

Sim's Hill Shared Harvest AGM

26th March 2018

Attendees

A quorum of members attended the event.

Agenda items

2017 Accounts

Chris presented a summary of the accounts and circulated a detailed paper copy as submitted to HMRC, then called for a vote to accept the accounts, which was passed unanimously.

Elections to the Board

Every year at least 2 members of the board of directors resign, to make way for other members to join the board. There was already a vacancy from Miriam's departure, and Chris Sunderland also resigned. James Miller stood for election as a paid worker representative, and Corra Bushel stood (in absentia) as a harvest share member. Both James and Corra were elected unanimously. Chris and Damien highlighted Corra's excellent contribution to outreach and helping to drive an increase in membership in the last year, for which Sim's Hill is very grateful.

Food Centre Project

Laurie gave a report on the food centre project, highlighting the benefits it has brought to those who attended. We had about 30 referrals from various sources during 2017, and there are normally about 7 attendees at each weekly meet at Feed Bristol's site.

Laurie has resigned from the post in order to pursue an opportunity to live and study on a croft in the Hebrides; Chris thanked her for her contribution and announced that we've had an outstanding response to the job advert to replace Laurie; 14 very strong candidates!

Education Project

Chris and Damien gave a summary of the education project, as Kirsty was on maternity leave and unable to attend the AGM. The project has struggled to get schools to attend, for a number of reasons such as limited school budgets. Overall though the project is starting to get good uptake including community groups, and the feeling is that it's really starting to come together, with a good outlook for the coming year.

Discussion Forum and Member Feedback

The meeting split into a few groups to discuss and feed back how the members felt about the state of the Sim's Hill project, and any related issues. Some highlights were:

- Some members prefer having a pick-up point instead of to-the-door delivery, because they don't have anywhere secure to receive deliveries at home.
- Overall everyone was very positive about being a member and the project as a whole.
- Some members noted that occasionally there isn't enough veg at the St Werburgh's pick up. This tends to affect those who can't pick up before the weekend, with some items being out of stock, or only the tatty scraps left over. In general though most members said they had no major issues with the pick ups.
- Some members prefer weighing their own share rather than receiving pre-bagged shares.

- A few members suggested having a separate box to offer any unwanted share items to other members, i.e. to facilitate an exchange system. The board members agreed to look at setting this up.
- One member asked if we could do more to avoid the use of plastics. James replied that in general we try to, but some items such as salads simply don't last more than a day if they are left loose or packaged in paper bags.

Grower's Update

Our new farm manager, James Miller, has been in post since February and reported on his view of the growing status and outlook. James reported that he was excited to see how involved the community are, with great participation on work days. The old, dangerous, glasshouse has been replaced with a multi-span poly tunnel, which James is transitioning to a no-dig system.

The tractor is repaired and ready to work, and Sim's Hill has recently purchased several implements that will improve our productivity and allow James to keep ahead of the weeds that caused so many problems last year. In addition, David Baverstock has kindly offered to continue to loan some of his equipment, and to help on site as and when needed.

James reported that a large number of crops are already planted and progressing well, and he is aiming to stretch the growing season as much as possible this year.

We spent more on bought-in veg last year than we wanted to, mainly due to losing a lot of crop to weeds. The expectation is that won't happen this year due to the increased mechanisation, as well as not losing so many days of glasshouse access, as we had been constrained to not entering the glasshouse on windy days due to the risk of falling glass.

One member asked whether it would be possible to avoid using animal products on the farm; James replied that whilst it is technically possible, it may not always be practical to do so at Sim's Hill so he may use animal muck from time to time.

End.