

Little Moor Allotments Committee Meeting 29 March 2025

Present – Philip B, Chris H, Dorothy R, Tony R, Liz B,

Apologies – Sara G

Minutes of March 1st Meeting agreed.

Review of Actions from previous meeting

- Re the Lease. Agreed by The Freeman and now with the Council. See “Matters Arising” for more detail. **CARRIED OVER.**
- Restricted Mobility Plots and Pond.
 - Work is going well on the Pond project and much progress has been made. Further work will be done by the BT Volunteers and our own volunteers in April. **CARRIED OVER until completion.**
- The Trading Hut clean & paint project. There are approx. 20 BT volunteers visiting the site in May. **ACTION** – Lesley to contact BT to see if this is a possible project for them. **CARRIED OVER.**
- Notice Boards – are not being used. Agreed that we would keep the one by the Trading Hut but remove the rest. Chris emailed members to advise and there have been no objections. **DONE & closed.**
- Painting white lines on Moorfield by the gate to make it more obvious it's a no parking area. **ACTION** – Chris has spoken to the Plot Holder who has Council contacts and we hope this will be taken up soon. **DONE & closed.**
- **ACTION** – Chris to email Ken to transfer his LMAA Chair email address to Phil. Also, to delete his access to the LMAA database. **DONE & closed.**
- **ACTION** – Phil to email LB with a photo for the website. **DONE & closed.**
- **ACTION** – Remove KF from Companies House and replace with PB. Still to do. Philip and Dorothy will meet to complete this. **CARRIED OVER.**
- **ACTION** – Chris to email the members requesting help at the Trading Hut. **DONE & closed.**
- **ACTION** – Dorothy to remove KF from the Current A/C and replace with PB after 10 March. **DONE & closed.**
- **ACTION** – Dorothy to discuss with KF re the “SumUp” card and investigate any benefit of transferring to “Zettle”. **DONE & closed.** Decision made to keep with “Sum Up” to avoid the technology switch.
- **ACTION** - consider inviting a speaker to the next AGM. **DONE & closed.** Lesley has spoken to one of our plot holders who has agreed to be our Speaker.
- Fencing and Gates – **ACTION** – Tony has spoken to possible suppliers and agreed one at a start date of 14 April.
- Topsoil for the raised beds in the Restricted Mobility plots. **ACTION** – get 3 quotes and proceed asap with the cheapest. **DONE & closed.** Order will be placed w/c 31 March.
- Move to CIC status – **ACTION** – Dorothy to progress. **DONE.** Dorothy met with CV and their recommendation is CIO status (not CIC) – see Treasurer report for more details.
- NCAA v NAS membership. **ACTION** – Lesley to contact NAS re details of membership. **DONE & closed.** Decision made to move to NAS membership.

ACTION – Chris to arrange & email members and Dorothy to inform David Banks at NCAA North East.

- Lease – with a new lease imminent, we need to align with its content, and this means we now need -
 - a new Tenancy Agreement with Plot Holders
 - a review of our policy templates
 - our existing Rules and Regulations
 - **ACTION** – once we have the new Lease, this work will be shared between Committee members.

Chair's report

Nil report

Membership Report

- In the past month we have welcomed 7 new members.
- Plots which are currently available are Plot 4(2/3), Plot 9 (1/2), Plot 25A, Plot 50(2/3), Plot 85 (1/2), Plot 86 (1/2)
- We have 8 people on the waiting list.
- Pond - This is now ready to be "dressed" We need to get some stones and logs to put around the top. We have been promised some plants from one of our new members who works at Cowells.

Secretary's Report

- **Restricted Mobility Plots and Pond** - 16 BT volunteers helped to get the pond liner installed. The volunteers also helped with finishing off the hedges along the perimeter, tidying the border near the new pond area and clearing away the remaining branches and brash from when the trees had been cut down in the far corner of the allotments. In view of the cost for fencing, we've sourced our own materials and Rob and volunteers will erect the fencing week commencing 31st March. We are also trying to source logs and pebbles for around the pond area.
- **Gates & Fencing** - Tony obtained a new quote for the gate repairs involving replacing the existing posts. It's much more reasonable so we have given the company the go-ahead to do the work.
- **Restricted Mobility Raised Beds** - Soil improver has been added to the raised beds and the topsoil will be ordered week commencing 31st March. 3 x greenhouses are on order. Delivery expected in about 4 weeks.
- **Fires** - We've received another complaint about fires on the allotment. Whilst it is not illegal for us to have fires, it is far from ideal for health and safety and environmental reasons. We urge everyone to use the communal bonfire rather than have their own. NOTE – the deadline for having bonfires has now passed and no one is allowed to have them. **ACTION** – Chris to email members to remind them of this.
- **Fires** - The enormous amount of hedge trimmings generated when perimeter hedges are cut, or take trees down, is generally added to the dead hedge to avoid burning it. Unfortunately, this time around, we had no choice but to burn the trimmings because the height and spread of the dead hedge meant it was impossible to get any more trimmings on.

- **Banner** - We purchased a banner and placed it on the fence on Ilford Road advising allotments available for rent. This has generated a lot of enquiries, so we now have a healthier waiting list of people wanting allotments and the banner has been taken down.
- **Rents** - Most people have paid their rents. Currently, only 2 are outstanding.
- **Demos** – Frank S has agreed to give a couple of demos again for anyone wanting to know how to plant potatoes, vegetables and make compost. We've decided to do 2 sessions, one on a Saturday morning and one on a Sunday morning, both covering the same topics. Dates are 12 & 13 April.

Trading Hut Report

- Summer trading hours started on Sunday 2nd March from 10am – 12pm
- Sales have picked up considerably with compost and fertilisers being the main sellers. All seed potatoes and onion sets have been sold. Thanks to all who bought them and supported the trading hut.
- 3 people have volunteered to help at the trading hut and their names are now on the rota.
- Jen has had a good response from people willing to help sell produce during the summer months.

Communications Report

- Nil report

Finance Report

- Balances as follows.
 - Current Account £7071
 - Instant Savings Account £21.6k
 - 32 Days' Notice Savings Account £35.583k
- Following the meeting with Connected Voice (CV), we discussed changing from a Ltd company to a CIC or registering as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). The benefits of the latter are:
 - We would not pay Corporation Tax
 - We can apply for a wider range of grants on the basis that as an Allotment Association we supply physical, mental and environmental benefits.

It is a lengthy and complex process and CV could do it for us for a fee of £980 + VAT. We may need an extraordinary AGM to agree this with members.

Building and Structures Report

- Re outstanding and, as yet, unapproved applications, from last year
 - 1 member has applied to replace a greenhouse with a slightly bigger one, and 1 member is considering erection of a new shed - to be advised
 - Waiting for a completed form from one plot re request to build a polytunnel.

Items for the Newsletter

- Transfer of membership from NCAA to NAS.
- Tidy Up days – Saturday 26 April and Sunday 1 June.
- Trading Hut will start selling produce from (probably) the 2nd Sunday in May
- The Committee are considering the change of status for the allotments to CIO status.
- Demo days to be given by Frank S – dates to be confirmed but probably mid-April
- LMAA Open Day planned for Sunday 17 August and will be project managed by Becky Hodson-Moor (thanks Becky!)

Matters Arising

- Lease – has now been agreed by the Council EXCEPT for 2 clauses
 - They do not want reference to invasive weeds or ground elder on their side in clause 4(s) and want that removed. In turn we would only have the requirement to deal with Japanese knotweed.
 - They will not sign the lease if it includes 5(d) the rectification clause. This gave us a month to rectify any shortfalls notified to us in order to forestall forfeiture of the lease. The point is that the Council retains the right to end the lease if any one of the tenants is in breach of the lease. They argue that this clause is not in any of their other leases and that in any case we have relief against unreasonable forfeiture through operation of the law.
 - The Committee discussed this and, in view of the length of time taken and the Council's position, we will respond saying "we reluctantly accept".
ACTION - Chris
- Pond – We agreed purchase of a garden bench, roof, water butts. TO dress the pond, logs to be supplied by David S and stones will be bought from Cowells (alongside those donated). We will look into having a solar powered pump.
ACTION – Lesley
- Available plots – Chris and Lesley will decide which are split-able. **ACTION**
- Signage to inform the public who we are. Discussed and agreed that we should have one and it will be erected when the Trading Hut has been tidied and repainted. **ACTION** – Phil will look into this and come back with design and costings.
- Tidy Up days – tasks include
 - Trading Hut tidy and paint.
 - Reclaim the path along by Moorfield.
 - Continue to Tidy Up borders.
 - Laying top soil on the raised beds of the restricted mobility plots
 - Clear rubbish from the site
 - **ACTION** – Chris to email members and buy the paint for the Trading Hut

Next meeting is Saturday 3 May at 10.00 and Liz B's