

Little Moor Allotment Association

AGM 2023 Chair's report

Introduction

This year's Chair's Report is thankfully provided to you in addition to our scheduled AGM to be held on Tuesday 7th February at the South North Cricket Club. The Association's accounts accompany this document, and we thank Julie Jacques for their completion and to Neil Scott for auditing them.

I must be having déjà vu. This time last year we were waiting for an entrance gate to be fixed after storms and now this year we are waiting for another to be fixed due to vandalism/forced entry. The boundary fence and gates are beginning to show their age, and whilst 2022 Urban Green arranged and funded repairs, this year under the Freeman we will be expected to fund and arrange ourselves- although nothing in writing has been received to that effect.

None of the allotment associations now with the Freeman have received a lease and so this restricts our ability to make decisions- such as those for improving fences and gates on site. The only thing we do know is the rent-that at least was not a surprise and no more than Urban Green's charge so far, although the Freeman have warned that rent increases will be in line with RPI.

Site

This year we have continued to manage our own hedge cutting saving the association hundreds of pounds if the service had been outsourced. Thanks to the many who helped with the hedge cutting and tidy up. On volunteer days we have maintained borders and tidied a lot of storm damage-again thanks to the many who helped with that. Storm damaged gates and fences were temporarily fixed by volunteers, and in a final act as landlords Urban Green paid for fence and gate repairs.

Unwanted visitors to the site remain a problem to us throughout the year. Please do notify the police of thefts, so that they are aware of the scale and frequency of the problem.

We have had some success in the Urban Green Annual Allotments Competition:

Best 1/2 plot - Carmel Ridley (Plot 33) 2nd place
Best full plot - David Harmiston (Plot 93) 2nd place
Best Shed - Gill Dallow (Plot 38) 1st place
Best Whole Site - Littlemoor 3rd place

Committee

In the last 12 months the committee has changed. We give thanks to Julie Jacques (Treasurer), who has resigned after completing this year's accounts- but is still around smoothing the handover to Dorothy Robson our new treasurer. Tony Robson has also joined the committee; he'll be a familiar face to anybody who uses the allotment shop on Sunday mornings. During the year we also welcomed Liz Bennett to the committee- she has done an excellent job managing and updating our website <http://littlemoorallotments.com>

I'd like to thank my committee colleagues for their efforts- it's a pleasure to meet and discuss allotment business with such friendly people. Thanks also to the regular volunteers at the allotment shop and in particular Rob Hodgson for all that he does at the shop and around the site. Many thanks also to John Bell and Ian who carry out essential maintenance of equipment and site infrastructure.

Membership

We have had 15 new members join this year and currently have 47 on the waiting list. The wildflower area is in its infancy, but we look forward to the next few years as it gets established. Thanks to Julie Eccles and those that helped with preparing the area. The flower bed on the old communal bonfire site that Frank

Snowden established this year with flowers from the excess polytunnel stock was appreciated greatly by members and passers by.

Thanks to John Stephenson and Friends of the Valley/Little Dene for collecting fallen leaves and creating leaf mould. Many of the members have benefited this year.

The Newsletter will resume in March. Just a reminder to use the website to keep up to date with all information about the site. In case you miss our emails or prefer to find your own answers, everything that's important will be posted on the website. Content like Volunteer Days, Trading Hut supplies, Growing tips and much more. The website is a 2-way thing – so, use it to sell what you no longer need or share your photos and news.

Finance

What follows is an overview of the financial year to the end of October 2022, the presented accounts are in the separate document attached to the same email this document is attached to.

Highlights

- Cash at year end £23860.08 (excluding cash held in key account)
- Positive returns from the Trading Hut and sales from the Polytunnel
- Successful collection of rents via BACS payment facility for ploholders
- Sales particularly from polytunnel have grown dramatically in the year made easier by the availability of contactless payments systems.

Year's Overview

Significant Income streams in the year included:

- Trading Hut - £6870.39 income down from £7732.53 previous year
- Polytunnel - £2448.70 income increase from £1505.24 previous year
- Rents received - £8685.94 (£7516.50 previous year)
- Lawn mower rentals - £564.00 previously ££624

Expenditure levels were £9593.04, slightly down from last year (£9698.57) The major expenses in the year continue to be ground rent and water rates. The rent is artificially low because the second half year rent from the Freeman was not invoiced by the end of the accounting period. To date we have not yet been invoiced. There is a new contactless payment cost which includes a one-off payment this year future years will be at a commission charge of 1.69%. The availability of contactless payment at the trading hut has allowed greater convenience and is likely to have led to higher sales.

Specific Performance

1. The Trading Hut continues to make a surplus. This is an excellent result & reflects the hard work put in by Rob Hodgson and the many volunteers throughout the year
2. The Polytunnel generated a surplus of £2270.03, selling seedlings and plants to plot holders early in the season and then later fresh produce. Again, thanks to Frank for growing and the many who are on hand to promote and sell on a Sunday morning.
3. Subscriptions of £8685.94 were received which was an increase from last year. We have taken the decision not to increase rents for the coming year given our cash reserves and also the Freeman's indication that the half year rent, when charged will not exceed the rental already paid to Urban Green
4. The Association remains in good health financially, however the current situation of rental income not meeting basic regular expenditure needs to be addressed.

Summary of Accounts

Looking forward to 2022/23

Our objective remains to maintain our cash reserves in order that we can afford to consider larger capital projects without being totally reliant on surpluses from the Trading Hut. As we have transferred back to the Freemen, we need to ensure we maintain sufficient reserves to cover maintenance and improvements which may not be covered in the new lease, along with responsibilities which we will retain.

We welcome suggestions from members regarding projects for site maintenance & improvements which the Association could fund.

Accountancy Note

The annual accounts for the year ending 31 October 2022 have been prepared in line with accountancy rules for Societies and Clubs. They have been prepared by Julie Jacques, Treasurer of the Little Moor Association April 2021 to 31 October 2022). Thanks go to the auditor Neil Scott a qualified accountant and fellow plotholder.

Little Moor Allotment Association - Rents 2023/2024

The annual rent levels are as follows:

Full plot: £66

Half plot: £33

Third Plot £22

Quarter plot £17

A reminder there are no reductions for those claiming state pensions or state benefits, and there is no early payment reduction.

How to pay

Rents will be collected up to the deadline of 7 March 2023 and can be paid as follows:

- By BACS transfer.

If you want to pay your rent by BACS transfer our account details are as follows

Account: Little Moor Allotment Association

Sort Code: 30 93 55

Account No: 01526831

For your reference please use the first 4 letters of the **plotholder's** surname followed by the plot number (e.g. **John Smith on plot 7 would be SMIT7**)

- By cheque. Cheques should be made payable to Little Moor Allotment Association and handed into the Trading Hut between 10.00 and 11.00 any Sunday in February. Please ensure you write the **plotholder's** surname and plot number on the back
- By cash. Any Sunday in February at the Trading Hut. Cash must be put in an envelope marked with the **plotholder's** name and plot number.
- If you are unsure of either the plotholder's name (if its not you) or the plot number contact littlemoormembership@gmail.com

Any queries please by email to - littlemoortreasurer@gmail.com