



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Management Committee Meeting
7.15pm on 14th April 2015 at Southside Community Centre***

Present: Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) (Treasurer, Acting Chair) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Jon Gray - Warriston (**JG**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) (observer) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) (observer) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) (observer).

1. Apologies: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**).

It was **AGREED** that in **PW**'s absence, **DR** chair the meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Thanks to **PK** for providing the Minutes were recorded.

3. Matters Arising: There were no matters arising.

4. Allotment Officer's Report: There was no Allotment Officer's Report.

Spending Priorities: **NMcC** has sent the updated Spreadsheet to **IW**. He indicated that he will attend to it on his return from holiday. It was **AGREED** that **NMcC** request that **IW** acknowledges receipt of the Spreadsheet. It is expected that **IW** will bring a list of items to be attended to and a budget to facilitate these actions to the next meeting on 12th May. **ACTION - NMcC.** **NMcC** indicated that the programme should in future be referred to as the Priority Maintenance List. **ME** asked that the request for a repair to a tap at Lady Road be removed from the list as this has been attended to by ploholders. **ACTION - NMcC.**

5. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: **EW** said he had no report. During his absence **SMcK** had monitored and replied to e-mails, but there was nothing of significance to report.

Website and Newsletter: **EW** is in receipt of a secondhand laptop to enable him to continue to update the website. He asked for contributions for a Newsletter for the end of April.

Treasurer's Report: **DR** said he is becoming acquainted with the Treasurer's procedures. He cannot write any cheques as the signatories have not yet been updated. It was **AGREED** that a fresh application be made to the Bank of Scotland for **EW** and **DR** to be adopted as signatories. It was also **AGREED** that in the meantime the current signatories pre-sign some cheques to allow payments to be made. **ACTION - DR.**

DR reported that the bond income has ceased as the term of the investment has expired. The bond account is £4508.06 and the current account stands at £12,543.73, of which expenditure of £172.75 is due to be made to site associations in respect of Trading commissions.

Thanks to **PG** for his services as Treasurer were recorded.

Trading Report: **DR** had received a report from **BB** detailing the Site Orders. He noted that only 15 site associations had participated this year, half of the potential number. This is in line with previous years. Participants consider the scheme to be good value for money, but many sites never get involved. It was **AGREED** to try to raise the profile of the scheme as it makes savings for participants and provides income to FEDAGA and the site associations. **ACTION - EW.**

Site Reports: **EW** said Cambridge Avenue intends to stage an Open Day in June.

JMcK reported a serious case of vandalism at Craigentenny. The fence had been cut and two sheds burned. One had just been erected at a cost of £600 to the plotholder who had subsequently quit his plot. **JMcK** has been in contact with the Police who made an inspection of the site. They said security is good and made a few suggestions on how it could be improved. **DR** suggested that **IW** be asked if any sites are or could be covered by private security firms. He suggested warning notices suggesting CCTV cameras are in operation could be posted to make potential intruders think twice. **JG** suggested Police officers include allotments in their regular tours. **JMcK** had arranged for the Police to have a key for Craigentenny. **PK** said Redhall had recently spent £100 on prickly shrubs to improve security. **DR** reported that *Rosa rugosa* had been planted to improve security at Restalrig. He suggested a bulk-buy of such plants could be considered.

ME said repairs had been made to the path at Lady Road but already dandelions were penetrating through the tarmac, indicating that the work was superficial. The gate was still not fixed. It was **AGREED** that these points be raised with **IW**. **ACTION - EW.**

LG said that the tree work promised and paid for two years ago had still not been carried out. This should be investigated. **ACTION - EW.** However, there appeared to be no more rabbits at Midmar.

JG said that the promised tree work at Warriston had not been delivered. The marks on the trunks indicating what was to be done were now fading, as were hopes of action. The cracks in the wall by the entrance were getting larger, adding to safety concerns. The last he had heard, the bins had not been emptied either. This will all be raised with **IW**. **ACTION - EW.**

NMcC and **DR** said the repairs to holes in the fence at Claremont Park and Restalrig had yet to be done.

JMcK added that the promised tree work at Craigentenny had not been completed either. Dissatisfaction was expressed at the way allotment holders are continually placed at the bottom of the queue for council services. Tree squads are regularly taken away to deal with Dutch Elm Disease work which means that they are not available to tackle agreed works. If in-house services are not available then the Council must make other arrangements. **EW** said that nesting birds will now prevent much work from being tackled.

Once again, the opportunity for dealing with overgrown and potentially hazardous trees has been lost. **SMcK** noted that after the progress made in recent months on priority works this felt like we had gone back to the era of muddle and inaction.

WA reported another stone throwing incident at Carrick Knowe. The age of the children involved was only 7 or 8 and they replied abusively when asked to stop. The Police will be asked to intervene. He also said that the padlock is broken and will need to be repaired. He will contact **IW** on his return to work. **ACTION - WA.**

PK said a couple of new plotholders had been notified to him and he had welcomed them to Redhall. He would check to ensure they had been given the Plotholders' Guide. **ACTION - PK.**

SMcK said that there were more rabbits than ever at Inverleith. **IW** has promised to instal a rabbit proof fence. 8 or 9 rabbits were caught today. They are trapped and taken to a Stockbridge butcher who uses them to restock an area in the Borders where rabbits are shot for meat on a commercial basis. Despite this initiative the allotment is being over-run as the rabbits have set up burrows under a container in the park. The situation is rapidly becoming extremely serious.

It was **AGREED** that **EW** write to **IW** about all of the outstanding matters, in particular the tree works that have been paid for and not done. **ACTION - EW.**

Strategy Report: **SMcK** led a discussion on proposals put forward at the March meeting of the Allotment Strategy Working Group. One area that raised concern was the fact that some allotment expenditure is apparently going on loan repayments incurred by the creation of growing spaces that are not allotments and rent is not charged for. Clarity is required on this. Areas where the Council could utilise the skills and expertise of allotment holders on a more formal basis and a working partnership should be explored. It was **AGREED** the proposal for a Councillor to chair the group should be pursued and the other participants will be consulted on this. **ACTION - SMcK.** It was noted that the Minutes of the last meeting had not been approved by the Council. **ACTION - EW** to request that these be made available in good time for the next meeting on 22nd April.

SAGS Report: **SMcK** said the proposals put forward by SAGS had been approved by the Committee and would now go to the full Parliament next month. The Government has indicated it will oppose the standard size and maximum waiting time clauses, but the fair rent proposal may be successful. The work FEDAGA did with the expert guidance of Donald Rennie may prove to be of significance here.

6. Any Other Business: Arrangements were made for an informal dinner on 5th May with Donald Rennie to thank him for his work on the rent rise campaign. **PW, SMcK, JMCK, EW** and **DR** will attend. If any other Committee members wish to attend they should contact **EW.**

7. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 12th May.