

DUNKELD AND BIRNAM COMMUNITY GROWING  
SC042496

Also known as DUNKELD AND BIRNAM@THE FIELD

5th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup> 2016

DUCHESS ANNE DUNKELD

SECRETARY'S REPORT

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This has been our fifth year of growing vegetables but has been the sixth year we have all been working together to grow food organically locally for the people of Dunkeld and Birnam. This year we had a small but dedicated team of workers plus we were able to call upon a larger number of volunteers for a particular range of tasks e.g. lifting Tatties. We have many people who have particular skills that we have become to rely on during the year from planning, designing, purchasing, organising, planting, growing, harvesting, selling and generally just mucking in. The chair will cover in her report the crop and selling stories which have been a huge success and I will deal with some of the boring but essential organisational details, But before I do this a note about the weather which provided us with many opportunities and also challenges.

The weather has been unpredictable again; January was one of the wettest and dullest on record, followed by February, which wet to begin with but colder, drier and sunnier as the month progressed. March was cold and very unsettled followed by April that was also unsettled but with a warm sunny spell in the middle of the month followed by cold and snowy weather. But we had spells of good weather during May. June with sunny but with above average rainfall, followed by July which although sunny also had above average rainfall. August seemed to be wetter than usual for the first two weeks then followed by sunny warm weather. September was generally excellent but oddly enough sometimes the night times were warmer than the days. So all in all a usual year full of challenges but apart from the very wet and dull start and we had excellent growing conditions for most crops. So is John Ruskin correct when he said, "There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather."?

## 2 THE ORGANISATION

We are a Scottish Charitable Incorporation Organisation (SCIO) and it is useful to remind ourselves of our Charitable Objectives.

- To advance citizenship and community development by encouraging cooperation and mutual support to produce food organically for local consumption in a changing economic and physical environment
- To achieve this by managing a sustainable and environmentally responsible growing project for the benefit of all

- To promote education within in the community in organic food growing, care and harvest and distribution and ensure a better understanding of the connections between what we eat and how it is produced, delivered and prepared.

We still have much work to do to meet all these objectives but we see it all as a long term project which evolves in a flexible manner and allows us all to learn as we go along. The constitution is available for any members who which to see it. At the present time, the Trustees meet regularly (usually once a month) to oversee activities on and off the field and set the general direction but we are increasingly realizing that we need to do more to involve members and volunteers and are looking at ways in which we can do this. There are many issues that arise during the year which make us question what we are doing and how we are doing it. This is a good thing, as it does not allow us to become complacent. We have had some useful suggestions and would welcome any ideas we can consider.

### 3 THE TRUSTEES

As SCIO we are required to have trustees who are responsible for running the Organisation and managing its assets. From 6<sup>h</sup> November 2015 there were 11 Trustees elected at our 4th AGM. At the following Trustees Meeting the following officers were agreed.

Linda Simpson	Chair
Dave Roberts	Secretary
Dave Amos	Membership Secretary
Jim Cockburn	Treasurer
Sarah Davidson	
Madeleine Hand	
Raymond Simpson	
Sandy Howe	
John Small	
Elspeth Baillie	
Ginny Carlton	

In addition to their formal roles each Trustees has undertaken a wide range of roles and we are fortunate to have so many skills available. We would also like to thank Linda Simpson for her very able Chairmanship during her second year as Chair. She has carried out her duties with considerable skill and always tried to keep us all involved.

### 4. MEMBERS

Members are a key part of the organization and a particularly noteworthy record was broken this year when we reached our highest ever membership total of 97, thanks to all of you who have joined and made us what we are today. Each member can contribute in many different ways and we are delighted that so many of you have decided to join and take a role, from supporter through buying and using the produce to active volunteering. Our members are our strength and we would like to thank each and every one of you for your participation.

## 5 PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS WHO HAVE HELPED US.

First of all I would like to pay tribute to Murray Livesey who passed away so suddenly on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Both Murray and Rene have been members and supporters from the very beginning and have regularly bought food from our stalls. Murray as many of you know was an expert renown throughout the world on Tomatoes and Tomato paste. This was on a totally different scale to us, you could say a completely different field but he was always encouraged us and that has been much appreciated. Rene has asked me

We have been lucky enough to have a number of different groups and individuals over and above our core group who have helped out and every little bit of help has made a big difference. Here are just some of the people who have helped out.

Geordie Ness for his wonderful vintage tractors and equipment. And time devoted to ploughing and harvesting

Pupils and teachers from the Royal School of Dunkeld.

Many people who have donated everything from tools to old Carpets

The staff at Birnam Arts for the Tuesday stalls.

The Church for use of space outside the Duchess Anne for the Saturday stall.

The Bridge for regularly publishing our articles.

The Community Orchard for supplying apples to the stall

Dunkeld and Birnam in Bloom for their support

Maria Olah for cooking us a wonderful harvest Supper in November 2015.

Simon Yearsley and staff at the Scottish Deli who have sold our produce over the winter months.

Jess Pepper and all involved with the Climate Change café for involving us in the Dunkeld and Birnam unplugged week in September.

Evelyn Menzies for taking the AGM minutes.

Everyone who helped at the Summerfest, which was very successful after last year's washout.

## 6. OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES

We have also received a grant of £500 from the Community Council for our wonderful new composting toilet. Do come and have a look and use it. It has been a great relief to many people working in the field!

The coop as part of the new Local community Fund are supporting three local charities and thanks to nominations from local coop members we have been nominated as one of three local charities. Co-op members get 1% of everything they spend on Co-op products to give to a local cause that matters to them. So please use you coop membership card when in the coop and nominate us to receive your 1%. The money will be spent on automatic watering system for the polytunnel and staging for propagation to help our poor backs.

We have made the field available as a base for the Wild Space Summer and Autumn Play schemes, for children's birthday parties and as a venue for the start of the local hill race that kindly made a generous donation to our funds. The Dunkeld and Birnam Playgroup have also made a visit and had a picnic.

We have an active Facebook page thanks to the efforts of Sally Small and website thanks to John Small

## 7. KEY ACTIONS.

The following actions have been undertaken during 2015 and have hopefully kept us on the straight and narrow

- The lease -We have continued with our lease with the Soil Association for 3.2 Acres. The rest of the field will continue to be leased to the horse owners and we would like to thank Caroline and her friends for their support and all the horse dung!
- The Buildings -We have 3 buildings, a general purpose shed, a machinery and produce storage shed and a polytunnel
- Insurances- We have taken out a number of insurances for public liability, product liability, volunteers, and capital equipment
- Risk Assessments-we have carried out a risk assessments for the visits and events
- Health and Safety - we have Health and Safety Policy.
- Child Protection- we have agreed and reviewed our child protection policy
- Affiliations - we are affiliated to the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens
- Reflection we had a Trustees meeting devoted to reflecting on 2015.
- We experimented with an open meeting at the shed to prepare for the planting.

## 8 THE GROWING

All this preparatory work was to allow us to grow and sell produce and so much has been achieved here. I will not cover this in any detail as it is in the Chairs report but I have been so impressed by what has been achieved literally on the ground. It is impressive and the food is fantastic.

## 9 THANK YOU

It is not possible to list everyone who has helped us in so many ways but without you and all our volunteers nothing like this could have happened

But from a personal point of view, again I would particularly like to thank all my fellow trustees. So much has happened in the last year and none of it could have been achieved without us working as a team. We have achieved a lot, learnt much, and discussed many issues into the night, worked in the field, sold produce, and grown in so many ways. Hopefully we are listening and learning all the time. It has been hard work and fun but the end result, wonderful fresh food which tastes fantastic available for all locally has made it all worthwhile. Food from the field to your plate on the same day with no food miles, no fertilisers; it is tasty and looks so good. For those of you

joining us at the Harvest supper after the AGM, you will be able to experience good food from the field.

Thanks you to each and everyone of you, it has been a good journey so far and I look forward to the future

Dave Roberts  
Secretary Dunkeld and Birnam Community Growing

November 2016