



Newsletter

February 2015: Photo appeal



Photo: Roger Hyam



My name is Roger Hyam. I trained as a botanist but spend my days at a computer at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Twenty years ago I worked as a photographer and still have a love of photographing people – but now for pleasure.

I've been making portraits at the Gardens culminating in an exhibition called [Botanics People](#). This year I am going to be taking pictures of people working in their gardens and vegetable patches around Edinburgh. You might see me on your allotment site soon.

My goal is to produce sets of prints as an archive of Edinburgh people. Along the way I may have small exhibitions and be able to help out organisations like FEDAGA with some publicity photos.

Most people don't mind me photographing them once they know my intentions. The challenge is being with people when the mood and the light are right.

If we meet and I ask to take your photo please don't feel you have to say yes. I'd be delighted if you do but I'm only interested in taking portraits of people who want to participate in the process. My fear is people diving for cover when they see me coming! I'm just as happy to chat and not take a photo.

Updates on the project will be on my [blog](#) under Allotmentees. You can contact me by clicking [here](#) or at 07590 608016.

▪ Roger Hyam.

Allotment Rents: D-Day dawns.



The wait is nearly over. The campaign has been run and all we can do now is hope our Councillors have seen sense.

On Thursday 12th February the Council will meet to decide upon its Budget for 2015-16, which contains proposals for a massive hike in allotment rents. There will be a lobby in the High Street from 8.30 to 9.45am. You can watch proceedings from 10am [here](#).

The petition has received 2314 signatures. The Council acknowledges 99 responses about allotments in its Budget Engagement Report, second only to their proposals on Edinburgh Leisure. Here's what they had to say:

1. The Council's proposal to raise an additional £150,000 of revenue through allotments attracted a large volume of responses. All responses were in

opposition to a "tripling" of the membership fee seen as necessary to generate this additional revenue.

2. Respondents stated their belief that the Council had entered into a binding agreement with the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and

Gardens Associations (FEDAGA) that saw full-plot allotment fees increase gradually from £50 to £100 (the current level) and that this price would remain

frozen until 2020, when increases would thereafter be linked to inflation.

3. Respondents stated their belief that the current rent level ensures the Allotments Service is self-sustaining. There is some complexity around this

because the gross revenue obtained by the Council from allotments is reduced by the cost of billing and processing a large number of payments for small charges (half plots and smaller, with significant discounts). In any case the current charges make no contribution to the development of new allotment sites.

4. Respondents felt that allotments made an important contribution to the mental wellbeing and physical health of allotment holders. They felt

it was important for individuals to be connected to the food they eat and its local production. These stated aims and benefits were felt to support a number of the Council's broader aims and objectives.

5. Some respondents felt that it was appropriate to have some increase to charges, given the Council's overall financial position. However they rejected the scale of the increase, which was not felt to be a "fair" rate as required by the appropriate legislation on allotments.

6. FEDAGA contributed to the consultation and made a number of suggestions for ways the Council could raise additional revenues through allotments. All of these will be passed to the service, but examples included:

- * A fee for being registered on the waiting list – given that there is a multi-year waiting list for allotments and an administrative cost of maintaining the waiting list;

- * A joining fee for new allotment holders;

- * A deposit for new allotments and for keys to allotment sites – refundable when allotments and keys are returned to the Council;

- * Use of environmental wardens to issue fines for allotments which are not appropriately maintained;

- * Providing only materials and land for new and redeveloped allotment sites, requiring those who want an allotment to provide the labour; and

- * Recruitment of volunteers to manage administrative tasks for the allotments service.

You can download the full Budget Engagement Report [here](#).

Winter Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop



2pm on Sunday 8th March 2015

INVERLEITH ALLOTMENTS
East Fettes Avenue

The speakers, presenters or those who have been invited to give a presentation will not be held responsible for any damage to property or injury to persons during the workshop.

Please remember to bring your own tools and equipment for the workshop. The Council will provide the necessary tools and equipment for the workshop.

To book for this workshop please contact Stuart McKenzie [here](#).

Bridgend Potato Day

Bridgend Potato Day will be on Sunday 22nd February. More info [here](#). Any West Coast readers may be more interested in the Glasgow Allotment Forum Potato Day on the same date at the Pierce Institute in Govan. More info [here](#).

Seed Swap

Seed Swaps are a great way of sharing seeds, meeting other gardeners and learning about different varieties of seed. The next one in Edinburgh is at Gorgie City Farm, between 10.30 am and 3.30pm on Saturday the 7th of March. More info [here](#).

The FEDAGA Shop: Opening Hours



This year the FEDAGA Shop will be open from 2 to 3.30pm on Sundays from the 22nd of February.

We're hoping to sell off the remainders of the seed potato and onion set orders in the first couple of weeks, so please try to make it along on the 22nd or the 1st of March. Members of the Inverleith Site Association will be on hand if there's anything left on subsequent Sundays - but we hope there won't be!

The FEDAGA Shop is just inside the West Gate of Inverleith allotments on East Fettes Avenue.

If you have made an order through your site, the delivery is expected on Saturday 21st February and should be available from your site rep thereafter.

Shocking vandalism at Saughton Mains



Click [here](#) to read the Evening News article reporting on the worst burst of mindlessness to hit Edinburgh allotments in many years.

There are also reports of a further bout of vandalism at Bridgend and serious anti-social activity at Carrick Knowe where stones have been thrown from the tram line and greenhouses damaged.

FEDAGA will be continuing to ensure that the Council's priority is security (along with safety) on the city's allotments. To have the Police take these matters as seriously as they should it is important that each plot holder who has been affected contacts the Police and lodges an incident report. The Police will only provide sufficient resources to combat or deter the vandals by reacting to a significant number of crimes. Sadly, at Saughton Mains, there has been.

If you have been affected by vandalism or any other anti-social activity it would be useful to let [FEDAGA](#) know.

Save Midmar paddock



The owners of the ground on which Midmar allotments stands wish to sell the paddock immediately to the south.

There have been proposals to consider a community purchase to keep it as open land - or as a much-needed extension to the allotments. Read more about the story in the [Evening News](#) and on Midmar's own [website](#).

The campaign to save Midmar paddock will be launched at 10am on Friday 13th February at the carpark at the top of Midmar Drive by Alison Johnstone MSP.

Heritage potatoes update

FEDAGA has sent in our details to SASA and are waiting for them to get the potatoes out of storage. Applicants won't be getting a lot of tubers, possibly a half dozen each. Varieties will likely be not available anywhere, hence the reason for doing this. If you're participating, save a wee bit of space for them. We will be in touch when the tubers are available for chitting.

Glass recycling



FEDAGA has been approached by a member wondering if all the glass from broken windows can be recycled and diverted away from landfill. It's quite amazing how many smashed up greenhouses there are. In the past it seems that a lot of debris was simply buried in pits on allotments - and continues to be dug up or mysteriously rise to the surface. A lot of the trash in the Trade Waste Bins is glass.

Sadly, the Council only recycles glass when it comes as jars or bottles. It may be that a private contractor may recycle window pane glass. Can anyone help?