

Draft

Dunkeld & Birnam @ The Field Trustee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 19th February 2019 at 7pm.
John Small's house

Present: Raymond Simpson, John Small, Maddy Hand, Dave Amos, Robert Gunn, Sandy Howe, Jim Cockburn, David Bee, Sarah Davidson

Apologies: Linda Simpson, Dave Roberts, Elspeth Baillie

Minutes: Minutes from last meeting agreed and will be put on website.

Membership: 44 renewed so far this year.

Finances: £15,896 in the bank at 15th Jan. Cheques to be presented £837. Last year £14,350 spent, Income £11,687, deficit £2000.

Administration: No safeguarding issues raised.
Raymond Simpson successfully completed a chain-saw course.
Land Trust Films, Dave R to reply to Ruth Curtis.

The Field: Reflection - Dave R to send out to everyone on database.
Poly tunnel - Sandy handed out plans for large poly tunnel cropping calendar and is happy for suggestions & involvement from anyone interested. Hari keen to be involved.
Stronger support needed this year for sweetcorn, tomatoes & cucumber. We will be growing fewer chillies but more cucumber and will be trying aubergines & sweet peppers.
Sandy pleased with overwintered crops.
Watering system for large tunnel is half completed.

Carrots, beetroot & parsnips still available from open field.

Compost - Linda has info from Binn farm. Compost will be needed soon for poly tunnels and No 7 no-dig bed. Questions relating to compost include, are supplies limited, where to leave for distribution?
Our own compost boxes are too full but the compost is excellent.

Robert and David Bee to decide on hoops & mesh for no-dig beds, this system has worked well so far.

Spring planning - dung spreading very good thanks to new barrows and volunteers.

Mark out no-dig beds, 3 rows of 3 beds, possibly. Do we need signs about not walking on or at least as little as practical? It should be possible to work 4ft beds without standing on.

Mulch - discussion on limiting plastic use and properties of various coverings and mulches. This will be ongoing as we trial various substances for sustainability, cost effectiveness, crop success and ease of use. Linda provided costs for fleece and polypropylene. Bio-mulch worked well on brassicas but was expensive.

Compostable cornstarch would be good but is thin and not so durable but may work for some crops. Polypropylene can last for several years if looked after, for example don't pull root balls through as breaks burnt edges. A 50yd roll could last for 4 years with careful treatment.

Should we buy 4 or 5yd wide polypropylene? Larger size needs less tucking in but is more difficult to handle, especially when windy.

Place visited in Inverness used a weed torch to make holes for leeks. This would take a long time for 1000s of leeks.

Raymond will order smallest quantity of 5m size and Robert will order heat gun and consult on heads needed. Robert suggested designing and commissioning our own hole maker from a blacksmith, this way we can get the hole size/spacing we require. Robert will consult Bankfoot blacksmith. It is possible to buy polypropylene pre-holed from Sweden but it is expensive. Will keep a look out for lower prices in future.

Herb garden - the rosemary was not good so will get a hardier variety. Could possibly grow some herbs in poly tunnel.

Val Wylie is keen to extend herb garden with some volunteers.

Kitchen garden: Sandy passed round plan and has started growing in his greenhouse will use large poly tunnel if required. Celeriac to be tried this year.

Flowers: Maddy has filled containers with compost and now needs sowing compost on top for seed sowing. New, level staging in small poly tunnel a great help. Bark paths to be laid on plot.

Selling/Harvesting: Compostable bags now available. Maddy found website for new stall boxes onto which we can print our own logo.

crates4us

Banner for stall using picture from bags and a little writing. Name, organic, SCIO number.

Website/Twitter/Facebook: No news

Biodiversity: Sandy cleaned out bird boxes. Tit ones (4) had all been used. Open fronted ones (2) had not.

AOCB: It was suggested we could look into getting an account with East coast farmers or H.I.S to benefit from a discount.

Taybank Growers - they have contacted us about small scale heritage serial growing as they are taking part with help from Nourish Scotland. Robert suggested this takes a lot out of the soil and can bring extra weed problems. It will also take a lot of extra work, planting, tending, threshing etc and do we have the person power for this? We could open up another plot for this purpose without compromising existing plots. It was decided we do not need another labour intensive project at this time but will watch Tayside Growers trial with interest. David Bee going to look into heritage grains and watch how Taybank Growers manage couch grass for a possible future trial at the field.

Raymond suggested Alan Scott for our annual review of trees. Sarah to contact him for a visit.

Next meeting: Tuesday 19th March, 7pm at St Jerome