

**MINUTES OF SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY'S  
20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
held on  
SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2016  
at 10.30am at  
SUNNYSIDE RURAL TRUST**

**Present:**

John Eaton (Chair)  
Lin Phillips (Vice-chair)  
Jenny Sippings (Secretary)  
Andy James (Treasurer)  
Cynthia Fulks (Minutes)  
Kate Rankin  
Clive Smith  
Jane Dickenson  
Wendy Calder  
Marsha Facey  
William Facey  
Peter Block  
Annick Mulcahy  
Dennis Casserley  
Linda May  
Geoff Halls  
Fyena May  
Kelly May  
Neil Kennedy  
Tricia Kennedy  
Phillipa Jones  
Simon Nicolle

**Apologies for Absence:**

John Driver  
David Hulbert  
Diane Mix  
Fiona Duck  
John Goffey  
Angela Wheeldon  
Ray Phipps  
Grace Phipps  
Denre Bruins  
Charlotte Bruins  
Phil Biss  
Rachel Scott  
Richard Hackworth  
Jamie Fulks

**1/16 To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received (see above).

**2/16 To approve the minutes of the last AGM**

The Minutes of the AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015 were confirmed and signed.

### **3/16 To receive the Chairman's report**

John Eaton presented his report, summarised as follows:

- John thanked the members of the Committee and other volunteers, Lin Phillips who has settled in to the position of editor of the newsletter and works alongside Jenny to ensure this is published. Also to Cynthia and Phillipa for cleaning the toilet on a monthly rota basis, and to John Goffey who has taken over from Adrian Scarborough on the water duties. Adrian has resigned his position on the committee due to work commitments and he was thanked for his past contribution to the society. More volunteers are needed for toilet cleaning duties as Lin stepped down last year after 5 years. Dennis Casserley kindly volunteered for this position.
- John thanked Trish and Neil Kennedy for continuing to co-ordinate the working parties on behalf of the committee throughout 2016 and reported that they are resigning from these duties at the end of the working parties season in March 2017. Neil publishes the jobs to be done 2 weeks in advance and these are generally posted on the notice boards, volunteers are always required and not necessarily for the whole day but for whatever time tenants can spare. When work is done on the coppices the volunteers get first refusal of the bean sticks. Past work has included clearing coppices, sorting out leaf and woodchip piles and path renovation. The working parties run from October through the winter months covering whatever tasks are required on the sites and with the resignation of Neil and Trish new volunteer co-ordinators are required to fill their place. An alternative way of organising the site jobs may be considered by the committee for winter 2017, more involvement is needed by plot holders. Individual plot holders continue completing jobs at other times during the week when time allows. Thanks were also given to the willing helpers who provide lunch on the working party days.
- Jamie Fulks and Clive Smith were thanked for their excellent work of renovating the toilet and work continues on clearing the site for the SAS shed, wood rack, manure bay and extra car parking. The next step is renovating and erecting the shed, volunteers are needed to help with this and Simon Nicolle volunteered his assistance as co-ordinator. Kelly & Linda May also offered their help. John hoped that this task would be completed within the first two months of the spring. The plan is to move the shed to the new site, renovate the component parts and then erect it on site. The purpose of the shed is to store the society's property of gazebos, chairs, tables and other equipment.
- The role of the Committee was outlined by John as representing all plot holders and as a voice on the Council's Allotment Sub Committee to discuss rents and other works as appropriate. Other jobs undertaken are the management of water usage, letting plots and advising tenants of the council's allotment requirements. All social activities are organised by the committee with help from other volunteers. Volunteers for the society's committee are always welcome and anyone interested should speak to any current committee member for further details. Anyone who has an interest in joining the committee in the future can come along and observe a meeting by first making arrangements with Jenny Sippings, there are 6 meetings per year. Will Facey may consider this in the future.
- Allotment Management Team - Council still has work in progress on the new computerised information system. As financial reserves are in very good health,

rents remain unchanged again this year at £25 for a full plot and £15 for pressurised water. The Council is considering re-evaluating the water charges to simplify administration, and the committee representative is fully involved in this discussion. As part of the plot holder's agreement they are entitled to collect water by a bucket. Several plot holders voiced their opinion on pressurised water as opposed to siphoning or carrying it. A show of hands was taken to gauge the level of plot holders who paid for a water licence. This numbered 5 out of the 20 present at the meeting. John advised the meeting that there was money in the reserves to improve the water distribution system on SSN, many tenants find great difficulty carrying heavy water.

- Rights of way – Council continues to close all roads on Sunnyside once a year except for A Road, to ensure no rights are lost by default – this is a legal commitment. Access for allotment holders is not affected.
- Trees – Council has continued to remove or trim a number of non-fruit trees and there are now none overhanging plots. Trees will continue to be monitored and information passed to the Council. A member mentioned non fruiting firs on SSN- the committee will check this situation. A member also advised of overhanging trees on the railway and asked for the Council to be notified.
- Waiting List - There is currently a very short waiting list and 1 and half vacant plots on SSO. A permanent notice is on the site notice boards asking for prospective new tenants.
- Untidy plots – John and Jenny have carried out inspections three times this year to ensure the Council's tenancy terms are being met Plot holders should notify a committee member if they are experiencing problems with adjacent plots. We have ground cover material available to put on vacant plots for weed management.
- Events – The Open Day was again a success, and thanks go to Angela who is stepping down from the job of co-ordinator after many years of organising successful open days. Wendy will take over this position in 2017 and she has a number of roles that require volunteers including checking furniture, preparation of the site, publicity, meet & greeters, raffle sellers plus others. We now look forward to Christmas drinks at the Tea Hut on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 12 – 3pm; please bring a plate of food to share. It is probable that David Lassman will be available to mull the wine.
- Roadways – John asked that all plot holders do not drive on the roadways in wet weather and also not to dig down below the road level to hold manure at the end of their plots as this is causing a safety issue.
- Deer Problem SSN – Fencing is being considered and the Council is getting quotes.
- Entrance Repairs – More gravel will be put down at Grantham Mews entrance. Repairs have been done to entrance gates and posts this year.
- Rotovator – John advised that a rotovator had been donated to the society and Clive will check that this is in running order and if so we will make a donation to the Hospice of £50.

#### **4/16 To consider and approve the Society's accounts and to consider proposals for expenditure**

Andy James, Treasurer, presented the annual accounts, on his 2nd year as treasurer. These were approved, and Andy was thanked for his work in this role over the year. A member queried if we could get a bank facility that paid interest, this is under review by Andy.

Membership of the SAS was down this year even though tenancies are up; the newsletter will be used to promote the benefits of belonging to the society, together with the substantial benefits to both tenants and society of the seed scheme. We have 56 paying members out of 175 tenants. Andy reported that income from the Open Day had increased from the previous year and Ted's bench had been self financing with £148 surplus going to Ted's charities.

The 30 seed orders had generated income for the society at the first tier of discount. It was also reported that despite a well fought battle the Watford Allotments had lost their case for continuing on their present site.

### **5/16 To receive any nominations for officers/committee members**

The following officers were nominated:

Chair: John Eaton  
Vice-Chair: Lin Phillips  
Treasurer: Andy James  
Secretary: Jenny Sippings

Kate Rankin was nominated as a new committee member plus committee members listed below.

### **6/16 To elect Officers and Committee**

The following people were elected to the committee.

Chair: John Eaton  
Vice-Chair: Lin Phillips  
Treasurer: Andy James  
Secretary: Jenny Sippings

Committee Members:

Wendy Calder  
Angela Wheeldon  
Cynthia Fulks  
John Goffey  
Kate Rankin

A discussion of how to encourage more committee members took place and this would be promoted via the newsletter. Will Facey said he may consider joining the committee at a future date.

### **7/16 To elect Allotments' representative on Town Council's Allotment Management Team**

John Eaton was elected as the site representative, with Lin Phillips as the deputy and Jenny Sippings as the substitute.

### **8/16 To consider future developments**

- a) Society shed project – as previously noted
- b) SSN water system extension
- c) Roadway repairs

### **9/16 Any other business**

- a) A member suggested the AGM should take place on the same day as the Christmas Drinks to encourage more attendance and interest in the society.
- b) Roadway safety – there should be no further digging down for manure heaps and where this has happened the sides must be shored up to protect pedestrians and traffic on the roadways.
- c) Removal of rubbish when taking over a new plot – plot holders must remove it to the refuse dump themselves

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.