



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Annual General Meeting

***7.15pm on Tuesday 24 October 2017 at Southside
Community Centre***

Present: Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) Chairman; Ernie Watt (**EW**) (Cambridge Avenue) Secretary; Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Telferton Craigentiny) Treasurer; John Grace (**JG**) (Midmar) Allotment Show Secretary; Paul Kerr (Redhall) Minute Secretary; Neiria MacClure (Claremont Park) Allotment Officer Liaison; Gilbert Clark (Midmar); Peter Wright (**PW**) (Lady Road); Muriel Horsburgh (**MH**) (Lady Road); Rosy Naylor (West Mains); Alice Bain Warriston; David Morrice - Restalrig; George Sutherland (**GS**) (Saughton Mains); Donald Stevenson (Saughton Mains); James Meechan; David Hills (West Mains); John Barclay (Pilrig Park); Mary Simpson (Saughton Mains); Brian Horsburgh (Lady Road); Liz Grace (**LG**) (Midmar); Stuart Swarbrick (Ferry Road); Alan Wilson (Stenhouse); Jane Robinson (West Mains); Mick Kadlubowski (West Mains); Jan Bradbury (Saughton Mains); Cllr. Lesley Macinnes (**LM**) (City of Edinburgh Council); Judy Wilkinson (**JW**) (SAGS)

1. Apologies: Alison Hewit (Warriston); Maureen Edwards (Lady Road).

2. Guest Speakers:

LM (Convenor, Transport and Environment) gave a talk demonstrating her strong support for allotment sites in Edinburgh and highlighted the fact that they have a valuable role to play in city life, are good for mental health and social inclusion, an opportunity to learn from others and a good way to relieve modern day stress.

The third allotment strategy is in place for the next 10 years. £100,000 is being spent each year on maintaining and providing allotment sites and community gardens. This will be particularly important with the expansion of the city on the south side. There is significant growth in the aged population and the Council is looking to increase accessibility for all. They also plan to develop a robust management system for allotments, improve the website, provide a training programme for new ploholders and work on revised regulations. She said that a growing population has to be housed and this competes with green space, but a balance must be struck. She said the Council's intention is to increase allotment provision and reduce waiting lists.

PW suggested Cllr. Macinnes should convene future Allotments Strategy meetings. He said that the Council has already identified 50 potential allotment sites so there should be no further delay in initiating new sites starting with Lismore. He said the Council should act as a facilitator to encourage local groups to set up their own sites accessing Lottery and Climate Change Fund grants. In response to a further question, **LM** said she would investigate the Data Protection problem preventing the Council from sharing information with FEDAGA. She said she would explore creative solutions to help FEDAGA be more involved in the Council's allotment work.

JW (Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, SAGS) gave an interesting talk on the work of SAGS, which will be 100 years old in December. She asked for FEDAGA members to support action on behalf of SAGS regarding the new consultation by the Scottish Government on guidance on how Local Authorities should enforce the provisions of the Community Empowerment Act. The consultation ends on 17 November. SAGS say that a deluge of responses is needed to make sure that positive change is achieved. The legislation is clear on what the obligations on Local Authorities are under the Act, however the guidance is not.

In particular, on Question 10 SAGS suggests strong supported Guidance. Model answers to the questions in the consultation are available on the SAGS website. Suitable sites for new allotments also need to be included in the Council's Local Development Plan.

3. Approval Of Minutes of Previous AGM:

The Minutes were Proposed by **PW** and Seconded by **DR**.

4. President's Report:

SMcK said he was pleased to have made it so far in his new role and hoped the Federation can continue to both help improve sites and also make "allotmenting" more enjoyable for members.

The full text of his report can be read in the Appendices to these Minutes.

5. Treasurer's Report:

DR said FEDAGA finances continue to be strong with a year on year increase of assets of £1492.39.

The full text of his report can be read in the Appendices to these Minutes.

6. Allotment Show Report:

JG said the 2017 show, held in the Methodist Church Hall for a second year was a great success, as judged by the number of entries and the standard of the exhibits.

The full text of his report can be read in the Appendices to these Minutes.

7. Election of Management Committee:

Nominations received:

President - Stuart McKenzie (*nominated by* Lady Road)

Treasurer - Dave Roberts (Lady Road)

Trading Secretary - Brian Bleakley (Lady Road)

Committee members: Alice Bain (Lady Road, Warriston), Gilbert Clark (Lady Road), Maureen Edwards (Lady Road), John Grace (Lady Road), Jon Gray (Lady Road), Alison Hewitt (Lady Road, Warriston), Paul Kerr (Lady Road), Neiria McClure (Lady Road), Mary Simpson (Lady Road, Saughton Mains), Peter Shaw (Lady Road, Saughton Mains), Ernie Watt (Lady Road), Rosina Weightman (Lady Road, Saughton Mains), Peter Wright (Lady Road).

With the exception of Jon Gray who has said he does not wish to stand this year these candidates were proposed by **DR** and seconded by **SMcK**.

As the position of Secretary is vacant, **LG** was proposed by **DR** and seconded by **SMcK**.

Accordingly the Management Committee comprising the following was elected:

President: **Stuart MacKenzie**

Secretary: **Liz Grace**

Treasurer: **Dave Roberts**

Trading Secretary: **Brian Bleakley**

Management Committee: **Alice Bain, Gilbert Clark, Maureen Edwards, John Grace, Alison Hewitt, Paul Kerr, Neiria MacClure, Mary Simpson, Peter Shaw, Ernie Watt, Rosina Weightman, Peter Wright.**

8. Motion to Annual General Meeting:

“The meeting recognises that the work of site associations is enabled by ensuring as much financial support as possible. To this end, the Management Committee will in 2018 double the annual payment made to site associations. This arrangement will be re-examined in subsequent years to ensure that money held by FEDAGA is made available to site associations if financial circumstances permit.”

This will mean that allotment sites will receive £2 next year for every plot holder instead of the usual £1. The motion was proposed by **PW**; Seconded by **SMcK**. It was put to the meeting and carried.

A question was raised as to what happens with allotment sites where there is no Committee and bank account to pay monies due to the site into. It was suggested by **SMcK** that the monies due to these sites could be used to purchase bulk compost which could then be shared amongst the ploholders at the sites involved.

9. Forward Plans for Coming Year:

MH spoke on the subject of a social excursion to next year's Dundee Flower and Food Festival which will be held on 1 September 2018. The cost is likely to be around £9.50 per person if the numbers support a 49 seater coach.

10. Any Other Business: **EW** reported that the allotment site at Dean Gallery has joined FEDAGA. There have also been enquiries from allotments at Prestonfield and Duddingston.

11 Date of Next AGM: 23 October 2018

Appendices:

Text of President's Report:

Regular Management Meetings have been held at the Southside Community Centre. These have been well attended and feel worthwhile. Discussion covers issues that sites are having together and liaises with the Council Allotment Service. Thanks are due to the Community Centre for setting out the room and keeping the costs to a reasonable level.

Even bigger thanks are due to the Management Committee. A fine set of individuals all very knowledgeable and keen to improve their own sites to make the allotment experience better for everyone.

Our relationship with the Allotment Service is good. Ian Woolard now attends a couple of meetings a year. He was here a couple of weeks ago and provided a useful round-up of how the year has been from his perspective. He's still working on tree removal from some sites and is generally happy with the quality of cultivation of plots. There are obviously exceptions, we should expect this, but he has a hit-list to work through to get some plots reallocated before next season. There was some concern at the last AGM that the change in Council policy about collecting FEDAGA and site subscriptions would have a detrimental impact to funding. Only around 40 people choose to opt out of FEDAGA membership and not pay their subscriptions. That's just 0.3% of 1,500 allotment holders.

Thanks for your support - but I just wish we knew who you are. The issue of the Council sharing ploholders details remains outstanding. We'd love to

communicate with our entire membership but Data Protection hurdles at Edinburgh Council remain in our way. I do hope some sense can prevail soon. One of the first changes I made since taking over the job was to align our meeting agenda to our constitution. Our constitution has quite simple objectives:

The co-ordination of Allotment Associations, the protection of their

interests and the improvement of their conditions.

So, the first thing we discuss is site reports. What problems are being encountered, can we help, are there precedents? Anyone gets a say, but most importantly there is time to try to seek resolutions.

We then continue, in line with the constitution:

To stimulate interest in and to encourage a commitment towards

horticulture in allotments.

I'm really keen on this one, it should be interesting and worthwhile having a plot. I'm delighted at the success of the SASA (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture) 'landrace' potato trials we've been involved with. Even if people ended up with an almost inedible crop of strange looking – and worst tasting – potatoes, they have given those three tubers a chance to come out of their cold storage and impress. Many have. Indeed, some comments make you wonder why anyone grows the common varieties now. 'The best potato I've ever tasted' is quite common in the feedback questionnaires you leave.

We've followed up the potato trials with a visit to their amazing premises out in Gogar. We had an interesting and muddy tour around their potato fields and wondered at the

importance of the lowly spud. I encourage you to sign up next year. We grew 70 varieties this year, I wonder if we could make it a 100? I wonder if they would GIVE us 100.

The Allotment Show certainly stimulated interest. It was brilliant to see a large hall full of excellent examples of our produce and even better to see how many of you turned out to comment, chat and meet old pals. We did wonder if all the effort was actually worth it after bringing the show back last year but you responded brilliantly. Thanks to one and all. I know John will be presenting his report later so I'll leave it at that, suffice to say a huge vote of thanks to his team of helpers – especially the carrot.

I'd really like to resurrect our coach trip to the Dundee Flower and Food Festival next year. Already we have a few plans, but we'd like more. We're all doing our best to *stimulate interest in horticulture* but would really appreciate a few more helpers. Think about it, we've a healthy bank balance that is only being enjoyed by the bank. Let's put some ideas into action – what do you want to do? How can FEDAGA stimulate that interest? Please let us know and we can try to help, or even volunteer to organise.

Finally, our constitution has as its last objective -

To purchase, on a co-operative basis, supplies for the use of the members

of the Federation.

I hope everyone takes advantage of our seed scheme which is generously provided by Kings Seeds. This year we made orders valued at £4,300. Our ploholders only paid 55% of that and another 10% was returned to sites as an

additional commission. Please encourage all your members to take part – it's a very worthwhile offer.

On top of this, we also order a pallet load of seed potatoes and onions from Kings. Again, it's generally a 50% savings over buying them from the DIY

stores or online. Now is the time to order, you should hear from your site rep – remember we need to get the order in by 20th November to guarantee, well 99% guarantee, that we get the varieties we want.

Another thank you to all the volunteers that unloaded that pallet and sorted potatoes, bagged up onions. It really was an incredible effort that was rewarded in saving to you and commissions to site funds.

Talking of site funds, there are some sites that don't have bank accounts and therefore we can't pass back subscriptions and commissions. We'd rather not hand over cash to individuals on behalf of the site, so what do we do? I'd like a quick discussion later please.

I'm quite impressed with Rock Dust as a fertilizer and have used it for three years after George Sutherland became an enthusiastic fan. Hello George, a very special welcome to you and thanks for the many years of FEDAGA service you have put in. George used to run the seed scheme before the convenience of the Internet and must have broken the springs on his car with all the composts and rock dust to stock the shop at Inverleith. I understand you're finally hanging up the spade George.

[GS receives a presentation of a bottle of wine and engraved glass in honour of many years service to fellow allotment holders at Saughton Mains and through FEDAGA.]

Back to Rock Dust, I've just negotiated a deal for FEDAGA where we can enjoy wholesale pricing. This means we could save around 60% of the retail price, more on this in the next newsletter – which I do hope you all subscribe to.

Finally, FEDAGA helps Edinburgh Council define and implement its Allotment Strategy.

Our role is of experienced consultants helping the Council fulfil its obligations to provide more allotments, manage them, improve the experience for ploholders and to finally adopt the long awaited revised allotment regulations. The strategy group hasn't met this year, but I'm assured by Ian Woolard that meetings will start again by the end of this month.

We can then replace the current regulations from 1924 that you are all in contravention of. Hopefully by the end of 2018 they will have been given Council and Government approval – and we can legitimately work our plots on Sundays. I look forward to it.

I look forward to 2018 and continuing to enjoy “allotmenting” with you all.

Text of Treasurer's Report:

Net profit was down around £400 as was expected with the reintroduction of the Allotment Show. The bank account started with a sum of £9251.76 and the account ended with a balance of £10429.27, with committed costs of £948.12 still to be paid.

The Bond interest was £11.50 taking the total to £4530.98 A rise in interest rates is anticipated before moving the account to a better rate.

Our Bank of Scotland current account is covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme up to the sum of £85,000.

The total reserves grew by £1492.39 which now total £14012.13.

The amount of money received from CEC was maintained at the 2015 figure for the number of ploholders, a tally of 1368. It has been agreed with the Council that the ploholder total will be based on a 1 year lag. This gives time to work out the number of ploholder who have paid the subscription per site and pay in the early part of the year. I would expect that this figure will rise for next year as more plots have been halved over the existing estate and a number of new sites have been added.

Shop sales increased to £293, an increase of £69 on the previous year. Trading contributed £584.5 to the funds down just under £160

A total of £2060.95 was returned to sites. The breakdown is as follows: £1368 return of CEC subscriptions

£438.20 return for Kings seeds

£68.25 return for Onions and

£186.50 for Potatoes.

This year as in the previous year the bulk of expenditure is accounted for in the return of the £1 subscription from the CEC. With the Allotment show next costing over £800 a close second.

The sites without accounts have grown as predicted and with new sites being added and older sites continuing to add to the growing total It now stands at £447.81.

FEDAGA Statement of Annual Accounts 2016 - 2017

Bank Balance brought forward 29 July 2016		£9,251.76
Account period 29 July 2016 to 26 July 2017		
INCOME	Credit	Debit
Total income	£ 5,913.70	
Trading profit		584.5
EXPENDITURE		
Total		£4,736.19
Expenses Committed but not yet Banked		
Sub Total		£1,014.12
Total		£5,750.31
Net profit		163.39
Bank balance 29 July 2016	£	9,251.76
Bank balance 26 July 2017	£	10,429.27
Committed cost	£	1,014.12
funds minus committed funds	£	9,415.15
Bond(1) INT PAID @ 0.25% = £11.30 5/4/17	£	4,530.98
Total Assets	£	13,946.13

Reserves Balance Summary	2013 - 14	2014 - 15	2015 - 16	2016 - 17
Bank balance at start of year	£9,398.58	£10,210.59	£10,652.96	£12,519.74
Cash in hand	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Deduct: loss for the year	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Add: profit for the year	£812.01	£442.37	£1,866.78	£1,426.39
Add or deduct; credits or debits for	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Current reserves year end	£10,210.59	£10,652.96	£12,519.74	£13,946.13

Signed: Neiria McClure. I have checked the accounts and confirm them to be a true statement of the finances of the Association.

Date 19/10/2017

Signed: Prof John Grace I have checked the accounts and confirm them to be a true statement of the finances of the Association.

Date 19/10/2017

Completed by Dave Roberts Treasurer FEDAGA

Text of Show Secretary's Report:

The show succeeded in its aim of bringing together the Edinburgh allotment community, thanks to an increased level of publicity and the tactic of appointing committee members as advocates of the show, 'spreading the word' and encouraging plot-holders to exhibit their produce.

	2012	2016	2017
Exhibitors	43	26	66
Entries	343	162	354

Last year's entries were well down on the 2012 show, presumably because of the three year hiatus (2013, 2014, 2015), but this year the numbers recovered and now exceeded the 2012 benchmark. Moreover, there were many new exhibitors and new trophy winners, showing that the FEDAGA community has a real appetite for the event. Entries were received from 18 sites.

Changes in the classes from last year

We revised the classes, taking into account the number of entries over the period 2010-2016. We noticed that many classes had been empty or under-subscribed and so we combined related classes (for example, we deleted pansies and had only one class of lettuces instead of three). We rebranded 'homecrafts' as 'from plot to plate' reducing the classes from 15 to 9, but we increased the children's classes from 4 to 9 and tried to make them more 'fun', attempting to make the show more of a family event. Overall, we reduced the number of classes from 93 to 83. Still, some classes were undersubscribed whilst others were very full (potatoes, runner beans and apples were well up on last year, reflecting the good growing conditions).

Finances

The cost of the show was £914 pounds, an increase on last year's £805. The increase was caused by an increase in prize money and costs of publicity and children's medals.

Support from the staff of the Methodist Hall

The Hall staff, and especially the janitors, supported us well, helping with the assembly and dismantling of the tables, providing the sound system, and keeping the cafe open for an extra hour.

Support from local horticultural agencies

SASA (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture) provided posters on potato diseases and we assembled a collection of SASA's heritage potatoes, a feature that attracted much interest. We were fortunate to be joined by Mark Hocart, Dean of the Edinburgh Centre of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), and an expert on plant diseases, who was on hand to give advice to gardeners.

Thanks to the judges

The judges (John Dyce, vegetables; Muriel Plate, plot to plate) discharged their duties admirably, and responded to our (at times) somewhat unorthodox approach. John Dyce announced his retiral from judging and we are seeking a replacement, Muriel is happy to help us again next year.

Support from the Edinburgh Council

Prizes were awarded by Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Convenor of the Transport and Environment Committee, under whose auspices the allotments are administered. She spoke warmly of FEDAGA's work and asked us afterwards if we had any issues we'd like to discuss with her. Consequently, a meeting is being arranged in the Council Chambers soon.

On a lighter note

(i) The largest carrot was five feet tall with legs, and attracted attention on the streets outside the venue. (ii) The shiitake mushrooms were deemed to qualify as 'vegetable' even though fungi are not plants at all.

Thanks

It was my first year as Show Secretary. I note here that the success of the show is the result of excellent teamwork by a truly talented and dedicated Committee, and the strong back-up from previous Show Secretaries. I thank them all.