



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## ***Management Committee Meeting***

***7.15pm on 11th April 2017 at Southside Community Centre***

**Present:** Committee: Stuart McKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Dave Roberts - Craightinny Telferton (**DR**) (Treasurer) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Alison Hewitt - Warriston (**AH**) : Alice Bain - Warriston (**AB**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) : Rosina Weightman - Saughton Mains (**RW**) : Mary Simpson - Saughton Mains (**MS**) : John Gray - Warriston (**JGray**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**); Observers: Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) : David Morrice - Restalrig (**DM**) : John McKinlay - Craightinny (**JMcK**) : Anne Sophie Laegran - West Mains (**ASL**).

**1. Apologies:** Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : John Grace - Midmar (**JGrace**) : Stuart Swarbrick - Ferry Road (**SS**). **EW** said that Rosy Naylor of West Mains has tendered her resignation due to other commitments. He said he knew he spoke for the rest of the committee in thanking her for her contribution. **ASL** is in attendance tonight and it is hoped that she and Jane Robinson will continue to represent West Mains.

**2. Actions from 14th March:** **AB** said it appeared the Urban Pollinators Project had closed. It was **AGREED** she contact the Field Studies Council to enquire how best she can take forward the promotion of pollinator-friendly policies on allotments. **SMcK** underlined the importance of this work as it has been established that allotments are the best urban environments for pollinating insects and the case for more allotments is therefore enhanced. **ACTION - AB**.

A volunteer is required to attend the SAGS AGM. **SMcK** undertook to do this.  
**ACTION - SMcK**.

Following **SS**'s enquiry about acquiring powered equipment to drive a compost screening device it was agreed in the light of suggestions from members to take this no further. It was noted that **SS** accepts this decision.

**PW** has been presented with an engraved cup in recognition of his decade of service as President and thanked the Committee for the gift.

**3. Site Reports:** **EW** said that the first new plothead in many years had arrived at Cambridge Avenue, a site notable for its small size and low turnover.

**RW** said that there were a dozen new plotholders at Saughton Mains setting about improving their plots. She said the gate, scheduled for replacement in the Spending Priorities list, does not need to be replaced. Repairs to the main post and a fresh lick of paint should make it serviceable again. This was noted and will be communicated to **NMcC** and the Allotment Officer. **ACTION - EW. MS** suggested that if savings are made from not replacing the gate this should be spent on further tree pruning. A large dead branch has recently fallen onto a plot. It was fortunate no-one was injured. After further discussion it was established that there is a need for a Tree Audit across all sites. **ACTION - EW.**

**JMcK** said that the water switch on had revealed a leaking toby at Craigentenny. He noted that the bin uplift was working well but was now on a new day.

**WA** said Carrick Knowe was due to be given a new trade waste bin to replace the one that was stolen, but there is no sign of it yet. He also said the Allotment Officer must have authorised some tree work as an official had been in touch promising action on a tree that is unsafe.

**JGray** said that some trees at Warriston have been pruned but he didn't know who had done this as there was no notification. **AB** said an old Christmas tree which has been left to grow towards maturity on a plot is among the trees scheduled for removal. She also said a plant sale has been organised for 23rd April. A day of action to tidy the site and do recycling has been arranged.

**ASL** said there had been a series of break-ins at West Mains. Rosy Naylor will speak to the Allotment Officer about tightening up security on the site. **SMcK** urged those affected to inform the Police and get an Incident Number. **ASL** also said there will be a Seedling Swap on 14th May. **EW** complimented both West Mains and Warriston on their regular and well-presented site newsletters.

**DM** said Restalrig will hold their AGM in May. There is an ongoing problem with trade waste bins not being emptied. There are 6 new plotholders and he is trying to find out who they are as there was no notification from the Allotment Officer. It was established that notification of new arrivals appears to be uneven with Warriston, Lady Road and West Mains among the sites being properly informed and Inverleith and Restalrig left in the dark. It was **AGREED** to take this up with the Allotment Officer. **ACTION - SMcK.**

**DR** said Craigentenny Telferton is trying to raise funds to purchase their land in a community buy-out. It is anticipated this will be a long process and many applications are envisaged. As agricultural land it is estimated at £150K, but if it had residential planning permission it would have been £1.2M.

**SMcK** said there will be a big clear up at Inverleith at the end of the month. A skip will be required and this will take £250 out of site funds. He said that the trade waste bins had been pinched from the kerb. The practicality of hiring a van to make multiple trips to the dump was discussed. If this is pursued it will be

necessary to get a letter of authorisation from the Allotment Officer. He also reported a large number of new ploholders and a new generation of rabbits.

There were general discussions about the perceived imbalance in responsibility and lack of authority for site committees, especially those on newly created and independently managed sites, and the management of the waiting list. **GC** raised the predicament site committees find themselves in as they have no power to act in disputes between ploholders. **ASL** said site committees should always act in a positive manner and seek support from the Council. **GC** said that discussions are more productive if held with councillors rather than officials. **SMcK** will contact the Council about powers the new site committees may hold on future sites. **ACTION - SMcK**. **SMcK** said that the Community Empowerment Act puts responsibility for managing waiting lists onto Councils. He will ask for a report on the current status and seek to have all site representatives informed of new ploholders prior to their arrival. **ACTION - SMcK**.

**4. Show Report:** It was noted a meeting of the Show subcommittee will take place on 25th April. **ACTION - JGrace**.

**5. Secretary's Report:** **EW** had circulated a written report. He noted the Allotment Strategy was approved and launched on 21st March which was unexpected as FEDAGA had been led to believe this was scheduled for the summer. **SMcK** had provided a quote for the press release. An anticipated piece in the Evening News didn't materialise, which was disappointing. Information on the Strategy has been posted on the website and in the April Newsletter. **EW** confirmed that the Allotment Officer has notified the forestry team of the request for woodchip to be delivered to allotments, with the priority site being Craigentenny.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** **DR** had circulated an updated statement which showed income of £293 for Shop sales and expenditure of £25 for membership of the Southside Community Council. Total assets stand at £12,093.73. To this he added further income of £11 for onions sold at Stenhouse. He said that he anticipates sending out cheques to all sites covering subscriptions, potato and onion sales and Kings dividends as soon as possible, probably in June. To this end he has asked for details on subscriptions collected by the Council.

**7. President's Report:** **SMcK** will ask the Council for a list of members following their analysis of who has opted out from paying their subscriptions. He has been invited by the Allotment Officer to the first of what is hoped to be quarterly meetings and will use this platform to also discuss tree issues, introduction of new ploholders, bin uplifts and the management of new sites. He will also ask for the Parks and Greenspace Contract Manager to attend. **ACTION - SMcK**. Regarding management issues the arrangements at Wester Hailes, Council owned but independently managed were noted, and advice will be sought from Mark Thirgood for his experience at Killandean Community Allotments in Livingston. Self management is hard work and it was recognised that it won't always be pleasurable.

**8. Maintenance Report:** **JMcK** enquired if a suggestion from Craigentenny had been added to the list of Spending Priorities. He asked if **NMcC** could reissue the list. **ACTION - NMcC.**

**9. Strategy Report:** See Secretary's Report. **SMcK** said he had noted that the Strategy said nothing about funding, which he had highlighted in his statement.

**10. Social and Educational:** **SMcK** said 60 bags of seed potatoes had been distributed under the SASA scheme. He was encouraged by the enthusiasm members were showing for this project. He will arrange for a visit to SASA for late June or early July. **ACTION - SMcK.** **JMcK** asked if SASA will be using members' feedback. He reported that Arran Luxury was the best tasting potato he had ever experienced.

There was a question about training for new ploholders. **JGray** noted some were totally overwhelmed by the scale of the task when presented with their plot. **PW** reminded the meeting that in the past Bridgend Growing Communities had delivered training schemes to new ploholders, 50% of the cost being subsidised by the Council. This expense was defrayed by the reduction in the number of failed tenancies which lessened the Allotment Officer's burden. There was a discussion on the merits of reviving the Bridgend scheme or promoting mentoring on site. It was established that the FEDAGA Introductory Pamphlet was still being issued to new ploholders. It was **AGREED** to make enquiries on what can be provided. **ACTION - EW.**

**11. Trading Schemes:** **BB** said that apart from one stray bag of Pink Gypsy all had gone well with the Potato and Onion Scheme. The notice of delivery was a bit short, resulting in not all volunteers being available for the delivery. **BB** was thanked for his efforts in ensuring that all members got their orders this year. **DR** said that the Shop was extremely busy on 2nd April and all stock was sold. **SMcK** said that he will wait until the end of May before requesting figures from Kings which he will use to calculate site dividends.

**12. Planning Report:** **AH** was unable to provide a report due to computer problems.

**13. Any Other Business:** **WA** asked if Site Associations will be informed who has not paid their subscriptions. **SMcK** said that we must be told and will pursue this with the Council.

**13. Date of Next Meeting:** 9th May.