



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## ***Minutes of Management Committee Meeting, 7pm on 9th July 2019 at Southside Community Centre***

**Present:** Stuart McKenzie (Inverleith) (President) (**SMcK**); Dave Roberts (Craigentiny Telferton) (Treasurer) (**DR**); Maureen Edwards (Lady Road) (**ME**); Neiria MacClure (Claremont Park) (**NMcC**); John Nisbet (Craigentiny Telferton) (**JN**); Jane Robinson (West Mains) (**JR**); Ernie Watt (Cambridge Avenue) (**EW**); Peter Wright (Lady Road) (**PW**);  
**Observers:** Liz Aitken (Carrick Knowe) (**LA**); Willie Aitken (Carrick Knowe) (**WA**); David Morrice (Restalrig) (**DM**); Barbara Seel (Leith Links) (**BS**).

**1. Apologies:** Alice Bain (Warriston) (**AB**); Gilbert Clark (Midmar) (**GC**); Yvonne Dawe (Saughton Mains) (**YD**); John Grace (Midmar) (**JG**); Liz Grace (Midmar) (**LG**); Alison Hewitt (Warriston) (**AH**); Paul Kerr (Redhall) (**PK**); Rosina Weightman (Saughton Mains) (**RW**).

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the meeting on 11th June were adopted as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising:** **LG** has reported that perhaps due to the change from Neighbourhood Partnerships to Neighbourhood Networks it was proving difficult to get clear advice on how independently managed sites can access grant money for site improvements. This will be pursued. **ACTION - LG. SMcK** will review the Mission Statement document.  
**ACTION - SMcK. DR** has visited Claremont Park, Cambridge Avenue, Leith Links, Saughton Mains, Warriston and Restalrig to inspect and where possible repair faulty noticeboards. He has purchased hinges, nuts, bolts, filler and anti-rust paint. The replacement boards are very expensive so they will be removed and magnetic “pins” supplied to fix notices directly to the back of the noticeboard instead. He will continue his programme of repairs this weekend. **ACTION - DR.**

**4. Site Reports:** **SMcK** said the **Inverleith** site hut has been repainted, the communal area by the hut has been increased in size and members gathered last weekend to hear an account by **PW** of his attempts to eradicate mare’s tail. Scottish Environment Minister

Mairi Gougeon will soon visit the site on a fact finding mission. There is a fox cub on site and a fresh supply of young rabbits for it.

**WA** said there is a serious infestation of rabbits at **Carrick Knowe**. Everything unprotected, including onions, is being eaten. He has been in touch with the Allotment Officer and the Pest Control officer will soon be in attendance. He took the initiative to invite the Lord Provost, Frank Ross, to the site to see the overgrown bund, built to protect the site from flooding. The outcome is that the Council will apply weedkiller where appropriate and trim the bund twice a year. **WA** will monitor this to ensure it happens. He also reported that the top hinge of the noticeboard had sheared off and he contacted a blacksmith to repair it.

**JR** reported on a social event at **West Mains** centred around the provision of a lockable skip which over the course of 4 days was filled with debris. New ploholders were schooled in "skip etiquette" - not blocking access for others by leaving their junk at the front - and the skip was locked overnight to prevent misuse by moonlight. The Open Day will be on 4th August.

**NMcC** said the **Claremont Park** noticeboard repair was successful and thanked **DR**. The gates are being painted and the next task is to paint the communal shed.

**BS** told of a problematic ploholder at **Leith Links** who is not looking after their plot. The Allotment Officer is not applying the agreed procedure and this will be taken up with him. The building work to the rear of the site has caused an influx of rats and the resident fox has left perhaps because of the noise. There is also a problem with a broken compost toilet. She is trying to source the relevant part. The main issue, however, is the housing development to the rear. Part of the site will be lost as the developer intends to build a public path on a strip at the east end. There will be an addition of up to 7 plots on land forming part of the development adjacent to the site. Discussions were entered into with planners and developers in good faith that were subsequently found to be in vain as the ploholders had been omitted from the neighbour notification list. It has become clear that matters that were to be discussed were void as the consultation period had already ended. The dispute centres on the height of the perimeter fence around the new plots, the position of a substation and composting toilet, adequate access via a pocket park on the development and access from the new plots to the main site. **JR** said the process should be halted as the ploholders, as occupants, should have been properly notified. As they were not the developers should abandon their plans and consult properly, as demanded by law. The matter was discussed and advice given. **BS** will meet with the other parties later in the week and will report back. **ACTION - BS.**

**EW** said the noticeboard at **Cambridge Avenue** has been examined by **DR** and repairs will be effected this weekend.

**JN** said the **Craigentenny Telferton** recently had their annual barbeque. The Open Day will be on 28th July with crochet features (“yarn bombing”) and a scarecrow-building event. Plots are changing hands, with new people joining the community and more on the waiting list. Mairi Gougeon recently visited in honour of a successful grant application.

**JN** also reported on the continued lack of a water supply at **Northfield** despite it being agreed and the funding made available. Plotters are still dashing across Willowbrae Road with buckets fetching water from a nearby petrol station. This will be taken up with the Allotment Officer. **ACTION - SMcK.**

**DM** said the **Restalrig** noticeboard has been repaired but is yet to be sealed. **DR** will attend to this. **ACTION - DR.**

**PW** told of the Giant Hogweed herbicide spraying on Network Rail land adjacent to **Lady Road**. As the landowner refused to take action the site association was forced to ask for volunteers to do this. Common areas have been pruned back and tidied up and a barbeque held. Surveyor’s studs have been discovered at the entrance and on the main path. On enquiry it was discovered that the University of Edinburgh is behind this. They are about to upgrade sporting facilities downstream at Peffermill and are perhaps considering taking action to prevent students being affected by sewerage overspill which frequently affects the allotments when the archaic drainage system overloads and the Pow Burn overflows. Those responsible apologised for not communicating properly. The site association is still waiting to hear from the University about the significance of the studs.

**5. President’s Report: SMcK** gave an account of the recent Allotment Strategy meeting with Council officials. The waiting list has been interrogated. The number still wanting a plot has fallen from over 3000 to 1254. Of these 418 want a full plot, 981 a half plot, 88 a quarter plot and 177 a raised bed. Where these applicants live will be taken into account when making an offer. With this information the Council can now plan how it will fulfil its legal obligations. Over 500 applicants said they would be interested in helping to form a new “DIY” site and 467 would be willing to attend a meeting with Council officials. The main focus is now on Lismore where 75 plots could be created. This site should now be pushed forward. There was discussion over the perceived obstacles to utilising Common Good Land. **SMcK** said that he was confident Fife’s Allotment Officer would be able to lend his expertise and experience on this matter to get a good outcome. **JK** said that how

a facility was labelled seemed to be important in getting the go-ahead. Community gardens/allotments often get permission as “community” is the key word.

**BS** asked why planners don't insist on Section 75 (planning gain) allotment provision in all new housing developments. **SMcK** agreed that this had been stated policy but the implementation appeared to be either haphazard or non-existent. This will be taken up again. **ACTION - SMcK.**

The problem of the Council's rent invoice check-off slip for FEDAGA and Site Association membership and subscriptions was discussed. Once a plot holder has indicated they are not willing to pay their subscription they are not asked again in future years, even although they may have changed their mind. This was not what was agreed. The officials agreed to fix this and requested a form of words that could be used. It is hoped that this check-off can be used to secure members' permission for contact details to be shared with FEDAGA.

Allotment rules and regulations were again discussed. This topic had fallen into abeyance 7 years ago when the Community Empowerment Act was first considered. Now this has been implemented it is time to look at updating them. **PW** strongly urged against reopening the text as in 2012 agreement had been reached. All we should now be doing is seeing that they are put into force and acted upon.

Emergency procedures were discussed after a plot holder suffered a stroke and did not receive ambulance attention for 40 minutes because the crew could not locate the site. There were inaccuracies found in the list of postcodes and grid references supplied by the Allotment Officer. It was also questioned how useful grid references are. The what3words scheme which uniquely identifies a 3 square metre square in a worldwide virtual grid was discussed and it will be suggested that ambulance crews be supplied with a list covering allotment entrances. **SMcK** was disappointed that his efforts to contact the Scottish Ambulance Service had not been reciprocated. The provision of basic first aid kits containing bandages, plasters and swabs was discussed. It would make sense to buy these in bulk to make savings. It must be established what would be of most use and how and where they would be stored. **ACTION - DR.**

**6. Secretary's Report:** A written report from **LG** covered emergency procedures and the mission statement, already discussed.

**7. Treasurer's Report:** **DR** said the bank balance stands at £13,621. He asked site association treasurers to check that recent payments had been received. The problem of sites with no bank accounts persists. These are Findlay Avenue, Baronscourt, India Place,

Hutchison Loan, Drumbrae, Kirkliston and Prospect Bank. It was agreed that FEDAGA cannot hold on to this money indefinitely and the credit must be cleared by the end of the month, which is the end of the financial year. As these sites have no representatives or mechanism for handling their members' money it was **AGREED** that compost to the value of the money owed will be purchased from Garden Solutions and delivered to each site. If possible an indication of when it will be delivered will be given so that it can be equitably divided amongst ploholders. If these sites get in touch in time a mix of products including equipment to suit their needs could be provided. **ACTION - DR.** This will be publicised via the Newsletter. **ACTION - EW.**

**8. Maintenance Report: NMacC** said there was no progress to report.

**Planning Report: AH** had submitted a report stating that there were no planning applications affecting allotments that she was aware of.

**Trading Report:** No report. It was noted that the Potato and Onion orders should soon be initiated. **ACTION - Brian Bleakley.**

**Show Report: SMcK** noted that a subcommittee meeting has been scheduled for next week. A publicity poster was decided upon. **NMcC** is recalling cups and trophies. A prominent individual has yet to be secured to present the prizes and possibilities will be explored.

**ME** had been in touch with the Southside Community Centre management and confirmed room bookings for the following year, including the AGM on 22nd October. Management meetings will take place on 10th September, 8th October, 12th November, 10th December, 11th February, 10th March, 14th April, 12th May, 9th June and 14th July.

**9. Any Other Business: PW** enquired if the Council had supplied running costs for the allotment estate noting that rent for a full plot is due to rise to £120 next year. **SMcK** replied that they had not. Given that expenses seem to have been reduced and income regularly rises it was important to establish that the allotment community is not inadvertently subsidising other Council services. It was **AGREED** to make appropriate enquiries. **ACTION - SMcK.** **BS** asked if ploholders on Council sites had to be resident in Edinburgh. She was told the draft regulations state that one has to have their main residence in the city to make an application.

**10. Date of Next Meeting:** 10th September.