

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST JAMES' AND ST BASIL'S CHURCH HALL, FENHAM HALL DRIVE, FENHAM

The meeting was attended by 35 members and Susan Pownall was in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Ian Carter, Margaret Maddison, Krys Gaffney, George Kell, Annie Brotherton, David Rochester, Liz Randall and David Roberts.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held in January 2016 had been circulated to the membership. Steve McDonnell has set up a You Tube page in readiness for his film about Moorside life. There were no other matters arising from the minutes and they were accepted as a true record of that meeting.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2016

Susan thanked the ploholders for their good gardening practices and welcomed newcomers who include younger gardeners with families. However, anyone having difficulties with cultivating their plot should advise the Committee who are there to help with problems. Buildings and structures must comply with regulations and the Freemen of the City conduct regular checks. Council spending cuts continue to bite and allotments are encouraged to self-fund more. Moorside's Shop, Plant Scheme and participation in a local Christmas Fair contributed to funds. The former Chair, Peter Whewell, had sadly died in September 2016 and acknowledgement was made of the substantial contribution he had made to Moorside and the Newcastle Allotment Working Group (NAWG). Moorside came third in the City Allotments Competition (Large Site Category) and several ploholders also did well. Funding had been sought for improvements to be made to the central pathway but on this occasion had been unsuccessful. Tribute was paid to volunteers who tidy external boundaries, maintain communal areas and help with DIY as well as to Steven McDonnell for his Health & Safety Project.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT (PRESENTED AT AGM AND ORAL REPORT)

The Accounts had been circulated to members. The Treasurer, Nicola Francis, reported that comparing income and expenditure between 2015 and 2016 there was consistency. The Council rent will probably not increase in 2017, water costs trend up and down but other costs are within our control. There were no significant purchases in 2016. The Council budget diminished in 2016 but there was no impact during the year on Moorside. Susan Pownall commented that Moorside has a reserve in case of emergencies. Going forward, a current repair necessary to the perimeter fence is the responsibility of the Council and work had been agreed.

5. TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT (ORAL REPORT AT THE AGM)

Susan Pownall, the Trading Hut Manager, described the shop and the associate membership scheme for the benefit of newcomers. The shop has gained a favourable reputation with other allotment sites and has been visited by several who are looking to set up their own. It also serves as a focal point for rent payments, application forms and, amongst other things, the collection point for seed orders from Kings Seeds organised by David Vincent. The latter generates a sizeable income for the Association through its discount scheme. The surplus generated by the shop was less in 2016 than in 2015 but there is an accumulated surplus, including that from 2016, of £3331.34 plus stock in hand of £3140.58. Mild weather in winter and spring contributed towards lower paraffin sales than in previous years. The supplier of horse manure had retired and a new supplier of farmyard manure has recently been engaged. Thanks were made to the dedicated team of volunteers. Delivery of seed potatoes for 2017 is expected during the week beginning 23 January.

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6. SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT (ORAL REPORT AT THE AGM)

The Show Secretary, Pat Francis, reported a successful day and a new event for 2016 in addition to a variety of stalls. Pat thanked the stallholders, the team on the Welcome Table, the show team and other volunteers who helped on show day including Rich Littlewood who provided a PA system. The raffle was well supported and there was a wide range of good prizes. The show was visited by Chi Onwurah MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central and she showed interest in the stalls and exhibits. Income covered the costs of putting on the show. The show in 2017 will be held on Saturday 9 September.

7. THE PLANT SCHEME REPORT (ORAL REPORT AT THE AGM)

Sue Johnson reported another successful and interesting year. Takings amounted to £1265.90 and expenditure was £480.55. A further sum was spent at the end of the year on seeds for 2017 taking advantage of sale prices so that the total expenditure during 2016 was £548.40. This left a surplus of £717.50 and the accumulated surplus going forward was £1768.15. The money, though ringfenced for use by the scheme, is income for the Association. The scheme did not participate in the City Show due partly to parking restrictions but Sue is considering other options. Growing will start shortly and sales will begin early to mid-April dependent upon the weather. Thanks were extended to the volunteers and the buyers for supporting the scheme.

8. MOORSIDE FACEBOOK OPPORTUNITY (ORAL REPORT AT THE AGM)

Rich Littlewood reported that while the Moorside website was good there was no interaction which could be provided by Facebook as a closed group available to Moorside members only. A trial run has been in progress since early December and opinion from the users is favourable. It would not take over from the dedicated web but would fill a gap. Questions from the floor appertained to the facility being available to non-Moorside members such as Associate members and problems arising therefrom. The proposal for a Facebook facility was carried by a majority. The proposal for a closed group was carried by a majority.

9. MOTIONS

RENT FOR 2017 - A motion was proposed to accept the Treasurer's recommendation that the rents for 2017 would be unchanged from 2016 as £80 per full plot (£65 concessionary) and £40 per half plot (£32.50 concessionary). This motion was carried.

10. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2017

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

Susan Pownall, Krys Gaffney, Tony Whittle, Sue Johnson, Sue Brophy, Steven McDonnell, Frank Lightfoot, and Nick Coster. Nicola Francis was proposed and seconded from the floor. They were all elected to the Committee.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.30 pm

SJ

23 January 2017