

Minutes of the Sunnyside Allotment Society Meeting held on Saturday 22nd
February, 1997

Present:

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| Ted Dyer | Chairman |
| Sharon Longley | Secretary |
| John Savage | Treasurer |
| Fiona Duck | Committee Member |
| Graham Hall | Committee Member |
| Kenneth Harbord | Committee Member |
| Carol Hall | |
| Ray Cheshire | |
| Hazel Grimwood | |
| Pete Phizackerley | |
| Greta-Jean Jolliff | |
| John Wood | |
| Mick D Lowen | |
| Clive Smith | |
| Jenny Sippings | |
| Kit Owens | |
| Dave King | |
| Paul & Lyn Phillips | |
| Theresa Manfield | |
| Martin Burbidge | |
| Peter Kohn | |
| Peter Block | |

Apologies for absence were received from:

Komeran Gadgar
Rosemary Burnett
Phil Biss
Phil Andrews
Angela Wheeldon
Bruce Nixon
Glynis Scaramuzza
Liz Jackson
Brian Burbidge
Liz Ansell

Draft Constitution:

All Tenants had received, prior to the meeting, a copy of the Draft Constitution of the Sunnyside Allotment Society. This is a condensed version of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardens rules. This has been presented in draft format to the Town Council. The only comment received was from Cllr Cutting who

suggested that item 26 be amended to qualify "majority of votes". There was no indication as to whether this was of those present, proxy, postal or substitute members. The meeting agreed that the words "of those present" be inserted after "majority of votes" and the "Rules" have been duly amended - *see attached*.

One item raised was that a provision should be made for relatives of deceased tenants in that they should have "first call" on the allotment in the event of their demise. However, rules such as this are not required in the Constitution but this matter will be looked at with regards to inclusion in the Tenancy Agreement although at the current time we do not have any influence in the letting of plots. This comes under the Town Council. When the time comes and we enter into an agreement with the Town Council with regards to the management of the allotments, we will have more control and items such as the above can be included in the agreement. Another matter raised by the meeting was the number of plots that are not being looked after by "sitting tenants" and the fact that some of these are the best plots. This is a source of concern to a lot of people. At the current time this is a situation we have no control over as this is in the hands of the Town Council. However, the current Tenancy Agreement is quite clear and many items are covered, and anyone who does not comply is in breach of the agreement.

Ted Dyer (Chairman) mentioned the possibility of working parties to make unused plots more attractive to prospective tenants. We are all in agreement that the common purpose of the Society is to have allotment land and keep it. The time to make the changes mentioned is when we have more control and are accepted by the Town Council.

Item 16 of the Constitution was discussed and agreed upon. The Society is not the place for political issues to be raised. We will deal with the Council whatever political party it belongs to.

Ted Dyer brought to the fore the question of levying a fee of "a sum not exceeding £1.00 per annum" - see Item 6. No-one had raised an objection about this and it was agreed after discussion that this sum would stand. However, it was pointed out that this was a voluntary payment. If and when we become self-running, then this figure can be reassessed. Before that time should we need funds, these could be raised by way of "fund raising events".

Paul Phillips suggested that Rule 11 should be amended to provide for Members calling a Special General Meeting to be required to obtain 12 signatures rather than the 5 shown in the draft.

After discussion it was agreed that the requirement for signatures be left at the 5 to avoid restricting members from using this Rule.

The Rules of the Sunnyside Allotment Society were formally adopted by the meeting by a unanimous vote.

Ted Dyer explained that the next step would be to enter into discussion with the Council as to how we move forward. Once the necessary information is obtained, a further meeting of the Society will be called and a decision taken on how we should proceed. The meeting was asked if anyone objected to these discussions taking place but the meeting was in full support.

The meeting was asked for suggestions on questions to be resolved with the Town Council and some are attached - *see Appendix I*. **Tenants were invited to add issues they felt were not covered by informing the Secretary - Sharon Longley, 53 Ellesmere Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 2EU - or other Committee Members by the end of March.**

Any Other Business:

Seven gardens have been let on the bottom side of Row C in the last couple of months.

John Savage was available to collect the £1 payments from society members.

Appendix 1

Suggested questions to be resolved with the Town Council regarding Sunnyside Allotments:

What is the Council's position on transfer of management of the allotments in regard to:

- (a) Maintenance of the boundaries including hedge cutting?
- (b) Maintenance of the water supply pipework:
 - (i) *would the Council retain responsibility for major works including renewal of supply pipes given the age of the majority of the pipes or is this seen as an SAS responsibility?*
- (c) What are the Council's arrangements for insurance against incidents on the site including personal injury to members of the public or damage to adjacent property due to such things as fire? Who carries the insurance and the cost?
- (d) Does the Council envisage a total transfer of responsibility including:
 - (i) *letting of plots?*
 - (ii) *collection of rents?*
 - (iii) *payment of water bills?*
 - (iv) *tank maintenance?*
 - (v) *cutting of roadways/hedges?*
 - (vi) *clearance of unused plots?*
 - (vii) *advertising?*
- (e) Budget: Would the Council make a contribution to the Society funds from the admin savings they expect to achieve?
- (f) Would the sites be leased to the Society for a nominal sum for a long period?
- (g) Would the "lease" between the Council and Sunnyside Rural Trust transfer to the Society?
- (h) Would the total area of both sites be included in the management arrangement including Birchnells Copse?
- (i) What arrangements would the Council envisage they would require to monitor the activities of the Society:
 - (i) *frequency of meetings?*
 - (ii) *audit of accounts?*
 - (iii) *Council representation at meetings of the Society?*
- (j) What is the present revenue generated by tenancies/lease for both sites annually?

- (k) What has been the water charge for both Sunnyside sites for 1994/95, 1995/96 and 1996/97?
- (l) Would the Council envisage interference with the Society's management of the sites, e.g. deciding that there is a desire to build on any part of Sunnyside Old or proposing any change to the green belt status of Sunnyside New?
- (m) Would the Council have anything to do with a partial transfer of responsibility e.g. the Society being responsible for determining tenancies but leaving rent collection to the Council?