**Annual general meeting 26th April 2018**

**Present** Mick, Kerry, Jola, Pam, Wendy, Tom, Veronica, Tony, Rachel, Garry, Paul, Lyn, Kathleen, Lesley,

**Apols** Howarth, Maria, Steve,

**Chair** Paul

Everyone introduced themselves

1. **Annual accounts from December 2016 to November 2017**

Garry presented the accounts, see appendix 1. Garry explained that the restricted funds are grants that we have received for specific items of expenditure. Unrestricted funds are income that we have earned from sales and membership fees. 83% of income was from grants. We made a small profit on the unrestricted activities on which we will pay tax.

Balance sheet shows our assets are £2551 these include the IBCs, the strimmers, tractor implements, envionmesh and black plastic. The largest expense was on the 2 growers we had last year, who were funded by Bright Ideas fund.

There were no questions. The meeting approved the accounts and thanked Garry for all his work as treasurer. The meeting agreed to appoint Kate Tully as the independent examiner for next year.

1. **Report on Activities and Highlights December 2016 to November 2017**.

Rachel presented her report on GCF activities and highlights, see appendix 2. There were no questions. The meeting agreed the report and thanked Rachel for her work.

1. **Report on funding applications December 2016 to November 2017**

Paul presented the report on funding applications, see appendix 3. Paul highlighted the development plan, written by Rachel and funded by the Bright Ideas grant. Rachel was thanked for her work in writing the development plan. Paul stated that it was a very successful year for applying for funding and acknowledged that members and other organisations provide a lot of time and support in kind to Gibside Community Farm. The meeting thanked all those involved in writing funding bids and agreed the report.

1. **Election of Directors**

Garry and Paul to remain as directors and Rachel is to stand down, but is eligible for re-election. The meeting was asked if anyone else would like to stand as well as Rachel. It was explained that there are 4 or 5 directors meetings a year and the role is to oversee the finance and governance of the organisation. Most business is conducted at the general meetings and all members are welcome to attend these meetings. There are always many tasks that can be shared out between members. No-one else was nominated as a director. Rachel was re-elected unanimously.

1. **Any Other Business**

Rachel announced that there is a meeting of co-ops in the region on 1st May at the Globe in Newcastle.

It was agreed that the next general meeting would be 10th May at 7.30 at Red Kite

**Appendix 1**

**Treasurer’s Report for year December 2016 to November 2017.**

## Summary

The scale of the Community Farm’s finances has expanded significantly in the Financial Year from December 2016 to November 30th 2017.

We had a total income of £27,455 of which the bulk £22,862.94 (83%) came in the form of restricted funds from grants detailed in Pauls report. Of our “own” unrestricted funds £4,591.76 was raised from membership subs, sales and some unrestricted donations from members. Details below.

We had a total expenditure of £22,044 consisting of £16,794 (76%) in restricted items, and £5,250 (24% of expenditure) in unrestricted funds . Cost of sales was £18,364 the remainder is £3,680 for capital items and depreciated (over 4 years). We had current tangible assets (actual real things) of £2,551 at 30th Nov 2017. This excludes the un-refurbished Ferguson Tractor itself which is outwith the accounts but includes parts bought for it..

The largest expenditure was on grower’s costs of £ 12,091 over half (55%)of our income and 66% of our cost of sales (see below)

We have made a small profit on the unrestricted funds of £173.93 so we will have to pay Corporation Tax of £34.79. This makes the Treasurer a happy man.

Our starting bank balance at 1st December 2016 was £ £5,277.18 and a final bank balance at the end of the FY was £10,206.35.

## Notes on Income

**Grants & donations**. This is covered in Pauls report on Funding

**Membership subs**: 23 memberships paid in this FY

**SALES** total sales were £2,644.70 of which Market sales £829.22 , Display sales £681.88 Members donation sales £50.00 and “Other” sales £1,083.60 mainly bulk sales to Laura at the Paddock £566.84 (52% of “other sales” and Abundant Earth £458.56, (42% of “other sales” ) both local organic box schemes.

## Notes on Expenditure

**Seeds & Plants**, (£1042) the largest cost were for Stakeford Nurseries ( Blyth Star) £373.40 the rest was on bulk onions garlic and seed potatoes from various suppliers.

**Horticultural Consumables**: the main item biodegradable mulch and various small items

**Horticultural Capital items**: main costs were for 2 strimmers , 3 water IBCs, enviromesh, weed fabric and various tractor parts PTO ( please turn over not power take off!)

**Horticultural contractors**: mainly grower costs (Ian Todd and Phil Tyler) from the restricted Bright Ideas fund. Lowery and Renwick Local farming contractors costs are from unrestricted funds.

**Insurance & fees** . Main expenditure was Bright ideas project consultancy fees for marketing and growing plans, plus Pubic liability insurance , tractor Insurance, Soil Association fees, Land Registry fees, Companies House fees etc.

**Promotion, publicity & website**. The largest item: Natural Bag company jute bags, which is treated as a publicity item

**Stock for sale** is jam jars and sugar for the jam-maker to use

**Travel and Subsistence** was mainly for the Wakelyns agroforestry trip paid out of Woodland Trust restricted fund

A **reserve** of £200 was retained throughout the year

Garry Jenkins, Treasurer

26th April 2018

**Appendix 2**

**Report on Gibside Community Farm activities and highlights for the year December 2016 to November 2017.**

We achieved a successful year of growing vegetables, harvesting more than the previous year. We grew extra potatoes and broad beans specifically for sale to 2 local veg box schemes. (The Paddock and Abundant Earth). This was successful as we cropped 2,192kg of potatoes and 235kg of broad beans. We have therefore contributed to increasing the availability of vegetables within the local area and reduced food miles.

We increased our membership from 23 to 24 enabling more members to access local veg which also reduces food miles. The turnover of membership was 13% showing that a large majority of members are keen to remain members of Gibside Community Farm.

We have sold our veg at 13 local markets during the year, 5 more than last year, including 2 markets that we had not sold at previously. We extended the number of weeks selling from the “honesty box” display stand within Gibside Estate from 11 to 19 weeks and doubled the amount of shelf space enabling wider access to local veg to local people and Gibside visitors. We raised £2645 from sales of veg to members, display stand, markets and box schemes.

We have delivered some surplus veg for free to the Foodbank in Blaydon, enabling access to good quality fresh veg for free for low income groups. Our surplus veg was also donated to Transition West Gateshead events to support their events and to promote Gibside Community Farm.

In May 2017 we introduced a better system to collect the number of hours that volunteers worked and the amount of produce that we harvested. In the 7 months to the end of November 635 hours were recorded as being worked by 10 volunteers in the field. Members have also been involved in the administration and development of the organisation, learning new skills and gaining in confidence in undertaking tasks. We have increased the number of volunteer hours from members in the project, which will have had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

We have increased the amount of local veg available to members at a low cost. We have increased the knowledge and skills of the members in horticulture.

We increased the number of beds in which we grew cut flowers, which enhanced the look of our plots for visitors to Gibside, provided bee friendly plants to support biodiversity and sold the flowers at the market which reduced transport costs and carbon miles for the cut flowers.

We have supported and engaged with local traders by selling our vegetables and herbs.

We have added value to the veg by making jam and chutney for members and for sale.

We have developed a positive partnership with the National Trust by enhancing their offer through the sale of local veg, providing gardening advice and free samples to visitors and ensuring our plots in the walled garden are attractive and informative.

We succeeded in being granted funding from Bright Ideas which has helped our development in several ways: we were able to develop a detailed and long term business plan, created a marketing report and plan and employed 2 growers for one day a week to help us extend our growing on our field. This additional help on the field meant that we grew more crops and were able to sell more to local box schemes. We were able to learn how to use our Ferguson Tractor and have bought a half share in a potato lifter. We have been able to form partnerships with local box schemes to grow veg to order for them for the following year.

With funding from the National Trust and the Woodland Trust we have been able to start creating the infrastructure to support members and volunteers on the field. In November 2017 this resulted in hard standing and a track being laid.

In October 2016 half an hectare of land was sown with Rye and Spelt. This was a year long research project with Newcastle University who were comparing results between 4 types of rye and 4 types of spelt. This was harvested in September 2017. In December 2016 we planted 43 apples trees to form an orchard. In April 2017 we finalised the lease for the field with the National Trust, which meant that we were then able to apply for funding from Big Lottery and other grant giving bodies. In August 2017 we visited an agroforestry farm in Suffolk, Wakelyns, to help us understand the theory and practice of agroforestry farming, this has helped in our planning for our agroforestry. In August 2017 we registered the field and walled garden to convert to organic status and we had our first inspection from the Soil Association, our organic certification body in October.

**Highlight of activities since 1st Dec 2017**

* Learnt to create of a willow structure to protect bee hives
* Finalised the planting plan for the current year
* Bought the seeds and plants and worked with Star Horticulture Services for their propagation
* Marked out the shelterbelt and alleyways and re-did the market garden area
* Moved the muck heap and spread it out, mostly
* Planted 1600 trees
* Engaged with wider community to help plant trees eg Nationwide Building Society volunteers, Living Woods North East
* Created new leaflets to promote GCF generally and specifically the cropshare scheme
* Created a members’ handbook
* Planted 1 hectare of fava beans for Hodmedods Company
* Bought a disk harrow and a plough for the tractor
* Tractor was repaired by the Ferguson Club
* Updated website
* Posted on facebook and community facebook pages
* Finalised the annual accounts
* Received approval for being funded for converting to organic status
* Bought the land entitlements which means we have now applied for basic payment scheme from government.
* Ran 2 apple grafting courses
* Sold leeks to bakers in Gibside, for Leek and Potato pasties and The Paddock
* Disconnection of electricity from the Portacabin donated to us by National Trust

**Our plans for the near future**

* Start planting ASAP!
* Installation of Portacabin on field to become our Hub building
* Buy and install container on field to become our store
* Contract to install a gate and fence to be installed on field
* Get connected to mains water supply
* Buy a 2 wheel tractor and some implements for it
* Get architectural drawings and specifications for a straw bale barn
* Install PV solar panels on storage container/Hub Building
* Apply for planning permission for polytunnels, composting toilet and roadside sign
* Open day as part of Community Business weekend – May 7th 11 – 2pm
* Hold a film and discussion evening – May
* BBQ or shared food on field to celebrate portacabin and container arriving on field – 15th June? (if it has arrived by then!)
* Open field event, farm tours June 23rd 11 – 2pm
* Develop relationships with other organisations including Comfrey Project. Also, those who will buy or pre-order our produce eg Food Nation
* Plant 100 crowns of rhubarb in alleyways to sell to National Trust for juice.
* Plant flowers in alleyways
* Apply for funding for composting toilet, polytunnel and roadside sign
* Sell produce in an extended display stand area in Gibside with story boards telling our story
* Sell our produce at Dunstan Staiths market and possibly Low Fell. (No markets in Gibside this year)
* Start the cropshare scheme on 20 July – we need 9 people to sign up
* Run a Pruning course in autumn
* Run Scything course in May/June
* Run Strimmer training in May/June
* Start planting trees again in autumn - 166 more trees in shelterbelt and alleyways, create hedges around the market garden and infill current hedges. In Spring 2019 plant novel agroforestry trees funded by Community Foundation

Rachel Putz

**Appendix 3**

**Funding Report on Gibside Community Farm for the year December 2016 to November 2017.**

It was a very good funding year for us,and we are grateful to funds for their support.

**Bright Ideas**

We received the maximum grant of £15,000 from them. We were able to spend the bulk of this on growers and hire of machinery or contractors, to help us expand operations in the field.

Money to look at what we could produce, and to go towards a business case for more funding. Marketing and involvement work with the public and our own members.

Money for a financial package to cope with our increased income and expenditure.

The use of a mentor to help us think about next steps in how we grow and fund the growth.

**Woodland Trust**

The Woodland Trust gave us a £9,975 Community grant provided money to enable us to undertake the groundwork necessary to bring Hub and Storage buildings on site .It provided funding for training and events on the field. It supplemented funding for our ambitious planting programme . It was linked to Nationwide Building Society provide staff time on farmers market and tree planting day.

Woodland Trust gave us access to **PURWOODS** grant for £5,000 worth of trees, guards, mats and stakes for the Agroforestry project

**Community Foundation(Leaf fund) Agroforestry grant**

They awarded us £2,300 to buy trees, stakes etc. which were non- native ‘exotic’, for the shelter belt and agroforestry rows and training and open days to promote agroforestry concept

**Orchard Windfalls grant**

This grant of £521 enabled us to set up our orchard of 47 trees.

**National Trust Gibside**

They negotiated a grant of £3,500 for us to help us towards putting the roadway into the field and foundations for the buildings. Support grant for our 1st year Soil Association Organic Registration. In kind support by offering our Hub Building ,and providing strimmer training .

**Capacity Fund Grant (Gateshead Council)**

We were given permission to spend a remaining £677.74 (out of £5,000) on implements for the Fergie tractor.

**Failed bids**

**Greggs Environmental Fund** £2,000 for a composting toilet.

**Gateshead Council Volunteer Grant** £500 to encourage volunteers

**Future Bids**

**Awards for All.** A bid was written (£9,999) in November 2017 but was awarded in December 2018

We need to note that members contribute enormously to Gibside Community Farm mainly in huge amounts of voluntary work but also with financial donations as well. Many thanks to everyone for all their support.

**Paul Gertig, Funding Group**