

North Staffs Allotments Network Minutes
3rd March, 2024

Attendance: K.Austin, Bycars; Simon Cartwright, Bycars; Jason Powell, Bycars; Mark Glover, Bycars; Stephen Clarke, Bycars; Anthony Humphries; Ann Humphries; Kate Mannion; Victoria Shepherd, Newford Crescent; Bruce Jarvest, Thistleyhough; Sarah Hill, Gresty Street; Nicola Farrin, Richmond Street; Paul Myatt, Richmond Street; Jayne Stokes, Fenpark.

Introduction: Bruce welcomed everyone and handed out the agenda.

Apology: Gresty Street, Uddelsfield, The Limes, Heron Cross and Shotfield Street.

Minutes from last meeting: Bycars confirmed they had not had details of the competition. Will arrange for them to receive them from the allotments officer. Bruce has developed an online survey to ask sites what facilities they have. Jayne then went through the rest of the minutes.

Minutes from this meeting: Victoria gave an update on the progress with the website and that it is up and running now. She also asked for information to put on the site from the any allotment holders that references growing plants, including from novices. In future there could be a Youtube feed for videos showing progress of a new plot over a growing season. Sarah has reported back that the allotments officer has worked hard to reduce the waiting list in the city to 324. This involved asking people to move from their preferred site to an alternative one. The Penkull area has vacancies, and the allotments officer has been informed. Was asked would it be possible to have up to date information on vacancies for the website. Will pass on to the allotments officer. Joiners Square has been declared surplus to the council's requirements. So is in the process of being decommissioned. Issues with anti-social behaviour and rough sleepers at Campbell Road has been resolved. With the police and rough sleepers department they have been removed from site. The council is now in talks with the owners of the pavilion to try and transfer ownership to the site to be used as a meeting room. Withies Road is still ongoing as is the renewal of leases. Any funding that sites would like to apply for from councillors will now have to be from April, 2024. A question was asked about having skips on the sites and Sarah said she would look into it. Also, security on council sites what can be done by the allotments holders to improve it. Bycars mentioned they had put forward suggestions to the allotments department which they thought were reasonable but were declined.

Bycars mentioned they have a disused building they would like to take down and have offered to carry out the work, but the allotments department said they could not. Sarah has said she will speak to the allotments department to find out more details. Bruce recommended they take photographs to show the state of the building.

A question was put forward regarding pest control for rodents "How long should you wait for the environmental department to respond?" Some present had a prompt response from the department others said they were still waiting. Again, suggested to keep contacting them. Bruce also reminded people to make sure they carry out good housekeeping regarding storing food/seeds etc. Make sure they are in containers that are secure, and sweep up any spillages.

Bruce apologised that there is still no constitution but has been very busy at work. Will have an update for meeting on 7th April, 2024.

Jayne gave an update of the accounts. There is currently money in the account to cover expenses but will need to fund raise to maintain the accounts. Still to sort the transfer of signatories for the bank account.

Reminder again to keep looking for any funding opportunities.

A.O.B

Jayne received an email asking about insurance for sites. She confirmed that any sites who have membership of the National Allotments can use their provider. However, most insurance companies can offer public liability.

There are free IBS containers available just need collecting. If anyone is interested just let us know and we will forward the details.

Sarah mentioned that with the council now asking homes to pay for brown bin collections they may be asked to take back the bins. If this is the case, they may be offered for free to the allotment sites.

Has anyone heard form Newcastle council. No one at the meeting had. Bruce said when he retires later this year he will try and contact them.

Received communication from two private allotment sites to offer some plots, Scot Hay and Wetley Moor.

Next meeting will be the AGM on 7th April, 2024. The posts on the management committee will be up for voting. If anyone would like to apply, please email Jayne. The posts are Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, IT Officer and 2 additional committee members.

Meeting closed.

Date of next meeting: Sunday 7th April, 2024

Venue: Travellers Rest, Werrington Road, Bucknall ST2 9AW.

Time; 11 a.m.