



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 2nd December 2014 at Southside Community Centre

Present: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Patrick Gibb - West Mains (**PG**) (Treasurer) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) (Trading Secretary) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : Jon Gray - Warriston (**JG**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) (observer) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) (observer) : Lorraine Corbett - Ferry Road (**LC**) (observer) : Sofie Anne Laegran - West Mains (**SAL**) (observer) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**).

1. Apologies: Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Rosy Naylor - West Mains (**RN**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Barbara Seel - Leith Links (**BS**).

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

3. Matters Arising: Rent Increase: **SMcK** summarised the campaign to date. Members have been encouraged to write to Councillors and MSPs. The FEDAGA 10 Point Response had been sent to City of Edinburgh Council Chief Executive Sue Bruce. It was noted that no acknowledgement had been received. The general level of acknowledgement to letters appears to be sporadic and poor. Members are also being encouraged to write to MSPs regarding the Community Empowerment Bill (CEB) - which at present omits any reference to a "fair rent". We now await the Council's decision in February.

Contact has been made with people with relevant legal experience. A case will be made and a meeting sought to prepare the ground in the event that the Council decides to enact the Draft Budget. To help to prepare this **SMcK** asked for Management Committee members to make reasonable estimates of the value of the food produced and the cost of seed, labour and equipment as this can be formulated to arrive at a potential productive capacity of an allotment plot which will determine what is a "fair rent" in terms of Section 19 of the Allotments (Scotland) Act 1922. Fortunately, **PW** has been doing this for a number of years for other research studies so a good quantity of accurate information is already at hand. **ACTION - SMcK.**

SMcK said the online petition was now over 2100. It was decided that the petition be delivered to the Council. **ACTION - EW.** **SMcK** suggested that as a publicity stunt, allotment holders take some produce to a farmers' market and try to sell it at 3 times the going rate to represent the Council's proposed rent rise.

Apple Press: **DR** said the apple press events had been well received. The only negative comments were that it was a bit late in the season. It was **AGREED** that an apple press be purchased for regular use next year. **DR** will research the purchase for next year. **ACTION - DR.**

4. Allotment Officer's Report: **IW** said there is to be a consultation meeting on the 4th of December around the proposed creation of 16 plots on a former bowling green at Victoria Park. He assured the meeting that these would not be more "raised beds" but proper half plots of 100 square metres. He also said he hoped further sites would be opened next year, with 20 plots at Lochend and 15 in the extension to Stenhouse. At each site the size of plots would be around 100 square metres. **GC** asked how these sites had been chosen. He made the point that in south Edinburgh no new sites had been created since Bridgend, almost a decade ago. **IW** said the creation of new sites appears to depend on the presence of proactive Community Parks Officers, and in the north and west of the city there appears to be more enthusiasm for creating new sites. He made the point that there are fewer people on the waiting list in south Edinburgh. **PW** said that the agreed list of sites to be developed seemed to have been sidelined. **IW** explained circumstances had changed and the issue should be addressed in the third Strategy Agreement, for discussion next year. **PW** said he expected the Council to state why the agreed programme of site creation was no longer valid. It would appear to have been abandoned without consultation and new sites appear apparently randomly. He said he was pleased new allotments were being developed, but he would like to know that the Council was acting methodically as agreed. That way the best value for money could be obtained. **IW** said a team had been established to survey walls on Council property and this would include the allotment sites at Redhall, Warriston and Pilrig Park. **IW's** main tasks currently are preparing invoices, managing the waiting list and letting vacant plots to new ploholders. Once again, assistance in helping out with this was offered but declined. **IW** reported that the new site at Northfield Drive is open and new ploholders are getting started. Unfortunately, there has been serious vandalism at Saughton Mains, with greenhouses and the toilet smashed. Extra security measures would be put in place to prevent a repeat.

Spending Priorities: **DR** said that the vast majority of Priority 1, 2 and 3 items had been dealt with and some new work was now being addressed. Repair work caused by vandalism is not budgeted for. The money remaining to be spent is now around £2K. **IW** said he had experienced difficulty in sourcing notice boards. **JMcK** said that most sites had reported that they did not require new notice boards and that this expenditure is unnecessary. **IW** said he had been frustrated at not being able to arrange the path repair work at Lady Road, but he expected the repairs to the gate there would take place next week.

DR said next year's Wish Lists should be compiled by sites from January and would be compiled and prioritised by FEDAGA in March for the new Financial Year commencing in April. **ACTION - Site Associations.**

ASL asked about delivery of leaves to West Mains. **IW** said he had noticed that expected deliveries to various sites had not turned up and he would investigate this. She also asked about **IW's** assessment that there is no space at West Mains for a bay for leaves. **IW** agreed to revisit the issue and suggested a smaller bay may be possible. **DR** advised **ASL** to take the issue back to West Mains and include it in next year's Wish List.

IW said next year's main items were shaping up to be renewal of fencing at Warriston, general ongoing tree works and possibly a trial of a composting toilet. **PW** firmly suggested that he abandon the toilet trial as this subject has a sorry history.

EW said the issue of who should cut the grass paths at Midmar had been raised again, highlighting the need for the division of responsibility between Council and site association to be agreed. **PW** said that FEDAGA had suggested to the Strategy Group that the area around the entrance should be maintained by the Council and associations look after the

rest, but talks had stalled as the Group had not met recently. **PW** said ill-will had been generated as it was perceived that the Council favoured some sites to the detriment of others. **DR** suggested that a large area of mown grass at Prospect Bank could be converted into a half plot and rent generated. **IW** undertook to look into this. **ACTION - IW.**

5. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: **EW** referred to the report he had circulated prior to the meeting. **IW** has included FEDAGA in correspondence from Dr. Kevin O'Donnell of SASA and a meeting is arranged for 5th December. It was **AGREED** that **PW** and **SMcK** attend. This may result in allotment holders participating in trials for new varieties of potatoes.

Website and Newsletter: **EW** said he had added a SAGS page to the website to cover the CEB consultation and 2 Newsletters were issued in November.

Treasurer's Report: **PG** spoke to his already circulated report. [This is appended to these Minutes.]

Trading Report: **BB** said site orders were arriving and the overall order for seed potatoes, onions and shallots would be submitted next week. **SMcK** said the recently opened sites had been added to the Kings Seeds database.

IW confirmed that the Plotolders Guide is included in the starter pack sent out to all new plotolders. **PW** said that the engraved trophies have been received and are available for the winners of Edinburgh in Bloom to pick up.

Site Reports: **SMcK** said that pest control of rabbits at Inverleith had commenced. A plotholder has noticed hungry rabbits have been gnawing the bark from the base of an apple tree, so this is just in time. **WA** suggested that as the leaves are now off the trees the longstanding tree work at Carrick Knowe should be arranged. **PG** said he had seen rats at West Mains and **ASL** agreed this was a big issue. **IW** said they had been "hammered" earlier in the year and he would revisit this. **GC** advised that the best control of rabbits and rats was to allow foxes on to sites. **JMcK** added that plotolders must resist the urge to feed foxes. **LC** asked about the Trade Waste uplift schedule as this has not been happening recently at Ferry Road. **IW** said he was also aware of a problem at Saughton Mains and he would make enquiries.

Strategy Report: There was no report.

SAGS Report: There was no report.

6. Any Other Business: **IW** said he had been approached by a Pollution Control officer enquiring if it was necessary for allotments to have bonfires. **PW** quoted the 1913 Regulations (amended 1924) that state that bonfires can only consume materials produced on the site and not be allowed to cause a nuisance. The rules do not proscribe times and are open to subjective interpretation. It transpired that there are differing local regimes at Ferry Road and Warriston, two sites that adjoin Warriston Crematorium, where there is a ban on fires when the crematorium is in operation.

7. Date of Next Meeting: 6th January.

APPENDIX:

Summary of FEDAGA accounts 1 August - 30 November 2014

Bank Balance 1 August 2014: £5,702.53

Income to 27 October 2014

Previous Bond Interest	£19.91	
Bond Interest October	£9.63	
Fee from Portobello	£51.00	
WCF potatoes overpayment	£97.30	
Total		£177.84

Expenses paid to 27 October 2014

SAGS fee	£75.00	
Treasurer Expenses	£22.94	
Site fees and commissions***	£620.99	
South Side Centre	£20.00	
Secretary expenses	£114.10	
Edinburgh in Bloom BBQ (Rik Hart)	£81.20	
Total		£934.23

Bank Balance 27 October 2014 £4,946.14

Income expected 27 October to 30 November 2014

Bond Interest*	£8.99	
Total		£8.99

Expenses Committed but not Banked by 27 Oct 2014

Edinburgh in Bloom BBQ (Liz Grace)	£144.70	
Third Prize	£25.00	
Site Cheques sent but not cashed		
Redhall	£122.67	
Past site fees due to sites without bank accounts		
Dumbryden**	£179.70	
Findlay Avenue	£37.00	
Hutchison Loan	£16.00	
Chesser Crescent	£27.65	
Total		£552.72

Cash available assuming all expenses are paid £4,402.41

Bond £4,508.06

Total Uncommitted Funds £8,910.47

Notes:

* Bond income varies month-to-month from 8.99 to 10.60 per month.

** This is based on Dumbryden having 40 plots due fees for 2012-14, plus £19.70 in commissions.

*** Corrected from Previous summary which was out by 3p.