



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## ***Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting (via Zoom), 7pm, 8th September 2020***

**Present:** Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) President, Inverleith; Liz Grace (**LG**) Secretary, Midmar; Dave Roberts (**DR**) Treasurer, Craightinny Telferton; Jan Bradbury (**JB**) Saughton Mains; John Grace (**JG**) Midmar; Alison Hewitt (**AH**) Warriston; Neiria MacClure (**NMacC**) Claremont Park; John Nisbett (**JN**) Craightinny Telferton; Ernie Watt (**EW**) Cambridge Avenue; Margaret Williamson (**MW**) Stenhouse; Peter Wright (**PW**) Lady Road; Observers: Pamela McKay (**PMcK**) Lethem Park; Heather MacPherson (**HMacP**) Northfield; Jane Robinson (**JR**) West Mains; Stewart Swarbrick (**SS**) Ferry Road; Ursula Wright (**UW**) Portobello East Junction.

- 1. Apologies:** Alice Bain (**AB**) Warriston; Yvonne Dawe (**YD**) Saughton Mains.
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the 14th July meeting were proposed by **NMacC** and seconded by **AH**.
- 3. Matters Arising:** **SMcK** said that after being alerted to the value of a prize cup it has now been identified. No further action is required. **DR** reported that FEDAGA membership of the Tool Library is not cost effective. It was **AGREED** to drop this proposal.
- 4. Site Reports:** **EW** reported that once again scaffolding is erected partially on a plot at **Cambridge Avenue** for roof work on an adjoining property. This time the scaffolders have been more pleasant, even offering a bottle of wine to the affected plotholder as compensation. This has helped greatly to dampen annoyance. The apple press is required to deal with a great many apples on a plot that is no longer properly managed.  
  
**SS** reported on produce thefts continuing at **Ferry Road**. He had a report from one of the plotholders that their plum tree had been stripped bare, a branch broken and a footprint beside. Gooseberries were taken earlier in the season. It has been suggested that there's a Rogue Jam Maker on the prowl, with a taste for more "exotic" flavours. A van was hired and volunteers cleared one full van load of rubbish to the dump, and another full van load of scrap metal to Dalton's. These piles had been accumulating through lockdown. Plotholders were very patient, tolerating it until it could get shifted. The next bulk compost buy for plotholders is being arranged. The scheme was cancelled in the Spring as the suppliers were swamped with orders. Plotholders can get a form in the site shed or via email; details on site noticeboards.  
First Aid Kits to the rescue: one sliced finger with secateurs, and a forehead gash from a gate springing back. Both injured parties grateful for the gloves and plasters in the kits.  
  
**PW** said the **Lady Road** AGM is postponed till September 2021. The Committee and Executive will remain in post for a further year.

An “Armageddon Flood” of water and sewerage hit the site two weeks ago. Water flooded parts of the site which had never seen flooding in living memory. Ian Woolard is arranging a skip to remove the mountain of debris taken out of the grillage and burn. Some plot holders very dis-spirited as no change in the flooding scenario can be expected from the Council, Scottish Water, or SEPA. A scheme to minimise the effects, cost c£300k, has been proposed but as it will funnel the water onto the road outside the site funding is not anticipated.

**HMacP** reported there is still no mains water supply at **Northfield** and this has been chased up again. Also, no further news about the building development.

**AH** said there was a recent burst water pipe underground at **Warriston** which is being fixed, and has meant the water is off across a section of the site. Plot holders seem happy with bonfire arrangements.

**JR** said it has been a quiet summer at **West Mains** with no organised socials or Open Day due to Covid-19, and no possibility of gathering for the AGM next month (though have a plan B for how to conduct the necessary business – see below). The cabin is still out of bounds and Scottish Government guidance on distancing and hygiene is promoted.

The resident foxes have been active this summer, with cubs on site. While great for keeping rodents at bay, it is less pleasant for people to have their onion and potato beds used as cub playgrounds and the discarded contents of rubbish bags from nearby houses dumped on plots.

There have been a couple of reports of theft of gooseberries (at least one of which could not have been the foxes as the bushes were caged).

On a more positive note a very kind plotholder has been servicing the water taps and reinstating standard connectors. The committee is now trying to ensure people use the correct connectors on their hoses to stop leaking water damaging the path and adjacent plots.

The AGM ‘Plan B’ is to cover the AGM business in a sequence of steps through the month of October. People will get the minutes and annual reports via noticeboards and emails and have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments just as they would in a ‘normal’ AGM. They will be able to vote and elect a new committee via a ballot box outside the cabin and in Doodle polls. The aim is to give everyone the same opportunity to participate as a physical AGM would have done and to be able to publish a report at the end as a stand-in for the usual minute in the hope of holding a normal AGM in 2021.

**5. President’s Report:** **SMcK** gave an account of the recent Allotment Strategy meeting between FEDAGA (**SMcK**, **LG**, **DR** and **EW**) and Council officials Bob McAllister and Ian Woolard. The main topic is the Rules and Regulations. The consultation is complete with positive scores in all areas, however additional comments need working through to ensure all those relevant are considered before continuing. Bob McAllister will send out a condensed list of comments for all to review prior to consolidation into a final version. It was **AGREED** that the latest version be circulated to site reps to keep them in the loop. **JR** said she had been requested to ask that the final version is approved by the full FEDAGA committee. **PW** noted that the process should not be delayed further on our account as it has already been nearly a decade since the process started and it has still

to go before the Council and Scottish Government. While there are no current regulations in force it is difficult to address problems on sites. It was further **AGREED** a time limit be set on the site rep consultation. **ACTION - LG.**

The Strategy meeting had agreed the bonfire ban should run during the summer from 1st May to 30th September. This was accepted with the proviso that barbeques be allowed as they don't cause as much smoke.

Other items discussed:

Subscriptions will be paid by the Council to FEDAGA before the end of April in future.

Allotment spending will be circulated to interested parties by the Council.

Rent may be reformulated so that ongoing costs are better accounted for. In future there may be two components: (a) rental and (b) administration charge, which could make bills for half plots more than 50% of those for full plots.

Communication from FEDAGA to members has been enhanced using the Council's data. It is hoped that in future site associations will be able to use this database for communicating directly with their members. This will have to be approved by the Council first.

The waiting list has increased 8-fold during the lockdown, now standing at 3300.

Woodchip from a private contractor is periodically delivered to Inverleith, Warriston and Saughton Mains. Midmar and Bridgend may be added to this list. **UW** requested that Portobello East Junction also be considered. She was advised to contact Ian Woolard directly.

First Aid Kits not already distributed will be provided to the remaining sites promptly.

**SMcK** also reported that the Covid Memories project has received 31 stories which are on the FEDAGA website. It was **AGREED** to keep this open for a while longer. There was a general discussion over how best to promote this material, either in a booklet form or via social media. It was further **AGREED** to carry contributions in the next Newsletter. **ACTION - EW.**

**6. Secretary's Report: LG** said the AGM is cancelled due to the impossibility of adhering to Covid-19 regulations. The committee considered what could be done to best satisfy the constitution. Most importantly, office bearers and committee members should be elected, the President's Annual Report should be circulated and the Annual Accounts should be examined and published. It was **AGREED** that all office bearers and committee members who have indicated their willingness to remain in position should continue in post, apart from Brian Bleakley who has not yet responded to enquiries. There were no objections to proceeding this way. There was a discussion on how to fill the Trading Secretary role should Brian Bleakley not wish to continue. **AH** indicated if Brian Bleakley was not willing to continue she may take this on if she received sufficient training and support.

The necessary reports will be published in the Newsletter and on the website. **ACTION - SMcK, DR and EW. LG** will issue nomination forms and explained that they do not have to be physically posted back but can be responded to via e-mail. The deadline is 30th September. **ACTION - LG.**

**PW** said that for future years the word "normally" should be inserted where appropriate as these are not normal times and will allow for the constitution to cover extraordinary

circumstances where physical meetings are not possible. **LG** pointed out that an EGM will be required to adopt this.

**7. Treasurer's Report:** **DR** said the balance stands at £12,598.03 after deducting £170.55 owed to sites with no banking arrangements. Once again, alternative arrangements will have to be resorted to for these funds to be returned to members. He said that so far there have been no applications to the Small Grants Scheme, but there are a further 3 weeks to go before the deadline.

**8. Other Reports: Maintenance:** **NMacC** said that she had met with Ian Woolard recently. She will circulate a spreadsheet showing the current situation. **ACTION - NMacC.** Ian Woolard will attend next month's meeting.

**Planning:** **AH** said there were no relevant applications to report.

**Trading:** With Brian Bleakley not attending meetings or indicating further interest the position of the Trading Secretary will need to be addressed urgently. **LG** will again try to contact him. **ACTION - LG.**

**Virtual Show:** **JG** reported that there were 94 entries from 38 competitors (11 males, 25 females, 2 couples). This is quite a good response considering the experimental nature of it and the reduced number of classes. The judging process is now in hand.

Certificates will be prepared for the lucky winners. It was **AGREED** to buy a £30 voucher as a mark of gratitude to the judge as travelling expenses are no longer required.

**ACTION - DR.** There will be a full report in the Newsletter and the website. **ACTION - EW.**

There was a discussion about possible venues and future formats for the Show. It is too soon to make any sort of plans given the pandemic but it is possible that in the future the Show will have a higher profile and be staged as part of the national food growing strategy.

**9. Any Other Business:** **JB** asked about AGM arrangements for site associations.

**SMcK** said Inverleith had conducted arrangements in May for their AGM similar to what FEDAGA are proposing which allows for accounts to be examined and office bearers and the committee remaining in service for another year. There were no complaints about this approach. **PW** said the same is happening at Lady Road. There is an assumption "normality" will prevail next year. There have been no objections and some have commented approvingly. **JB** said that no arrangements to cover the situation have yet been instigated at Saughton Mains, but so far there have been no complaints.

**10. Date of Next Meeting:** 13th October via Zoom. Participants will be e-mailed the link by **DR** prior to the meeting.