



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 5th August 2014 at Midmar Allotments

Present: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Patrick Gibb - Dumbryden (**PG**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) (observer).

1. Apologies: Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : Christine Flannery - Findlay Avenue (**CF**) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting: Item 5, reference to rabbits at Midmar should read Inverleith. With this amendment, the minutes for the 1st July meeting were approved.

3. Allotment Officer's Report: **PW** read from **IW**'s Report. He queried the reference to a new site at Northfield as this had not been previously discussed. **ACTION** - **EW** to seek further details.

JMcK noted the large pine tree in the centre of Craigentenny has been removed. **LG** said the ash trees bounding Midmar had not yet been pruned. Willie Aitken of Carrick Knowe had been in touch to say the tree work there was not on the list. This has been addressed.

Provision of a shed to contain a composting toilet for Dumbryden has been arranged. **IW** believes that he has identified two ploholders who will undertake to look after this much needed facility. **GC** noted that on his recent inspection tour he saw evidence of a great deal of voluntary work provided by ploholders, such as strimming grass paths, etc. which contributed to the general upkeep of sites.

As **DR** and **IW** are expected to attend next month's meeting, time will be devoted to discussing progress on the agreed spending priorities.

4. Matters Arising: Payment of Site Fees: **ME** noted that cheques had been sent out to site associations at last.

Apple Press: **DR** has been in touch with Portobello Transition Town about borrowing the apple press but had not yet had the dates firmed up. **JMcK** said that if the scheme was a success Craigentenny would be interested in hosting it next year. **RH** said feedback he had received was very favourable.

Bare Root Fruit Trees: **PW** had found a supplier who could provide 50% discounts on maiden whips if 25 or more were ordered. It was agreed to publicise this through the Newsletter. **ACTION** - **PW** to provide further details.

Allotment Benches: **SMcK** had reported back that the park benches he had investigated were prohibitively expensive. **PW** offered to investigate flat-pack benches. **ACTION - PW.**

Planning: **ME** had written to Miller Homes suggesting that an allotment site be established at East Suffolk Road pending planning approval for housing. They replied saying her proposal would be noted. **GC** has checked on the plans for 3 major schemes in southeast Edinburgh and had found no provision for allotment space. He was particularly aggrieved as Broomhill was one of the sites listed as potential allotment land in the past. He questioned how effective FEDAGA is in ensuring the Council include allotment provision in the planning process. **JMcK** said that such provision was advisory, not compulsory. **PW** said the Allotment Strategy document was aspirational: growing areas should be included within housing developments and this represented how far FEDAGA had managed to shape the policy. As discussions were about to start on the next document the matter would be referred to the Strategy Steering Group. In the meantime, SAGS is working on the committee stage of the CERB legislation which may force councils to follow through on their aspirations and place requirements on developers to set aside land for allotments.

Edinburgh in Bloom: **RH** said that all but one of the entries had been judged. He anticipated the results would be decided by the end of the week. In all, the standards were very high. 5 entries were from Inchkeith Court where most plots were about the size of a tablecloth. This made it very difficult to apply the criteria, which were designed for standard size plots and half plots. Some of the plots were given over to flowers, so were not being used to grow food. However, the site is a superb community garden. It is obviously well loved and well used. It is apparent that the competition should be split to cover plots larger than 100 square metres (a standard half plot) and a separate category for smaller raised beds. An additional factor is that the Council doesn't charge rent and no subscription is paid to FEDAGA. At the very least, entrants should pay an individual membership fee. There was discussion on how this should be managed in future. It was **AGREED** that next year's competition will be run by **RH** with assistance from **JMcK**.

RH made some observations picked up from the judging. At Carrick Knowe it is apparent that the flooding issue has not been resolved. He said that instead of claiming that the soil bund had solved the problem, the Council should admit that the problem persists. The tram work damaged the drains and the operator refused to do repairs. The Council have been ineffectual in addressing the issue. It was recognised that the problem may well be impossible to resolve. **PW** warned that the most likely affordable solution the Council would propose would be to close the affected plots. The best plan of action would be to create raised beds to mitigate against the effects of flooding, as was done at Inverleith and Lady Road. **GC** offered to contact Willie Aitken to seek further information and try to arrive at a solution. **ACTION - GC.**

RH had been told of concern over the pile of leaf mould that was dumped by the Council at Dumbryden. This contains a lot of grit, debris and dog dirt. Also, it probably contravenes the site's organic status requirement, as demanded by Scottish Water. There was a dispute on this matter, as **PG** had not heard of any complaints. He believed that it was acceptable material and it was not difficult to sift unwanted rubbish out. **PK** said that, if left for long enough rain water washes salt and grit out, as happens at Bridgend. **JMcK** advised that the processed garden waste compost provided, for a fee, by Forth Resource Management was preferable. **RH** said the leaf mould provided to Warriston was from a private contractor, was not street sweepings, and was of good quality.

RH suggested that as there will be no Council award ceremony this year, FEDAGA should stage it's own event. He suggested all entrants be invited to a barbeque which would enable the Management Committee to meet and chat with them. It would be a good way of getting to know some keen members on an informal basis. It was **AGREED** that this was a good idea and the event will take place at 2pm on Saturday 13th September at Midmar. A budget of £250 was settled upon.

AGM: EW will send out the papers including the draft Constitution in the next week. **PW** will prepare an statement explaining the changes. **ACTION - PW**. Everyone present indicated that they are willing to stand again for office next year. **PG** was asked to seek a speaker on general aspects of potato growing from SASA (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture). **ACTION - PG**.

4. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Points to discuss included the reaffiliation to SAGS which was unanimously **AGREED** - at a cost of £75. A member had contacted the Secretary as she had lost her key and was unable to get a replacement as **IW** is currently on leave. There is no other officer charged with dealing with his duties when he is not present. Strict conditions apply to the issue of keys. However, it was suggested that Site Representatives be supplied with a spare key that could be issued to members in similar circumstances. **ACTION - EW** to enquire if this can be done.

Site Reports: RH said that a website for Warriston has been set up. A link has been put on the FEDAGA website.

There were no further reports.

6. Any Other Business: None.

7. Date of Next Meeting: 2nd September at Inverleith. **PW** gave his apologies as he will be unable to attend.