

North Staffs Allotments Network Minutes

Sunday 4th February 2024

Attendance: Derrick Hesom, Caverswall Lane; Hazel Middleton, Longton Hall Lane; John Storer, Heathfields; H Storer, Heathfields; Sarah Hill, Gresty St.; Ali Burdon, Gresty St.; Sarah Pearce, Turnhurst Road; Kevin Austin, Bycars Road; Amanda Brown, Bycars Road; Mark Glover, Bycars Road; Scott Hulse, Dollys Lane; D Hulme, Buxton St.; Jim McDermott, Udallsfield; John Birch, Udallsfield; Paul Myatt, Richmond St.; Steve Barber, The Limes; Victoria Shepherd, Newford Crescent; Gayleen Millward, Campbell Road; Steve Plant, Birks Street; Bruce Jarvest, Thistlehough; Jayne Stokes, Fenpark; Brian Wilson, Stoke Old Road; Josephine Gallimore- Barker, Heron Cross

Introduction: Bruce welcomed everyone.

Updates from last meeting: Jayne reported back on some potential funding avenues that she had found online. Bruce reported back on the constitution progress and was still working on it. Victoria outlined the progress on the website and confirmed that there may be a donation from Leek's Town Mayor towards the running costs of the web site. Also, Sarah mentioned that all councillors do have some small amounts they can be accessed for projects, but sites need to be quick about it for this years funding.

Updates from Sarah Hill: The allotments service have sent out details of the competition for 2024. Some at the meeting have received the details others had not. Sarah will pass that information back to them. The waiting list for available plots has been closed till the allotments officers have identified who is still interested and the number of vacant plots, both council run and self-managed. Once this has been completed, they will have a big push to get as many as they can occupied by Easter. Leases are still being updated for the self-managed sites with the legal department. Sarah was asked why is the waiting list not being shared with the self- managed sites that was the form did not have a tick box to say, "Willing to share details". So due to Data Protection regulations they were unable to share. John Birch reported that he allowed his information to be forwarded to potential candidates and that had worked. Victoria outlined some issues her site has and the lack of communication from the allotments officer. A question was asked, "How were the rent increases in line with RPI?" She will ask the question and report back.

The Network will be doing a survey of the sites in the city to outline if any have lost land due to local residents encroaching. Bruce has agreed to carry this out when he retires later in the spring.

A question was asked has an inspection taken place by the council at Withies Road. Sarah said she would ask.

Turnhurst Road asked could they have support from the allotments officer to help them split large plots. Sarah said she would pass that on for them.

There is an invertebrates fair being held at Staffordshire University on Sunday 3rd March between 10 am and 4 pm. If any one is interested.

Jayne asked if anyone would be prepared to be signatories on the bank account. Bruce and Victoria agreed to become signatories.

The website is being developed on a ongoing basis and Victoria would welcome articles for the site but not too much graphics, due to how much space they take up it would take up. Victoria also reported that there is a discount for members of the Network at Topsoil and More. Will include the information on the website.

Bruce also offered to bulk purchase pots/trays etc for the smaller sites if people are interested.

A.O.B

Derek from Birches Head site explained the work they have been doing with local groups around growing food etc. Has asked sites and individuals that when they have gluts of veg/fruit to let them know and he can arrange for these groups to collect, or people can drop off, so they can be used rather than wasted. They are also working with schools and have produce a video on You Tube.

Meeting closed

Next meeting

Sunday 3rd March 2024