**General Meeting 3rd Nov 2016**

Present Howarth, Rachel. Julie Hawthorn (National Trust) Garry, Paul and Mick (later)

Apols Lynn and Maria

Welcomed Julie to the meeting. Paul agreed to chair.

1. **National Trust liaison**

Julie is happy to come to meetings as and when this will provide a good avenue for communication. Agreed to do this every 3 months, we will do this as part of general meetings, but if it seems we then don’t have enough time for the rest of the business, we will make a separate meeting. Julie can do evenings, but not Tues pm or Thursdays. We need to plan the meetings for next year and send to Julie.

**Lease** – is with Julia. Start date? Julie’s view is that because we have had access to the field then it should be Nov 15. However, we need the lease to get grants and agricultural payments, without shelter/equipment we have not been able to develop the land more. Julie to discuss with Julia. Lease length – we have now had 2 funders saying that we need 25 years. Julia did a letter of support for the woodland trust application last June and in the letter said that the NT would give a commitment beyond the 20 years. Julie would like the lease sorted before the end of the year. Julie will look at the letter of support to see if this would meet our needs with funders. Julie to get clarification from Julia why 20 years is what they prefer.

**Planning permission** – Julie has spoken to Jenny Lugman (who was involved in the planning discussions before). We have to start the process again as it is too long since the last discussions. Planners had said that if we have agricultural buildings then it will be permitted development. To make progress we need to get the planners back out to discuss and show them Howarth’s drawing. Julie/NT would like to be at the meeting. NT would have to see the application. Jenny mentioned the height of the building – we need to be careful of this. Paul/ Howarth to contact planners.

**Marketing strategy** – need data on numbers of visitors how many visitors are local and how many are repeat visitors to Gibside to support our marketing strategy. Mel is the visitor experience manager, (but she is leaving.) Julie will ask Mel for these figures. NT’s main audience are families and they want to increase the midweek offer because it is quieter then. Gibside does not tend to get the tourist visitors midweek Cragside.

**Trailer** – Paul clarified that NT had promised match funding with the Gibside Capacity grant towards the refurbishment of the trailer. (£308). This was to take off the transfers and originally to put new ones on, this has now been transferred to creating the shelving display. Garry to give BACS details to Lorraine. Position of the trailer – it is Ok for moment where it is. NT are thinking of re-locating the estate yard and will include the trailer into these plans. GCF view is that we will still need some storage in the estate even if we are not growing in the walled garden and have some storage on the field. This will support the distribution of veg to members and stocking up the shelve units with veg. Julie explained that a new production kitchen is being planned to be put in the estate yard. If we wanted to ever use the production kitchen we would need to talk to Claire.

**Old toilet** – yes we can continue to use it.

**Walled garden** – it is likely that there will not be plots in the future, but NT have not got the new design yet. There is a meeting on Nov 25th  with D. Gavin, Julie to let Rachel know time of meeting. Yes, we could encourage plot holders to join us, through Debbie, 19th Dec is official handover of the design.

**Trees** – unlikely that they will stay in the garden. We said we would like the recently planted ones, however the older larger trees would need a lot of watering and care to re-establish. If NT could provide the means to do this, we would have them

**Apples** – There are lots available – see Lisa for getting some. They can be stored in sawdust or newspaper.

**Funding applications –** informed Julie that we had made another application to the Woodland trust, and are planning to apply to Bright Ideas. We showed Julie the plans for the growing area on the field.

**Forward assist** – meeting for Nov 4 has now been postponed by FA. A new date has not been set. Won’t be next week as Julie and Mick can’t do next week. FA have not proved that they could do any work on the field. They need to follow our plan that they would work to or join as members. Taking a piece of land will not work.

**Path to field** - It would be good to have a route from field to the estate, through the estate.

**Willow** – NT are going to plant a willow labyrinth and will use the willow for weaving baskets. We informed Julie that willow will form part of the trees that we intend to plant. Agreed it would be good to work together on providing willow and developing workshops.

**Green Academy Project** (Tim) national project for young people, 14 – 24 to provide opportunities in conservation work. NT to provide training on site and then the young people will take their skills to their local communities. Jodie Peachey is employed to work with Tim on this project. Julie asked if we could accommodate some young people to work with us. Agreed. We will need to talk to Tim to progress this. There is 2 years of this project.

**Apprentice** – we asked if NT could take on an apprentice who, as part of their training, worked with us on Fridays. Julie said that NT are starting apprenticeship schemes in future.

Julie left the meeting.

1. **Top field**

**Potato digging** Nov 4th - Paul to bring forks and potato bags from the trailer. Garry has got sacks as well. We will distribute from the field as much as possible. Paul can take to black hall mill as well as Ryton. Rachel/Howarth to do Low Fell and Newcastle. Garry to do Burnopfield and Rowlands Gill. Laura can take 75 – 100kg a week. Garry to find out what she will pay.

**Builders quote for field** – Rachel and Howarth met a builder today but he could not give a price for groundworks. He gave us the number for a person who will, so we are arranging to meet him. The builder will come back and do an estimate once the groundworks person has done his estimate.

**Groundworks** - Mick spoke to Mick Wilks about the groundworks, as Mick M does not think funders will give us the money to do them. Mick W knows of a NT fund (agricultural) that might provide support for the groundworks. Howarth to photocopy his plan at NT so can get it scanned to send to Mick W to send to the NT agricultural fund.

**Visit to see 2 wheel tractor** near Reeth has been arranged for Nov 14th – Paul and Mick can’t do that date, Garry not sure if he can. Aim to leave Low Fell at 9.45.

**Ferguson tractor** – We replied to the letter that Ferguson Club sent us. We need to show them tomorrow where we want to plough for next year and talk tomorrow. Need to set a date for us to learn to drive our tractor. Tractor storage – no solution yet found, Mick to ask the B and B on Fellside Rd.

**Robertson’s Builders** – They have agreed for us to send in a wish list of things that we need and will buy us some scaffolding mesh for shelter. Looks very positive. We might need a big tarpaulin for the tractor – will they have one?

**Membership structure** – Rachel has sent around an amended version of the discussion paper. Garry has sent a response. Paul liked option 3 and 4. Adjust the model so that the it comes out with the amount of labour and money we need. Garry likes the donation model. Need to show that each option is comparing the same things. It was suggested to drop the allotment model. Howarth keen on people not paying more than what would get from having an allotment. Allotment model shows that double the number of hours are needed than what we are planning to need. Maybe put in the figures of the allotment to show what is involved. It was suggested to put in a supporter’s fee, which does not include veg. Agreed that Rachel would amend the paper again and then send out to members so that it can be discussed and voted on at the planning meeting on Dec 10th. If members are unable to attend the meeting, then ask them to vote for their preference before the meeting.

**Planning for planning meeting – Dec 10th** - We want to encourage as many members to come and meet other members and have a social time as well as discussing plans for the future. So encourage people to come for the lunch even if they can’t come for the whole day. Food to be a shared lunch for those who are happy to bring food, but people don’t have to bring food if they don’t want to. Topics to include drawing and plans for the field, flowers, future of walled garden, shelf stackers, website/Facebook/marketing, membership fee. Rachel to ask different people to kick off the discussions and to send out a separate invitation to the event from the GCF update.

**Iain Tolhurst** - Paul not spoken to Iain yet.

**Label for jars** – Agreed that Gibside community farm logo and address, website and Facebook page should be on the label. Fiona has bought 100 jars and will send invoice when bought sugar. She will make redcurrant jelly over the weekend.