

SUNNYSIDE VIEWS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE JOY OF ALLOTMENTS

Hello everyone ...

Well the heat wave keeps coming and going and sometimes it gets just too hot to garden. So sit back and enjoy our latest newsletter. Thank you as always for all contributions. Clive (A17)



Open Day !

Sunday 17th August - weather permitting - is the Sunnyside Annual Open Day. We are still open for anyone who wishes to volunteer to help out with our various stalls; with setting up or taking down and putting away; or anything you wish to donate to help raise money for local charities and of course for our own projects being planned for the benefit of both Sunnyside Old and New. Contact any member of the Committee to register your interest.



Notes from the Chair ...

Hi everyone. Wow are we already into August - where is this year going?

And what about the heat wave - days and weeks of sun and so very little rain. I am very surprised we are not already into a hose pipe ban in this area but as always we are watching for announcements and of course will take whatever necessary action needed.

Now I can't write my notes for our summer edition of *Sunnyside Views* without mentioning our annual Open Day. Again so many of you have come forward to offer help and as always - with good weather being forecast - we will have a great turnout. But please if you wish to help out then let any member of the Committee know and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the day.

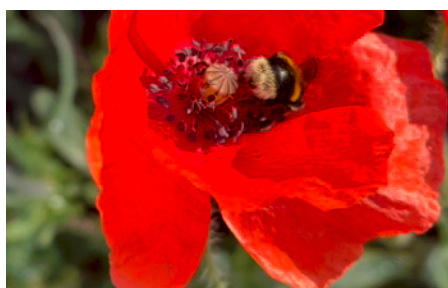
But similarly a few other simple reminders please. By all means bring cars on to the sites but please keep to the designated car parking areas; don't park on the main routes through the site; and do keep your speed down. We have had complaints so please be considerate to everyone.

So let's kick back and enjoy this good weather. After all we all complain when the rain and cold return and it is wonderful to see so many of you up there putting your plots to good use. Have fun and keep gardening!

Diana Ball (A24)

122 days to 2026 !

From 1st September there are 122 days to 1st January 2026 so with the clock ticking now is a good time to grab a cuppa and start thinking about your seed orders for the new year! Yes we know many are still focused on keeping the weeds down for this year let alone planning ahead to next but order forms will be arriving at the start of September from Kings Seeds. Andy James, Committee Treasurer is again running this year's scheme and will want all order forms returned by the end of October. Andy writes "as last year, there will be a letter with the order form showing you how to access the online catalogue and how to complete your order - but please return order forms to me rather than direct to Kings so we can realise the discounts for us all. I will also leave a few hard copies of the catalogue at the Tea Hut (B15) on Sunnyside Old so why not grab a cuppa while you complete your order." Emails will be sent to all tenants in the near future with more details.



Did you know !

Approximately 28,000 acres of land are covered by allotments in the UK with around 90,000 people on waiting lists.

A sit down with Geoff ...

Sunnyside Views asked one of our shall we say more mature tenants - Geoff Smith (A21) - for a contribution to the newsletter - what we got back was perfect and needed publishing in full ... so over to Geoff

"I am one of the luckiest allotment holders as I have very good good neighbours around my plot and a wonderful wife - Rosemary - who has supported me in whatever I do for almost 65 years now.

I was born in Potten End in one of the small cottages behind the Plough Public House and I moved to Berkhamsted in 1961. In 1962 I joined the local fire service as a retained (part time) member and served until 1983. What an experience. I remember one Friday night in November a terrific storm was raging and a call came in to attend an incident at a chicken farm. A metal silo was swinging in the wind and touching high voltage electric cables. We managed to get a stake in the ground and lasso the silo to stop it touching the cables. So many memories including turning our appliance over on the A41 but more of that maybe another time.



Geoff and Rosemary pictured on their plot earlier this year - if you are passing always say hi

My allotment life goes back to the late 1960s when I got my first plot on the Dellfield site. I started with only small plots at first before moving to a full plot but then we moved house to the other end of town and frankly it was too much to keep going back to water my runner beans - my favourite crop - twice every day so I gave it up.

Then around 2010 I met Dave Neale at the Kitcheners Bowls Club - bowls is another love of mine. Dave at the time had 2 or 3 plots on Sunnyside and he offered me a piece of land. I accepted and heard nothing more until I bumped in to Dave at a petrol station almost a year later and the rest as they say is history. I am now into my 80s and everything is getting harder to do. I don't know how much longer I can do it. But I enjoy coming to my plot when I can and love being part of the Sunnyside life." Thank you Geoff - such a lovely man!

Rent Renewals !

Back in May we all received a letter from the Town Council outlining new rent charges from September 2025. It stated that although there had been no increases since 2021, there would be increases coming in this year for both rent and water rates. This would see a full plot increase from £40 to £50 with water increasing by £2.50 and for a half plot an increase of £5 with pressurised water going up by £1.25. The letter also asked for all tenants to let the Council know by 14th September if they didn't want to continue with their plot so that it can be offered to those on the waiting list.



Sunnyside Views carried out our own research to see how the new charges compared. The results were surprising. For instance Trafford Council are proposing a charge of £138 a year for a full plot (up from £104) but offer concessions for those over 60. While the lowest proposed rent we could find was in Ashfield in Nottinghamshire where the proposed rent would be £27 for a full plot.

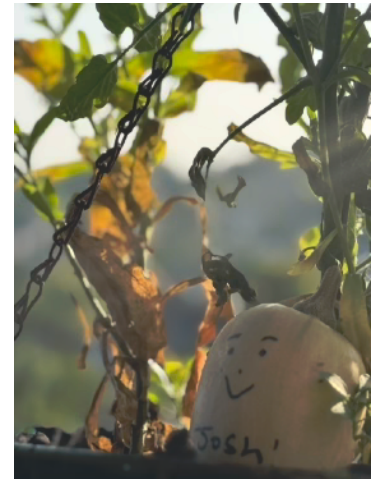
Sunnyside tenants have until 14th September to decide.

Summer night wanders ?

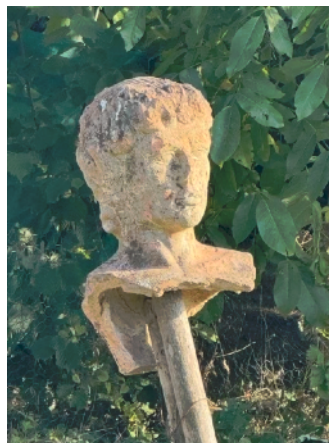
Its amazing who and what a summers night stroll can reveal hidden across Sunnyside ...



Someone's relaxing on a warm evening in the shade



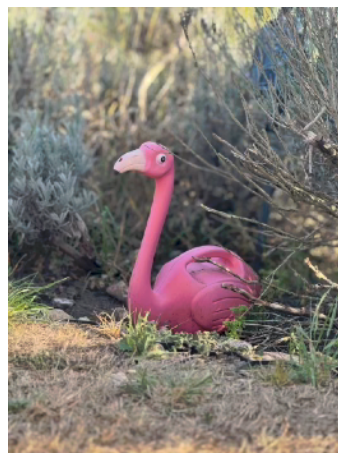
And who is this hiding amongst the tomatoes?



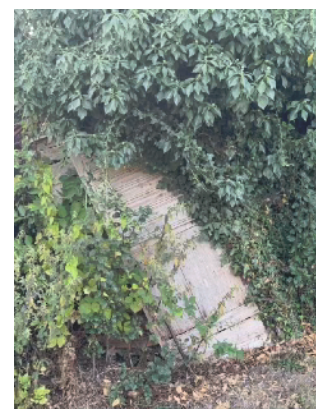
They are bringing a classical theme to Sunnyside New!



Does anyone know this couple hiding out on Sunnyside Old?



Or can anyone identify this species of bird hiding in the lavender?



And finally how is this shed even still standing ?

From Plot to Plate ..

Who has grown too much beetroot this year? So many of us have lets face it so here's a simple recipe for beetroot chutney.

Ingredients

3lbs of beetroot;
 ½lbs of brown sugar;
 1 pint of vinegar; juice of one lemon;
 1 ½lbs of cooking apples;
 2 onions;
 1 tsp of salt and 2 tps of ground ginger.



Method

Boil the beetroot for around 2 hours, cool it, peel and cut into cubes.

Peel and chop the apples removing the cores in the process.

Finely chop the onions and place the apples and onions in a good size saucepan.

Add all the other ingredients - except the beetroot to the onions and apples and simmer for one hour, stirring occasionally to stop it sticking.

Add the beetroot and cook over a medium heat for 15 minutes. Cool and place in sterilised storage jars.

And a quick way to sterilise your jars - wash the jars and lids in warm soapy water. Then place them in a heated oven on a tray for 20 minutes at 160C.

The No-Dig Gardening Revolution is here to stay!

Many of you have asked if we could feature the art of “no dig” more so for those traditional gardeners who thrive on traditional methods turn away now - “no dig” it seems is taking centre stage

No dig-gardening uses the powers of nature to create thriving ecosystems. But where do you start?

Small is beautiful !

Raised no dig beds are perfect for allotments where you want efficiency and neatness.



Are storm clouds gathering for traditional methods as the “no dig” revolution grows?

Its all in the layering

And central to “no dig” is the art of layering. A base of cardboard will help suppress weeds and will break down over time; and then by adding organic matter such as compost and mulch on top of the soil you start to create a fertile growing haven without disturbing the ground below. This protects worms, soil organisms and microbes - all vital for healthy soil and plants.

Is it climate resilient?

A well prepared no-dig garden will withstand anything the UK weather throws at it. The layered approach improves drainage and avoids water logging during those downpours while mulch helps retain moisture when the sun continues to shine.

And don't forget about your environmental footprint

No-dig gardening is a very practical way of reducing your environmental footprint. Mulch helps cut down on watering; homemade compost made from for instance grass clippings and autumn leaves is perfect while avoiding tilling keeps carbon in the soil rather than releasing it into the atmosphere.

No-dig is not for everyone. But for many it really is here to stay - happy layering !

Our joiners and leavers ...

We welcomed 10 new tenants and said goodbye to 11 in the last quarter.

Welcome to ...

Simon Howell	A38A
Philip Harrocks	B11B, C
Georgia Huelamo	B15B
Sarah Cave	B43
Charlene Nelmes	N9
James Radford	N10
Justine Francoise Freeman	N51
Murray Carr	N61
Kevin McGhee	N65
Thomas Crowley	N67

Goodbye to ...

Jo Crowder	A1B
Ann Bird	A36
Louise Eyles	A38A
Winnie Mac	B11B, C
Robert Hopper	N9
Sally Young	N10
Lynne Stevens	N32
Nick Rastall	N56A
Clive Theis	N61
Tanya Stirling	N65
Matt Chamberlain	N67

Water is like gold !

Water conservation is a must. Yet many hosepipes continue to leak and many tenants have had problems when tap connectors go missing. One leak alone can lead to around 50 tonnes of water being wasted so we all have a responsibility. Check your hosepipes and connectors to make sure they don't leak. Add guttering to sheds or greenhouses and never remove the hose connectors from the taps - nothing is more annoying ! Thank you.

Getting to know you ...

Over 150 people have plots across Sunnyside - and it is so nice to reach out and learn more about your neighbour - this time we meet Paul Malekos (C35 and C33B)

Hi Paul can you firstly tell us a little about yourself? I was born in Clapham, London, moved to Cyprus at 14 and now I'm in beautiful Berkhamsted a place I've called home for 15 years. I have a six-year-old daughter, two rescue cats and a newly found love for gardening

What prompted you to take on your plot? I got the bug for having an allotment working on my friend's one in Aston Clinton. Since then, I realised I had to get my own.

What has been your most successful crop so far? So far this season I would say my kale, lettuce, chillies and cherry tomatoes. The fruit orchard too but that's just cheating as I inherited it from the previous tenants.

What ideas do you have for your plot ? To plant more perennials such as blueberry bushes and veg and to use "cover crops" over the winter. I also plan to dig a small pond for wildlife/ frogs (aka slug control) and eventually to build another polytunnel.

What three words would you use to describe your plot? My weedy orchard !!

What is your favourite garden centre? Tring Garden Centre - the first garden centre I discovered and where I have spent way too much time and money.

And finally - and a tad randomly - moving away from gardening can you tell us about your first car and how would you describe Berkhamsted? My first car was a little Mazda Familia which I had in Cyprus. Berkhamsted is beautiful, with friendly people, a tranquil canal to walk along and of course Ashridge - green and clean with 7,000 coffee shops!

Thank you Paul.



Meet Paul and his new love for gardening ... and cherry toms!

Those were the days!

Lets step back to the mid 19th Century. The American Civil War was at its height; the Victorian era was about to hit Britain; and railways and the telegraph were at the top of the technological advances of the time.

But here in Berkhamsted new regulations were introduced for allotment holders under the guidance of Sir John Hobart Culme-Seymour, the owner and rector of the parish of Northchurch.

These ordered that

- the land is be cultivated only with a spade and no more than 2/3 of the plot should be sown with potatoes
- Rent would be increased to a penny per pole which must be paid half in June and half in September without fail
- No tenant should work on their land on a Sunday or "at hours belonging to his master without his leave"
- Every tenant "is expected to attend Divine Service" regularly and there must be no trespassing or encroaching on another's plot

And for anyone not meeting these rules - "if any of these rules be broken or a tenant be guilty of drunkenness, dishonesty or other misconduct then their land will be forfeited".

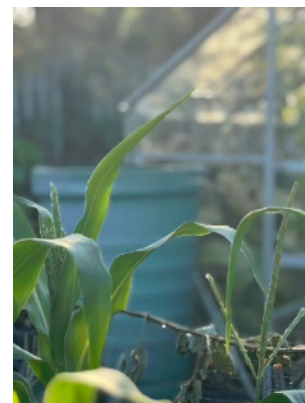
Source: Berkhamsted Historical Society

News from around the Committee table ..

Update on working parties; plans for the annual Open Day; tenancy changes and update on water consumption. Your committee met in early June.

Not surprisingly a large portion of the latest Committee meeting held earlier in June focused on plans for the Open Day - once again a reminder of Sunday 17th August - (and the weather is looking good). As always this is a key day in our collective calendar year helping to raise money for local charities and our very own projects and the Committee are keen to acknowledge all the collective effort that goes in to the making this annual event such a success.

There were also updates on the progress that the Working Parties have been making on various projects earlier this year - in particular clearing up many of the communal areas; including various attempts to keep New car park weed free. Again a massive thank you to everyone who gave up their Sunday's to help out. The next one will be held on 12 October 2025 (weather as always permitting).



And finally John Goffey (B18) reported on the use of water across the site. This is a key consideration not least as it is vital that all pipes and taps are kept in good working order and that tenants are reminded to help with water preservation - covered elsewhere in *Sunnyside Views* and which if not kept in check could affect fee charges from the Council.

As always this is your committee so please approach any member for updates or ideas on making Sunnyside even better!

An old sage once said

You know you're a gardener when you devote three months of your life to grow veg that would cost less than a £1 in the shop.

Your Committee

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

Chairperson:

[Diana Ball](#)

Vice-chair:

Vacant

Secretary

[Jenny Sippings](#)

Treasurer:

[Andy James](#)

Newsletter editor:

[Clive](#)

Other members:

[Angela Wheeldon](#)

[John Goffey](#)

[John Eaton](#)

[Tom Hall](#)

[Jacqui Thomsen](#)

Thats all for now folks !

We are back again in **October 2025** and if you have any ideas for the newsletter then please contact me on
climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

For now there are yet more weeds to pull out - does anyone notice that actually they are easier to get out in this warm weather - and yes once again some white fly on my brassicas to deal with.

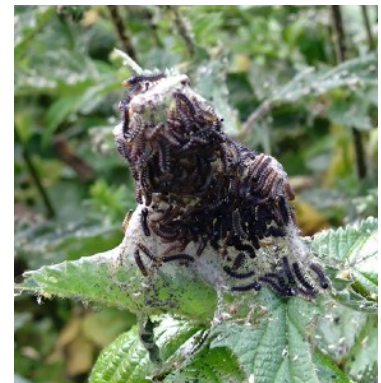
Happy gardening everyone !
Clive (A17)

Butterflies under threat

How do we stop the steady decline of butterflies - Angela Wheeldon (Br7) and Janet Tuppen (B7) joined others when local expert - Malcolm Hull - visited Sunnyside earlier this year.

2024 was one off the worst years on record for the UK's butterflies population with almost 40% of our most common species showing a significant decline in numbers. So it was no surprise that many Sunnyside tenants turned out when local preservation expert, Malcolm Hull from Butterfly Conservation, visited in June.

Janet Tuppen was one such tenant and noted "Different plants are useful for different parts of the butterfly life cycle - caterpillars love ivy, hawthorn or wild cranesbills - while lavender, calendula and early fruit flowers such as apple or plum are good nectar plants for butterflies.



Caterpillars busy at work

And Janet added "a good patch of nettles in the sun is also good for providing protection against predators and very good for Peacock caterpillars."



A Ringlet enjoying Sunnyside

Angela Wheeldon commented "I found the walk both interesting and useful. We all need to remember that butterflies are important pollinators so it is vital to provide nectar rich flowers in April and May and then again in August and September when natural nectar levels

are lower. And if you see butterflies or moths on your plot then look them up, identify the species and their caterpillars and that will help make sure you are providing the right food for them to feed on."