**General Meeting 11th Jan 2017**

Present Howarth, Rachel, Wendy, Paul, Garry (Chair), Mick

Apols Maria, Lesley

1. **Budget**

Management and Finance group have created a new budget for this year. Turnover of about £4200 likely if exclude items for water and tractors. Have built in £600 as donations from members. Target is 30 members for the year. We need to increase income from last year to cover additional costs of growing more and some capital requirements. Garry learnt about doing a cash flow analysis on the Community Fed of City Farms course and will try and do this on the budget. Garry to send the budget round to all members. There is £125 from Woodland Trust to cover insurance – this will help as insurance is a big item.

1. **Growers group**

We need lots of help growing modules as we are doing many more this year. Jane, Mick, Howarth/Rachel, Garry/Lesley have offered to grow some, Paul can’t as has moved house. Rachel to send out list in a table to members and ask them to put names against them. Seaweed request – Alice has got some and it is in the trailer. The wind has caused havoc with the black plastic on the field so will need much better methods of securing it, either many more tyres or sandbags filled with soil. Tom from Wylam nurseries has agreed to order our potatoes – hopefully this will reduce carriage cost. Mick has sent the list to star and is waiting to get a price.

1. **Funding group**

**Gateshead capacity fund** - Iain Tolhurst – Paul has not spoken to him. Mick has sent him the field plan and will send the planting plan to him. Paul will talk to Iain and Gateshead council to clarify payments.

Wendy advised that she has been successful in the past in getting funding from James Knott Trust and Community Foundation.

**Bright ideas** – we have been successful in getting through the first hurdle. It is a grant to help organisations to get ready to apply for Power To Change. Most of it will be for advisors but will also be able to pay for marketing, architects fees. Paul will be contacted by an advisor and then work on an action plan will need to be done.

**Woodland trust grant** – we have got £9500 with 3 conditions, 25 year lease, provide evidence of engaging with local people for tree planting, and get the money for the trees from another grant from the woodland trust. Also National trust have to agree the plan that we put forward and we will need planning permission for the container. Paul has been chasing NT for lease. For planning permission, we will need a revised drawing of what we will be putting on the field ie for one container. NT might pay for the hard core. Mick has sent the plan for the tree planting to Julie Hawthorn (NT), but she has not yet replied. We will need to fund raise funding for hard core, cladding, flail, 2 wheel tractor, toilet, water connection and another container. Priority is the hard core.

1. **Members**

Steve Hunter has joined and Emily Hemmersly has enquired. 16 people have paid this year so far and 2 members have said they will not join this year.

1. **Donation model**

Rachel sent round a draft paper (to members how had said they were coming to the meeting) to describe the donation model for members for discussion at this meeting. Garry’s commented on 2 issues, do we want payments of the membership scheme weekly and can admin work be included in the work counted? Agreed that we will accept weekly payments and agreed that admin work can be included in the model. Also need to clarify what the growing season is. Rachel to amend the paper and sound round to all members and ask Maria to put it in the induction pack. It was agreed that Rachel should have sent the paper to all members prior to discussing it at the meeting.

1. **Top field**

We have started putting down black plastic but need sandbags or more tyres. Rachel to send Garry the detail of how much black plastic we need and the website which was cheapest. Howarth to send website for the sandbags to Garry. We will move the fruit from the walled garden at end Feb. Rachel to send Crookgate stables tel number to Garry/Paul for them to ask if they can practise driving the tractor in the yard to start with. To learn to start and stop the tractor. Temporary shelter needs to go up just before we sow any plants. Some thought will need to go into how it is constructed.

1. **Meeting schedule**

Rachel had presented a meeting schedule at the December meeting and sent round an amended version to all members. Mick commented that Saturday mornings will be difficult in summer as people will want to be away and Fridays morning meetings takes time away from growing activities. Thursday am might be a possibility. Agreed to stick to the schedule until end of march and then review when to hold meetings.

1. **Display shelves**

We need to make a decision whether to continue putting veg on shelves. We have parsnip, pots and leeks. Need to encourage members to take veg and ensure there is enough for members for as long as they need. Agreed that veg should only be put on shelves for Friday, Saturday and Sunday and not to put much out. (ie not necessarily fill!) We need to have some imaginative signage on empty shelves eg Sold out or Veg will be available next weekend and to advertise the organisation. Messages will need to be fresh and keep changing!

1. **Annfield plain food bank**

Lisa Nicholl from Annfield Plain food bank is keen to have some fresh veg available and she is prepared to collect it from us. We discussed that we have not managed to give Blaydon food bank much this year. Agreed we don’t have the veg at the moment, Rachel to tell them not now but later in the year we will have much more available.

1. **Burnopfield Neighbourhood Trust**

Mick has arranged a meeting with the Burnopfield Neighbourhood Trust and asked Tommy and Kathleen to attend next Monday (eve). This is to publicise GCF in Burnopfield.

1. **Go local**

Go Local have discussed the options following our meeting with them. They have asked if we could supply 21 weeks of 60kg of potatoes and deliver. What price would we charge? They don’t think renting a piece of our land would be feasible for them. They might still be interested in an exchange of crops but would need more thinking on this. We don’t have any storage so we could not commit to 21 weeks of supply. We would prefer to have them on our list of groups who would buy from us intermittently like abundant earth and the paddock. Rachel to ask if they are interested in this. We would expect the price that they usually pay.

1. **NT walled garden group**

Rachel said that she has been sent a 5 page document describing the NT project which includes the new design for walled garden, restoring the hall and establishing a kitchen in the estate yard. GCF is mentioned several times as an organisation NT want to support. Rachel to ask Julie Hawthorn if another member of GCF can attend a meeting while Rachel is away. Rachel to send round the 5 page document.