



## **THE ORCHARD PROJECT – Sunnyside Rural Trust at Tom and Sue Stuart Smith’s Serge Hill project.**

The Orchard Project will be a land-based service offering horticultural therapy, high quality perennial plant growing, training and education, a sustainable social enterprise and a community hub.

It is located on land owned by Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith and will pull together their skills with local charities and horticultural resources to offer an innovative and dynamic service for some of the most vulnerable people in the community. It was granted planning permission in 2020. The Stuart-Smiths are funding the overall development of the site and the construction of a horticultural hub building for lectures and events.



A key partnership has been developed with Sunnyside Rural Trust, who will be growing a range of perennials on site for commercial sale whilst supporting and training vulnerable young people and adults with learning disabilities in horticulture. Sunnyside grew the plants for Tom’s Iconic Horticultural Hero garden at RHS Hampton Court Flower Festival 2021.

The whole Serge Hill site comprises four different elements

### **The resource centre**

The building, which takes the form of a large timber framed barn, has a footprint of 175m<sup>2</sup> and includes a 30m<sup>2</sup> mezzanine floor. It comprises storage space, toilets, an office, large kitchen and a meeting/events space.

The construction of this has been paid for privately by Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith. Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith will run a series of events that promote the benefits of gardening, especially the benefits for mental health and learning.



### **The vegetable plots**

Beginning at the start of the pandemic in March 2020, eight vegetable plots were created for local residents at Serge Hill. A small number of plots are being used by local schools and charities. The Watford youth counselling service Signpost are already on site. Two local schools for whom Tom Stuart-Smith Ltd have voluntarily designed gardens, Bedmond Academy and Breakespeare School, are also interested in participating.

### **The plant library**

The plant library comprises a collection of approx. 2000 different plant varieties intended as a learning aid for gardeners and is looked after by a team of volunteers. These plots have been developed over the last two years by Tom Stuart-Smith's design studio with support from a team of ten local volunteers. We envisage the plant library being looked after by a wider group of volunteers and Sunnyside apprentices. Tom Stuart-Smith Ltd employs a gardener three days per week to look after the plant library and to organise volunteers. Sunnyside will use this as a source of propagation material for our perennial growing enterprise and horticultural therapy work.



*The plant library in July 2021 (left) and the plant library in September 2021 (right)*

### **The nursery – Sunnyside’s base**

The nursery is being developed on a 760m<sup>2</sup> site within the orchard for the propagation of plants from the plant library collection and the private garden of Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith. The site will include a glasshouse, level standing-out areas, compost heaps and a mess room for Sunnyside staff and apprentices. The building and operation of this facility is the main object of fund raising.

At a time when the therapeutic benefits of horticulture are so clear and cuts to social care are so common; this project will provide a space to heal and the opportunity to develop and gain paid employment.

### **The project supporters**



**Tom Stuart-Smith** is a landscape architect who has designed gardens, parks and landscapes throughout the world.

Significant projects in the public domain have included the Queen's Jubilee garden at Windsor Castle to mark the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, a garden square at King's Cross in London for Argent LLP and the Aga Khan Foundation, several major projects at Chatsworth, a new public garden at the Hepworth Gallery Wakefield, and the masterplan for the RHS's gardens at Bridgewater (near Salford) which is the largest new garden project in the UK. The Weston Walled garden there was largely financed by the Garfield Weston Foundation.



**Sue Stuart-Smith** is a psychiatrist, psychotherapist and author of *The Well Gardened Mind*, which became a Sunday Times bestseller and a Times and Sunday Times book of the year. It has since been translated into fifteen languages.

**Okra Studio** is an emerging architecture studio based in London, they specialise in architecture, urban research and educational outreach. They have designed and supported Sunnyside.



**Sunnyside Rural Trust** is a registered charity that supports young people and adults with learning disabilities by offering training and employment opportunities within a social enterprise setting. We offer a wide range of employment opportunities including growing and selling fresh produce e.g. fruit, vegetables and salads; poultry keeping; PAT testing; gardening design and maintenance; allotment makeovers; warden services; and growing and selling a wide range of plants including Dacorum Borough Council bedding plant contract. We sell our produce and services through our two farm shops, local networks, regular markets stalls and local events.

We support over 150 people with learning disabilities every week. The impact we have:

- For every £1 spent with Sunnyside it saves £9 on statutory funding.
- In the UK only 5.4% of people with learning disabilities are in any kind of paid employment. Sunnyside has 7 people with learning disabilities in paid employment.
- We support the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of our trainees by building self-esteem and confidence alongside skill development.
- We are absolutely dedicated to providing training, opportunities and work to vulnerable young people and adults.

We offer activities from five sites all of which have different strengths and work to the same values:

**1. We value our people and work as a team. We:**

Listen to each other and show respect.

Empower people to reach their goals in a safe environment.

Support everyone in a fair and inclusive way.

**2. We care deeply about our environment. We offer inventive and sustainable services to the community. We stand for:**

Quality & stewardship

Enterprise

Reliability

**3. We have a passionate, "can do" approach to our work. We are:**

Resilient

Creative

Dedicated

To find out more please visit [www.sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk](http://www.sunnysideruraltrust.org.uk)



**Our sites:**

**Activity Centre** - based in Berkhamsted off Ivy House Lane. It offers a purpose-built facility where we cook the vegetables and fruits we grow on site. It has six acres, comprising gardens, allotments, heritage fruit orchards, coppice and willow plantations. AC offers services to people with learning disabilities and people with dementia.

**Hemel Food Garden** – based at Two Waters Rd, just off the canal in Hemel Hempstead. This is where we grow DBC's, Kings Langley and various cemetery bedding plant contracts. On site we have a successful café, bakery, farm shop and garden centre. We run a repair shed in partnership with Community Action Dacorum (CAD).

**Northchurch** – based on six acres at the bottom of Northchurch allotments, New Road. NC was our first service and to commemorate 30 years in 2020 we have built a new courtyard surrounded by new buildings. We will continue to grow veg across the six-acre site as well as offer animal therapeutic courses from the new stables (we have rescued a small number of pigs and sheep), care for 350 chickens and offer excellent training facilities. It has a farm shop on site that sells our produce including eggs, apple juice, jams and chutneys. We run a repair shed in partnership with Community Action Dacorum (CAD).

**Orchard Project** –Serge Hill Bedmond. In 2019 we built a temporary nursery to grow 7000 herbaceous perennials for the Iconic Horticultural Hero garden designed by Tom Stuart-Smith for the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show 2021.

**Sunnyside café @ The Forum** – Hemel Hempstead.

We operate a café at the headquarters of Dacorum Borough Council offering a daily menu, barista coffee and selection of meals and cakes.



### **Why Sunnyside?**

- We have a proven track record of developing safe and robust community projects and delivering in the short, medium and long term. For example, we received £300,000 from the Lottery to start our Hemel Food Garden site in 2011 and within 3 years (the target time) we were 100% self-sustaining and continue to thrive. It now offers a bakery, barista coffee, café, farm shop, perennial and bedding nursery, orchards, woodland allotments, beekeeping and a tranquil space on the canal.
- We have an excellent model of ensuring that our training contracts and social enterprise activity work together to generate diverse income streams.
- With our diverse horticultural experience, we would be able to grow high quality plants.

- In addition, we have 30 years' experience of land management. We are confident we can create a safe and enriching environment for the public to enjoy.
- We would create employment for local people and in particular those far from the job market and often disadvantaged in the marketplace.
- We are easy to work with and great at partnership working for example, we work with Community Action Dacorum offering Repairs Sheds across Dacorum, Age UK Dacorum offering gardening activities to their clients, Electric Umbrella by offering them a venue to practice and perform from, Herts Mind Network, South Hill Centre, DENS and many more.
- Sunnyside is a registered charity and not for profit so 100% of all income from social enterprise is invested in the care of vulnerable young people and adults in the local community.
- Winner of the Queens Award for voluntary service, demonstrating the quality and sustainability of our charity.
- We have an excellent safeguarding record for our teams, trainees, volunteers and the public. We are a competent, well-trained team and meet the standards set by Hertfordshire County Council approved providers list.

This opportunity provides the perfect combination of work and social responsibility to make a significant difference to vulnerable groups and the wider community.



People with learning disabilities are often overlooked for work and do not have an opportunity to be productive in their communities.

### **Impact**

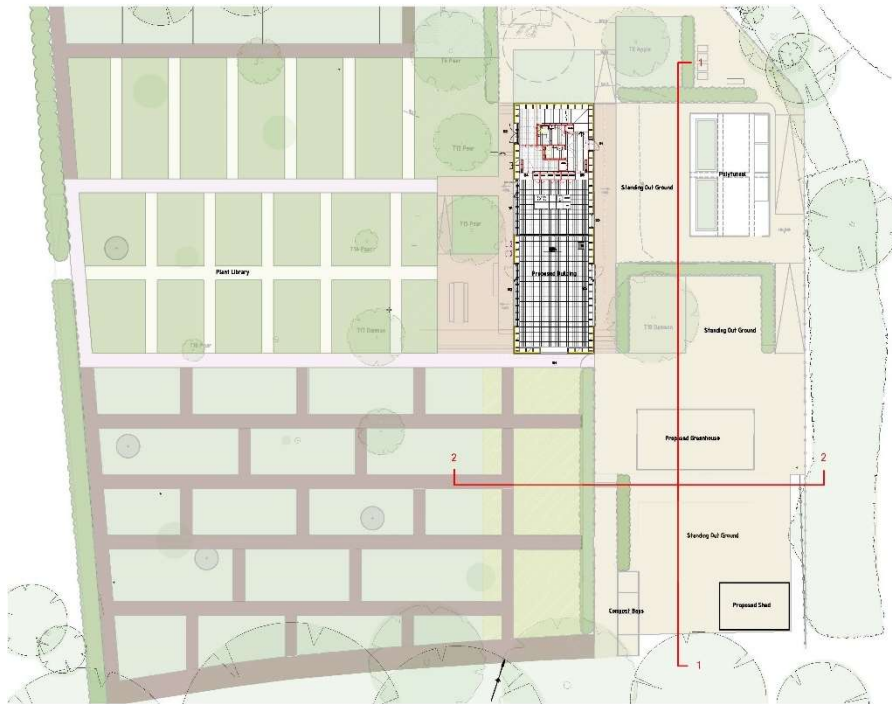
This development would offer:

- paid work, work experience, training and skill development,
- volunteering opportunities,
- therapeutic wages for vulnerable people and
- it will challenge the way the public see people with learning disabilities and breaks down barriers.

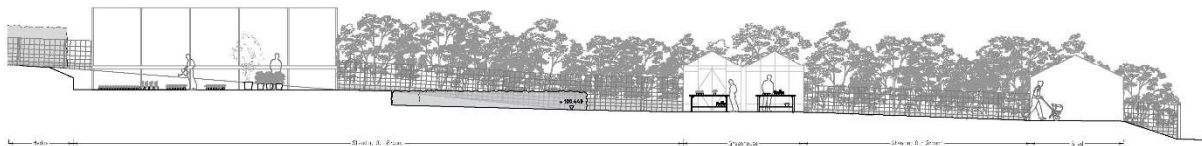
SRT will support 36 people a week to access horticultural therapeutic activity.

We will propagate plants and collect seeds from the onsite plant library to grow on for our gardening contracts and for sale to garden designers and the public.

## The design of the nursery at Serge Hill



Greenhouse Location Plan 1  
Scale 1:200



Greenhouse Elevation 1  
Scale 1:100



Greenhouse Elevation 2  
Scale 1:100

The design of the nursery comprises a self-contained area enclosed by deer and rabbit fencing and sheltered both by the barn building and existing woodland and a mature hedge. It feels comfortably enclosed but not hemmed in. Within this area we propose to add a commercial glasshouse 80m<sup>2</sup> and a 32M<sup>2</sup> mess room with a toilet, storage shed, boiler



house for greenhouse and handwashing facility for Sunnyside staff and apprentices. We propose to commission a community interest company (CIC), the architectural practice OKRA, to tender for the work to ensure value for money and sustainable materials. The building will have a pitched roof construction. We have planning permission accepted for this development by St Albans District Council.

## **Funding**

Our intention is to make this project 100% financially sustainable and independent within 2 years. We require capital funds at the beginning to build the setup, as detailed below. We would like funding for staffing so we can set up and ensure we are operating efficiently. In particular, we need to ensure the site is running safely to begin offering therapeutic horticultural activities.

We know we can support 6 people with learning disabilities from this site, 5 days a week, 40 weeks of the year. This will generate income of approx.£50k a year through statutory funding.

We will be growing for Tom Stuart Smith's gardening projects within the UK and other designers across the county from the plants grown each year and this will represent a minimum of £60,000 a year income by year 3.

We will be running plant sales from the orchard project and our other sites, we forecast these will generate a further £20,000 a year.

Finally, we will be running horticultural therapy sessions for bespoke groups through the year and forecast £12,000 income from this.

In total we believe we can cover our running costs each year by the beginning of year 3 and maintain the level of staffing, support and service to make this a successful social enterprise.

## **Funding required – please see detailed list at the end of the document.**

We are seeking funds for three aspects of the project:

### 1. Nursery construction

Establishing the nursery at the Serge Hill. So far we have partially fenced the site, laid on some services and created a level platform for the nursery. We propose to build a 12mx6.4m glasshouse, mess room, accessible toilet, and access ramp to get into the nursery. We propose to construct compost heaps so that waste from the garden is, as far as possible, recycled. The objective will be to have 6 full time apprentices working on the nursery which covers c. 760m<sup>2</sup>. Plants from the library will be propagated and grown on prior to being taken to other Sunnyside sites where they can be grown on to commercial size. Plants will also be sold on an informal basis at Serge Hill for the regular garden openings.

We need £164,864 to complete our full operating perennial nursery and horticultural therapeutic service.

2. Transport – we need a way to transport people and plants. We have identified a double cab transit van to enable this. We currently estimate this at approx. £40k. The site is far from public transport and the nature of our clients means they have additional vulnerabilities and challenges in getting to services and work. Without transport the value of this project would be dramatically reduced.

In order to transport and move plants around we need a sit on tractor and trailer. This will facilitate safe and efficient movement of plants and materials around the site.

3. Revenue running costs

In order to ensure the project is sustainable for the long term, we need initial support for salaries and revenue costs. We will use perennial plant revenue, direct payments, training income to be able to run these services for the long term.

We have agreed a long-term lease of the land at a peppercorn rent (to largely cover utilities) with the Stuart Smiths. We anticipate these costs will rise as cost-of-living situations continues. We have made a nominal provision to cover these.

Staffing

A project manager to manage SRT operations and work on site as a gardener. The postholder will be responsible for all horticultural activity, safeguarding, support needs, operations run by SRT, organising events, liaising with partners and our other sites.

We require professional input from a consistent horticultural coordinator to ensure the quality of therapeutic input. We only require some part time support but it is essential for the participants in order to get the maximum benefit from our work and services.

We want to offer paid opportunities to our most vulnerable community members. In the UK, only 5.1% of people with learning disabilities are in any kind of paid employment. Sunnyside has 7 people with learning disabilities in paid employment and we intend to build upon this.

PPE forms an important part of our work to keep everyone safe.

All equipment for which funds are sought will become property of Sunnyside Rural Trust.

We have already raised £164,000 towards our project. This is made up so far of:

- Abbots Langley Tough Ten committee have contributed £3,000 towards the accessible benches and tools.

- Sunnyside will offer all management and professional costs to the project in addition, office and core costs, printing, running costs, IT, insurance, and professional subscriptions. This is valued as £40,000 of matched funding each year.
- Julia and Hans Rausing have granted us £100,000 towards the project management and capital build.
- Tom and Sue Stuart Smith have held open events and this has contributed £16,000 to the fund.

The above funding will allow us to complete the ground works and fund the mess room. The next key element for us to secure funding for is the greenhouse. We require £63,620 in funding. The breakdown of all costs are details in the table on the next page.

We have chosen Harrier to design and build our bespoke growing structure so it fits the needs of the site, the people and the plants. It gives us the warmth, light and space to bring on cuttings and seeds to maximise our success.



## Costs for development of Sunnyside Rural Trust setup at the Orchard Serge Hill

	unit	quantity	rate	total
<b>Nursery construction</b>				
Levelling to areas except greenhouse	m2	760	10.5	£12,000
Construction of access ramps and accessible track	m2			£6,000
construction of retaining walls to nursery area	m2	15	230	£3,450
land drainage	item			£5,000
irrigation to nursery	m2	760	4.5	£3,420
mypex surface to nursery	m2	760	3.9	£2,964
Fencing to nursery - 2m high deerproof rabbit proof	m2	40	25	£6,000
Construction of compost heap	item			£2,000
	Nursery sub total			<b>£40,834</b>
<b>Greenhouse</b>				
Levelling to create platform for nursery and greenhouse with crushed stone base.				£8,000
screw piles to greenhouse	item			£2,000
Purchase and erection of Greenhouse 12.6m x 6.2m	item			£35,000
Fit out of greenhouse inc propagation tables, including rise and fall potting tables x3. Fully accessible.	item			£4,500
Irrigation within greenhouse				£7,000
Danish trolleys for plants		6	220	£1,320
Potting benches		6	300	£1,800
Services to greenhouse inc boiler room construction	item			£4,000
	Greenhouse sub total			<b>£63,620</b>
<b>Mess room</b>				
screw piles to mess room	item			£2,000
timber supply to mess room felling, mislling and transportation costs only	item			£6,000
construct mess room including design fees	item			£40,000
construct toilet and outside handwashing facilities. Connect to existing septic tank	item			£5,210
Internal fixtures and fittings to Mess room including tools, outside table and chairs, inside furniture, kitchen.	item			£4,800
log burning stove inc fitting and building control sign off	item			£2,400
	Mess room subtotal			<b>£60,410</b>
	<b>Nursery work total</b>			<b>£164,864</b>
<b>Transport</b>				
Transport - plants and people carrier. Ford transit. Ideally hybrid.			1	£40,000
Trailer and small tractor				£20,000
	<b>Transport total</b>			<b>£60,000</b>
<b>Staffing and revenue costs</b>				

PPE for trainees and volunteers (hi viz, boots, overalls, gloves, secateurs and bag)	item			£2,500
Compost, plant materials, pots, trays, seeds, plugs etc. All covered within funds raised so far. Approx £4,000 each year.	item			£4,000
Septic tank emptying costs	per annum	2	342	£684
Rent and utility contribution to Serge Hill site	per annum	2	1200	£2,400
Legal fees	item			£2,500
Central costs and core covered 100% by SRT.	per annum			£12,000
to employ full time project director for 2 years including NI, pension @18.05%	per annum	2	35,415	£70,830
to employ a full time plant propagation specialist	per annum	2	30,000	£60,000
Plant sales and marketing covered 100% by SRT.				£3,400
Consultancy and cpd	per annum	2	5,000	£10,000
to employ part time horticultural therapist for 2 years including NI, pension @18.05%	per annum	2	12,500	£25,000
to employ full time a supported employee plantsperson including NI and pension @18.05%	per annum	2	23,610	£47,220
<b>Staffing &amp; revenue total</b>				<b>£240,534</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£465,398</b>
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<b>Income</b>				
Julia and Hans Rausing				£100,000.00
Sunnyside Contribution				£45,000.00
Tough Ten Committee				£3,000.00
Tom and Sue Stuart Smith open day contributions				£16,000.00

**£164,000.00**

**Total funding remaining      £301,398**