



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Management Committee Meeting  
7.15pm on 14th July 2015 at Redhall Allotments***

**Present:** Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) (Treasurer) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) (observer) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) (observer) : Alan Wilson - Stenhouse (**AW**) (observer).

**1. Apologies:** Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**).

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters Arising:** **PW** noted that he had received a reply from David Jamieson (Head of Parks and Greenspace) about the wall survey before the previous meeting, but had failed to notice it. He apologised for his oversight. The reply was non-committal. It was noted FEDAGA had waited for a year for a wall survey which had been promised as a matter of urgency. The position now is that the Council will listen to ploholders if they raise a concern about the condition of a wall. It was **AGREED** that the walls requiring attention are at Claremont Park and Redhall. The damaged wall at the entrance to Warriston does not form part of allotment land and the funds to repair it must come from outwith the allotment budget. **RH** said that if it fell down it would not land on allotment land, but it is a potential hazard to pedestrians on Warriston Road. **PW** said that he would raise the issue at the next Strategy meeting. **ACTION - PW.**

**Management of, and charges for Council allotments, and Members' Survey:** **PW** had circulated a draft survey which was designed to find out members wishes on the future shape of the Council allotments service. It will be important to get a good response. Past hard copy surveys got returns from around two thirds of ploholders but the most recent online survey only got a 15% response. It was **AGREED** to approach the Council to see if they would mail out a copy to each allotment holder on their database. It was further **AGREED** to look at having an online Survey Monkey option accessible via the FEDAGA website. It was also **AGREED** to offer the Council administrative assistance in collating the results.

There was a discussion over the proposal to reduce concessions. Age demographics show that every year an extra 2 to 3% of ploholders are claiming age related concessions as they are over 60. **JMcK** expressed misgivings at FEDAGA's proposal for the Council allotment service to operate without subsidy. He said that if unforeseen costs arose the rent might have to rise significantly. He said leisure pursuits provided on behalf of the Council by Edinburgh Leisure are subsidised and failed to understand why allotments should be an exception. **SMcK** agreed. He said it is not for us to save the Council money. FEDAGA have made suggestions in a co-operative spirit, but the Council manage the service and it is now up to the Council to make proposals.

**PW** noted that with the passing of the Community Empowerment Bill local authorities must charge a fair and reasonable rent. The legal advice FEDAGA has received shows that this falls between £92 and £103 for a full size plot. He said that Edinburgh Council's allotment costs vary from year to year. They don't work on a 5 or 10 year plan and so cannot make financial projections. **GC** said that comparison with allotment services in Glasgow, Bristol, Birmingham and Newcastle shows that Edinburgh provides poorer services at the most expensive rate. He would be taking this up with his Councillors and advised others to do likewise.

**JMcK** conceded that in discussions with fellow ploholders there was little concern over raising rates for those on concessions, but **NMcC** reported that she had spoken to ploholders who are on a tight budget and are upset at the prospect.

**Telferton planning proposal:** **DR** reported on activities that have been undertaken to best defend the allotments at Telferton from the threat from Avant Homes. Aside from legal and procedural preparations there have been canvassing meetings in and around Portobello, media presentations to the Edinburgh Reporter and Portobello Reporter and a well supported 38 Degrees petition. The developer is expected to submit a formal application to the Planning Committee in the next couple of months. He requested a representative from FEDAGA to speak to the Committee. This was **AGREED**. Representatives from SAGS and PEDAL will also appear along with local residents. **DR** noted that the proposals have changed a few times already, but the bottom line is that two thirds of the plots at Telferton will be lost if Avant Homes is successful.

**4. Allotment Officer - Report and Actions:** **IW** had submitted the following report:

1. The problems with the water supply at Victoria Park have been resolved.
2. Work on the pathways at Bridgend and Dumbryden has been undertaken to make them safer.
3. Agreement is requested for jobs on the Spending Priority list. In particular, the path at Claremont Park requires urgent attention.
4. Scottish Power are again working at Saughton Mains making arrangements to remove the pylon.
5. Site inspections show standards are good despite recent poor weather.
6. Problems reported with some Trade Waste bins.

There was a discussion about the number of plots marked as "Keep Under Observation". Although these plots are not up to standard there are unknown special circumstances personal to the ploholder and the Allotment Officer is understandably unable to discuss these. However, this causes problems as other ploholders see plots being unworked and falling into disuse. **PW** said that if possible a site representative should accompany the Allotment Officer on his inspections and try to ascertain what standard he deems acceptable. It was commented that he is a one man band spread thinly.

**Spending Priorities:** **NMcC** had again met with the Allotment Officer. She needed agreement on what issues to take forward. It was **AGREED** that all items with security or safety implications should be progressed as well as the long delayed tree pruning jobs. **LG** queried why Midmar was no longer on the list of tree jobs. **NMcC** will have it reinstated.

**PW** queried the provision of grass cutting and hedge trimming services to some sites. It was suggested that the size of these tasks varies from site to site and some are too large to expect them to be undertaken by ploholders. The proposal to refelt the communal shed

at Chesser Crescent was considered to be not a priority. Other sites arrange for their communal sheds to be repaired at their own expense. Further information will be sought on this matter. **NMcC** will meet with the Allotment Officer on 21st July. **ACTION - NMcC.**

**5. Consideration of Reports - Secretary's Report:** **EW** had circulated a Report detailing all correspondence over the month. He is in receipt of a proposal from the City Archivist to take into storage any documents pertaining to FEDAGA. It was **AGREED** that **EW** give the Archivist the paper documents he has been keeping. **ACTION - EW.**

Further to a recent complaint about the advice to leave a deteriorating shed containing asbestos on a plot it has been ascertained that the Council's Corporate Policy for Managing Asbestos requires the Council to protect its employees. It was **AGREED** that allotments should be included in this policy and the matter will be referred to the Strategy Group. **ACTION - PW and SMcK.**

The proposal to develop Curriemuirend Park in the Local Development Plan has not been resolved. It was **AGREED** to take no further action on this unless a fresh initiative is made by local campaigners.

**Treasurer's Report:** **DR** was able to distribute cheques for membership fees and trading dividends. Sites not directly represented will have their cheques posted out.

Expenses comprise: Bags for the Shop (£8.39), Legal advice (£160) and trading rebates to Carrick Knowe (£9.50), Cambridge Avenue (£6), Lady Road (£17) and Stenhouse (£2.50). Cash available after all expenses are paid (current account): 7844.02 and £4510.56 in the Bond.

There has been no progress in having new signatories appointed. **PW** will again approach the Bank of Scotland to apply for the required forms. **ACTION - PW.**

**DR** said a new apple press, muncher and 2 filter bags have been bought. Charles Passmore of Midmar has volunteered to arrange for apple pressing at the Midmar Open Day. The equipment will be stored in the FEDAGA Shop at Inverleith. It will be available to any member association for apple pressing events on application to **SMcK.**

**DR** will soon prepare the accounts for the AGM. It was **AGREED** that **LG's** husband be approached to act as an examiner. **NMcC** volunteered to examine the accounts with him.

**Trading Report:** **BB** will have the catalogues next month and will select varieties. **SMcK** said the rebate from Kings Seeds was £314.57 which is slightly down on last year. This has been divided up between participating sites according to the number of orders and will be included in the rebate cheques.

**Site Reports:** **RH** reported a spate of vandalism at Warriston all around the area where the fence has been due to be repaired. The Police have been informed. There was also a report of further stone throwing incidents at Carrick Knowe.

**6. Any Other Business:** **EW** said he will begin to prepare papers for the AGM.

**7. Date of Next Meeting:** 11th August at Inverleith.