

Little Moor Allotments Committee meeting 16 December 2023

In attendance: Ken F, Chris H, Dorothy R, Tony R, Sara G, Liz B

Apologies: Mark F, Lesley G

The November Meeting Minutes were approved.

There was a review of actions arising from the November meeting:

1. Results of the Sunflower and Pumpkin competitions will be in the November Newsletter. **DONE**
2. Speak to the Insurers again to determine the total value of Trading Hut contents and include the 4 new lawnmowers **Done – there will be extra cost from May 2024 to cover the additional assets**
3. We still need to find someone to do the Trading Hut rota. **DONE** Also, we need someone to do the Selling Produce Rota - **Carried over – action Chris**
4. Role of Social Secretary. Agreed that we would send a personalised email to all plot holders to ask for volunteers. **Action – Sara** to speak to Richard **Carried over**
5. 4 new lawnmowers into the Newsletter. **DONE**
6. Re volunteer days / hot drink flasks **DONE**
7. Re Plotholder Appeal – Completed **DONE**
8. Water was turned off for the winter on 31 October – include in Newsletter. **DONE**
9. Contact the water company re our higher & possibility of leaks. **DONE – waiting a date from them**
10. Re getting last year's trophies back – **DONE but only 1 reply so Carried over**
11. 2024 AGM confirmed as 13 /2/24. **DONE**
12. New Bank Account details have been sent to all plot holders & in the Newsletter **DONE.**
13. The Trading Hut reduced winter hours and closed from 10/12/23 to January 2024. All informed. **DONE**
14. The Expenditure report - to include all known items of expenditure plus contingency planning **Discussed in Matters Arising**

Chairman's report:

There was a report of a rough sleeper in one of the sheds but he left the site quietly.

Membership Report:

- Lesley had emailed her report – 31 on the Wait List and 5 plots available. One of these was a full plot that was difficult to split.....should we offer it to an existing plot holder. The decision was "yes in principle" but we need to know where it is. **Action – Chris to speak to Lesley**
- Other items in the report were discussed under Matters Arising

Secretary's report:

- Re the ongoing proposed Lease & discussions with other Allotment Associations. The current proposal has been accepted in principle by the Freemen and all the Associations are ok to support it.
- Our rent will be £3305pa BUT we are now responsible for fence maintenance.
- There are potential issues with the new Building & Structures policy concerning the size of polytunnels. The Freemen are saying max size of 12 meters. Our (communal) is bigger so we will look to get an exception clause for communal poly tunnels.

Action – Chris

- 1 current plot holder erects a temporary polytunnel during the summer. It's unclear whether this is within the guidelines. **Action – Liz to get the Policy from Mark and put it on the website**
- Committee Training with Northern Counties dates are confirmed as 18/1, 25/1, 1/2. Venue is United reformed Church, Jesmond. Times 6.05pm to 9.00pm

Communications report: Nothing to report

Treasurer's Report:

- Current account just over £6,000
- Savings Account £31,000 and earning £ 35 a month interest
- End of Year accounts have been produced and Connected Voice will validate – cost £216
- **Action – Dorothy to get a quote from CV re completing our tax returns and any other legal requirements**

Trading Hut Report: - Nothing to report

Building & Structures Report: Nothing to report

Matters Arising:

- Proposed 2024 rents. It was agreed that a special meeting would be held on the 6/1/24 to go into this in detail. In light of our increasing costs (Freemen rent increase of approx. 30%), we need to -
 - Look at all known and planned expenditure
 - Contingency plan for contractors to do what Rob and Frank currently do
 - Do a 5 year Investment plan
 - Establish a fair and transparent rent for 2024
- Investments should come out of our retained finances /savings and maintenance out of rental income
- AGM planning to be the focus of the next Committee meeting

Date of Next meeting 29 January at 7pm at the Chair's house (special meeting on the 6/1 at 10.00 as described above)

