

## **Moorside Allotments Association**

### **Minutes Of Committee Meeting Held On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 pm in The Community Hut, Moorside Allotments, Fenham Hall Drive, Fenham**

**PRESENT:** Peter Whewell (Chairperson), Sue Brophy, Robert Germany, Susan Hrisos, Sue Johnson, Frank Lightfoot, Sue Pownall,

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Krys Gaffney, Nicola Loose, Neils Souter and John Reid

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING** held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 were amended slightly under the heading Letting Officers report and then passed as a true record.

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

It was noted that the rotavator had been serviced at a cost of £40.00. It was decided to advertise the availability of the rotavator and strimmer at the Trading Hut on the website and in the newsletter. It was thought that it would be helpful to conduct a training session, to which all plot-holders would be invited, on the use of the rotavator and strimmer via a person with training status and **PW** would contact a possible trainer. It was hoped that a list of those trained could then be compiled. It was noted that the use of the strimmer needed the use of helmet and visor, shin-guards and steel capped boots, the first two being available from the hut.

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**KG** was not able to attend

#### **TREASURER REPORT**

**NL** was not able to attend. She had left cheques with **PW** for payment of invoices during her absence on holiday.

#### **TRADING HUT MANAGERS REPORT**

**SP** reported that trading was going well and the volunteers seemed to be enjoying serving at the Hut. All the seed potatoes were sold. There had been difficulties renewing our supply of compost, but more was to arrive this weekend. Committee members wondered if there was peat in the compost and **SP** undertook to find out from the supplier. **SP** noted that the cost of many items had gone up since the last purchase and that a revised price-list would have to be issued shortly. The Committee were happy to leave it to the Trading Hut Managers to decide the appropriate pricing structure. **PW** had attended the NAWG forum which had focussed upon funding and it had been mentioned that one allotment site had a trade membership with B&Q which allowed substantial discount. **PW** would investigate further. There had been discussion between Committee members about the compost enclosure between the Trading Hut and The Community Hut. **FL** noted that the enclosure probably did not comply with planning permission. There was a generally expressed feeling that the area between the two huts should be available for shows and meetings and that the enclosure detracted from the aesthetics of the site. On the other hand it was also generally recognised that it was convenient and practical to have compost stored near the hut and that the alternative of storing the compost in the hut by the toilet block would involve trading hut volunteers in onerous journeys to fetch compost.. **SP** had emailed all trading hut volunteers and had had a high response rate. She read out the emails to the Committee. The views were agreed to be thoughtful and constructive and again highlighted the dilemma between aesthetics and practicality. After full discussion the Committee felt a compromise could be reached with the serial

purchase of smaller quantities of compost and the compost being stored directly behind the huts so the present enclosure could be dismantled. **FL** kindly agreed to construct two suitable cages when time was available

#### **SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**NS** was away at present. **PW** noted that **GT** was helping with practical aspects of the show. **FL** said that some of the show categories would need appraisal and it was agreed to do this when **NS** returned.

#### **LETTING and INSPECTION TEAM.**

**PW** reported that Plot 55 had been let as two half plots, 55a and 55b. The plot-holders of plot 97b joined the Committee at this point to discuss their tenancy. The difficulties in managing the plot seem now to be overcome and the Committee noted that good progress had been made towards cultivation recently. The tenant of recently re-let plot 7b had resigned because of a change in personal circumstances. In view of their excellent start on plot 7a, it was agreed that these tenants would take on the whole plot 7. The Inspection Team thought that if the path next to the toilet block was paved, then the remainder of the wild site could be fenced off and perhaps let as a mini-allotment. **SH** raised the question of the mechanism for plot-holders of half plots moving up to full plots. It was agreed that **PW** would create a waiting list specifically for half-plot holders and write and ask all half plot holders if they wanted to be considered for such a waiting list.

#### **GARDEN CLUB**

**PW** apologised that advertising for the 1<sup>st</sup> May Garden Club had not happened and the meeting had had to be cancelled. It was agreed to wait now until **NS** returned and then construct a forward programme for the rest of the year.

#### **NEWSLETTER**

**RG** was hoping to produce the next Newsletter in June. Articles on any subject of interest are invited from all plot-holders. The deadline for **RG** receiving articles will be Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

#### **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**PW** said that the grant application for printing the Constitution had been sent in to Grassroots and an outcome could be expected within 12 weeks. **FL** had arranged for an estimate for paving around the toilet block, to be forwarded by the contractor who did the paving around the Trading and Community Huts. **PW** noted that the NAWG forum had been useful in describing a range of funding sources, including Grassroots and Ward funding.

#### **WORKING PARTY REPORTS**

There was nothing new to report.

#### **SEEDLING SWAP SUNDAY**

**PW** noted that Moorside would host Seedling Sunday on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> May organised by Emma of plot 14. **SP** agreed to oversee the event on behalf of the Committee.

#### **OPENING OF THE TOILETS**

Following a letter from plot holder on 68 about the opening of the toilets it was confirmed that **GT**, who oversees the toilets had closed them temporarily because of flooding but that they were now repaired and open on a permanent basis until the water was turned off in November. It was

ascertained that the feasibility of locking the toilets with an additional lock, so that each member could use their gate key, had been previously explored and been found to be impractical.

#### **YOUTH COMMUNITY ORDER SCHEME**

The plot-holder in charge of the Scouts plot attended for this item together with Mr D. Parks, Probation Officer. A small group of adolescents, not more than four, had been assigned to dig the Scouts plot under supervision and the venture had been successful. These youths were subject to Community Orders for minor offences of anti-social behaviour including vandalism. The question was whether the Association or individual plot-holders would wish to engage the youths to do similar work under supervision, which was gauged by Mr Parks to be helpful in their rehabilitation. The Committee discussed the proposal with the Scouts plot-holder and Mr Parks. In the discussion it was clear that opinion within the Committee was divided as to whether this proposal was generally acceptable. Some Committee members were of the opinion that they would be willing to engage the youths under the condition that they were under continual supervision. Other Committee members thought that the proposal would expose the allotment to risk. **FL** suggested that the matter be put to the allotment membership for further consultation via the newsletter and website and this was agreed.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**SB** wondered if we could ask the council not to cut the margins in front of Moorside in order to preserve a mini-habitat rich in wild-flowers and in insects. **PW** said he would look into this matter. **PW** reported that he had been elected to sit on the Newcastle Allotment Working Group Committee.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup> June at 7.15 pm Community Hut**