

Low Moor Allotment Association

Committee Meeting

21 January 2017

Attendees:

Angela Johnson (chair)
Simon Wild
Lindsey Maxwell
Christine Robertson (site secretary)
Joe Lyons
Lucy Wild (site secretary)
Anthony Day (invited to attend)

Apologies:

Darren Lovatt (Council Allotment Officer)
Helen Balawajder

Absent:

Chris Glasper

Footpath repair

- Principally laid path toward Heslington Road, with other portions done with excess planings
- Principally funded by the £700 grant from the Ward Committee, Council made up excess cost and arranged the community payback team for labour
- Angela has written required report for the Ward Committee, awaiting receipt to submit
- Some unhappiness from tenants where additional path areas were laid without notice, bulbs or other boundary plants may have been affected
- Concern from tenants about future management and impact of spray drift if herbicides are used to manage grass, etc. which is already showing through in some areas.

New members

- Helen emailed members regarding getting new members for the committee. Anthony has stepped forward attending as an observer.
- Similar arrangement to Sonya previously who expressed an interest after AGM.
- Opportunity to become full members at AGM if they wish to be nominated.

Shop roof

- Chris had gotten an estimate for a fibreglass roof following his concerns about the roof integrity.
- Angela approached a plot holder with building experience to assess the roof, his conclusions were:
 - o Water is being held on surface due to edging associated with the originally intended green roof retention.
 - o Roof integrity is presently acceptable. The lining which covers the timber (associated with intended green roof) is holding but will deteriorate in time. The timbers are dry.
 - o Recommendation that we do consider taking action before the lining fails.
 - o Plot holder could felt entire roof and address drainage problems for something like £1000 if volunteers could help with the labour. Angela will follow up and obtain a full report and estimate to present for decision at next meeting.

Correspondence re Association Constitution

- Angela stepped aside as chair for this item with Christine assuming the chair role.
- Angela explained that Darren had asked for meeting notes and copies of various documents following an apparently anonymous complaint about Angela holding two roles on the committee: Chair and Treasurer.
- Lucy and Christine consulted with another local Association and contacts with legal experience. Contact suggested the constitution was ambiguous and could be made clearer, but there was no serious concern from those externals consulted.
- Darren offered assistance of Council staff member, Julie Hood, with experience in such matters to help with considering alterations to the Constitution.
- Several questions were raised including:
 - o Q: Is Association answerable to Council? A: Not in any formal way
 - o Q: Is Association funded or in receipt of any grant from Council? A: No
 - o Q: Is there concern regarding the funding from the Ward Committee for footpaths? A: All required documents were submitted when the application was made and there were no concerns expressed at that time from the funder.
- Conclusion that a sub-committee to include Simon and Angela and anyone else interested will consider the constitution with advice from Julie Hood. Likely to revise to ensure acceptability of dual roles is clear, mostly due to small number of people on the committee.
- Draft revisions will be brought back to the full Committee for comment and consideration given as to whether there is a need to call an Emergency GM or to wait for the AGM to put before members for approval.
- Angela resumed chair role following this item.

Allotment officer report (provided by Angela from note sent by Darren)

- Skip to be booked for weekend of Fri 10th Feb – 13th Feb. Up to Association to promote, suggested theme of 'love your allotment' at Valentines.
- Conifer on plot 63 to be felled by Arbour wise for £700 on 24th Jan paid by Council, but volunteers required to manage all material generated, to be stacked on plot 144.
- Recommendation of burning from Darren; a concern and discussion about alternative management. Two potential people with chainsaws who could cut down and remove firewood or offer to plot holders, could pursue chipper either through Darren or share with cemetery.
- Stump treatment needs to be confirmed to prevent regrowth.
- Volunteers may be required to rebuild plot 63 fence.
- Tree Health and Safety survey completed and some results shared, with suggestion that Association develop a tree policy.
 - o Discussion that a tree policy was outside the current remit of the Association as this is part of the relationship between tenants and the Council.
 - o Will review this as potential new management entity is formed and in consideration of this entities' role as relates to trees, once confirmed.
- Council receipt of payment for path works sent.
- New database, issues requiring manual inputting and will be delays in determining vacancies
- Future planning letter to tenants in late January. Monday Counsellor Ayre agreed continuing exploration of new entity options for managing the Allotments. Group of 9 plot holders (including Simon) to be involved. (later information available that Adam Myers also in group)
- Angela mentioned the Yorkshire Post article.

Site Secretary Report (Lucy)

- Waiting list in excess of 50
- Unsure of current vacancies due to system issues, but perhaps by late February
- Angela received a comment from one plot holder that warning letter Christine sent re trimming hedges was very much appreciated.

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PCSO report

- No report, but given notice that Matt is leaving and our rep will be Hannah

Finance

- End of year figures for 2016
 - o Association Account Balance (21.12.2016) = £1482
 - o o/s payment to be debited = £700
 - o Effective Balance £782
- Gardeners' Store Account
 - o Balance (28.12.2016) = £6793.09
 - o Starting Balance (Jan 2016) = £5497.45
 - o Total income from sales = £9718.58
 - o Total expenditure = £8462.94
 - o (1 o/s cheque payment of £10 c/f to 2017 accounts)
- Shop Admin total £1057.27 (includes electricity, insurance, shopkeeper' plot rental, stationery, travel, £94.92 total discounts currently deducted from General stock but probably more correctly included in accounts within shop admin, cleaning (£150 cash withdrawn) Note : Angela has asked Chris and Kerry for detailed breakdown of this in terms of hours / dates / tasks alongside payment made to helper engaged.
- Auditing: currently considering best option for independent annual audit
 - o Darren has asked other Associations to share who they use
 - o Recommended 'Outsource' in Millfield Lane which may cost £75
 - o Angela will pursue enquiries to obtain Audit of 2016 accounts
- Angela re-iterated desire to release the Treasurer role to any interested party, with a training period for continuity. Simon has agreed to take on this role .subject then to his confirmation at AGM. It was agreed that Simon will also be added as a signatory to the accounts.

Shop

- No report presented
- Rotas prepared and distributed, including three new volunteers
- Bagging up onions and potatoes: unsure of date, but bring your scales when called upon!
- May add additional bagging up to 'jobs' for shop volunteers to undertake on shifts
- Pricing discussed and it was regretted that Chris was not present to give relevant information. As decided last year agreement of Committee is required for proposed standard mark-up on goods bought, with some discretion with shop keeper for individual item variation from standard or to make round figures.
 - o Seeking report from shopkeepers so that mark up rate for this year can be agreed.
 - o % figure to be provided for bulk purchase items this year.
- Discussion of seedling sales last season
 - o Confusion by committee members, both through sales and purchase, that seedlings were for personal profit and not for the Children's plot (as has traditionally been the case)

- o Sale of seedlings was a useful service and popular for some plot holders
- o Concern that this had not been brought to Committee for prior approval
- o Suggestion that this should be managed like all shop purchases (honey, etc.) and purchased for a fixed fee but sold at standard markup with proceeds going to shop.
- o Open sourcing of seedlings to best price as per any other shop item, i.e. remove any conflict of interest

Hedgelaying

- Several volunteers to learn and then to undertake further work on site
- £200 to St. Nicks for training agreed. **UPDATE** Don Davies employed for training as St. Nicks had no capacity.

Mentoring

- Angela has volunteered and will coordinate
- Other volunteers sought
- Promoted when plots let by Site Secretaries

Pentaque pitch

- Some discussion that Darren has suggested insect hotels, but no information shared with group. Lucy to contact Darren.
- Some volunteer effort to seed area has already been undertaken, but recognition that more work was needed.

Activities

- Lucy to organise plot crawl.

AOB

- Simon suggested that notes could go on website for general info.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : SUNDAY 26TH FEBRUARY AT 12 NOON IN WELLINGTON INN