

## **MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION**

### **Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at the Nunsmoor Centre at 5.30 pm on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.**

**Present:** Steven McDonnell (In the Chair); Susan Pownall (who took the Minutes); Barbara Taylor, Nick Coster, Simon Rutherford.

In the Absence of the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary, SMcD chaired the meeting and SP took the Minutes.

#### **Tribute to Tony Whittle**

The meeting expressed their shock and sadness following the recent death of longstanding and valued Committee member and Lettings Officer, Tony Whittle. SP advised that a private cremation had taken place at a woodland park crematorium in Northumberland at the end of the previous week. Anne Whittle had asked SP to thank everyone for flowers and cards, which she had so appreciated. There was to be a celebration of Tony's life at the Copthorne Hotel in the afternoon of 14<sup>th</sup> October to which Anne welcomed his many friends and colleagues. SP to put a piece on the website over the next day or so with all the details.

**1 Apologies for Absence:** Frank Lightfoot, Richard Littlewood, Nicola Francis, Emily Sweetman, Karen Brown, Sarah Farrell.

#### **2 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> September were agreed as a true record of the proceeding subject to one amendment under 4c below. Proposed by BT and seconded by NC.

#### **Matters Arising.**

- a) SP confirmed she had written a resumé of the shop activities for the proposed handout to new members. This also included the availability of the toilets and water supply. She would email the piece to FL/ES accordingly.
- b) Tree felling: confirmed the ash tree had been felled and following a request from the plot holder in whose garden the wood lay, it had been agreed that she could have it. SP also clarified that the third tree previously on the Council's longstanding list for attention comprised the Leylandii between Plot 50 and 52 which needed taking down to hedge height or thereabouts.
- c) The proposed Lease with the Freeman: It was confirmed that the 75% cultivation comprised fruit, vegetables and flowers.
- d) SR reported on his further research on the purchase of a sit on lawnmower. He had been advised that end of season sales were a prime time to procure a good one for between £250 and £300. SP commented that the subject had been raised many times before but storage was the issue. Agreed to liaise with the shop and Tony Francis regarding the current items being stored in the lockup next to the toilets to ensure sufficient space was available. The meeting agreed that any such machine would only be used by specific people and not available to plot holders in general.

Apart from an amendment suggested in Para (c) above, the Minutes could be posted on the website.

#### **3 Chairman's Report**

In the absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, this item was deferred. There was no update on the Lease as NF, as spokesperson, was unable to attend the meeting either.

#### **4 Moorside Open Day**

This item was deferred in the absence of the Secretary but it was acknowledged that the proceeds of the event had been around £500. TBC by organisers. SP advised that the shop had remained open during the event, as was usual, and takings comprised shop income.

SP advised that the Ladies' toilet lock had been irreparably broken during the Open Day. As it was near the end of the season for toilet opening, she would resolve the problem over the winter.

#### **5 Site Updates**

- (i) **Trading Hut.** SP confirmed September takings as £366. 05. The takings for the weekend of 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October would feature in the October month end figures. SP also reported that the newly serviced trimmer had been lent out and returned without the filter and filter cap. Having spoken to the repair centre, they had suggested sourcing one online which SP would do. The repairers had also suggested that the machine had been damaged by being operated too close to a hard object. Advice to plot holders borrowing it would be given in future.
- (ii) **Inspections:** NC reported the findings of the Inspection Team. Warning letters to be sent to plot holders of 20b, 95 giving 28 days to meet acceptable criteria. Advisory letters to be sent to plot holders of 11, 89b, 100, 107, and 79 for reasons stated on inspection report (final version attached). H & S letters to be sent to 52 and 83b.
- (iii) **Lettings:** SP reported that Tony and she had liaised with a potential plot holder for NO 17 and SP had followed up with FL after Tony's death. As a consequence, Plot 17 had been let. Paperwork had been completed, gate key supplied for which they had paid a deposit. SP to advise the Treasurer and Secretary of their contact details for rent and membership purposes respectively.
- (iv) **Health & Safety:** SMcD reported. Plots 52 and 83b to be asked by letter to remove razor sharp slates placed on edge of borders immediately. (See NC's inspection notes). All plot holders to be asked to keep the lanes tidy and clear of hedge cuttings, thorns, overhanging branches, fallen fruit and any other obstacles which constituted a safety hazard. Jobs for the winter should include attention and repair to leaning fences. S.McD would send out the annual H & S return forms in respect of plant scheme, community plot, shop and toilets etc as soon as he had a working printer.

#### **6 Application for gate key.**

Discussion not minuted. Having been involved from the outset in conjunction with Tony, SP updated the meeting.

#### **7 Any Other Business**

- (i) SP raised the question of the proposed community bonfire, specifically the date and also when and where donated material could be left for burning.

Agreed that the organisers put something on the website etc urgently as plot holders were enquiring.

- (ii) Given a suitable day, SMcD proposed applying weed killer to the communal gravel paths.
- (iii) So that gardeners could fill their water butts and greenhouse water receptacles, SP asked that plot holders be advised in advance of the proposed end of season water turn off and closure of toilets. Negotiations were ongoing with Northumbrian Water/Freemen regarding the installation of a new water valve which would hopefully increase the water pressure into the allotments from the metered system housed just inside the moor boundary fence. If further improvements proved necessary, a second phase would involve a second valve inside the allotment boundary.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

**8 Date of next meeting:** Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> November at 5.30 pm.

**SCP**

**5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**