

Elsewhere in the paper will be a report of me opening the new eco-facility at Ditton Allotments. Funded by the National Lottery, allotmenters now longer have to hide behind some tarpaulin if they are caught short while weeding and it has the added bonus of having a communal space next door for a quick cup of tea and a catch up about this year's crop.

Having spoken about the power of having an allotment, as I do, on one's physical and mental wellbeing I was delighted to read just a few days later the new Secretary of State for Health advocating alternatives to antidepressants, such as gardening and the great outdoors. I find my own allotment is a real distraction from the everyday hustle and bustle. You can't think about Brexit when you trying to train a runner bean or shoo a cabbage white from your brassicas. And even though my plot is right by a busy road, it is a place of solace. Don't get me wrong having an allotment is hardly free of anxiety - my cauliflowers haven't yet sprouted a head, the lack of rain is having a devastating effect on the carrots, and I am running quite a few weeks late on getting the leeks in. But still I look forward to my snatched moments.

And it is this kind of mindful distraction that the Health Secretary rightly thinks can help improve our mental wellbeing. Gardening is proven to be good for your mind (and body) and can keep you active longer. When we have seen the doubling of prescriptions for antidepressants it is right that we begin to recognise the power of alternatives. Not always because medical help is important but run side by side with other activities we could be at the start of something quite exciting and with the added bonus of never needing to buy another courgette from the supermarket again!