

Sims Hill Shared Harvest Members' meeting 24th November

A quorum of members was present.

Summary of 2015 – Sim Osborn

Members are aware from our recent email that Sims Hill has had a difficult year and is facing a budget deficit this year. Sim introduced the meeting by giving an overview of the difficulties of the growing year which have contributed to our current deficit situation, and also highlighted some of our successes and positive responses to our communication with members.

Challenges included:

- New growing team – gap in experience.
- Reliance on David B. for using the tractor – unable to get it at critical times.
- Cash crops much more of a challenge, pests in polytunnel
- Over ambitious membership growth plan (and thus planting plan). This was necessitated to try and pay for a day of a week for a community grower with Feed Bristol as our contribution for access to land and facilities on that site. Previously our contribution had been in kind.
- We recruited a lot of new members, but unfortunately lost people at the same rate

Successes included:

- We had good workshares and volunteers and some good membership meetings.
- We have had offers of money and time from members. Izzy already facilitated a really good volunteer meeting with some of our members.
- Christopher Sunderland has offered to be co-opted back to the Board for 6 months to add capacity to the board and work on negotiating our memorandum of understanding with Feed Bristol. We are also looking for other people to strengthen the Board.

2016 Draft budget presentation and discussion – Bobbie Sunderland.

Bobbie presented a possible draft budget for 2016 to the meeting and asked for members to input on it.

One way forward might be to:

- Create a Farm Manager position – bring someone in with more business skills as well as growing skills, who can lead the team and develop the business. Core funding can cover some of this strategic leadership/farm manager post, but £5000 in donations have been offered specifically to fund this post for an initial period.
- We would aim to employ the Farm Manager post for 4 days a week from Jan to June then for 2 days a week from July to Dec, with the Farm Manager raising some grants to help pay for their post after that.
- Other than the Farm Manager we have 5 grower days per week.
- Plan for modest membership growth 55 to 65 Full Share Equivalents paying + 10 or 15 workshares (tbc).

- Negotiate with Feed Bristol over our contribution to them making sure it is feasible for both projects. This may mean jointly raising funds.
- Keep our share prices the same.
- Continue with the workshare programme
- Continue buying in vegetables to make up the share while we are short of our own

Bobbie's draft budget didn't include any funding for an outreach post, however discussion at the meeting suggested that this would be an important role to facilitate members in getting more involved and keeping the momentum generated at the We Love Sims Hill meeting (see below) going.

The meeting agreed the direction of the budget and gave the Board permission to develop and move forward with the plan.

Alison Crowther also recapped the "We Love Sims Hill" meeting facilitated by her and Isobel Tarr. These notes can be found in a separate document on the Sims Hill website [here](#). If you are interested in taking part in any of the working groups formed at the meeting, please get in touch with Stephen Hobbs at steve@hobbs.uk.net.

Thanks so much to Izzy, Ali, and Steve for all the hard work in organising the amazing energy of our members and supporters!

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