



Spring 26

Spring's all about hope and watching colour return to nature. Our plants are starting to bloom, and our crops are looking promising again. Spring is a reminder that all our hard work during winter truly pays off. We hope you enjoy catching up with us in this edition of our newsletter, filled with lots of news to celebrate together!

Celebrations and partnerships

Working with other organisations and businesses is a real joy for us at Sunnyside. It's incredibly rewarding to grow our network and connect with different people in our community.

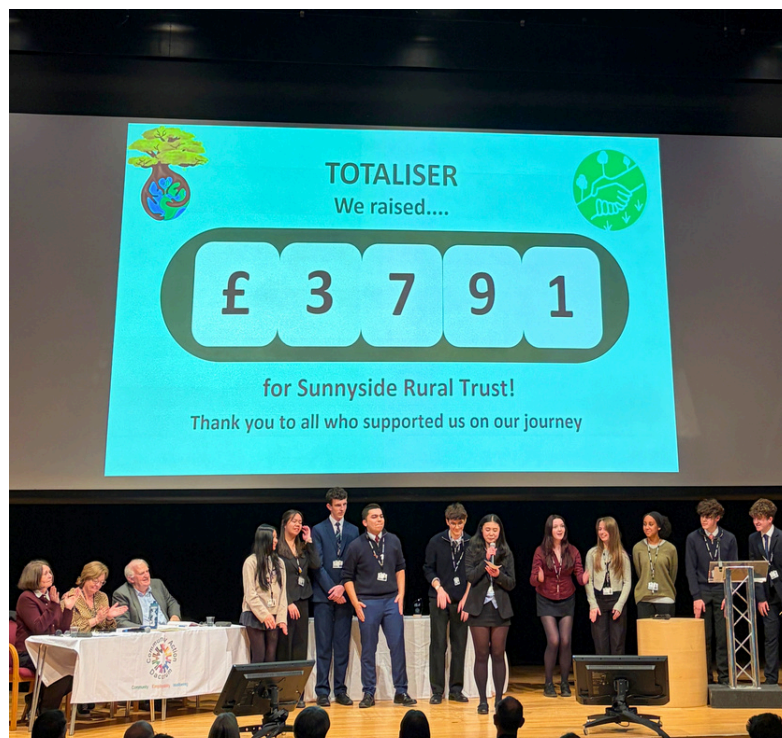
Corporate volunteering

In April, we hosted an extra special thank you event for DLL. As one of our long-standing corporate volunteer groups, DLL have dedicated an incredible amount of time and resources to Sunnyside. Investing their time and money into some incredibly important projects. We are so grateful to have support from DLL and so many other corporate businesses.



A Mayoral visit

In her final week as Mayor of Dacorum, Catherine McAvery came to visit our Northchurch Site! Known for championing inclusion, Catherine spent the afternoon shift engaging with our wonderful trainees, discussing their experiences at Sunnyside. Catherine has been a great supporter of us, and we loved hosting her for the afternoon. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.



Dragons Apprentice Scheme Winners!

For the past few years, we have had the pleasure of participating in The Dragons Apprentice challenge, organised by Community Action Dacorum. Each charity is paired with a school and a local business ('Dragon'), to turn £100 into over £1,000. This year, we were paired with Team Genesis from JFK Sixth Form and The Gym Group. Through innovative events, Team Genesis raised an impressive £3,781 and emerged as the Dragons Champion 2026. Their professionalism, passion, and dedication were truly inspiring, and they showed genuine care for the charity's cause. Thank you, Team Genesis!



The Randle Siddeley Programme of Excellence

In March, we gathered to celebrate the achievements of our 8 RSL apprentices and reflected on a transformative year. Rooted in the belief that opportunity stems from passion and perseverance, the program has enabled participants to develop skills, confidence, and independence through meaningful work in nature. Our team of apprentices have supported countless projects across West Hertfordshire, honing their skills and evolving into confident, driven individuals.

None of this would be possible without the generosity and support of Randle Siddeley and his team. A thank you to Arit Anderson for her continued support and advocacy for Sunnyside. Her stunning peat-free Hampton Court Garden, now relocated to Hemel Food Garden, has become an incredible learning centre for our apprentices. We are truly grateful.

Not forgetting Emma, the program lead, who guided the team on a remarkable journey this year, with her passion for the project being evident throughout.



High Sheriff Award

'From growing plants for major flower shows to creating gardens and caring for animals, Sunnyside inspires independence, joy, and connection with nature.'

We are so grateful to have received the High Sheriff Award for Nurture through Nature. We are so proud of the work we do and our incredible teams of staff and trainees who make Sunnyside the nurturing place that it is.

Congratulations to

Sunnyside
Rural Trust



HIGH SHERIFF AWARDS 2026



Cafés & farm shops

Our cafés provide valuable opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to develop hospitality skills. This means that each cup of coffee or slice of cake you buy contributes to creating meaningful and supportive workplace experiences for our trainees.

Eggciting times

The weather change means lots more eggs! Trainees collect around 50 eggs a day at Northchurch and sell them in our cafe and farm shop. You can also add eggs to your veg box. This time of year is so exciting as we see changes everywhere.

Click [here](#) for more info about our cafes and veg boxes!



“Working at the Sunnyside cafés provides me with opportunities to enhance my skills in areas like maths and drink-making, which boosts my confidence. Over time, I've grown more comfortable and self-assured in serving and interacting with customers and staff. Working in the cafés is incredibly rewarding!”

Sarah, Trainee in the café

Seasonal growing

We grow a wide range of plants and produce throughout the year. All our produce is grown without chemicals, using environmentally friendly methods.

Perennials

After a cold winter our peat-free, locally grown perennials are thriving again. Nurtured by our dedicated team, we offer over 300 varieties for purchase at:

Hemel Food Garden, Two Waters Road, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9BY, Monday to Saturday from 9 AM to 3 PM.



Veg Boxes

From April to December, Sunnyside Rural Trust offer veg boxes! All our produce is grown without chemicals, using environmentally friendly methods.

- Build-your-own option available with a minimum order of £5.
- Eggs can also be ordered through the veg box, depending on availability.
- Fresh herbs are available alongside seasonal fruit and vegetables.

Expect authentic food, which may include quirky shapes and the occasional blemish.

Click here to sign up!



Monthly Veg Stalls

Get your hands on our seasonal veg every month at Hemel Food Garden! From freshly harvested greens to vibrant root vegetables, each month's selection is a celebration of the season. Our produce is grown using no-dig principles and fed by our homemade compost. Plus, with every purchase, you're helping to create jobs and learning opportunities for adults with learning disabilities. **Follow our social media for dates and times.**



Supporting Tom Stuart Smith and Arit Anderson

This year, we had the privilege of supplying plants and gardening support to Arit Anderson and Tom Stuart-Smith for the Chelsea Flower Show. In more exciting news, we'll also be growing plants for Tom Stuart-Smith's Tate Britain Garden, with propagation done by our trainees using the TSS plant library. Collaborating with professional gardeners on these projects offers our trainees a unique opportunity to gain invaluable hands-on experience in plant propagation.



Picture shows one of our trainees enjoying TSS Tate Britain installation at RHS CFS



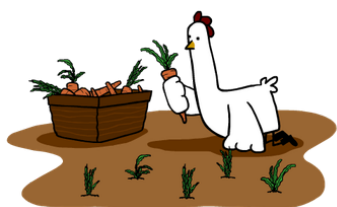
Events 2026

The events season has well and truly arrived. We will be at many plant fairs and community events over the next few months, come and see us!

Seasonal Events at Northchurch

Our annual Grab & Grow event was a huge success! We love welcoming the local community to our beautiful site, where they can explore our Spring Activity Trail, purchase some of our wonderful plug plants, and, of course, indulge in treats from our café.

This year, we're excited to host our second **Sunnyside Summer Festival on Saturday, July 18th**. You can look forward to local music, delicious food, and much more! Stay tuned for further details by following us on our social media platforms.



Hemel Food Garden National Garden Scheme

We are proudly part of the National Garden Scheme (NGS), a fantastic UK charity that opens the gates to over 3,500 exceptional private gardens, raising millions for important nursing and health charities. For the past few years, we have welcomed the public to our otherwise private site, and this year we could officially open our peat-free Hampton Court Garden, which Arit Anderson donated to us in 2024. We also had guided tours and incredible home-made cakes and cream teas from our beautiful cafe. It was a joy to showcase the incredible daily work of our trainees, staff, and volunteers.



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Spring is an incredible time of year.
We naturally want to clear out and make way for the new.
At Sunnyside, this means growing, and we are already seeing
amazing projects, people, and plants come alive.



Some early highlights have been winning the
High Sheriff Award for our Social Prescribing work,
Care in the Community Award from Heart Radio,
sending plants and gardening support to
Tom Stuart Smith and Arit Anderson at the RHS
Chelsea Flower Show (see picture of me and Arit
on her wonderful Project Giving Back garden for
Parkinsons UK).

A huge thanks to our trainees, volunteers and team for all their creativity
and hard work. Sunnyside continues to thrive and has an incredible impact
on our community.

Keely Siddiqui-Charlick, CEO

Join our Board of Trustees



We are seeking dedicated candidates with expertise in:
**Charity finance, Human Resources, Horticulture
and Safeguarding to join our Board of Trustees.**
Be part of a team that truly makes a difference!

**Are you passionate about making a difference
in your community?**

Sunnyside Rural Trust offers transformative work experiences for young people and adults with learning disabilities in West Hertfordshire. Through our innovative initiatives in horticulture, community projects, wellbeing services, and social enterprises, we empower individuals to develop skills, boost their confidence, and thrive.

If you're interested in discussing
this opportunity further, please
reach out to us at:
jobs@sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk.

Sunnyside
Rural Trust