

**MINUTES OF SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY'S  
8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
held on  
SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2004  
at  
SUNNYSIDE RURAL TRUST**

**Present:**

Bruce Jones (Chairman)  
Jenny Sippings (Secretary)  
Daniel Bartlett (Treasurer)  
Bernard Axford  
Kylie Bartlett  
Jean Barnett  
Michael Barwise  
Brenda Baynes  
Philip Biss  
Peter Block  
George Brown  
Sue Dabbagh  
Jane Dickenson  
John Driver  
Fiona Duck  
Ted Dyer  
Betty Fowell  
Peter Fowell  
John Goffey  
Brian Jackson  
Elizabeth Jones  
Amanda Montague  
Peggy Picco  
Richard Pollock  
Jim Renton  
Garry Rooke  
John Savage

Patrick Stileman  
Chris Watt  
Clive Weakley  
Mary Weakley  
Angela Wheeldon  
Rina Wheeler

**Apologies for Absence:**

Karen Bevan  
Dennis Casserley  
Shirley Casserley  
Jim Ellisdon  
Geoffrey Giles  
Hazel Grimwood  
Carol Hall  
Graham Hall  
Karin Huber  
Ian Knight  
Pru Scofield  
Clive Smith  
Angela Walsh  
Judith Ward  
Peter Ward  
Peter Wheeler

Bruce Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting and he also thanked Sunnyside Rural Trust for the use of their hall.

## **1/04 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received (see above).

## **2/04 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record by all those attending.

## **3/04 Chairman's report**

This was Bruce's second chairman's report and his first year as site rep. He felt that it had been a good year and that we had welcomed many new friends to the allotments and that everyone got on very well together despite all being different.

Bruce then continued by reviewing the past year.

### **Things Bruce felt did not go well:**

*The Toilet.* Bruce expected to be able to report that the toilet had been completed in September 2004 and put to good use. However despite our efforts it is still not available. Planning Permission and Building Regulation Permission are in place and we should soon have essential connection to the main sewer arranged by the council. We will then do the rest of the work. We have the materials, fittings and the skills and will make the time to do the work. Bruce promised that the toilet will be completed well before the AGM 2005.

*The Allotment Strategy.* Bruce reported that this is not quite accomplished yet, despite much discussion.

*Vacant Plots.* We have not yet managed to let all of the vacant plots on Sunnyside New, despite our considerable efforts on clearance days last winter and work on the middle roadway last weekend, which will be continued next weekend. We hope to be more targeted in the future, concentrating our efforts on the vacant plots nearest to the established blocks of cultivation. It has not yet been decided whether to keep the haul route.

### **Things that went well:**

*The Allotment Strategy:* This is not yet in place, but it now really coming on. An Allotments Charter has been drafted and discussed and agreed by the Allotments Management Team. It will be going before the full Council on 6 December. If approved it will form the basis for more detailed work on the strategy. We feel pleased to have got this far and we have reason to hope that the AMT will gain even more standing with the Council and that it will really become the means by which the allotments are managed, and from which fully discussed proposals will go the Council for approval. Despite the recent disagreements with the Council over rents etc the signs are now very good for the allotments to go forward in the future.

*The allotments are getting to be more cultivated.* We have had success in promoting the allotments (and we try to promote all Berkhamsted Allotments) and in letting more Sunnyside New plots. We have a lot of new friends as tenants since the last AGM and the allotments are perhaps looking more cultivated and productive. We have managed to encourage the tidying up of some scruffy corners. We hope to continue with this into the future, but not at the expense of some wild areas essential for the well being of our plots.

*Railway works.* The railway contractors have been and gone and despite the disruption we have gained some better gate posts and gates, including new gate posts at the Ivy House Lane end of Old. We also gained hardcore for the improvement of the Sunnyside New middle roadway. The plots they occupied have been reinstated and we are considering how they should be used after they have settled down. Whether the fence down Grantham Mews is an improvement is something that people have different views on.

*Materials.* Ted's wood pile continues to grow and the number of greenhouses. Ted continues to quietly do the things we rely on him for, like fixing gates and water tanks and much other maintenance saving the Council a lot of money. We expect to continue this self help culture.

*Events.* As well as holding two Open Days we have continued to promote allotments whenever we get the opportunity through events such as:

- the Lions Fete, August Bank Holiday Monday;
- the Art Exhibition (National Allotments Week);
- the Berkhamsted Town Council stall in the High Street for National Allotments Week;
- the Community Fair in the Old Town Hall;
- and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December we will be with the Council on their stall at the Festival of Light;
- clearance days next weekend working on the Sunnyside New middle road way.

*Standards of cultivation.* Because of the pressure of demand on Sunnyside Old, we are beginning to take a more critical look at the standards of cultivation, and four plots have changed hands this autumn. Bruce appealed to tenants to consider whether they are able to do justice to a full plot and if not think about giving up a half or quarter – particularly on Sunnyside Old. We have some tenants keen to expand and other potential new tenants. It is also important that plots of a more 'environmental' nature are cut back so as not to stray onto the gardens of neighbours.

*Security.* Generally Sunnyside Allotments are pretty secure. We have had one theft from a shed this year and an act of apparent vandalism on a water tank. Bruce said that we should not be lulled into a sense of false security and need to remain aware. Sheds should be securely locked and tools security marked.

*Sunnyside Allotment Society.* The SAS is in good heart and that is all of the members, some of whom make very significant contributions in quiet ways by providing help and assistance and welcoming the new gardeners. Bruce thanked the other committee members for their hard work.

*Seed order.* The seed order has broken records this year, and despite hiring heavy plant for the last clearance day, the finances are in good order.

*Calendar 2005.* Since the 2004 calendar was such a deserved success, we are producing another one for 2005, this time with recipes to help us use our produce to best effect. Vast amounts of work go into the calendar, mostly by Jenny with Angela's assistance. Another major item that Jenny maintains is the Sunnyside Allotments website, which now has had many visits.

*The newsletter.* An enormous amount of hard work goes into the newsletter by Brenda and Fiona, and we know it is well received by everyone. Please send any suitable articles to Brenda who is the editor.

## **4/04 Consider and approve the Society's accounts**

Daniel apologised for not having a set of audited accounts. George Brown (auditor) currently has the latest set. These will be included in January's newsletter.

Income from seed order, sales and donations increased this year.

We had £1096.11 in funds at the close of the year.

Daniel will be putting systems in place to track income.

There will be further expenditure next weekend on tool hire for the clearance day.

## **5/04 Open Days and Barbecue**

*Open Days and barbecue.* We held two open days this year, both wet. Even with additional help we have found it a great deal of hard work to organise 2 open days. We feel that it will be best to continue holding the barbecue at the end of June, but to have just one Open Day during National Allotments Week in August.

Angela suggested that we could hire Sunnyside Rural Trust's hall for an art exhibition and we could perhaps hold a scarecrow competition.

John Driver recognised that most of the work falls on a few people. He suggested that we should raise the level of advertising e.g. local radio, newspapers.

John Goffey asked whether August was wise because of the holiday period. However it was felt that the same applied to June. August is a good time for produce and to be a part of National Allotments Week.

## **6/04 Future Projects**

Generally we wish to keep Sunnyside Allotment Society going and to promote allotments within the town.

*Bee keeping.* Angela raised the subject of bee keeping. Some concerns have been raised about allergies. Michael asked whether this would affect the wild bee population. Jane Dickenson thought not. It was also raised whether we would need insurance and whether neighbouring houses would be affected.

*Restoring paths on Sunnyside Old.* We would like to restore paths between plots and some of the horizontal paths between A road and B road.

*Site shop.* Michael raised the question of whether we could have a site shop so we could buy items like bamboo canes and strings in bulk. It was pointed out that we run a seed order. Chris Watts informed us that SRT are having a secure green container moved from Northchurch. A similar thing would make a good store. It was suggested we could ask the railway for a trackside store.

*Birtchnell's copse and hazel coppice.* Patrick thinks we could make the first cut soon on Old. We aim to be self sufficient in sticks. February 5 clearance day will be used to work on Birtchnell's copse and coppice.

## **704 To receive any nominations for officers/committee members**

All officers on the committee were prepared to stand again and all other members apart from Graham Hall.

John Driver was proposed by Brian Jackson and seconded by Patrick Stileman.

## **8/04 Election of officers and committee**

The committee elected is as follows:

Bruce Jones	Chairman	866078
Ted Dyer	Vice Chair	872684
Jenny Sippings	Secretary	865890
Daniel Bartlett	Treasurer	877109
Brenda Baynes		865853
John Driver		862734
Fiona Duck		874334
Patrick Stileman		874457
Clive Weakley		875373
Angela Wheeldon		874440

George Brown agreed to continue as auditor.

## **9/04 Election of Allotments' representative on Town Council's Allotments Management Team**

Bruce is willing to continue as rep. He feels there is still much to do in terms of strategy.

## **10/ 04 Any Other Business**

*Newsletter.* Brenda asked for articles on gardening and that articles should be emailed to her. The next newsletter is due to go out in January. Michael asked when the copy date is. Brenda replied that it takes 2 weeks to produce.

*Website.* Bruce thanked Jenny for doing the website.

*Calendars.* On sale at the end of the meeting for £3.50 each.

*Subscriptions.* £2 to be paid to Daniel at the end of the meeting.

*Sunnyside Rural Trust.* Chris Watts announced that for the next 2 Saturdays there would be a charity tombola stall on Berkhamsted market. He also asked for donations.

*Black plastic.* Michael Barwise is concerned that the council have been providing non-porous black plastic. A catalogue of porous cover has been given to the town clerk.

*Cheap plants and seeds.* John Driver pointed out that many of the local garden centres belong to Wyevales and are very expensive. He asked whether we could put 'good buys' and bargains in the newsletter. Michael suggested a list of supplier should be on the website. It was pointed out that this already exists.

The meeting closed at 11.25 a.m. Next year's AGM will take place on 26 November 2005.