

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A warm welcome to the Sunnyside Rural Trust 2010/2011 Annual Report and 2012 Calendar and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am pleased to present this report. Our main focus for the year continued to be offering training and employment opportunities to adults with learning disabilities and in addition this year has seen the Trust continue to open new opportunities for our service users.

### Highlights from this year include:

- A successful grant application to Social Enterprise Investment Fund (SEIF) to enable the Trust to expand our Northchurch site by taking on a 25 year lease for 3 acres of land adjacent to our existing operation. This development has 6 new polytunnels, 8 new chicken houses for 100 new hens, 2 new greenhouses, a 40m<sup>2</sup> soft fruit cage, rainwater collection tower, 150 fruit trees and a number of new raised beds. We anticipate the additional produce from this land will significantly increase the amount of saleable goods as well as enhancing opportunities for people with learning disabilities.
- The Trust won a competitive tender to operate the Central Nursery site based in Hemel Hempstead. Along with the lease for the site is a 5 year contract to grow Dacorum Borough Council's bedding plants. This will offer local people with learning disabilities the opportunity of paid employment and volunteering opportunities from the wider local community.
- We have focused on opening and operating our farm shop at the Northchurch site and running regular local market stalls stocked with our produce. A key aspect is the training in customer services, sales and retail this offers to people with learning disabilities as well as paid employment.
- In addition to our horticultural activities we have supported 8 adults with learning disabilities to train as qualified PAT testers (Portable Electric Testing). We now offer a competitive and high quality service to local businesses and other charities.
- We are increasing the number of service users making use of our services and in particular those who have individual budgets. We continue to support our service users to make the transition into individual budgets and greater financial independence.
- In 2010 we celebrated 20 years of Sunnyside Rural Trust with an event at our Activity Centre. The event included a live band, auction, organic barbecue courtesy of Eastwood Butchers and an amazing cake cut ceremoniously by Major of Berkhamsted, Julie Laws.

To enable us to realise our ambitions and to grow the Trust in times of sure economic challenges, we have actively sought new trustees to strengthen the Board. These new recruits together with the experience of existing trustees provides the platform to set the strategic priorities and supports the Chief Executive to achieve them, and I feel confident that we will go from strength to strength over the next few months and during next year. We are delighted to have won the contract to run the Central Nursery which has enabled us to diversify our income while continuing to build on our strengths.

The last year has been very encouraging and I am very excited about next. The challenges of a shift in funding for our mainstream activities while developing our existing services provides Sunnyside Rural Trust with unique opportunities to build on our knowledge and experiences and continue to add significant value to our service users and the local community alike.

 

*Rhys Madoc, Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

## OUR VISION

Sunnyside Rural Trust has a vision of an inclusive community where all people are valued and enriched within a sustainable environment.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Sunnyside Rural Trust has a mission to provide services that will empower individuals to fulfil their potential for their benefit and for the benefit of the wider community and environment.

## OUR VALUES

- Inclusion
- Choice & empowerment
- Self-determination
- Sustainability
- Person-centred services
- Dignity



## PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The Trust plans to continue with the activities outlined in the Chairperson's report. In addition our new site, The Hemel Food Garden will begin to operate from the Central Nursery in Hemel Hempstead. The site will grow bedding plants but also become a local food hub where community groups and the public can enrol on a variety of courses. We have formed a robust partnership with Dacorum Borough Council, Dacorum in Transition groups, Boxmoor Trust, Community Action Dacorum, Herts Mind Network and a wide range of other local charities and community groups. The site will be funded through social enterprise activity including the bedding plant contracts, sales to the public and donations. We have received funding through the Big Lottery Local Food stream to ensure it is able to meet its objectives.

