

# MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2014 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST JAMES' AND ST BASIL'S CHURCH HALL, FENHAM HALL DRIVE, FENHAM

The meeting was attended by 56 members and Peter Whewell was in the Chair.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Mr and Mrs Allen, Harry Carter, Ian Carter, Nick Coster, Rob Germany, Margaret Maddison and Liz Randell.

### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held in January 2013 had been circulated to the membership. There were no matters arising from the minutes and they were accepted as a true record of that meeting.

### **3. BRIEF FILM OF MOORSIDE LIFE**

Steve McDonnell had been due to screen a brief extract of a film he had compiled for the National Film Archive of life at Moorside; he was unable to attend the meeting.

### **4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2013**

The Chairman's report had been circulated to the membership and was taken as read by the meeting. The Chairman reiterated his thanks to the committee and all the volunteers for their hard work during 2013 and welcomed another community group (*Age UK Newcastle*) to the association. The Chairman was concerned by rubbish accumulating outside the site and encouraged individual members to collect, and take it home, whenever possible.

### **5. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The council rental for the site had not changed in 2013 but was due to increase by 30% in 2015. The water bill was high due to high usage during a hot and dry summer. The Community Hut is too small for committee meetings; these are now held monthly in the Nunsmoor Centre at a cost of £15 per month and this has led to an increase in administrative costs. There had been some expenditure on the less able plot and new gate locks had been purchased. The Association's bank balance includes income from the plant scheme and revenue generated by the Trading Hut. Since the Association's rental income matches its necessary expenditure it was proposed that the rents should remain at the 2013 level. It was suggested that some of the Association's excess income should be held in a deposit account in order to earn interest.

### **6. TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT**

- ◆ Sales had generated an income of £7797.31 against an expenditure of £6077.81, leaving a surplus of £1719.50 and stock in hand had a retail value of £2424.71. Thanks to the hardy team of shop volunteers who have helped to achieve this good result and to the Treasurer who has kept all in order financially.
- ◆ The range of products stocked by the Trading Hut has expanded and includes more items to suit organic gardeners. Shortly to be added to the range will be volcanic rock fertiliser (in 20 kg bags) and mycorrhizal granules (in 150g and 360g packs) at keenly competitive prices. Rock salt for de-icing paths was also available from the hut.
- ◆ Seed potatoes were in stock and selling rapidly with some varieties already sold out. Garlic bulbs, onion sets and shallots would be available at the end of January.
- ◆ Both the *King's Seeds* scheme (co-ordinated by Dave Vincent) and the *Thompson & Morgan* seed scheme (co-ordinated by the Trading Hut Manager) had been successful in 2013. Both suppliers offer ongoing discounts throughout the year for allotment societies; brochures and order forms are available at the Trading Hut.
- ◆ The Trading Hut aims not only to be self-sustaining but also to raise revenue which can be ploughed back into Moorside activities. The existing container is cold, damp and cramped for the shop volunteers to work in; an application to the Freemen for permission to have a third container was refused so the existing facilities have been rearranged and the sales area will move into the Community Hut before the end of January. There will be

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a new dedicated racking system in the hut which has been obtained at a cost of £620, inclusive of VAT and delivery. The new sales area will provide a more comfortable environment for both Moorside ploholders and shop volunteers; heat and light will be supplied by the on-site generator. The existing Trading Hut will continue to be used to store stock and to house the paraffin tank, and for paraffin sales. It is hoped that the more comfortable environment will encourage more volunteers to help run the Trading Hut; a form is enclosed with the AGM papers for those who feel that they can spare two hours on either a Saturday or Sunday morning to do so.

### **7. SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Show Secretary's report had been circulated to the membership and was taken as read by the meeting. It was suggested that there should be an open craft category at the 2014 show although it may be difficult to find a suitable judge to adjudicate a wide range of handiwork. Members from the *Comfrey Project* also suggested that there could be a stall where foods from different parts of the world could be sampled.

### **8. MOORSIDE PLANT SCHEME 2013**

Sue Johnson thanked Dave Eason (the scheme's pioneer) who together with his team of volunteers had raised around £900 in 2013 selling a large and varied selection of plants to Moorside's ploholders. Over the last two years plants had been raised by Dave and by a group of volunteers; the plants were maintained in several greenhouses scattered around the site which made it onerous and time-consuming for the group to tend the plants. Dave is taking a back seat in 2104 and the plant scheme volunteers are willing to continue running the scheme. The Committee has agreed to plot 86 being used by the group for one season in the first instance; the plant scheme group is expected to look after the garden during the growing season and the scheme will pay rent to the Association. The situation would be reviewed at the end of the growing season. There is a large greenhouse on the plot and space for two smaller ones which have been donated to the scheme and clearing and weeding of the garden was well under way. There is already a core of volunteers for sowing seeds but more are needed; donations of seedlings are welcome from members who are unable to join the group and a rota would be drawn up for volunteers to help with watering and transporting plants to the sales area. A list of proposed plants is enclosed with the AGM pack for members to look at and add to if they have particular requests.

### **9. GREENING WINGROVE**

David Rochester (plot 21) is a founder Director of this initiative which aims to make the Wingrove Ward a greener and pleasanter place to live. Community interest groups are responsible for planting up containers in Arthur's Hill and around St. James' and St. Basil's church. Volunteers tend the containers and individual members of the congregation sponsor a large pot. Fifty apple trees have been planted in a community orchard in Nunsmoor Park; thirty more remain to be planted and volunteers are needed to manage this project. Funding is being sought to plant around 1,300 large trees. Around 300 fruit trees are available to schools and private individuals; some are also available to allotment holders and a form is available in the AGM pack for interested members. There are also plants available for planting in recreational areas; one proposal is to plant poppies along Barrack Road to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War 1. Volunteers are needed for various schemes within the *Greening Wingrove* project.

### **10. RENTS FOR 2014**

A motion was proposed to accept the Treasurer's recommendation that the rents for 2014 be unchanged from 2013. The rent for 2014 would be £55 per full plot (£40 per concessionary full plot) and £27.50 per half plot (£20 per concessionary half plot). (The concessionary rate was for pensioners over the age of 65 and the unwaged). This motion was carried.

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### **11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- ◆ It was suggested that individual ploholders plant up tubs or troughs outside their plots to improve the appearance of the site.
- ◆ A motion was proposed to support the Committee investigating and costing the options for increasing the pressure of the site water supply. The motion was carried.

### **12. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2014**

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

Sue Brophy, Krys Gaffney, Sue Johnson, Steve McDonnell, Sue Pownall, John Reid, Peter Whewell and Tony Whittle.

In addition, at the meeting Nicola Francis was proposed and seconded for Committee membership.

They were all elected to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.07 p.m.