

# MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

## MINUTES of COMMITTEE MEETING HELD on SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH at 10.00 am in THE COMMUNITY HUT, MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS

**Present:-** Dorota Anthoniak, Sue Brophy, Sue Johnson, Frank Lightfoot, Nicola Loose, Susie Pownall, Jonn Reid, Neils Souter, Peter Whewell, Tony Whittle

**Apologies for Absence:-** Krys Gaffney

### **Minutes of the meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2010.**

These were accepted as a true record. Matters arising not covered in the minutes:- The University Research was now almost completed. Winners of the prizes had been Susan (plot 4). Pat (formerly plot 4a) and Jo (plot 86). The research results would be now collated and we would be sent a copy of the final report, perhaps by April.

### **Treasurer's Report**

All members had now paid their rents for 2010. The Treasurer was complimented upon her attainment of such a perfect result. Our bank balance was in a healthy state.

### **Trading Hut Manager's Report**

The scaffolding sale had been a success and all those ordered had been bought, with some spare left as stock. Manure had now been delivered to the plot 1/2 area. There were still plenty of seed potatoes left which might need to be reduced in price. A number of other products suggested in our questionnaire were going to be stocked shortly. Two new trading hut volunteers had already been introduced to the workings of the hut and there would be more new faces soon. **NS** queried the price of paraffin at the Hut, noting that members had found that Littlemoor were offering paraffin at a lower price. **SP** said that the recent substantial rise in our prices had been necessitated by the increased cost of the last purchase and that our prices could not be reasonably reduced. **FL** noted that the price of our paraffin was substantially below that of the usual retailers.

### **Grants Subcommittee**

The Subcommittee had been concentrating upon preparing a Sustainable Communities Fund Grant. This was an overarching application which included £3,000 for six start-up beekeeping grants; a grant for £1,000 for producing an educational booklet; a grant for £2,100 for our bumblebee garden information boards. The application was now almost ready for submission. One unresolved area is the demand by the grant assessors that applications should include a safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy. **PW** had checked with the Executive Officers of NAWG and found that there was no such policy currently in operation amongst Newcastle Allotment sites. He was therefore actively exploring with CVS and Safeguarding Newcastle whether it was appropriate for Moorside to have such a policy, and if so to produce such a policy which could then be used as a template for all allotment sites in Newcastle. Jayne Butler of the Comfrey Project had been particularly helpful with advice and we will be sorry to lose her next month as she takes up a new post at the Law Centre. The Subcommittee would also be sending in a Wingrove Ward grant application for our show canopy.

NS suggested that we should explore the idea of an additional building at Moorside to house a shop. The Chairman noted that an option appraisal for such a venture should be worked up in due course.

### **Bee Group**

There was an oral report from PW and TW of a bee strategy meeting called by Nigel Hails, Head of Environment, Newcastle City Council to discuss ways of helping propagate bees in Newcastle. The Moorside direction to the Sustainable Communities Fund arose as a result of that meeting. The Newcastle Allotment Working Group were to try to identify which allotment sites had hives and to form a Newcastle allotment bee-keeping subgroup. TW would arrange a **Moorside Bee Group meeting on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00 a.m.** it was noted that there may be further Moorsiders interested in keeping bees.

### **NAWG**

There was an oral report from PW who noted that the Allotments Officer was still only working for two days per week because a suitable pay scale had not yet been approved. One corollary was that our flooding information remained in a file in the Allotments Office.

### **Northumberland in Bloom**

The judging criteria had been circulated. Members noted this was difficult understand but it seems that we will be visited on a preliminary basis in April, with the main judging in July including an appraisal of what progress has been made between April and July. It seems probable that the judges will want to see our main community area, the bumblebee garden and plots 1/2 which we hope will be a woodland glade together with the new hedge. Therefore we would concentrate our floral efforts on these places. PW had been in touch with Sue Shaw, Neighbourhood Manager and Mark Lamb the Horticulture Manager about providing us with planters and plants. Preliminary communications had been promising but a recent lack of response needed to be chased up quickly.

### **The Moorside Show**

It was noted that Pat of plot 5 might be interested in being Show Secretary and the Committee would formally ask her to take this post. This would mean she would be co-opted onto the Committee. If not we would change the Show into an open day.

### **The Garden Club**

NS would be meeting with RG this week to prepare a programme for this year's Garden Club. The first meeting would be on **Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00 am.**

### **Flooding update**

PW had been in touch with Kevin Batey of the Freemen and had subsequently been asked to send relevant previous surveys for tabling at a Freemen meeting two weeks ago. A recent phone call to Mr Batey had elicited that exploratory work would be undertaken in the next fortnight and PW would at that point explain at first hand where water is coming off Nunsmoor onto Moorside.

### **Waiting List**

**PW** presented an updated waiting list. Three persons quite high up the list had not replied to a firm request to confirm their place on the list and would be removed from the list. Two people were simultaneously on other allotment site waiting lists and one couple from Fenham had an allotment but this was in West Denton. It seems that two ladies wanting a joint plot may have been missed off the list. This would be investigated and if true they would be reinstated on the list at the appropriate level. **DA** pointed out our data protection obligations and it was agreed that the list would be stripped of personal information and could then be posted up in the Trading Hut

### **Moth Survey**

The Committee had received a request from Mr Jonathon Wallace to conduct a moth survey on Moorside Allotments. The Committee agreed to this request, which would involve Mr Wallace being given a key to empty moth traps several times per week. Mr Wallace had agreed to write up his project for our website.

### **Sending out minutes**

**PW** had been contacted by a member who thought that it had been agreed that minutes of Committee meetings would be sent out by post to members. The Committee confirmed that this was not what was agreed at the AGM. The policy remains that minutes would be available after being ratified by the Committee on the website and in the Community Hut.

### **Any other business**

It was agreed to hold an inspection meeting on **Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> April at 9.00 am before the Garden Club meeting**. **FL** raised the question of the nature of the fungal infection of the tree at the turning circle that had been felled this month. If it was honeycomb fungus then the whole stump would need to be removed and the wood burned. This would be further investigated. **TW** mentioned a tree on 96b which was in danger of demolishing a wall of the garden of the house behind. This would be inspected by the inspection team.

**NS** mentioned that there was an unconfirmed report of a woman from outside the allotments putting kitchen units on the skip. **DA** confirmed that the Comfrey Project had put units on the skip and that at least one of these had been usefully recycled by another member. **NS** raised the matter of members leaving bonfires still alight on their plots. It was agreed that this was against the bonfire code of practice. **TW** on behalf of the Comfrey Project asked if the water could be turned on next Friday. However because of the danger of frost and pipe damage it was agreed that the water would be turned on Good Friday. The skip had filled up within 5 hours of it being on site and another skip would be ordered for Easter weekend.

**SP** mentioned that she had had conversations with a signwriter about a designed board to replace the chalk board currently advertising the shop outside the main entrance. **FL** pointed out that the next step would be to investigate the planning situation and this was agreed. It was agreed that it might be a good idea for each Committee member to “adopt” a number of ordinary members to improve communication between the Committee and members. **PW** agreed to produce a possible plan for such a process

### **Date of next meeting**

**Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> April at 10.00 am in the Community Hut**