

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2012 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST JAMES' AND ST BASIL'S CHURCH HALL, FENHAM HALL DRIVE, FENHAM

59 members were present at the meeting and Peter Whewell was in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Sue Brophy, Ian Carter, Michelle Coleman, Emma Hughes, Liz Randell, Bob Reid, Sarah Whewell and Tony Whittle.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held in January 2011 had been circulated to the membership and were confirmed as being a true record of that meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2010

See attached. The Freemen had rejected the Committee's proposal to plant the area fronting Moorside, citing that the Association's lease did not allow planting outside the site.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Association's income had increased slightly because the rent from members had been raised in 2011. There would be an increase in the site rental for 2012 because the Council was taking out Public Liability insurance on behalf of all sites across the City; the size of this increase would not be clear until April. There had been a slight rise in the water rates in 2011. Overall we are now breaking even for our basic running costs as compared with income from member's rents. The Association now held separate bank accounts for grants and key deposits. Moorside had cover for Employer's Liability Insurance, but the cost to insure against theft or loss of the Association's equipment or loss and theft from individual plots was prohibitively high. All the Association's equipment is marked to make it identifiable if it is stolen.

5. TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT

- ◆ Report on financial figures. Slightly down on the actual cash surplus at bank compared with last year but we have more in stock levels of the popular items than last year in anticipation of gardeners' needs in late winter/early spring. Mild winter weather has meant less paraffin sales to date, although we have another consignment coming in on Friday. Increase of 4 pence per litre on last year at this time. We can absorb this increase.
- ◆ Lots of new items in stock, which have proved successful – bird, insect and butterfly netting; original Humax seed compost; well-rotted manure; several varieties of bird food; and the continuing success of scaffolding planks.
- ◆ The 2012 seed potatoes are now in stock – First Earlies, Second Earlies and Main Crop. Well priced at between 60 pence to £1 per kilogram, depending on the variety. We take the opportunity to highlight seasonal gardening items on the whiteboard on the fence, which has helped to bring prospective purchasers in.
- ◆ We manned the Trading Hut for over six hours on Show Day but with disappointing sales for ourselves. However, we managed to sell a great number of raffle tickets and managed the plant and jam sales, for the benefit of the Show Fund. We need to do more to promote the TH, though, in future.
- ◆ Sporadic thefts were experienced again during the summer months and the Trading Hut has been co-ordinating reports to forward to the Police, who informed us they wanted a monthly report, instead of an individual incident report.
- ◆ Suggestions have been put forward regarding the need for explanatory notes on all the items we sell, especially bagged speciality fertilisers and the like. This is something we are taking on board.
- ◆ As well as the successful Kings Seed scheme, expertly co-ordinated by Dave Vincent, we have also embraced the T & M scheme, which gives 50% off seeds and 15% of plants etc. This is ongoing throughout the year, so if anyone wants to order anything, please

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come to the Trading Hut, where we have catalogues and order forms. The Trading Hut will co-ordinate the orders with the suppliers, so all you have to do is complete your requirements and hand them in.

- ◆ We are rapidly running out of room in the TH and feel we could also expand sales if people knew the full extent of our products. Although it may be a long-term plan, we have suggested perhaps investing in a new building, which might also include the Community Hut, which is not used to its full potential at the moment. Security would be paramount of course.
- ◆ Thank you to all the TH volunteers. Always need extra help. Drop out for work/health reasons. Sub-team in place to clean toilets and community hut.
- ◆ Trading Hut volunteers are now insured through our City Council arranged umbrella PLI scheme.

It was suggested that bagged products such as fertilizers sold in the Trading Hut should be labelled with indelible ink to make them identifiable during storage. Associate membership costs £1 and allows non-members to purchase goods from the Association; it was agreed not to raise the cost of associate membership.

6. SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT

See attached. It had been necessary to hire additional tables for the 2011 show and the Committee was looking into the purchase of new marquees. It was suggested that part of the Moorside show should be staged in the church hall; this idea had been considered in the past but it was generally agreed that visitors enjoyed visiting and wandering around the site as part of the show experience. The show needed to be more widely publicised and advertised to attract the public inside on the day itself.

7. RENT FOR 2012

The rent for 2012 would remain at £55 per full plot (£40 per concessionary full plot) and £27.50 per half plot (£20 per concessionary half plot). The concessionary rate was for state pensioners and the unwaged. Anyone who thinks they should qualify for a rent concession should discuss this directly with the Treasurer.

8. MOORSIDE TREE STRATEGY

The planting and regeneration of trees at Moorside is paramount; the Committee, working with the Allotments Officer, the Tree Officer and individual ploholders, plays a central role in the conservation and management of trees on the site. The new Committee should identify where new trees could be planted and obtain grants and funding to do so; there was scope to plant trees around the perimeter of the site where cultivation on plots would not be affected. The Tree Officer would be able to advise on the types of trees to plant; fruit trees on plots could be planted without restriction although the planting of other trees within plots would be discouraged. A motion to accept the Tree Strategy June 2011 as a working document was agreed.

9. KEYS FOR TOP GATE

A motion had been proposed to provide access to the allotment site for all members via the gate at the north end of the West Lane. This would need the permission of the Freeman, agreement between the residents of Moorside North and the provision of a Moorside lock on the gate; the provision of a lock and chain for the gate cost around £110. There were concerns about the security risk to the site should the gate be left open and the danger of livestock wandering onto the site from the Moor. This motion was not agreed. An amended motion to request limited access to a very small number of members, using the present lock, was also not agreed.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- ◆ Tractor access on some lanes was restricted because fences have moved out of alignment but it was also noted that tractors had become bigger...

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- ◆ *Greening Wingrove* is an initiative in the ward to make it a greener and pleasanter environment to live in. There are two allotment sites in the ward which provide green spaces and harbour a wealth of expertise which can be exploited by the wider community. There is already interaction between Moorside and the *Greening Wingrove* initiative.
- ◆ It was proposed that the waiting list should be published on the website so that potential members could view their position on the list. There are presently 40-50 people on the list who are facing a wait of between two and three years. Publication of such a list would need the permission of each person on the list; at present, the list which is updated every month, is available to view in the Trading Hut.
- ◆ A vote of thanks for the work done by the Committee was extended from the floor.

11. ELECTION OF HONORARY MEMBERS

Ben and Jean Rudden have been members at Moorside for 38 years; they are unable to continue cultivating their half plot but would like to maintain contact with the site. Their honorary membership was agreed.

Former Chairman Terry Maxwell would like to help members on the site. His role would be to act as a mentor for new members as well as offering 'hands on' help. It was agreed that he should become an honorary member.

Former Chairman Jeff Sutcliffe had worked hard for Moorside and attracted the funding which established the Trading Hut. He thanked the Association for his nomination but felt that as he now lived in Scotland he was too far away to be an honorary member.

12. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2012

Prior to the meeting, the following had been proposed and seconded for Committee membership:

Sue Brophy, Krys Gaffney, Sue Johnson, Nicola Loose, Sue Pownall, John Reid, Steve Reeve, Peter Whewell and Tony Whittle.

In addition, at the meeting Steve McDonnell was proposed and seconded for Committee membership.

They were all elected to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.