

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2009 AT 7.15 P.M. IN
THE COMMUNITY HUT, MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS, FENHAM HALL DRIVE

PRESENT: Peter Whewell (Chairperson), Krys Gaffney (Secretary), Nicola Loose (Treasurer), Robert Germany, Susan Hrisos, Frank Lightfoot, Sue Pownall, John Reid and Niels Souter. Tony Whittle was also present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Sue Johnson.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING held on 16 July had been distributed to Committee members and were accepted as being a true record of that meeting.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- ◆ The grass verges nearest the fence on Fenham Hall Drive had still not been cut, probably because of the wet weather, although rubbish in the area had been cleared.
- ◆ The Allotments Officer had paid £200 for the recently purchased locks because the Council is responsible for security on allotment sites.
- ◆ **SP** had not yet looked into the matter of the trade discount at *B&Q*.
- ◆ The police were patrolling the site daily at dusk.
- ◆ Natalie Whitehead had collected the ladybird surveys.
- ◆ Kara Jackson had set up a camera on the site for a week but no passing wildlife had been captured on film. Depending on the quality of the images, the Association would consider buying and installing cameras on Moorside for security purposes.
- ◆ £100 had been spent on barrels for the communal area. Planters, to be situated outside the gates to improve the appearance of the site, would be requested from the Council.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (not on the agenda)

Tony Whittle was interested in keeping bees and had attended a meeting chaired by Steve Emsley on the subject. In order to keep bees, one needs to be a member of the Newcastle and District Beekeepers Association and be trained in doing so. There are courses on beekeeping; some are free and some cost around £120. Ideally, hives should be concentrated at 7-8 per square mile; a higher concentration results in less honey being produced and smaller colonies. Approximately 8 hours per month need to be spent tending the bees between March and September and whereas equipment costs are relatively low (around £90) the hives themselves are expensive. Tony would position the hives at the far end of his allotment, behind the greenhouse but before introducing hives onto the site, members would be consulted for any objections they may have and to ensure that they don't have phobias or allergies to bees. The Committee was supportive of the project and **PW** would post the information on the website to gauge opinion from the membership. **FL** suggested that members should be encouraged to install nesting sites (pieces of drilled wood) for solitary bees.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

KG had received 4 more enquiries from people interested in having plots.

TREASURER'S REPORT

From November 2009 **NL** will have a clear starting position to monitor the Trading Hut's takings. Associate members pay £1 and this money will be paid into the Association's accounts. **NL** had claimed for concessionary members and this had been deducted from the rent for the site.

TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT

The strimmer was being serviced and the Trading Hut was well stocked but supplies of compost needed to be moved from the store to the hut. The current hire charge for the rotovator and generator was £1 and **SP** suggested that this should be raised. It was agreed that the rotovator should be hired out at £2.50 per 2-hour session during Trading Hut opening times; hire charges for times when the Trading Hut was closed would be negotiated. One or two rota volunteers had dropped out and **SP** was standing in for them. It was agreed that the selling price for paraffin should be raised to £3 for 4 litres and that the market price should be monitored.

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT

The sub-committee was to meet on 22 August. White plastic sheeting to cover the tables would be bought once the supply of paper covers had been used up. The estimated income from the show was £130, excluding money raised from the raffle. The Trading Hut would start selling raffle tickets at 20p per ticket or £1 per strip. Councillor Nigel Todd would present prizes at the show. Posters advertising the event would be put up in local venues such as newsagents etc. **NS** would ask members to provide produce and plants for sale on the day of the show.

LETTINGS AND INSPECTION TEAM

Plot 77b had now been let to the member of plot 77a.

GARDEN CLUB

The next meetings would be on 17 October and 14 November. The topics would be *What to do now* and *Weed eradication*

NEWSLETTER

RG would produce the next newsletter at the end of September.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Association's constitution had now been bound. **PW** had received a phonecall from *Grassroots* seeking an assurance that a wheelchair was able to get into the toilet; this suggests that the application may be successful...

WORKING PARTY REPORTS

None of the parties had anything to report

NAWG

NAWG will be carrying out research to gauge demand for allotments. A survey published in *Citylife* would ask whether people wanted an allotment. Michael Cranston was retiring as Allotments Officer to join his family's saddlery and animal feeds business.

ROTOVATOR/STRIMMER TRAINING

This would take place on Saturday 10 October.

WEBSITE LINKS

PW had suggested a number of links and asked Committee members to write a 6-line summary of any sites that they recommend. **RG** offered to do a summary of the RHS site.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

PW had produced a document to inform members of the Association's communication strategy. This would be circulated to members with the bound copies of the constitution.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- ◆ Members can begin to burn bonfires at the start of November; **FL** considers this is too late as weeds and rubbish are too wet to burn easily by this time. **PW** would speak to the Allotments Officer to request that the bonfire ban be brought forward by a fortnight or so to the middle of October.
- ◆ The NSALG allotment insurance has options for associations to add sheds and buildings to their policies at an additional cost, but greenhouses are not included. It was suggested that the Association should apply for grants to purchase wooden greenhouses for members.
- ◆ **NS** would investigate whether Fenham Library could be used as a venue for Committee meetings during the winter months.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This would be on Thursday 17 September at 7.15 p.m. in the Community Hut.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.