

Minutes of the Berwick Slow Food Annual General Meeting held on 29th March 2023 at the Parish Centre

Present: Committee Members: Kevan Wylie (Chair), Ken Hardy, Millie McRobbie, Ray McRobbie and Laura McGinlay, plus 11 other members/supporters.

1. Chair's Report

Kevan Wylie thanked all those present for attending to celebrate a successful year for Berwick Slow Food. Several events had been held, including the "Film and Food" evening at the Maltings.

BSF has been invited back to the Alnwick "What a Wonderful World" Festival in the Summer to again provide tasting samples, information about Slow Food and promote the Festival. It is intended to hold more joint events, not only with local produces/traders, but also some with the Edinburgh and Scottish SF groups.

Millie and Ray McRobbie have been appointed Festival Directors and information on the Festival and other events is distributed via social media and the website.

A full copy of the Chair's report can be requested via email.

2. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the accounts were distributed. Ken Hardy explained the overall balance included the Festival contingency fund; and money allocated to previously agreed projects, including Prior Park First School Community Garden and the Bursary Fund.

Questions from the floor including communications issues re emails. Millie explained there have been some problems, especially re trader emails shortly before the Festival. The Committee are considering email hosting. It was suggested that, especially for the Festival, there should be a return to direct emails.

The Bursary project was raised and several members hoped this would be continued. Ken assured all that the earmarked funds were still available. Millie had approached the Community Trust about how to promote this fund and they provided feedback on equality and diversity issues and the need for clarity on how allocations are decided.

3. Committee Membership

The following postholders and Committee members were elected:

Chair – Kevan Willie
Vice Chair – Laura McGinlay
Treasurer – Ken Hardy
Secretary – Millie McRobbie

Members – Ray McRobbie, Jo Thomas.

Membership is still above 20 people.

4. Future events in 2022

Millie outlined some of the suggested activities, including another Film and Food evening at the Maltings and a visit to Cheviot Brewery. Other suggestions were always welcome.

Events would be publicised via the quarterly newsletter and MailChimp emails.

5. Berwick Food and Beer Festival 2022

Millie and Ray reported on the Festival. Over 97% of traders gave positive feedback. They were also canvasses on changing the Festival weekend to August and traders were again positive about this. The biggest challenges for 2023 are rising costs, especially around utilities, and the availability of the Barracks. The courtyard only may be available – no parking and no access for traders from the back of the site.

Alternative options are being considered, e.g. the Parade Green, car park and Wallace Green street closure. It is intended that entry to the producers' market will be free, with a pay gate to the marquee.

A few questions were asked on the views of local residents and site logistics and as much information as available at this time was provided.

Millie confirmed that the 2023 Festival would look and feel different but, given the Barracks redevelopment plans, this was inevitable. Ray provided an update on trader applications and some changes to the size and layout of the marquee.

6. Any Other Business

Ruth and Maurice McNeely, SF members and past Festival directors, informed everyone that they were leaving Berwick to move back to Northern Ireland. All thanked them for their great commitment to Berwick Slow Food and the development of the Festival and wished them well for the future.

Kevan Wylie thanked everyone for attending and invited all to stay on for some refreshments.

The meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.