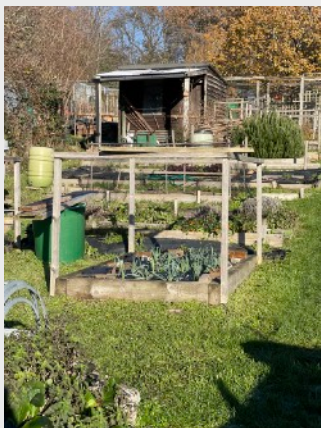


# SUNNYSIDE VIEWS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE JOY OF ALLOTMENTS

## Lets get started ...

*So a new growing season is upon us. Now is the time to put those seed orders to work; forget about the mistakes of last year and press on with the new. In this edition of Sunnyside Views we are looking at ways in which we can help you out. We also get to meet your new chair and introduce some new ideas from the Committee which we are keen to get your feedback on. So happy reading !*



## Dates for the diary !

*As the days get longer we can bring you some dates for the summer months. A summer working party is planned for **Sunday 9 June** and the Open Day for this year will be **Sunday 18 August**.*



Diana your new chair with John Eaton who is standing down after 11 years in the role.

## Notes from the Chair ...

Hello everyone this is my first *Notes from the Chair* as your new chairperson and it is a real honour to take on the role. Firstly though thank you to John Eaton who has stood down after so many years of service.

John's devotion to the role has been second to none and I know I now have big footsteps to follow so I am really pleased that John has decided to stay on the committee to guide me through my early months. I would also like to thank Jenny Sippings who has been a great source of information and advice to me as I settle into the role.

So how do I see my role? Firstly as your point of contact with the Council (our landlords). I am also here for any suggestions or problems you have and to lead the committee as a team to make sure your needs as tenants are fully represented. So please if I can help you in any way then do contact me.

After all Sunnyside is such a wonderful community and I will do all I can to continue John's excellent work in leading that community for the benefit of us all.

**Diana Ball (A24)**

## From plot to plate

Put spring veggies to exotic use with an African style curry. Serves 4-6.

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 1 onion diced and 2 garlic cloves finely chopped
- 500g of sweet potatoes and carrots sliced and diced and 500g of kale and broccoli diced and shredded
- 5cm root ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 heaped tsp of ground coriander and the same amount of ground cumin, paprika and cinnamon
- 400g tin of plum tomatoes, 400g tin of coconut milk and 250ml of pineapple juice
- 100g of peanut butter

### Preparation

Step 1 : heat oil in large pan, add the onion and leek and cook for 5 mins, stirring regularly

Step 2: add the garlic, ginger, sweet potato and carrots and cook for a further 5 mins, stirring regularly

Step 3: stir in the spices and cook for 1 min before stirring in the chopped tomatoes, coconut milk and pineapple juice. Cook for 15 mins with the pan lid on.

Step 4: Stir in kale and broccoli and cook for a further 15 mins. Stir in peanut butter, thin down the sauce with water and season to taste.

## On the wild side of life !

Did you know we have wildlife areas across the two sides of Sunnyside - areas kept aside to help our little friends - Angela Wheeldon (B17) takes up the story and is looking for volunteers to help with maintenance.

"It was back in the 1990's that a "use it or lose it" campaign was started by tenants on Sunnyside as the whole site faced being sold for redevelopment. So with the support of the Council at the time we decided to set aside some space to provide shelter for the valuable wildlife resource that had built up" explains Angela.

"Now we have a dedicated area on B Road (Sunnyside Old) which consists of early flowering shrubs, a pond used by frogs and toads - and possibly newts - and bramble cover for nesting small birds ranging from warblers to visiting whitethroats. We also have shrubby hawthorn and twiggy heaps, an insect hotel, a lizard habitat and some taller trees for larger birds.

"We also have an area down by the Grantham Mews gate for butterflies and flowering shrubs and seeds, while we are utilising other areas to encourage bees and other pollinators.

"On Sunnyside New the wildlife area consists of young native trees, a willow area and a series of natural hedges.

"Maintenance is by a mix of Jane Dickinson and myself as well working party volunteers and the team from the Sunnyside Rural Trust.

"But we are keen to come up with a proper management plan and are looking for volunteers - young and maybe not so young - who might like to work with us. So if you are interested - all ideas and capabilities are welcome - then please contact either myself on B17 or Jane on A10 - or speak to any member of the Committee".

"After all our little feathered friends can be real garden helpers so lets encourage them and welcome them all".



## Housekeeping ...

Plot inspections took place in early April and it is clear that a lot of tenants are taking great care to keep their plots tidy. Polite reminders are being sent out to those tenants who haven't met the standard. Tenants are also reminded to keep paths between plots tidy and mown and to avoid putting stones and other objects on grass paths which destroy lawnmowers. Also please use water wisely on your plots - the supply on sites is being turned back on so make sure you are not leaving hoses running and that you are making best use of water butts. Diana as our new chair is also taking up the point with the Council around the fact that often pathways are being used by the public as walkways with in some cases the unmentionable dog waste being left behind. We are also seeing all the pathways increasingly being used as walkways by the public. Only A Road is a public right of way. Diana as your new chair is taking this up with the Council.

## Mentoring new tenants ...

New committee member - Tom Hall (A25) - has agreed to introduce a mentoring scheme for new tenants. If you would like to take up this opportunity then please approach Tom direct who is happy to help and will advice on any issues or challenges you may be facing.

And remember Sunnyside is a community effort - we are all here to help each other whenever and wherever we can.

# Vlogging for success

Millions are following vloggers these days covering all things "allotments" - according to the RHS amongst others here are the top 5 on YouTube.

Our friends at the RHS as well as other leading garden societies have been reviewing gardening channels on YouTube. According to their research and in no particular order here are the top 5 most viewed.

**Jessie at Plot 37** is a particular favourite on Youtube with thousands of followers in the UK. Jess is a northern girl who keeps an allotment with her mum and covers everything from seasonal rotation planting to dealing with pests of all types. A real hit and very easy to follow with monthly updates.

**Jen's Allotment Adventures** is a newcomer to the scene but again is simple to follow and is gaining followers rapidly. Jen is particularly adept at pushing the boundaries on what to plant so a real favourite if you want something different.

Next up is **Erica's little Welsh Garden** which is brilliant for tips and tricks and Erica packs so much into such a small plot that she is great for those short on space.

Then we have **North London Allotment** which is a very popular and at times funny look at all things allotments and if you really want to watch someone learning from mistakes then head here on Youtube.



And last but not least is **GrowVeg**. A very easy to follow vlog presented by a guy who well simply oozes energy so if you can keep up then join the thousands who follow him each month.

Any other recommendations you wish to share then send them my way - [climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk).

## Spring into action !

*Spring is here - hopefully the rain will stop just long enough to put time in for a few jobs.*

### Prepare and protect !

*Clear your ground and remove dead leaves from perennials including strawberries. Add fertiliser in between plants where possible.*

### Earlies or mains !

*When it comes to planting potatoes then April is the ideal time. Plant out "earlies" first and then main crops at the end of the month. Remember to mound up with soil to protect from frost.*

### Last chance saloon !

*If you are growing chillies, tomatoes or aubergines from seed then now is the time to do it. Sow them under cover or wait for May to buy plants from the garden centre.*

### Thin out your seedlings !

*Now is the time to thin out any seedlings you may have planted in March or earlier. Follow the seed package for specific guidance.*

### Transplanting can start !

*Some varieties of brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, broccoli, broad bean or leeks can now be transplanted outside. But keep fleece at hand to protect them from frost.*

## What's new for 2024 ...



"Going all Mediterranean" for Simon and Fiona on N28 who are thinking of figs and maybe peach trees



Newcomer Stacey hails from the States and is thinking of mini pumpkins for Thanksgiving on A36B



Emma on B33A is thinking of Snap Dragons and runner beans



Raging bull chillies are on the list for Jen and Mark A27



Leanne on A5B was hard at work planting a new red current bush



James and Claudia, N33, are trying sweet potatoes as they move into their second year

## Our joiners and leavers ...

So far this year we have welcomed 9 new tenants and said a fond farewell to 4 people. There are over 28 people waiting for plots and at present there are no plots available.

### Welcome to ...

Stacy Taylor	A36B
Anne Wilberforce	A37
Janet Tuppen	B7
Gary Davidson	B27A
Hannah Purdy	B31B
Caroline and Stuart Nicholls	C7B
Simon and Fiona Lewis	N28
Nick Rastall	N56A

### Goodbye to ...

Andy Dolwin	B27A
Irene Rambota and Joyce Taylor	N28
Lorraine Golder	N56A

A warm welcome to all newbies !

## Loo(king) for volunteers !

So how many times have we all welcomed the fact that along A Road there is a little blue hut - our very own on site toilet? Many of us use it - including for first aid at times or even to wash hands - but yet so few of us volunteer to help clean it. Well here's a simple request. If you use it then please volunteer to join our cleaning rota - contact Diana Ball - and if you do use it please use the path down to it instead of walking across neighbouring plots.

## 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 met Neil and Trish on C23.

**Hi Neil and Trish can you tell us a little about yourselves?** Yes we have been tenants since 2011 when we took on our veg plot on C23 and now also have a fruit plot on B33B. I am from Derby and Trish is from Farnborough. We met sort of halfway - in Stevenage.

**What prompted you to take on your plot?** We wanted a bigger veg plot and our garden just doesn't get enough sun.

**What has been your most successful crop?** 2023 was great for tomatoes - I would recommend Gardeners Delight or Sungold varieties. This year it might be watercress?

**What is your favourite crop to grow?** Asparagus, dwarf French beans and summer raspberries are real favourites of ours.

**What three words would you use to describe your plots?** Calm, sunny, haven.



**What advice would you give any newcomers?** Make a plan you can achieve. It took us 3 months to dig our unkempt first plot on C23.

**What is your favourite garden centre?** We buy from Kings Seeds using the discount we can all benefit from as tenants.

**And finally - and a tad randomly - moving away from gardening can you tell us about your first cars and how would you describe Berkhamsted?** Well Trish had a blue Peugeot 104 whose heater never worked while I had a black A40 estate which had been used by the Nottingham Fire Brigade. I bought it with £200 borrowed from my mum. And Berkhamsted - well we came here over 40 years ago because it was commutable, now we stay for friends and the countryside.

**Thank you Neil and Trish**

## Bonfires - think of our neighbours !

We all have garden rubbish to clear at times and starting a fire on your plot often seems the ideal solution. Well not for our neighbours living in the area. Please be considerate. Instead the Committee have started to "fire up" when we can in line with working parties. So please speak to a member of the Committee if you have anything you wish to burn.



*A tempting caption competition contender - Jenny helping Clive Smith try out his new fire safety equipment !*

## Remembering Ted !

You have been asking about the *Ted Memorial Garden* which sits halfway along A Road. Ted Dyer was a great friend to so many on *Sunnyside*; was the founder of the Sunnyside Allotment Society; and its chairman for many years. Ted sadly passed away in 2016.



## News from around the Committee table ..

### New committee members join a new chair as 2024 gets under way for the Sunnyside Allotment Society committee

Lesley Johnson (A6A) and Tom Hall (A25) are our new faces around the Committee table both introduced when the group met for the first time under your new chair, Diana Ball (A24) earlier this year.

And those were not the only headlines at the February meeting.

Dates were set for this year's Open Day (Sunday 18th August) and a summer working party (Sunday 4th June) and as always we are looking for volunteers to help with both.

The meeting also included approval for Tom as the new committee member to run a mentoring scheme for new tenants (details elsewhere in this publication) and discussion around the wildlife areas on both Old and New sides (again covered elsewhere).

Finally a lot of discussion centred around the Council lead Allotment Working Group (AWG) which brings together representatives from all allotment sites in the area.

Items of note from the AWG was the increase in how much has been spent on general maintenance by the Council during 2023 up from just over £2000 to more than £9000 for the last financial year. Most was down to plot clearance costs; rubbish amnesties (which Sunnyside benefitted from during 2023) and works following a recent tree survey.

Remember the Committee is here for you so please approach any member if you need help or have ideas for *Sunnyside*.



*Your new committee (back row left to right) Tom Hall, John Eaton, Jenny Sippings, Angela Wheeldon, Lesley Johnson. Front row (left to right) Diana Ball, John Goffey, Kate Rankin and Andy James. Clive is not pictured.*

## Did you know

Allotment sites are typically bound by rules but some more strict than others. For instance Greenwich Council in London insist that paths between plots must be 47.27 cm in width and send inspectors to check.

## 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:

[Diana Ball](#)

### Vice-chair:

Vacant

### Secretary

[Jenny Sippings](#)

### Treasurer:

[Andy James](#)

### Newsletter editors:

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

### Other members:

[Angela Wheeldon](#)

[John Goffey](#)

[Kate Rankin](#)

[John Eaton](#)

[Tom Hall](#)

[Lesley Johnson](#)

## Thats all for now folks !

We are back again in **July 2024** and if you have any ideas for the newsletter then please contact me on

[climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk](mailto:climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk).

For now I am off to finally getting some planting done - and of course even more digging.

**Have a great Spring everyone !**  
**Clive (A17)**

## A slimy tale to finish on !

Tenants have been asking if we could feature ways of dealing with allotment pests - we duly oblige and this time focus on slugs and snails!

All those hours spent choosing the plants, preparing the ground, watching your young seedlings grow into healthy green veggies - and then suddenly you return one day to see our "friends" the slugs have taken a bite or many. So *Sunnyside Views* took a walk around both Old and New to see what natural solutions you are using.

### Coffee Grounds and Egg Shells

seems a popular choice for many and most of the coffee shops in Berkhamsted will happily hand over old coffee grounds if you ask. When spread around your plants both coffee grounds and egg shells act as a good deterrent but make sure the egg shells are clean as any residue could attract rather than deter slugs and snails.

**Beer Traps** again there is evidence of many in use across both Old and New sides and guess what apparently slugs love beer! A container or any old tub or yoghurt pot sunk into the ground with the rim at or just above the soil level, filled with beer works well apparently - cheap beer of course!

**Wool pellets** have gained in popularity over the past few years and are a little more effective it would seem than our picture suggests. Again carefully placed around plants or even in strips between plants will help keep those slugs from your fresh produce.

**Nemotodes** are controversial for some but if used early in the season then they are a good biological control of slugs and snails.

**And finally keep it tidy** - there are many ways of keeping slugs and snails down - some even advocate going out with a torch at night and picking them up - but if nothing else keeping your plot tidy will reduce hiding places and will help keep those slug numbers down.



**Oh the irony in this picture !**