



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 1st July 2014 at Southside Community Centre

Present: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) (Treasurer) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Barbara Seel - Leith Links (**BS**) : Patrick Gibb - Dumbryden (**PG**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) (observer) : Rosy Naylor - West Mains (**RN**) (observer).

1. Apologies: Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Christine Flannery - Findlay Avenue (**CF**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes for the 6th May meeting were approved.

3. Allotment Officer's Report: **PW** read from **IW**'s Report. The statement "Midmar seems to be rabbit free" was contested. **PW** noted that a figure of £18,700 was given for annual standing charges (water, electricity, refuse removal). So far this year around one eighth of the budget has been spent.

Spending Priorities: As neither **DR** or **IW** was present there was little to be said other than to note that they had agreed works to be completed and **IW** had supplied a progress report. **EW** said **JMcK** had asked that the single tree within the Craigentenny site be removed and he reported that the site association would contact Edinburgh Leisure about lopping trees on the golf course that cast shade over plots.

RH offered the redundant composting toilet at Warriston to Drumbryden, but after discussion this was declined. **PG** felt that it was not realistic to expect that the required level of maintenance could be provided. He hoped that in due course when planned housing is built adjacent to the site a facility connected to the mains and sewerage system could be installed.

4. Matters Arising: Payment of Site Fees: **BB** reported that the Council had paid the money due and he was now in a position to send cheques out. Cheques for a doubled-up annual payment (in line with an earlier decision) as well as commission from trading would be issued next week. **SMcK** said that Kings had paid the 10% commission agreed upon for the Seeds Scheme and this could be added.

Edinburgh in Bloom: There were a reasonable number of entries for the Allotment Competition, but it was down on last year. **JMcK** will forward the details to **RH** who will liaise with the judges. He anticipates that judging will take place toward the end of July.
ACTION - JMcK and RH.

Constitution: **PW** will draft a revised constitution in line with the agreed changes which will be issued with the AGM papers in August. **ACTION - PW.**

4. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: **EW** reported that a land owner in Bonaly had been in touch offering a 5 acre site for allotment use. **PW** will respond and supply a copy of the SAGS Allotment Design Guide. It was estimated that around 200 plots could be created on this piece of land. **ACTION - PW.**

EW has had unanimous support for the proposal to provide brown bins to allotments. **SMcK** expressed scepticism about whether it was appropriate or practical and doubted if it would happen. **GC** said the Council would be wise to introduce it gradually on large sites to see how the service would be used. **PW** said the proposal went against the sound principles of composting waste material yourself. Other material can be burned. At Lady Road there is a monthly communal bonfire to deal with material that cannot be composted.

EW said a plan for the Apple Press should be drawn up. It was **AGREED** to see if the press could be available from Saturday 25th October to the following Saturday 1st November. This would allow for the Press to be available at weekends. It was further **AGREED** that the host sites would be Lady Road, Inverleith and Claremont Park. **ACTION - EW** to make arrangements, liaising with **DR.**

Newsletter and Website: A Newsletter had been sent out in June. Until additional assistance is available **EW** will continue to prepare a Newsletter on a monthly basis. Three Open Days can be reported: West Mains on 27th July, Midmar on 23rd August and Inverleith on 22nd September. Other items for inclusion to **EW**, please. **ACTION - EW.**

Treasurer's Report: **BB** said that the balance on 1st June was £4163.54. Expenses are £220 - withheld fees for Warriston. Income is £3405 from the Council for Site Fees and £9.63 for bond interest. The balance on 1st July is £7358.49.

Proposals for how best to use the funds available after payments to sites are made were discussed. **RH** proposed that reconditioned park benches could be supplied to sites. **GC** said it was important that there was somewhere for older or former allotment holders could meet up. **RH** suggested Site Associations could apply for a grant from FEDAGA to fund a worthwhile project. **PG** emphasised that it is important that the money is not spent on items the Council have responsibility for and which should be paid for from the money paid in rent. **SMcK** will investigate the possibility of sourcing park benches. **ACTION - SMcK.**

EW suggested free horticulture education courses or question and answer sessions could be provided on sites. **RH** said a room at the Botanics could be hired to stage a "gardeners' question time" event with a couple of professionals on the panel. He felt this may be easier than organising an event on a site. **PW** said he could look at a pruning workshop at the old orchard at the Royal Edinburgh hospital. He also suggested FEDAGA could organise bulk orders of bare root fruit trees which could provide a 50% saving to members. He undertook to investigate these options. **ACTION - PW.**

BB suggested FEDAGA invest in a canopy which could be provided to sites staging Open Days. **SMcK** said members might appreciate bulk compost provided free to sites. If the scheme was large enough it may be possible to cut the costs drastically. He would look into it. **ACTION - BB and SMcK.**

Trading Report: **SMcK** said that Kings had paid £328.76 which just about represented the 10% commission that had been agreed upon. This has been divided up between the participating sites on a pro rata basis and would be added to the payment to be issued next week. **ACTION - BB.** The scheme continues to be very successful, growing by around 15% this year. Participants bought seeds retailing at nearly £3400 and actually paid only £1900.

Site Reports: **EW** said **PK** had reported to him that the Open Day at Redhall had gone well, with over £200 being raised for site funds.

BB said that the barbeque area at Midmar had been renovated. The old brick barbeque structure had been demolished, the slabbing extended and 2 mobile barbeque units purchased. **GC** said he was concerned about outbreaks of potato root eelworm at Midmar. He felt the Council should police such incidents to ensure that other ploholders were not affected. **PW** said it would not be possible to persuade the Council to do this and that it is the responsibility of individual ploholders to practice good hygiene by practicing crop rotation. This is perfectly possible, even on a small half plot. **SMcK** said he was concerned that big bud on blackberries seemed to be rife at Inverleith. In the past site committees forced ploholders to keep their plots hygienic. Times have changed. **RH** said that if this was tried at Warriston you would be told to mind your own business.

SMcK said he was pleased that the issue of rabbits at Midmar was being now being formally handled by the Council's Pest Control team and that a rabbit proof fence will be installed.

NMcC reported on a very successful clearance of debris from Claremont Park. For £40 a small van was hired and ploholders were cajoled into helping to load the van and unload it at the nearby Seafield dump. She said they had not experienced problems there as they had explained that the material was from a Council allotment. It was **AGREED** to ask **IW** to draft an official letter to be presented to staff at a dump to ensure there are no problems for them accepting van-loads of rubbish from other sites in future. News of this initiative will be reported in the next Newsletter. **ACTION - EW.**

Strategy Report: The next meeting will be on 23rd July. It is expected that Devolved Management will be on the agenda and discussions will commence on the next Allotment Strategy Document. Implementation of the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill will be discussed. **GC** said that areas previously listed as potential allotment sites could now be built on for housing as a large building plan has been accepted by the Council. He cited the land at Broomhills, off Frogston Road, which is about to have 1000 homes built on it. **PW** said that it is our intention to ensure that allotment provision is built in to planning permission for such developments.

SAGS Report: **PW** gave a brief report on the SAGS AGM.

6. Any Other Business: **ME** said that the Southside Community Centre had been booked for meetings from October to next July. The AGM has been booked for 21st October. She will write to Miller Homes to ask about their plans for the site at East Suffolk Road. **ACTION - ME.**

7. Date of Next Meeting: 5th August at Midmar.