

MOORSIDE ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 JANUARY 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST JAMES' AND ST BASIL'S CHURCH HALL, FENHAM HALL DRIVE, FENHAM

The meeting was attended by 44 members and Susan Pownall was in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Annie Brotherton, Ethnie Carter, Harry Carter, Ian Carter, Liz Randell, Liz Whewell and Peter Whewell.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held in January 2015 had been circulated to the membership. Steve McDonnell's film about Moorside life had not progressed beyond the overview clip shown at the 2015 AGM. 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 2013

Susan Pownall was elected as Chair in June when her predecessor, Peter Whewell, stood down from the committee to concentrate on his health; his leadership had been inspirational and had raised Moorside to the status of one of the showcase allotment sites in the city. She thanked her fellow committee members and the 'invisible' volunteers for their help and support in maintaining and overseeing the site. During the year, Moorside had welcomed several gardeners from Nunsmoor allotments and had been saddened by the passing of Dave Eason and Steve Reeve; a relatively new member, Richard Littlewood, had taken over the management of the website. The site had fared well in the City Allotment Competition, but it was Stan and Audrey Tortoise's prizewinning plot, and their success as the City Master Gardener, that made the site a city attraction for visitors. Susan represents the site on the Newcastle Allotments Working Group (NAWG) and is due for re-election in 2016; wishing to continue as representative, she urged members to vote for her at the Allotment Forum. Ongoing local government cuts mean less money for allotment projects and concessions reduce the rental income received by the Council by 15%; a reduced Council Allotments Budget could result in the association meeting some future spending from its own funds. Members were urged to complete rent forms when paying their rents so that their contact details could be updated.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Nicola Francis, reported that the association had a surplus of £1,200 which had been created by the Trading Hut and the Plant Scheme. There had been a large increase in the council rental for the site in 2015 and a small rise of 0.5% was expected in 2016. Much of the association's expenditure is on administration and maintenance, with, for example, a replacement lock costing £120. The rent paid by members covers all outgoings such as rental to the Council, insurance and water rates. The Treasurer was proposing an increased rise to the rents since if they remained at their current level the association's cash surplus would be reduced to nothing. The accounts were accepted by the meeting.

5. TRADING HUT MANAGER'S REPORT

Susan Pownall, the Trading Hut manager, thanked the volunteers for their work and support during 2015 and made an appeal for additional volunteers. The surplus income generated by the Trading Hut during the 2015 season amounted to around £800. The closure in 2015 of the Nunsmoor allotments had resulted in the loss of Associate Members and a corresponding drop in revenue; paraffin sales had also decreased because of the mild weather. A ton of soil conditioner, costing £35, had been available to members outside the Trading Hut; most of it had disappeared but only three barrowloads had been paid for. The Trading Hut manager hoped that those who had forgotten to pay for the topsoil would come forward and do so now. A new consignment of enriched topsoil was available in the manure store, retailing at £1.50 per barrow. Several tons of well-rotted horse manure was expected at the end of January. The seed potatoes for 2016 had arrived. The manager thanked everyone for supporting the Trading Hut.

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6. SHOW SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Show Secretary, Pat Francis, thanked the Show Committee members Sue Johnson and Tony Whittle, and the show day team, for their contributions. The PA system used at the 2016 show had been of great benefit. The show had cost £600 to stage and had raised £800. The possibility of holding the show in the church hall, in the event of bad weather, was raised from the floor; the rental of the hall, at £17/hour, would not make this feasible. The possibility of holding the show earlier in the year was also suggested and this may be considered at a future date. Sue Johnson had retired from the Show Committee in October and Fiona Douglas and Jill Dales were two new recruits. The 2016 Moorside show will take place on Saturday 10 September.

7. THE PLANT SCHEME REPORT

George Kell reported on behalf of the Plant Scheme. In 2015, plant sales were conducted from plot 86 on an experimental basis and generated a surplus of over £500, in addition to a surplus brought forward from previous years of activity. The savings made in terms of human resources, watering and transporting the plants means that in 2016 plants sales will be carried out exclusively on plot 86. A range of plant varieties, including organic, is proposed for 2016. There were not many buyers from outside the allotment site and he thanked all those who had supported the scheme.

8. MOTIONS

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

There were no other motions.

9. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR 2016

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

Sue Brophy, Nicola Francis, Krys Gaffney, Sue Johnson, Frank Lightfoot, Steve McDonnell, Sue Pownall and Tony Whittle.

In addition, at the meeting Nick Coster was proposed and seconded for Committee membership.

They were all elected to the Committee.

John Reid was unable to continue as a member of the Committee and the Chair thanked him for his support over the years.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Melissa Girling proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for their work.
- A visit was expected from the tree surgeon; there were various trees on the site that needed pruning, cutting down or inspection for safety.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

KG

2 February 2016