

SUNNYSIDE VIEWS

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH THE JOY OF ALLOTMENTS

Hello everyone ...

One minute it's over 30 degrees and next freezing cold. Well as we all move into autumn and winter what better than to sit down, get a cuppa and grab our latest newsletter. Enjoy the read and remember contributions always welcome. Clive (A17)



Dates for the diary !

Winter working party dates have been set so if you are free and can help out then please put Sunday 16 November; 18th January; 15th February and 8th March in your diary. We are also planning Christmas drinks - weather permitting - on Sunday 21st December with details to follow.. And finally our Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday 24th January so hope to see you there.



Notes from the Chair ...

Hi everyone. Where did the summer go? It didn't seem that long ago when all the paths were baked a golden brown and we were facing days of very little rain. Well autumn really has now rolled in but enough from me about the weather.

In fact now is a great time to start thinking about the next planting season in 2026 and to that end you will all have seen letters from Andy our Treasurer outlining details of our annual seed order programme and I hope many of you managed to get your orders in to make use of our discount offers.

Also now of course is a good time to look back. Thank you to everyone who helped out with our annual Open Day earlier this year. We raised over £600 in profit which means we can fund improvements to communal areas across the site; as well as fund some of our community events for the benefit of us all; as well as making a donation to DENS - a local charity acting as a first port of call for anyone facing homelessness.

And finally a few of us back in August had the delight of attending the wedding of Jenny Sippings and Clive Smith. So many know Jenny and Clive and have benefitted from their advice and help over the years in so many ways. It was an excellent day so let me finish by congratulating them both.

Have a great autumn - and please keep your plots tidy !

Diana Ball (A24)

Congratulations !

Congratulations to Jenny Sippings and Clive Smith (A26) known to so many of us and a constant source of friendly help and advice. On Friday 31st August, Jenny and Clive tied the knot after shall we say a few years of being together. What is more a few Sunnyside tenants turned up on the day - invited of course - to mark the day in a true Sunnyside way. Congratulations once again to you both.



Sunnyside tenants turned out to rightly congratulate Jenny and Clive with an arch of gardening tools

Seed order next steps

31st October was the deadline for seed orders to be with Andy James, our committee treasurer. So what is next? "Seeds normally arrive in December, potatoes in January" says Andy who will contact tenants when their orders have arrived for pick up. "Some items (larger sundries, fruit bushes, asparagus etc) are delivered directly to you by Kings" advises Andy.

Britain's Hedgehogs -help before it's too late !

From around 30 million in the 1970s to just over one million in 2024 - the British hedgehog is in serious decline and your help is needed.

There is no doubt that the native European hedgehog - *Erinaceus Europaeus* - is in serious danger of extinction. In fact according to the British Hedgehog Society this gardeners' friend hasn't been seen in some parts of the UK for some time - and in the South East a recent survey reported less than 500 recorded sightings.

So what has happened to this friendly animal - a natural pest control who would never be seen eating fruits, seed or our brassicas? Well the increase in pesticides - including slug pellets; the increased use of trimmers and the increasing introduction of walls rather than hedges are certain causes. But we can all help.

Create Safe Shelter

Pile logs, sticks or leaves in a quiet corner of your plot - this mimics natural nesting and hibernation sites and avoid disturbing these areas where you can.



Provide "safe" water

Leave a shallow dish of water on your plot and if you have a pond make sure you provide a ramp or bricks so they can climb out.

Avoid chemicals and hazards

Try to avoid using slug pellets and instead turn to beer traps. Far more humane and many would say far more effective - but make sure you choose a type that is covered rather than open. And lift netting when it is not in use; check composts carefully and definitely lift bonfire piles before setting them alight where you can.

And as for trimmers ?

Check long grass before strimming or digging because quite simply trimmers are the No1 accidental injury source.

Find out more at britishhedgehogs.org.uk

Berry Beds ! Looking after fruit bushes before the winter arrives

Fruit bushes are in abundance across both Sunnyside Old and New so here are a few simple tips for helping them through the winter months.

A quick trim and mulching

Remove any fallen leaves or mummified fruit to reduce the threat of overwintering pests or disease - and mulch up using compost, wood chip or leaves to insulate the roots and provide a steady source of feed.

Currant and gooseberry bushes

Remove crossing, diseased, dead or very old wood and thin out or remove any inward growing wood so that the bush is opened up for light and air.

Raspberries and blueberries

Cut autumn fruiting raspberries down to the ground and for summer fruiting varieties cut down any old wood (ie. where they have fruited this year). Blueberries should only be hard pruned in late winter or early spring.

And definitely don't ...

Don't dump high-nitrogen feed now as this will encourage soft growth which will be damaged by any frost. And don't prune stone fruits (such as plums or cherries trees) in the autumn - do this in the summer to avoid silver leaf and never leave rotted fruit on or below your plants.

A little care now to bring better harvests next year !

Summer 2025 successes !

So what was your best crop this summer - we catch up with some of our tenants to find out.



Newbie Carole Yearley (N64B) had a great first year with a fabulous crop of tomatoes



Keith Gibson (N7A&B) made a welcome comeback this year with an abundance of fruits to choose from



Cathy and Andy Johnson (A1A&B) had joy with purple beans no less !



For committee member John Goffey (B18) had an abundance of pears, apples and plums - the real orchard maestro of Sunnyside



And butternut squash for Jenny Sippings (A26)

From Plot to Plate ..

Here's a simple, seasonal recipe perfect for using up those last few brassicas as we move into autumn - our own Autumn Brassica Stir-Fry with a touch of garlic and lemon.

Ingredients

200g Brussels sprouts, halved;
150g kale torn into bite sized pieces;
150g broccoli florets;
1 small cabbage, shredded;
2 tbsp of olive oil;
2 garlic cloves, minced;
1 tsp of lemon zest and the juice of half a lemon;
salt and pepper to taste.



Method

Heat the olive oil in a large pan or wok over a medium heat;

Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute until fragrant;

Toss in the Brussels sprouts and broccoli first and cook for 3-4 minutes;

Add the kale and cabbage and stir-fry for 3-4 minutes until the vegetables are tender but still bright;

Season with salt, pepper, lemon zest, and juice to taste;

Serve immediately (sometimes sprinkled with chilli flakes or toasted nuts.

Add beans or roasted potatoes to complete the dish.

Open Day Fun in the Sun !

Once again Sunnysiders from across both Old and New turned out to make the annual Open Day a real success

The sun really did shine, the gazebos just about stayed up and once again you our valuable tenants turned out to help with a range of stalls. In the end over £600 profit was raised for improvements on Sunnyside Old and New as well as a donation to local charity - DENS. Open Day 2025 was once again a success for us all.

A special thank you to Committee member Angela Wheeldon (B16) who took on organising the day and thank you to everyone who turned out to both volunteer to help on the various stalls or in helping to set up and take down at the at the end of day. The Sunnyside Community at its very best!



Our joiners and leavers (and some movers) ...

We welcomed 9 new tenants and said goodbye to 10 in the last quarter. We also had 3 tenants join others as co-workers and 2 tenants switched plots after putting their name down and waiting. There are 21 people on the waiting list at the moment so please if you wish to give up your plot let a member of the Committee know. Thank you.

Welcome to ...

Christine Chisholm*	A9
Eve McCarthy	A18B
Zoe Robertson*	A21
Lin Phillips**	B15A
Sophie Sturgeon	B30A,B
Fiona Naylor	C17A
Vicki Daniels**	N4C,D
Adam White	N11
Grace Emery	N34
Jennie Peachey*	N38
Wendy Owen	N70

Goodbye to ...

Lin Phillips**	A18B
Angela Whyte	B15A
Mark Roberts	B30A,B
Will Facey	C17A
Jennie Peachey	N4C,D
Martin Cramer	N8
Ntiana Chasindri	N11
Chris Hoyland	N13
Steve Poulton	N34
Clare Donohoe	N52
Sally Rasiah	N58A
Kirsty Carlton	N58B
Vicki Daniels**	N70

*co-workers

** movers

Getting to know you ...

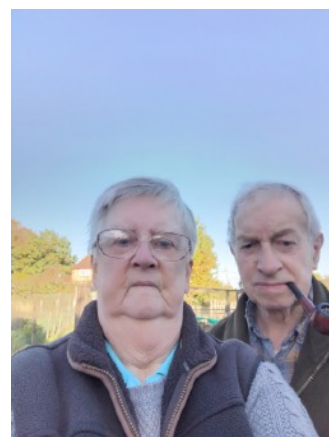
Over 150 people have plots across Sunnyside - and it is so nice to reach out and learn more about your neighbour - this time we meet Jean and Tom Alexander (N59 and N60)

Hi Jean and Tom can you firstly tell us a little about yourselves? We moved to Berkhamsted 44 years ago, although Tom was actually born in Berkhamsted.

What prompted you to take on your plot? Well we love the taste of the produce we've grown ourselves. It just seems to taste much better doesn't it.

What has been your most successful crop so far? Well this varies from year to year of course but this year was it was definitely potatoes and strawberries.

What ideas do you have for your plot? We like to try different veggies each year when we can with some failures - tromboncino for instance - and some successes - such as butternut squash.



Jean and Tom - residents in Berkhamsted for 44 years

What three words would you use to describe your plot? That's an easy question. Demanding, productive and peaceful.



I had to research what a Nash Metropolitan actually looked like ... now that is cool !

What is your favourite garden centre? Hillier's at Water End, they always seem to have what we want -and an excellent cafe !

And finally - and a tad randomly - moving away from gardening can you tell us about your first car and how would you describe Berkhamsted?

Well Tom's first car was a Nash Metropolitan while for

Jean it was a Honda Civic. And what do we like about Berkhamsted - lots of coffee shops !

Thank you Jean and Tom.

Keep Planting !

Hang on a minute! Why are you all bringing out the tarpaulin and covering your precious beds. Autumn is a great time to keep planting so here's a few potential winners for you.

Garlic, Onions and Shallots

Sets can be planted now for earlier spring harvests and the both onions and garlics welcome a good frost.

Spinach and winter lettuces

Look for hardy varieties and remember to cover any young seedlings until they are strong enough to thrive winter months.

Do you fancy a radish or two?

Look out for good winter varieties such as "Black Spanish" or "Daikon" and plant before the end of November.

Kale and other winter brassicas

Will usually withstand frost and taste sweeter the colder and frostier it gets.

Don't forget the herbs

Parsley will survive mild winters if mulched and plant chive roots now for early spring growth.

And don't neglect your soil

Green manures like winter rye, vetch or mustard are excellent for improving your soil and preventing erosion.

You see for many October and November is a time to keep going!

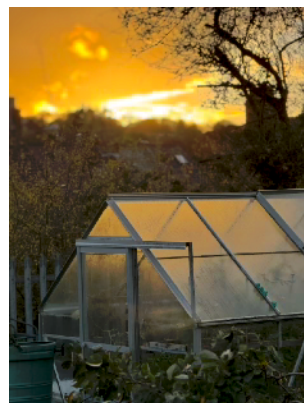
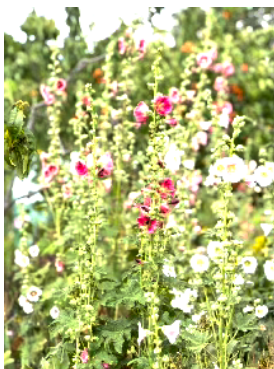
News from around the Committee table ..

Seed swaps; planning for winter working parties; and future events to plan - your Sunnyside Committee huddled in the tea hut pergola on a particularly cool day in September

Yes the long hot summer days were a distant memory by the time the Committee met at the Tea Hut in early September to discuss a range of matters all for the benefit of Sunnyside "allotmenters".

For a start the seed swap scheme seems to have been particularly popular this year with tenants leaving a variety of seeds (and some seedlings) at the Tea Hut throughout the year. The scheme will be repeated next year so keep popping up to B Road to see what's on offer.

Tom Hall (A25) outlined some of the key jobs that will be tackled by winter working party volunteers this winter including helping to clear plots particularly on New which were proving hard to let as they had been vacant for some time and where grass and plants had been left to go to seed. Neighbouring tenants had rightly complained.



Other discussions centred around planning for the Annual General Meeting to be held on Saturday 24th January 2026 at the Sunnyside Rural Trust Centre on Old - and everyone is welcome - as well as Christmas Drinks for 21st December dependent as always of course on the weather.

But remember the Committee is there for you so please approach any member if you have any questions or ideas - we are always here to help. And don't forget we also have our own website which can be found at <https://www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk/>.

Allotment facts !

German allotments - Schrebergarten or Kleingarten - typically include a summer house where tenants will often live during the summer months.

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 Thomassen](#)

Thats all for now folks !

We are back again in **January 2026** and if you have any ideas for the newsletter then please contact me on climic@sunnysideallotments.org.uk.

For now I am off to cut my grass paths for the last time this season and just tidy up a wee bit, but remember this - gardens don't sleep in the winter - they just prepare.

Happy autumn everyone !

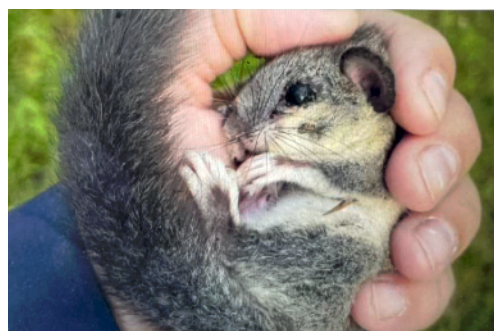
Clive (A17)

Furry foodie on the loose

Sightings of ever so cute Glis Glis are increasing on Sunnyside - and gave one tenant quite the fright !

One day in October one of our tenants who will remain anonymous suddenly jumped out of their shed. The shock on their face was evident. We all rushed to help. Sure they had seen little droppings in their shed; for definite they were in the process of clearing their shed out to find out the cause - but what they didn't expect was the little eyes popping out from wood stored above their head.

Yes this was a Glis Glis and it seems more and more of you on Sunnyside are reporting sightings. And do you know they are in fact a protected species.



You see Glis Glis were actually introduced into the UK by one Lionel Walter Rothschild - the British zoologist and collector who many of you know lived in Tring. The year was 1902 and he introduced them to Tring Park.

The Glis Glis - or little "edible dormouse" - a cute little friend but just keep away from those wires!

Now latest estimates suggest there are around 20,000 to 30,000 in the UK and most are still to be found in the Chiltern Hills. They are nocturnal, excellent climbers, live mostly in woods but love sheds or any dark place.

And what is more they will hibernate up to 7 months at a time - hence the Latin name *glis* which is associated with fattening and sleeping.

Yes they are notorious for chewing - so you definitely don't want them in your loft where one recent Berkhamsted house fire was in fact put down to these little *friends* chewing through wires in the room but it does seem that more and more they are finding Sunnyside just right for their home.

And one shocked allotmenteer will never forget the day ! They of course will remain nameless !