

## Little Moor Allotment Association

### AGM 2025 Chair's report

#### Introduction

This year's Chair's Report and the treasurer's report are provided to all members in addition to our scheduled AGM to be held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at the South Northumberland Cricket Club. The Association's accounts accompany this document, and we thank Dorothy Robson for their completion. Connected Voice have audited them.

In November last year we thought we had a version of a lease that most allotments under the Freeman were content to sign, however, at the time of writing the association still has no lease and it remains to be seen who that will be with. You may have noticed the shifting position of parks and allotments between Urban Green and the council, and we seem stuck in the middle at this time still having paid no rent to our landlord and hamstrung as to any capital expenditure projects we have proposed.

#### Site

The site remains managed well by those ploholders who volunteer to cut grass and hedges maintain fencing and keep borders tidy and free of rubbish. This year we also managed cut down some overgrown fruit trees on site. Much of the brash and wood from this activity has meant communal bonfires once more and that has come at a price for some of our neighbours who have objected.

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.

This year we held an open day as part of Allotments Week. It was a great success on a number of levels, for those people young and older who visited as our guests and also for those who volunteered on the day and before the event for the pre-open day tidy up. We hope to retain this as annual event.

Other on site events have included Frank's demonstrations which have been well attended.

#### Committee

Following Mark Fuller's departure Peter Calver stepped up to take oversight of buildings and structures requests.

As you will know by now the association needs a new chairperson and we are inviting interest from those willing and able to take on this role. The association **cannot continue** without a chairperson under the terms of our likely lease. The remaining committee are best fitted to the roles they currently occupy. So the new chair does not need to have been a committee member either now or in the past. Indeed we would invite other members to join committee alongside a new chair.

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 20 new members join this year and currently have 5 on the waiting list. This is much lower than in previous years and in part reflects post COVID demand but we have also discovered that systems to direct interested people to a plot on Littlemoor via the council/Urban Green/NAWG have not been working

## Finance

What follows is an overview of the financial year to the end of October 2024, the presented accounts are in the separate document attached to the same email this document is attached to.

Please make sure when paying rents to the association by BACS that you use the most recent sort code and account number detailed below. We are charged for non BACS payments- so please if you haven't tried BACS payment for your rent before, please give it a try this year.

### Highlights

- Cash in Bank at year end £46619.88 (excluding cash held in key account). We await backdated rent invoices from the council. This accumulation of non paid rent has at least generated this year nearly £650.
- Successful collection of rents via BACS payment facility for ploholders continues to grow in popularity and avoids bank charges
- Sales from shop up compared to last year by £1218.80 and polytunnel sales up from last year by £357.60 (thanks to Jen Stephenson for organising the polytunnel sales rota- it really helped to spread the workload and thanks to all those who volunteered their time on Sunday morning)

### Year's Overview

Significant Income streams in the year included:

- Trading Hut and Polytunnel sales income up £1576.40 from last year
- Rents received - £11830.50 after rent increase (£8730 previous year)
- The open day generated £571.75

As expected, expenditure levels increased to £14823.37 compared to last year (£10013) however that excludes the usual rent that would normally have been paid to the council. The major expenses in the year would normally be water rates but due to overpayments last year we paid a far lower amount- we expect this to return to normal levels and we do expect to pay ground rent and backdated rent . The cost of fuel impacts grass cutting and our investment in lawnmowers is responsible for the higher maintenance costs, the surplus on the trading account has contributed to this higher cost. The significantly higher level of stock in hand is due to buying from our suppliers early to avoid price increases and of course the inflationary rises of what stock we buy for the shop.

### 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, 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.

## Looking forward to 2025/26

It is our intention to change legal status again to become a Community Interest Company. This would have been done earlier but at the time of becoming a private guarantee company we chose this because time was against us- we needed a quicker change of status – but we believe CIC is a better status for our association and brings with it less accountancy expenses and a less onerous administrative burden. We recommend that members support this.

We have capital expenditure plans relating to fencing and gates. Following a generous bequest from Anne Tavroges we propose to create a pond near to the bonfire site near Ilford road boundary – this has been welcomed by Anne's family. We also aim to maintain current accessible plots and add three others on the empty plot 25.

This year rents will remain at the previous year's rates

## Accountancy Note

The annual accounts for the year ending 31 October 2024 have been prepared in line with accountancy rules for Societies and Clubs. They have been prepared by Dorothy Robson, Treasurer of the Little Moor Association. Connected Voice audited the accounts.

### Little Moor Allotment Association - Rents 2025/2026

The annual rent levels are as follows:

Full plot: £90.00

Half plot: £45.00

Third Plot £30.00

Quarter plot £22.50

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 18 March 2025 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 Allotments Ltd

Sort Code: 30 99 50

Account No: 14339563

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 Allotments Ltd 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](mailto:littlemoormembership@gmail.com)

Any queries please by email to - [littlemoortreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:littlemoortreasurer@gmail.com)