

Little Moor Allotments Committee Meeting 16 July 2024

Present – Lesley G, Chris H, Dorothy R, Tony R, Sara G, Liz B

Apologies – Ken F, Peter C

Review of Actions from previous meeting

Chris

- No progress on update from the Council re the Lease and a breakdown of costs re legal/surveyor. Decided we need to escalate. Chris to send letter to the Council cc The Freemen about the problems this is causing. Carried over.
- Personal Data requests and whether we need to be registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. Carried over.
- Speak to Ian re the Drainage Map. Carried over.

Lesley

- To contact the NAS for their advice re minimising the risk of cross contamination on equipment. DONE though the advice was very limited.

Tony

- Update on plot signage. Work continuing. Carried over.
- Site fencing - 2 posts near the Trading Hut need shoring up and a few places along Ilford Road need reinforcing. DONE

Chair's report

- Nothing to report

Membership report

- Since the June meeting we have had 3 plot holders leave. Plot 2, 46A and 82.
- We have 2 new members on Plot 82 and 65B.
- A current member has taken over Plot 125
- Vacant plots are,
 - Plot 2 which has been sprayed.
 - Plot 46A which is to be sprayed.
 - Plot 25 but it has produce which is being sold on Sunday mornings. Once empty the plot will then be offered to current plot holders. If no one wants it, it will be divided into two half plots.
 - Plot 26A is proposed as the site for a pond.
- There are 3 on the waiting list. Two have specific requirements of plots with greenhouses.

Secretary's Report

- Tidy up day on July 7th went well. A lot of volunteers turned up and all the jobs got done. We need to set a date for the next one.
- Frank's talk on weed and mares tail control was well attended. Hopefully we'll start to see mares' tail reducing around the site. Unfortunately, the weather is not conducive to spraying problem areas at the moment with all the rain. We desperately need a dry spell to get on top of the weeds.
- The planning meeting for the Allotment Open Day went well. We have a list of activities that we'd like to do on the day to which a number of names have been allocated. A banner has been designed and received and will be put up next week on the railings beside the trading hut.
- We have had a decent response to our request for people to help on the Allotment Open Day on 18th August. A meeting was held on 7th July to give the volunteers an outline of what we are planning. A further meeting has been organised for Saturday 20th July.
- There was a huge flood from a burst water main on Jesmond Dene Road on Sunday 7th July, which affected half a dozen allotments on the south side. Northumbrian Water was in attendance at 5am in the morning and did a good job in pumping the water away. They are replacing the burst piping and also replacing the drain covers that constantly rattle when vehicles go over them. The NW manager came on site and took photos of the affected allotments which he forwarded to their insurers. We need to make a claim for any loss of produce as a result of the flooding.

Communications Report

- Nothing to report.

Finance Report

- Current account -£6,044 Savings Account £34,515
- £10,014 in a 32-day notice account @ higher interest rates
- Agreed that Dorothy would move an additional amount into the higher interest account. DONE - This means we now have £9,515 in an instant savings account and £35,018 in the 32 days' notice account.

Trading Hut Report

- We have purchased 2 lightweight strimmers for allotment use. Unfortunately, they've both been damaged due to misuse. People need to be reminded that they are for strimming grass only and not for cutting down weeds and shrubs.
- Sales of produce continue to go well, and we've made over £3k so far. The weather is so cold that the tomatoes in the polytunnel are taking a long time to ripen.
- The peat free compost that Rob bought to replace Sylvagrow is showing disappointing results. We'll continue to monitor feedback but may go back to purchasing the normal Sylvagrow next time.
- Action – Sara to include amount raised from sale of produce in the next Newsletter.

Building & Structures Report

- Since the June meeting, there has been one request, and this was approved.

Matters Arising

- Open Day on Sunday 18 August 2024.
 - We will need 4 cash floats and the Card reader. **Action** – Dorothy
 - “Cash preferred” to be included on the poster. **Action** – Lesley
 - Northumberland Natural History society – Lesley has heard back from them, and their response seemed positive, asking for more details. **Action** – Lesley to respond.
 - We will need 9 tables for the various activities. We have been promised a loan of 5 and will need to collect them from Treherne Road on the morning of the Open Day. **Action** – Liz to coordinate with the donor.
 - A request will be made to members for the additional tables and a number of chairs. **Action** – Chris to email and Sara to include in the Newsletter.
 - Guided tours – Two people have agreed for the North side – Gill and Helen. Still need people for the South side. **Action** – Lesley
 - Meet and Greet visitors – Lesley.
 - Poster – **Action** - Lesley
 - Tables -
 - Home-made Produce and Cakes– Cath and Dorothy
 - Garden produce – Pat B
 - Tombola – Maggie and Maureen
 - Drinks table – Sara and Liz (Lesley has the flasks)
 - **Action** – Chris to email members re donations for the tombola, home produce and help setting up (start at 10.00) and tidying away.
 - Other members who have volunteered to help include Richard Y, Liz C, Jeremy
 - Next Open Day meeting is planned for 20 July – **Action** – Chris to do an agenda.
- There is a proposal to instal a Pond on existing Plot 26a, which is difficult to rent. The rationale is convincing – helps biodiversity and complements the work we’re doing with the dead hedge and wildflower area. There are safety risks to children and these need to be managed. Costs need to be determined but will included hiring a digger, lining, fencing, plants.
- Rents for the Restricted Mobility Plots. Agreed that, at the 2025 AGM, we would propose to reduce the rents on these plots to the equivalent of a half plot. We need also to consider converting other plots to “Restricted Mobility” to help those with health issues.
- Trading Hut – agreed that the Committee.
 - would clean and paint the inside of the Hut in the Autumn
 - Do a Stock review of what is / is not selling.

- Flooded Allotments – following the burst pipe, Northumberland Water took photos of the plots affected and will send them to their Insurers. **Action** – Chris will contact those affected and see if there was any lasting damage.
- A special Committee meeting re Open Day only – 13 August at 7pm at Treherne Road
- Next Committee Meeting – 16 September at 7pm