



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 3rd June 2014 at Southside Community Centre

Present: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : John Gray - Warriston (**JG**) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : John McKinlay - Craigentiny (**JMcK**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) (observer) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) (observer) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**).

1. Apologies: Patrick Gibb - Dumbryden (**PG**) : Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) : Barbara Seel - Leith Links (**BS**) : Christine Flannery - Findlay Avenue (**CF**).

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

3. Allotment Officer's Report: **IW** said that inspections showed that most sites were in good condition. Plot holders with substandard plots were being contacted and he gave details of letters issued. The first phase of the new Drumbrae site will be opened on 10th June. Tenants for the second phase are now being offered plots. A bin lorry had damaged the water supply to Redhall and repairs are ongoing. He has been told that the Trade Waste Bin Uplift service cannot now be suspended over the winter so will operate all year. This is due to administrative shortcomings. He reminded the meeting that there were often problems when the service was scheduled to restart in the spring. There were concerns expressed about greater expenditure, but **IW** said that he had been able to negotiate a reduced rate. It was **AGREED** that if the service was to continue through the winter it should be promoted to plot holders so that they can take the opportunity of clearing more accumulated debris off their plots.

IW said he is looking at introducing a Brown Bin Compost Uplift service. There were divergent opinions on this, some believing all organic waste should be composted or burned on site, others saying that there are restrictions on some sites on burning and diseased material should be professionally processed, not composted on site. **IW** said that the service provision would be at a minimal cost. It was **AGREED** to take soundings on the possible demand and return to the matter in the future. **ACTION - EW**.

IW said rabbit control operations are taking place at Midmar, Redhall and Inverleith. He has met with a wall surveyor who will visit 13 sites with walls and issue a report. It was **AGREED** that **IW** will request that the report will be completed by the end of August. **ACTION - IW**. **IW** said that he understood funding from outwith the allotment budget will be made available to pay for any repair work identified.

IW has requested a guidance leaflet on how to deal with asbestos found on allotments from the Council's Asbestos Officer. He will meet with her soon to discuss this. He confirmed that if asbestos is to be removed the cost of this will be met from the budget for

asbestos removal. **IW** reported that Scottish Water had approved the water supply at Baronscourt. Water will be on tap by the end of June. The water supply at Kirkliston is now working well. **IW** has met with a specialist plumber at Bridgend to discuss the water pump there. He has been advised that it would be best to leave it as it is. **PW** expressed concern at this and asked to meet with the specialist. **IW AGREED** to arrange this. **ACTION - IW**.

IW said that the tree work is now proceeding. Leith Links and Warriston have been completed. The next sites to be dealt with are Craigentenny, Claremont Park, Inverleith, Midmar and Redhall. He said more tree work may be identified and would be tackled over the summer.

EW has been in touch with a representative of Warriston Crescent Residents Association to discuss the former Warriston Crescent site. There are major problems in getting the site back into use. **EW** has put the representative in touch with Lochend Secret Garden and offered advice on grant aid.

Spending Priorities: There was a discussion on how best to proceed. **IW** suggested a list of small and easily achievable projects, but several members wanted the main priorities (security, safety and pest control) to be addressed. This position was **AGREED**. **DR** will meet with **IW** soon to discuss the matter and arrange for it to be taken forward. **ACTION - DR and IW**.

JMcK noted that **IW** had said that the Millennium Forest to the south of Craigentenny could not be touched. He requested the name of the appropriate person to contact as he took issue with this. **ACTION - IW**.

DR thanked **IW** for the progress that has already been made, but said that a lot still remains to be done. Together, they will address this.

Devolved Management: **PW** said this had been put forward by the Council at the most recent Strategy Meeting. There will be a meeting in around 3 months' time to discuss how to progress it. He said it is for the Council to suggest which tasks should be considered for devolved management and a costing would have to be agreed. He said FEDAGA is clear that if volunteers are to take on responsibilities currently met by the Council, this would come at a cost. This could be expressed in rent reductions. He believes the proposal has arisen because more allotments are being created and more ploholders are in position but the Council is unwilling to appoint another Allotment Officer. **IW** said the proposal is likely to form part of the Third Allotment Strategy Document, to be discussed next year.

RH asked why site fees have not yet been paid by the Council. **PW** said FEDAGA were suddenly being treated as if they were a supplier and had been asked for a lot of additional bureaucracy before they would be paid. This has now been addressed. **PW** said he was grateful that the Council collected members fees as part of the rental payment but would appreciate, as they are nearly 6 months overdue, being kept informed of changes to procedure. **IW** said he had spoken to the Payments officer last week and understood that the payment is in hand. He expected that next year the payment will be made within a week of invoicing.

RH said that Warriston needed the money retained by FEDAGA over the past two years. **BB** arranged for the cheque to be issued. Payments to all site associations will be made as soon as the money has been deposited in FEDAGA's account. This year, as previously

agreed, all sites (except newly opened ones) will receive a double payment. **ACTION - BB.**

JG reported break-ins and vandalism at the Water of Leith section of the Warriston site. **IW** said he would arrange for repairs to be made to the fence. Plot holders are reminded to report all such incidents to the police and ask for an incident number to be issued. **JMcK** suggested that sites arrange for a key to be given to officers so that they can include allotments in their patrols. **GC** said that as community policing is being changed this month it is important to ensure that allotments are not forgotten.

4. Matters Arising: Edinburgh in Bloom: JMcK said that due to an administrative error the closing date for entries will have to be put back to 27th June. This will not affect the judging timetable. It was **AGREED** that the opportunity be taken to encourage members to consider entering if they have not already. **ACTION - EW** to write to all representatives.

Constitution: It was **AGREED** that SAGS be nominated as an appropriate body to hold FEDAGA's assets for a 12 month period after a decision on dissolution is taken. **ACTION - PW** to provide draft.

4. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: EW circulated a report detailing all significant items of correspondence. He had attended the West Mains AGM which had gone off well. **BB** noted he had not received the address of their Treasurer. **EW** will arrange for this to be done. **ACTION - EW. WA** had been in touch reporting flooding at Carrick Knowe, despite the construction of a soil bund. The Southside Community Centre AGM will take place at 6.30pm on 24th June. It was **AGREED** to continue associated membership. **ME** said the venue would not be available in August and September. It was **AGREED** to hold the meetings on 5th August and 2nd September at Midmar and Inverleith, respectively.

Newsletter and Website: Due to **CF**'s work commitments no Newsletter has been issued. **EW** had issued a stop-gap edition to maintain momentum and address the enquiries from members who were missing it. **SMcK** volunteered to assist Maggie Sinclair in producing a June edition. **ACTION - SMcK.**

Treasurer's Report: BB said that the balance on 1st April was £4303.01. Expenses are £9.18 (stationery) and £164.55 (Warriston members' meeting). Income is £15 (Site fees) and £9.63 (bond interest). The balance on 1st June is £4163.51. Consideration will have to be given to the savings bond, currently with the Co-operative Bank on a high interest 3 year deal which is about to expire. **ACTION - BB.** It was **AGREED** that **PG** be nominated to succeed **BB** as Treasurer at the AGM.

Trading Report: SMcK handed over the float and takings from the last two weeks' trading at the Shop. The Kings Seeds Trading Scheme has continued to be successful, growing by around 20% to £3389 sales last year. He has the figures which will enable him to calculate the payments to site associations based on members' participation. The total sum involved is £338.90, being 10% of the sales. **ACTION - SMcK.**

Site Reports: ME reported on another flash flood at Lady Road. The flooding reached two feet high and again deposited sewerage upon the site. **PW** had calculated 5 years ago that a wall able to channel the floods through the site would cost around £30K. This is clearly outwith the ability of the allotment budget or ploholders to pay for. He maintained that as

Scottish Water and the Council are responsible they should be pressed to pay for an adequate solution.

LG praised the quality of the work done to shore up a path on a steeply sloping part of the Midmar site. However, the materials for this relatively short stretch cost around £800 and to properly address the problem 3 or 4 similarly sized improvements are required. **GC** noted that the problem is caused by poor cultivation practice on the part of ploholders. He suggested that to tackle the erosion the whole area should be closed over winter for remedial work to be done. This would require the agreement of the ploholders concerned. He also recommended that site associations should be more actively involved when the Council is entering into a contract as they may have members who can provide relevant expertise to assist **IW**.

NMcC asked for advice on how to use the composting toilet. She was told that the toilets were not fit for purpose, being designed for a family of 6. The only ones known to still be functional are at Craigentenny, Restalrig and Midmar where there is a dedicated member who takes responsibility for cleaning and managing the facility. Most sites are not fortunate enough to possess such a saintly individual in their midst. **NMcC** said the Claremont Park toilet was on the verge of being closed. **RH** suggested that the toilet apparatus can be removed freeing up the building for another use. **SMcK** said the Inverleith toilet building is now a tool store.

SMcK reported on action to eradicate rabbits at Inverleith. He also said that Inverleith will feature on the judges' tour for Entente Florale. He will use this as an opportunity to try to get the entrance path improved. **ACTION - SMcK**.

Strategy Report: There has been no meeting.

SAGS Report: **PW** said the SAGS allotment conference and AGM on 21st June will be addressed by journalist and broadcaster Lesley Riddoch.

6. Any Other Business: **ME** told of proposals for a private allotment site at East Suffolk Road, on the former St. Margaret's School playing field. The site is owned by Miller's but planning permission for housing has so far been refused. There is a proposal that Miller's be approached to enter into an agreement allowing for a temporary site to be created. **SMcK** said the Grove Community Garden at Fountainbridge is thriving and being expanded. The East Suffolk Road scheme could be informed by the experience of the Grove. **ME** will speak to the Grange/Prestonfield Community Council on the matter. **ACTION - ME**.

7. Date of Next Meeting: 1st July.