



Newsletter

December 2013 / January 2014



Fantastic Discounts again with Kings Seeds

A reminder, as you look forward to the new season, that as a member of FEDAGA you can get a massive 45% discount from flower and vegetable seeds bought from Kings Seeds. We also anticipate a further 10% being returned to your site later in the year making the seeds cheaper than half price. If you have not already registered for the scheme then full details are available on the FEDAGA [website](#).

Please be aware that if you have already registered then you only need go to www.kingsseeds.com and login with your email address and

password from the email sent during registration. Use the 'secret code' provided at the checkout stage to receive your 45% discount.

Whilst on the topic of seeds



A proposed EU seed legislation seeks to force all seeds sold and exchanged to be formally licensed. If no licence is purchased then they cannot be bought, sold or even given away.

A petition asks that traditional and local varieties remain exempt from licensing or certification requirements. Strict rules, controls, inspections and costly permits should only apply to seeds and seed materials which are traded commercially, in large quantities. The free exchange of seeds and seedlings between farmers, gardeners and seed initiatives must be guaranteed and supported. Only by growing a wide selection of fruits, vegetables and grains, can we ensure that our agriculture adapts to climate change, new diseases and pests. We want colourful variety not standardized uniformity!

If you feel supportive of this then please sign the petition [here](#).

Save Craighouse - and why it matters to allotments



FEDAGA's Planning Officer writes: There is major opposition to a major planning application on Craighouse Hill (one of Edinburgh's seven

hills and a designated site of Great Landscape Value) which ought to be protected against any development. It was the site of the former Royal Edinburgh Hospital where the war poets, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, went to recuperate from shell shock during WW1. In the 1990s it was sold to Napier University but they found it was too expensive to maintain, despite getting several millions off Historic Scotland, so about two years ago they sold it to developers Mountgrange (they of the Caltongate fame) who want to cover the hill in ugly modernist housing in order to convert New Craig (the magnificent Royal Edinburgh Hospital building designed by Sidney Mitchell in the Scottish Renaissance style) into flats.

This has several repercussions for local people, and people who enjoy Edinburgh's views and those who are interested in gardens, horticulture, and nature. Firstly that the magnificent grounds will be less accessible to the public and the views will be destroyed. People go there for nature walks and to roll their Easter eggs, etc.. Secondly that mature trees will be felled and wildlife disrupted. Thirdly, that as a result of more building and tarmac that flooding which is already a problem in nearby Balcarres Street will be worsened.

Objections have to be in by next Thursday 16th. It is a numbers game, the more we can show public hostility the more likely the developers are to give up. If you want to lodge an objection there is more information on how to do so [here](#).

And the connection to allotments, you ask?

Charles Passmore of Midmar Allotments writes: I am asking you to send an objection to the resubmitted planning application to build houses at Craighouse / Craiglockhart Hill.

You may ask 'What is it to do with me?'. Quite simply in my view, if planning permission is given to build new houses at Craighouse, then I can see no objective reason to prevent planning being given to the Laing Estate who own the paddock above our site and who also own Midmar Allotments.

You may, like me, feel there are wider issues but as a Midmar Plotholder you should be concerned.

We have until January 16 to object.

As a local councillor commented (a friend of Midmar, Mark McInnes), this is a war of attrition in which the developers hope we, the local community, will eventually roll over in silence.

This is what I submitted to the planner responsible:

Dear Ms Wilson,

Planning reference no: 12/04007/FUL Address: Napier Campus, Craighouse.

I am writing to you to object to the re submitted plans for Craighouse. In particular I am opposed to development on one of Edinburgh's superb open spaces. I understand that Craighouse is not designated for housing in your 'Local Plan'. As a protected green Open Space it is our duty to protect this site from development and the development of new buildings should not be allowed.

If this development were to proceed then I see no reason that planning to build on other Open Spaces such as the Hermitage Paddock on Blackford Hill could be denied.

Yours faithfully

Charles Passmore

5 points SAGS are suggesting for the Community Empowerment Bill



If possible, before January 24th individual plot holders and association committees should comment on the Scottish Government's proposed changes to the allotment legislation. This will be part of a new and much bigger Community Empowerment Bill. It affects every plot-holder in Scotland and could have serious repercussions for us all.

The current Government consultation on the Community Empowerment Bill can be found [here](#). Section 4.3 of this document is on allotments.

In addition the report and analysis of the consultation on the allotment legislation in May can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/5432 and www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/4291.

The Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society (SAGS) response to date can be found on their [website](#).

You can respond directly to the government [here](#).

You will need to fill in two sections:

- i. a short section called "Information About You" at the top of the page, and
- ii. "Allotments" further down the page.

Click on the links to fill this information in.

SAGS are pleased with the proposals and the comments in their response to the questions are mainly for clarification, additions or explanations

The five main points they feel are important are:

1. Section 172 Q61 Proposed definition of an allotment site and allotment plot.

- A standard plot size of 250 sqm should be in the definition. Many people will only require fractions of this but those who can look after and cultivate a full plot should be able to acquire one.
- Allotment sites on local authority or public owned land are deemed permanent and protected from closure. Any on land leased from a private land owner should be subject to a long term rolling lease and protected from closure.

2. Section 174 Q63: Proposed duty to provide allotments.

SAGS suggests that if the local authority is unable to meet the demand for allotments, there must be a strong and enforceable mechanism for making sure the steps are 'reasonable' and there are sound reasons why the law has not been implemented. And so add: "Any challenge to these reports will be referred to the relevant Scottish Government Minister."

3. Section 176 Q65 Local Authority Duties to Manage Allotments

SAGS welcomes the duty to produce a food growing strategy and suggests that to show their commitment to providing allotment sites within a timeframe local authorities should carry out a five yearly review of their Food Growing Strategy.

4. Section 176 Q65 Local Authority Powers to Manage Allotments

SAGS strongly advises that allotment sites should be permanent.

Therefore the power to use local authority land for temporary cultivation should apply to the temporary provision of growing spaces; this should have no impact upon the duty of a local authority to provide permanent allotment sites.

5. Section 179 Q68 Surplus produce

It should be clear that surplus produce should only be sold directly by the allotment association on a non-commercial basis, with all proceeds being invested back into the site. This is to avoid the commercialisation of allotment sites.

Seed Potatoes and Onion Sets

Our Trading Secretary expects that the Trading Scheme Order will be delivered to Inverleith Allotments on the morning of Saturday 15th February. When this is firmed up we will be in touch with Site Reps. It would be good if each site with an order could arrange for someone to come along, help with the unloading and sorting and take away their site's orders.

Sunday Seed Swap



Laura Moss writes: This year's Seed Swap which is happening at Gorgie City Farm in partnership with Edinburgh Garden Partners on Sunday 2nd of March.

It was a fantastic event last year and this year we want to make it bigger and better.

As well as an opportunity to swap seeds and expertise with fellow enthusiasts there will be talks from experts, 'Sow and Tell' in the farm's gardens and crafts and trails for younger visitors! All that's before you've indulged in tasty treats from our on-site cafe.

We still have a few spaces left for those of you who might like to have a stall, give a presentation or run an activity - please get in touch with me here education@gorgiecityfarm.org.uk and let me know what you have in mind.

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