



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Management Committee Meeting  
7.15pm on 11th August 2015 at Inverleith Allotments***

**Present:** Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Jon Gray - Warriston (**JG**).

**1. Apologies:** Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : John McKinlay - Craigentiny (**JMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**).

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters Arising: Management of Council Allotments - PW** summarised the position. The Council have proposed outsourcing the management of the allotment service. FEDAGA have agreed that it is not able or willing to take on this responsibility. It is believed that today the Chief Executive of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is in discussions on the possibility of taking on the function. The Backgreens Initiative is also understood to be considering the possibility. It was noted that there had been no progress made since the last Strategy Group meeting in May. It was **AGREED** to write to Cllr. Lesley Hinds as there were many outstanding issues unresolved from this meeting. **ACTION - PW**.

**Inspection of Council Allotments - PW** presented Bob McAllister's proposal on how to take forward FEDAGA involvement in site inspections. He foresaw a problem as personal information relevant to whether or not a plot holder would be able to retain a substandard plot will not be shared. This will make it difficult to see if recommendations are being properly followed up. Doubt was expressed that the proposed system would address the main prevailing problem of superficial activity being undertaken after receiving a letter from the Allotment Officer which is not followed through. This cycle results in a lot of substandard, under-used and deteriorating plots which is not acceptable given the number of people on the Waiting List. **ME** suggested the Allotment Officer's letter should ask if the plot holder intends to retain the plot, and if the answer is "yes" then why. It was **AGREED** to participate and recommended that the new system be piloted in a few sites at first. **JMcK** had earlier indicated he would be prepared to serve on an inspection panel. **PW**, **SMcK**, **EW** and **NMcC** indicated they would also serve. It was further **AGREED** that any travel expenses would be paid by FEDAGA.

**Member Survey** - Feedback on Bob McAllister's draft survey of allotment holders was not enthusiastic. He had not responded to initial points made. It was **AGREED** that if he did not adequately address the concerns raised then FEDAGA would not be associated in any way with the survey. There are many questions over the content and distribution of the survey which will be put to the next Strategy meeting. **ACTION - PW** and **SMcK**.

**Telferton** - It was noted that the campaign to save this independent site is ongoing. A Certificate of Lawful Use has been obtained to help defend the site from developers. Evidence from allotment users is being compiled to demonstrate their social necessity.

**Apple Press** - A volunteer to supervise the use of the apple press and masher is required. A register of use should be prepared. The availability of the equipment will be advertised in the Newsletter. **ACTION - EW.**

**4. Allotment Officer - Report and Actions:** **IW** had submitted a report for the month. In particular it was noted that Scottish Power work at Saughton Mains and Prospect Bank is continuing with access for the latter being prevented. **DR** had advised by e-mail that the work at Prospect Bank has now been completed. The information on inspection letters issued has been amended to delete site and plot number details. **NMcC** spoke for all when she said this made it more difficult for site representatives to check on progress. **SMcK** said this unfortunate development is perhaps because it has been apparent for some time that there is no consistency between reports from month to month. Removing this detail makes it impossible to analyse the report and hold the Allotment Officer to account.

**Spending Priorities:** **NMcC** had recently met with the Allotment Officer. She reported four items had been actioned. They are purchase of matting for paths at Midmar and Findlay Avenue, 2 tonnes of whindust for Restalrig and repairs to the tarmac path at Claremont Park. **EW** added that the delivery of whindust to Cambridge Avenue had been received and ploholders had laid it out on the access path. **NMcC** said the request for refelting the communal hut at Chesser Crescent was approved as this is a no-shed site. She had requested that no money is spent on noticeboards as they are not considered a priority, unless if there is some spare money left in the budget at the end of the year. The vandalism at Warriston and Carrick Knowe was discussed and will be addressed. She had queried repairs to the fence and gate at the new Kirkliston site and established that the initial work had been substandard. Repair work to fences at Claremont Park, Leith Links and Restalrig was agreed. The long-anticipated tree work at Midmar was raised and an undertaking to arrange a contractor made. The wall inspection has been done and work identified at Claremont Park where some coping stones need to be cemented in, and the wall at the entrance to Redhall requires some repointing. Ploholders were asked to not remove ivy and buddlea from walls as the tugging action may cause damage.

**5. Consideration of Reports - Secretary's Report:** **EW** had circulated a Report detailing all correspondence over the month. He reported that Craigentenny had taken up the offer of free astroturf. A proposal to promote end-of-season B&Q offers for allotments had been received and would be looked at. The recent West Mains Open Day had raised £500. Comment from a member vigorously opposing the concession proposal was circulated to the committee and replied to. **EW** said he had not yet approached the city archivist about storage of papers, but would do so. **ACTION - EW.**

**Website and Newsletter:** **EW** said notice of the West Mains Open Day and the talk on Danish Allotments missed the Newsletter but was noted on the website, under Events. A new Newsletter will be published in the next few days.

**AGM:** **EW** had circulated draft papers for the AGM. These, with amendments, will go out to site associations next week. A guest speaker was discussed and it was **AGREED** that **PW** pursue this. **ACTION - PW.**

**Treasurer's Report:** DR had circulated a statement that would cover the year and be presented to the AGM. There was a discussion about examining the papers and NMCC will arrange to do this as soon as possible. **ACTION - NMCC.** PW will contact the Bank of Scotland regarding new signatories. **ACTION - PW.**

**Trading Report:** BB has indicated he has the catalogue and is selecting best sellers from previous years and a few new varieties. It is hoped that the paperwork can be distributed promptly to encourage maximum participation.

**Site Reports:** SMCK said that Inverleith had staged a "potato boiling" where ploholders could bring their freshly dug tubers to share and enjoy them with butter on site. It was established that Pride of Bute, one of the "heritage" varieties supplied by SASA was *not* a boiler, but should be steamed or baked. NMCC reported on the Danish Allotment Talk which was very interesting and highlighted the disparity of allotment styles in Denmark.

**Strategy Report:** SMCK said that lack of progress and recent developments were disheartening. He suggested FEDAGA should concentrate on ensuring the small day-to-day matters are properly addressed before entering into discussions on longer term topics such as management of sites and strategy documents. It was noted a draft strategy document was to have been published by August.

**SAGS Report:** As PW has retired from the SAGS committee, Edinburgh's sole representative is Andrew Reid. He said FEDAGA should be more directly represented especially as implementation of the Community Empowerment Bill is now taking place. A volunteer is sought.

**6. Any Other Business:** None.

**7. Date of Next Meeting:** 8th September at Midmar.