



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 14th February 2017 at Southside Community Centre

Present: Committee: Stuart McKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Alison Hewitt - Warriston (**AH**) : Alice Bain - Warriston (**AB**) : John Grace - Midmar (**JGrace**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : John Gray - Warriston (**JGray**) : Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**); Observers: Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) : Jane Robinson - West Mains (**JR**).

1. Apologies: Rosy Naylor - West Mains (**RN**) : Dave Roberts - Craigentenny Telferton (**DR**).

2. Actions from 8th November: **EW** said that the offer to attend the Dean Allotments AGM was declined. Since Jenny McKenzie is no longer serving on the committee a new representative to the Lothian Pollinators Project is required. **AB** volunteered to take this on. **ACTION - AB**. It was **AGREED** that as it would be impractical to set up a trading scheme for bulk items, information on best offers and how to set up community purchases would be shared among member sites. **ACTION - EW**. **PK** expressed an interest in the Newsletter and Blog workshop which was due to be held in January, but was postponed. **ACTION - SMcK**.

3. Site Reports: **ME** said a new gate has been installed at Lady Road which is wonderful news considering how long it had taken to be achieved.

PK in response to a question on the bee hives at Redhall said that he believed a third hive may be set up this year.

WA said a Councillor paid a visit to view the overgrown soil bund at Carrick Knowe. This led to the weeds being chopped down and an agreement to cut them twice a year in future, once before seeding in the summer and again at the end of the year. He commended the Council for the positive outcome.

AB said the mound of composting material at Warriston has been levelled and will be fenced off. In due course it will be sprayed and covered before a decision on what to do with the area is reached. The leaf mould has been moved to another area. It is hoped a new permanent communal compost area will be constructed. She noted that after a six week hiatus the trade waste bins have been uplifted.

JGrace noted that the story of Midmar's communal composting bins was a cautionary tale. When they were set up they were properly used. Now they are receptacles for anything that people want to dispose of, including uncompostable material such as soil and large woody items. No-one is willing to help manage them or clear them out. The result is that they are constantly overflowing and are now in danger of collapse. With a controlled single input such as leaf mould, as happens at Saughton Mains, communal composting can work. **AH** said that this will be the plan at Warriston as well. **JGrace** said it is vital that no wood or diseased material is included as people will not use it. Midmar intends to apply for a grant to supply plastic compost bins for new ploholders. There followed a discussion on the best method of composting. To build up sufficient heat a cubic metre sized heap is required, which is larger than the plastic bins. But if three such bins are carefully managed using a sequential method top quality compost can be produced. **SMcK** advised sites to contact Waste Aware as they will fund schemes that prevent compostable material going into landfill. He said the Inverleith bins work as they are properly managed and every spring bags of "Inverleith Gold" are provided to ploholders. **GC** emphasised the importance of feeding the land. He said a properly managed full sized food producing plot will require around 35 barrow loads of compost every year.

SMcK said that Inverleith is about to organise a tidy-up. Non-compostable waste material will require a skip which will have to be paid for out of site funds.

4. Show Report: JGrace reported on the subcommittee meeting held in January. The purpose of the Show was looked at. Four areas were identified: to provide enjoyment for members, to involve the public, to demonstrate expertise and to give an opportunity to meet up and socialise. A date, Saturday 2nd September was set and the venue will be the same as last time. The number of classes was reviewed with no recommendation to scrap any. To stimulate family involvement childrens' classes will be created including a radish competition. There will be a photography section and homecrafts will be brought back with emphasis on using allotment produce instead of handicrafts. A social event afterwards was looked at but it was agreed that the most practical solution was just to go to the pub. A publicity plan was agreed. Potential judges were discussed. It was agreed to wait until after the Council elections before deciding on who would make presentations. It was **AGREED** that the subcommittee will meet again in April. **ACTION - JGrace.**

GC said that in the past the Show had made a profit and urged financial caution. **SMcK** said that in the past money had been made by selling teas and cakes but this was no longer possible due to food regulations. Also, the Methodist Church forbade a tombola which had been another source of income. FEDAGA's good financial position means that the Show can be staged for many years to come.

5. Secretary's Report: EW had circulated a written report. There had been discussions with the Council over the past 6 months over their proposed changes to the collection of membership subscriptions. It had been expected that the Council invoice would explicitly give ploholders an option on this and explain that

payment would give consent for contact details to be passed on to FEDAGA. It was not possible for the message encouraging continued membership to be distributed with the invoices, as had been planned. When the invoice was issued it was as before with the addition of the word “voluntary” before the subscription information. In the light of this it was decided not to take up the Council’s offer of distributing the statement by e-mail through their database. It remains to be seen how this minor, but important, change affects membership levels.

EW said Sam Murray has provided advice on the planning monitor brief which has been shared with **AH**. **AH** said she has commenced monitoring planning proposals that mention allotments on a regular basis and so far has only come up with the Teague Homes development that affects Leith Links. **EW** said that after proper consultation initiated by Leith Links representatives it appears that a good outcome minimising disruption and providing 7 extra plots has been arrived at.

It was **AGREED** that **EW** will attend the Community Planning for People and Planet event on 1st March at Craigmillar Library. **ACTION - EW**. It was also **AGREED** that **AB**, due to be interviewed as part of a Participation in Policy and Planning initiative in her capacity as Chair of Warriston, represent FEDAGA as well. **ACTION - AB**.

6. Treasurer’s Report: DR had circulated two Financial statements, dated 2nd December and 9th January. The first showed an income of £1567.50 (trading scheme) and the following items of expenditure: Redhall subscriptions and seed scheme rebate, £68.48; Pilrig Park subscriptions and seed scheme rebate, £59.90; engraving trophies, £151.80; presentation to outgoing President, £56.48; Show, £311.97; Southside Community Centre membership, £60. The second showed an income of £1762.50 comprising trading scheme payments and subscriptions from Craigentenny Telferton, £93, and Portobello East Junction, £102 (for 2 years) and expenditure of £1276 (trading scheme). As of 28th December the bank balance was £8052.14. Once committed costs are removed the balance stands at £7598.05. The Bond is £4519.68. Total assets are £12,117.73. As the Bond is held in the Co-operative Bank which is due to be sold, the need to identify a safer more productive account is more pressing. **ACTION - DR**.

7. President’s Report: SMcK noted that Inverleith allotments will celebrate their 100th birthday next year. As grants relating to World War I commemorations are available, and the allotments were born out of the war effort, an application will be made to aid an appropriate celebration. He also said a member had written a “potted history” of the allotments. **JGrace** said Midmar is also about to celebrate 100 years of activity.

SMcK said that the SASA Potato Trials are progressing well with a lot of interest so far. Applicants have until the end of the month to register.

He also said sites are encouraged to enter the It’s Your Neighbourhood competition, organised by Keep Scotland Tidy and the Royal Horticultural Society.

8. Maintenance Report: NMcC had circulated the annual request for items from sites and had received replies from Inverleith, Midmar, Ferry Road, Warriston, Chesser Crescent and Claremont Park which had been added to 4 suggestions by the Allotment Officer affecting Warriston and Dumbryden. These have been compiled into a report and circulated to the committee. The main concerns related to tree work. Also of note was the construction of a leaf mould bin at Warriston. After discussion it was **AGREED** this should be pursued by applying for a Waste Aware grant, freeing money for use elsewhere. **JR** noted recent tree work at West Mains which had left a large quantity of cut wood which had to be burned. Bonfires are not an option at some sites. It was suggested that such work should include removal of such material. **NMcC** commented that these jobs appear to take place randomly and without notice. It is hoped that the Allotment Officer will attend the March meeting to discuss progressing these items.

9. Strategy Report: SMcK said progress is slow with the Strategy document yet to be agreed and the Regulations review still to be addressed. The Council will progress the creation of a new site at Lismore after the elections by identifying likely participants from the Waiting List and encouraging them to access grants. FEDAGA will provide advice if required.

An additional representative is needed to strengthen FEDAGA's delegation to the Allotment Strategy Steering Group. **JR** indicated she would be happy to volunteer for this. **ACTION - JR.**

10. Social and Educational: SMcK asked for suggestions for places to visit which could be organised for members. His suggestion of a visit to the Forth Bridge will have to wait due to construction work.

11. Trading Schemes: BB said the seed potatoes are expected on 22nd February. He will contact volunteers when he has a specific time. He has been told that all orders have been fulfilled so there should be no substitutes this year. **WA** is in receipt of the onions and they will be bagged and ready on the day. He will require reimbursement for this order. **ACTION - DR.** A rota for the shop was arranged: 26th February: **BB, JGray** (provisionally) and **PK**; 5th March: **EW** and **WA** and 12th March: **NMcC** and **PW**.

SMcK said that as new ploholders take on a freshly divided half plot the Kings Seeds database regularly requires to be updated. This can be done quickly once notified. He undertook to chase up figures on the number of orders over the past year. **ACTION - SMcK.**

12. Any Other Business: GC said he had attended the sale of tools on the occasion of the closure of the Hermitage of Braid Community Walled Garden Project but had been disappointed in the quality of what was available.

13. Date of Next Meeting: 14th March.