

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2010 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE ROBERT STEWART MEMORIAL HALL, WINGROVE ROAD, FENHAM

1. PRESENT: The meeting was well attended by over 40 members and Peter Whewell was in the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Michelle Coleman, Rob Germany, Steven Harland, Susan Hrisos, Irene Rutherford, Carol Smith and Wingrove Primary School.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held in January 2009 had been circulated to the membership and were confirmed as being a true record of that meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Associate members are able to use the Trading Hut without compromising the Association's tax situation. The Secretary of Newcastle Allotments Working Group had scrutinised the Trading Hut accounts for 2008 and deemed them to be adequate. The Chairman had made enquiries about honoraria; many associations make honoraria payments to their officers provided that individuals can justify the expenses that they incur; at £30, Moorside honoraria are low by other Associations' standards. At the 2009 AGM, it had been decided not to cull any of the bird population on the site. In 2010, it is proposed to assess the bird population at Moorside and a seminar on how to carry out such a survey is expected. Vandalism continues to be a problem across the City and at Moorside, three greenhouses were stolen during the summer. Despite the police patrolling the site, training their dogs around the boundary and the police helicopter sweeping the site with its infra-red sensors when flying over Fenham, no vandals have been apprehended.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2009

See attached.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Accounts for the Trading Hut are now included in the Association's accounts, and the 2009 accounts include key money and a grant from the Council. Although the Trading Hut is making a profit, this can be unpredictable and rents need to cover the Association's basic expenses. Rents at Moorside (which are comparable to other sites in Newcastle) had remained unchanged for several years and the Treasurer recommended that the rent for a full plot should be raised by £5; the rent for a half-plot would remain at its current level. The majority of members present agreed to the rent rise.

7. SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Moorside show is run in conjunction with St James' and St Basil's church and was a profitable and successful event in 2009. The Show Secretary thanked all those who had helped to set up the marquees, Sue Johnson for finding sponsors for the show and all those who had manned the stalls. The show made a profit of £108 and proceeds from the surplus produce sold was donated to *Aid to Africa*.

8. TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT

Taking over from the previous managers, Harry and Stan, had been a steep learning curve, but the changeover had gone well and the Trading Hut Manager, Sue Pownall, is now ably helped by a team of volunteers whilst Susan Hrisos and Nicola Loose maintain good stock control. The hut forms a social focal point on the site and also provides a service to the members; an associate membership scheme has also been introduced which widens this service to the community outside Moorside. More volunteers are needed to help run the hut, volunteering entails giving up two hours per month and a trained volunteer is always on hand to help newcomers. In addition, volunteers were rewarded with a seasonal voucher to spend on products from the hut. The Trading Hut has made a profit of £1,364 and new products

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continue to be introduced; a questionnaire will further gauge demand for products that members would like to be sold in the hut. Sharp sand would soon be available in 25kg bags and seed potatoes would be available from the first week in February.

9. GARDEN CLUB

Niels Souter and Rob Germany have been running a garden club on Saturday mornings throughout the year, but the sessions have been poorly attended. Members could identify topics to be covered at the garden club, and it was suggested that the sessions could be targeted at new ploholders. It was also suggested that the membership, as an email group, could be reminded of the dates when the garden club was running. The Chairman's concern was for members without email who would not receive such notification although all such events are advertised in the Community Hut and noticeboards.

10. FUTURE DIRECTION OF MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS

- ◆ The problem of flooding on the site will be monitored and addressed.
- ◆ There was a suggestion that plants should be raised for the membership. No profit could be made from such a venture, but members could donate produce/seedlings at the Trading Hut in return for vouchers.
- ◆ The toilets had been repaired but were closed over the winter because of frost; a ramp would be built to allow for wheelchair access. There was a suggestion that the ladies' toilet should also become accessible for disabled members of either sex since the approach to it is easier for wheelchairs. After some discussion it was suggested that both gents' and ladies' toilets could be used by disabled members of either sex.

11. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Tim Townshend from the University of Newcastle had approached the Committee for help in a research project on the importance and benefits of allotment ownership, to which the Committee had agreed. Moorside would receive a collective response on the project's findings.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

This item already covered under Garden Club

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

14. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

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

Dorota Antoniak, Sue Brophy, Krys Gaffney, Sue Johnson, Frank Lightfoot, Nicola Loose, Sue Pownall, John Reid, Niels Souter and Peter Whewell. They were all elected to the Committee. Tony Whittle, nominated by Sue Johnson and seconded by George Taylor, was also elected.

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.