



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

FEDAGA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00pm on Tuesday 22 October 2019 at Southside Community Centre

Present : Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) President ; Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Craigentinny; Telferton) (Treasurer); Ernie Watt(**EW**) (Cambridge Ave) (Newsletter); Elizabeth Grace (**EG**) (Secretary); John Grace (**JG**) (Allotment Show); Maureen Edwards(**ME**) (Lady Road); Paul Kerr (**PK**) (Redhall) (Minutes); Alison Hewitt (**AH**)(Warriston); Neiria McClure (**NMcC**) (Claremont Park); Jane Robinson (**JR**) (West Mains); David Morrice (**DM**) (Restalrig);Chris Hughes (Warriston); Diana Hughes (Warriston) ;Isla Browning(Stenhouse) ; Stuart Swarbrick (Ferry Road); John Barclay (Pilrig) ; Iain Watt (Bridgend) ; Jack Booth (Carrick Knowe); Gill Young (Ferry Road) ; Donald Sturish (Saughton Mains) ; Edward Irvine (Saughton Mains); Gilbert Clark (**GC**) Midmar; Kathleen White (Duddingston Garden) ; Antonia Reeve (Stenhouse) ; Heather MacPherson (Northfield); Edith Wilson (Stenhouse); Ursula Wright (PEJAA) ; Alan Wilson (Stenhouse); Alice Bain (**AB**)(Warriston); Jackie Finlayson (Baronscourt); Angela Barr (Baronscourt); Chris McKinnell (Lady Road);

1. Apologies: Pamela McKie (Letham Park)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous AGM held on Tuesday 23 October 2018 had been circulated and were approved . Proposed by **EW** and seconded by **DR**.

3. Matters Arising – None

4.President's Annual Review (SMcK) Another year gone by. I do hope the Federation continues to both help improve your site and also make allotmenting more enjoyable for you.

Gilbert Clark who many of you will know is stepping down from the FEDAGA Committee this year. Gilbert is a living legend who at the age of 97 has been growing his own vegetables for an incredible eighty years. Gilbert was involved in the beginning of the Federation of Edinburgh Allotment and Garden Associations(FEDAGA) and helped to develop the Edinburgh Allotment strategy .He's scaled back his growing a bit over the years but still has enough produce left over to run a stall at the church of St Columba's by the Castle. Christian Aid has benefitted from the stall which has been a feature for the last 25 years.

Given the time and effort he has spent working on the plot for charity and off the plot for SAGS and FEDAGA , it is no wonder that Gilbert was awarded his MBE in 2001 for services to the allotment community. Gilbert, thank you for your contributions over the years.

We've held our monthly Management Meetings here at the Southside Community Centre all year. The meetings have been well attended and feel worthwhile to discuss issues that sites are having together with liaison with the Council Allotment Service. Thanks are due to the Community Centre for setting out the room and keeping the costs to a reasonable level. We seem to be able to finish meetings before 8.45pm these days, just as well because we'd get thrown out otherwise. Even bigger thanks are due to our Management Committee. A fine set of individuals all very knowledgeable and keen to improve their own sites to make the allotment experience better for everyone. Thanks to you all on behalf of the ploholders of Edinburgh. A special thank you to Paul who incredibly deciphers our meetings into meaningful minutes.

Our relationship with the Allotment Service is good. Ian Woolard now attends a couple of meetings a year which he manages to work around his golf.

Of course, we are supported by our membership. We've not known who you are in the past but that should change soon. We've convinced the Council that by changing the wording on the annual bill they are permitted to pass on details of who pays their membership of the Federation. We will then be able to email the membership with useful information in our newsletter and make sure everyone can keep up to date with what is going on in your Federation.

Even better, if we do this right, we could also offer a service to send out site-specific newsletters to our members. At last – both the Federation and sites can keep in touch with ploholders.

The Council allotment service have been taken up with evaluating what they need to do to implement the Scottish Government Community Empowerment Act. This has prompted a full review of the waiting lists in Edinburgh. More later on.

Our committee meetings continue to align our meeting agenda to our constitution. As I've said before, our constitution has quite simple objectives:

The co-ordination of Allotment Associations, the protection of their interests and the improvement of their conditions.

So, the first thing we discuss is site reports. What problems are being encountered, can we help, are there precedents? Anyone gets a say, but most importantly there is time to try to seek resolutions.

One site I should report on is Northfield. You'll remember they have had to bring water in containers as their water was never connected to the mains supply. The good news is we've helped them raise this with the Council who will make the important connection. Hurrah! The issue now is when? Ian Woolard hopes 'in the spring'.

A new site has been created by the Boys Brigade at Letham Park. I'm delighted to welcome 79 new ploholders there into FEDAGA.

Liz Grace, Jane Robinson and Alan Gordon have been busy co-ordinating with the Scottish Ambulance Service to ensure they have location details for all sites in Edinburgh. This was prompted by a long delay to a ploholder who fell ill and the ambulance wasted time finding the site entrance. We are relying on site representatives to check their own site details. Please look out

for emails asking for validated information. Thanks go to Liz, Jane and Alan for this important document.

On a similar topic we've realized that sites may not even have any basic first aid equipment, there's also a good chance it is out of date anyway. Thanks to Dave; our treasurer, we have been able to purchase reduced price kits from the St Andrews Ambulance service and will distribute them to site reps later in the meeting. But let's hope you don't need them.

I recall the newsletter headline 'Treasurer Tries To Give Away Cash'. This was an appeal to sites to pass on details of bank accounts so we could pay site subscriptions and any seed commission outstanding. Some did come forward but some remain without a formal committee, constitution and therefore no bank account. More thanks to Dave for organising a huge order of compost which was delivered around these sites and thereby returned value to plotters. He even negotiated an extra 10% of compost for the sites - and no delivery charges.

Our constitution continues -

To stimulate interest in and to encourage a commitment towards horticulture in allotments

We secured funding from the Scottish Community Alliance and ran a study trip to Killandean Community Allotments in Livingston. Just one Councillor took up the invitation but many of our members filled the minibus and enjoyed hearing how the site had been funded, created and now, run.

I've made a submission to the Health and Sport Committee in the Scottish Government on the 'Social prescribing of physical activity and sport inquiry'. I simply defined all the health benefits of allotments and how we should be investing more money in their creation and therefore improving the nation's health. Doesn't the NHS benefit most from a healthy population? So why don't they fund allotments? We shall see!

Mairi Gougeon; the Scottish Government minister for 'Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment' visited Inverleith Allotments along with Ian Welsh; the SAGS President. We had a walk round in some late summer sunshine and Mairi left with a better understanding of some the issues we face regarding allotment provision and upkeep. We hope the meeting will be the first of many and also raise the importance of allotments.

I'm delighted at the popularity of the SASA (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture) 'landrace' potato trials we've been involved with. This continued for the fifth time this year and hopefully a sixth next year. Reports of how these potatoes grew and tasted range from 'never again' to 'the best potato I ever tasted'. Look out for announcements in the newsletter. Speaking of which; we do owe a great deal of thanks to Ernie who looks after website and newsletters. He does a great job in pulling together items into what is essential reading. I look forward to extending the circulation to all plotters next year.

The Allotment Show was again a resounding success. We did have a few problems to solve but again filled a large hall full of excellent examples of our produce and many of you turned out to visit to have a chat and meet old pals. I know John will be presenting his report later so I'll leave it at that, suffice to say a huge vote of thanks to him and his team of helpers.

Finally, on the stimulating interest topic – we again made it to the Dundee Flower Show on our own coach. Thanks are due to Muriel Horsburgh for organizing the trip and again provided a horticultural quiz on the bus which I won!

Muriel is currently enjoying herself on a cruise but she did say she would run it again next year when Dundee includes the National Vegetable Society's own show. If you've never experienced how perfect, large and long vegetables can be then I'd really recommend it. Look out for newsletter announcements.

Finally, our constitution has as its last objective -

To purchase, on a co-operative basis, supplies for the use of the members of the Federation

I hope everyone takes advantage of our seed scheme which is generously provided by Kings Seeds. This year we made orders valued at almost £7,000. Our ploholders only paid 55% of that and another 10% was returned to sites as an additional commission. Please encourage all your members to take part – it's a very worthwhile offer.

On top of this, we also order a pallet load of seed potatoes and onions from Kings. Again, it's generally a 50% savings over buying them from the DIY stores or online. The deadline for orders has passed last week – I hope you all got your orders in. The deadline was early this year to let Brian away on his holidays. Thank you Brian.

Another thank you to all the volunteers, especially Willie Aitken, that unloaded the pallet, sorted potatoes and bagged up onions. It really was an incredible effort that was rewarded in saving to you and commissions to site funds.

As I mentioned earlier, FEDAGA helps Edinburgh Council define and implement its Allotment Strategy. Our role is of experienced consultants helping the Council fulfil its obligations to provide more allotments, manage them, improve the experience for ploholders.

A full review of the current waiting list across Edinburgh has been completed. The list started as about 3,000. It now stands at around 1,400. About a third of these people want a full plot, the majority would be happy with a half plot or raised bed. That was the good news...there is now an online form to allow people to be added to the waiting lists. Currently 25 applications a week are arriving so the waiting list is growing quickly once more.

The survey also asked whether people waiting would be prepared to get involved in creating their own new site. 500 said they would. This may be about to happen at Lismore playing fields. We hope this will be the first of many more sites created by the surrounding community. The latest news isn't promising as we've been told that legal issues remain with land classified as 'common good' becoming allotments. We need to help the Allotment Service find a way through the red tape without spending thousands on legal fees.

Comment received from the floor that allotments are sometimes prescribed in England as being good for mental health.

The strategy group are also keen to finally get new allotment regulations agreed and passed by the Council and Scottish Government. And after nine years working on them who wouldn't be?!

That's all I have to say. 2019 has been another good year for both growing crops and

bringing together the plotholders of Edinburgh. I look forward to 2020 and continuing to enjoy allotmenting with you all.

5. Treasurer's report (DR)

DR thanked **NMcC** and **JG** for checking the FEDAGA annual statement of accounts.

A statement of the accounts had previously been circulated.

Total Income - £12,122.97

Total Assets- £13,406.88

DR advise any site reps present at the meeting to take a free first aid Kit to be delivered to their respective sites for communal use.

A question was received from the floor on the availability and cost of First Aid courses. Another attendee commented that that a persons employer may pay for them to attend basic first aid training.

DR commented that he would look into the viability of a basic first aid training course for a larger group of interested people.

6. Annual Show Report (JG)

There was a good turn out again for this year's allotment show (see appendices for detailed show report).

There were a total of 51 exhibitors and 320 entries from 18 allotment sites. (17 last year). Most exhibits came from Stenhouse, Lady Road, Ferry Road and Restalrig. There were 16 male and 30 female exhibitors.

171 of the exhibits were vegetables

38 of the exhibits were fruit

55 of the exhibits were plot to plate

8 exhibits were in the children's section

48 of the exhibits were flowers

This year all of the children entering exhibits were awarded a medal.

Unfortunately the Café was out of use this year which meant that the catering facilities were limited to tea, coffee and biscuits.

There was a good display of heritage potatoes grown from varieties provided by SASA.

The tomato tasting table also proved to be very popular.

There was a good selection of poetry submitted this year and some of this will be published in the forthcoming FEDAGA Newsletter.

This year Councillor George Gordon, who chairs Edible Edinburgh gave out the prizes to winning entrants.

The main cost of the FEDAGA show is the hall hire and the cost of the hall hire this year was £1,108 which is significantly higher than last year. The Treasurer (DR) is currently looking into this matter.

Another major cost is the cost of engraving the trophies.

Next year we are looking at working with Edible Edinburgh to present the allotment show and the Council could potentially host the event to promote healthier eating.

A question was received from the Floor(ME) regarding the small number of schedules printed off for the show and the cost to allotmenters to print of their own schedules. JG confirmed that for cost reasons a limited number of schedules was printed off and some sent to each allotment site rep.

Another attendee commented that they were in agreement with the small print run and that the best form of communication was by 'word of mouth'.

EW commented that the allotment show had stopped for 3 years because it was not viable and one of the main costs was the cost of printing the schedule.

Another suggestion was made from the floor that the pages of the show schedule could be displayed on site notice boards and people could take photos on their phones. Another comment was received from the floor that the schedule should be accessible for all.

DR commented that site reps could be asked in future how many copies of the show schedule they needed for those not able to print their own. The Chair (**SMcK**) concluded that more copies wouldn't be printed on cost and environmental grounds but was sympathetic to the idea of getting the schedule out earlier at sowing time.

The show secretary (JG) commented that the success of the show is the result of excellent teamwork by a willing Committee: Neiria McClure, Alison Hewitt, Ernie Watt, Alice Bain, Dave Roberts, Peter Wright, Paul Kerr, Rosina Weightman, Maureen Edwards, Stuart McKenzie and thanked them all.

7. Secretary's Report (EG)

Of thirty two nominations forms sent out only thirteen were returned.

8. Election of Management Committee

Nominations were received from the following sites?

The nominations for office bearers were as follows:

President- Stuart Mckenzie (nominated by)

Treasurer – Dave Roberts (nominated by.....)

Secretary - Liz Grace (nominated by)

Show Secretary – John Grace (nominated by)

Committee Members (nominated by)

Maureen Edwards; Neiria McClure; Peter Wright; Alison Hewitt ; Ernie Watt; Paul Kerr; Alice Bain; John Nisbet ; Janet Bradbury; Margaret Williams

Rosina Weightman - resigned and Janet Bradbury nominated in her place

Gilbert Clark - resigning

Margaret Williams - nominated from the floor

All proposed by? And seconded by?

Accordingly the Management Committee comprising of the following was duly elected :

President- Stuart McKenzie

Treasurer – Dave Roberts

Secretary – Liz Grace

Show Secretary – John Grace

Trading secretary- Brian Bleakley ?

Maureen Edwards; Neiria McClure; Peter Wright; Alison Hewitt ; Ernie Watt; Paul Kerr; Alice Bain; John Nisbet ; Janet Bradbury; Margaret Williams

Everyone nominated for a post on the Committee was voted onto the committee.

9. AOCB

There was a question from the floor enquiring how a site could send a newsletter to all of its site members. **SMcK** replied that FEDAGA may be able to use its database to facilitate this. **GC** enquired who the elected Councillor responsible for allotments was. **SMcK** replied that this was Councillor Leslie McKinness. However she had not attended any allotment meetings this year. Councillor George Gordon is interested in allotment site issues. A representative from Barons Court allotments commented that they have discovered that the bottom part of their site is liable to flooding and four plots are affected. **SMcK** advised that the Council Allotments Officer, Ian Woolard should be contacted regarding this issue.

10. Date of next AGM

Tuesday 20 October 2020

Appendices:

Allotment Show Report

FEDAGA Vegetable and Flower Show 2019

The 2019 show was held on Saturday 14th September in the Methodist Church Hall, one week later than last year (which was itself one week later than 'usual'). The later date was used to avoid a clash with the Dundee Flower and Food Festival.

The show succeeded in its aim of bringing together the Edinburgh allotment community. The show was publicized to Site Representatives, by posters, and via email distribution to plot-holders by Ian Woolard (Edinburgh City Council).

	2012	2016	2017	2018	2019
Exhibitors	43	26	66	65	51
Entries	343	162	354	464	320

Entries were submitted from 18 sites (17 last year), the most exhibitors coming from Stenhouse (6) with significant numbers coming from Lady Road (5), Ferry Road (4) and Restalrig (4). An analysis of the gender-balance of competitors showed that 16 were male and 30 were female, with a few entries coming from male + female partners and those of unknown gender.

category	2018	2019
Flowers	50	48
Vegetables	253	171
Fruit	73	38
Plot to Plate	75	55
Children's section	13	8

Trends in the classes from last year

We made no changes to classes. Entries were dominated by the vegetable classes, as ever. Last year (2018) was an excellent summer for plant growth and that may account for the high number of entries

in that year, but the lower number of entries this year occurs not just in vegetables, flowers and fruit, but also in plot to plate and in the Children's section. Possibly the publicity was less effective.

Support from the staff of the Methodist Hall

There were unexpected difficulties in the run-up to the Show. There had been a misunderstanding, and the wrong hall had been booked by the Methodist staff; moreover, the café was being refurbished and therefore was unavailable. To provide basic refreshments, we ran a self-help facility in the café room, and our judges were taken to the nearby café Elephants and Bagels. On the day, the Hall staff supported us well, helping with the assembly and dismantling of the tables and providing the sound system.

Other events

We were fortunate to be joined once more by Mark Hocart, Dean of the Edinburgh Centre of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), and an expert on plant diseases, who was on hand to give advice to gardeners. We exhibited SASA Heritage Potatoes, plot-holders' poems and ran tomato-tasting. Poems will be published in the FEDAGA Newsletter.

Thanks to the judges

The judges (Jim Mercer, vegetables; Eleanor Marshall, plot to plate) discharged their duties admirably, managing to complete the judging in the short time available. Both are keen to judge next year.

Support from the Edinburgh Council

Prizes were awarded by Councillor George Gordon, Chair of Edible Edinburgh. Afterwards he made encouraging remarks about Edinburgh allotments, and indicated his willingness to help us where necessary regarding Council matters. We are following up this contact.

Costs (pending)

Entry to the Hall was free to all and no charge was made for competing. The overall cost to FEDAGA was £1108 which is equivalent to £21.72 per entrant and £3.46 per exhibit. The largest items of expenditure were engraving of the trophies (£240.30) and hire of the hall (£368). See appendix for breakdown of costs.

Possible dates of next year's show

To be decided. (If we are to avoid a clash with the Dundee Flower and Food Festival, we should avoid September 5th)

Thanks

It was my third year as Show Secretary. The success of the show is the result of excellent teamwork by a willing Committee: Neiria McClure, Alison Hewitt, Ernie Watt, Alice Bain, Dave Roberts, Peter Wright, Paul Kerr, Rosina Weightman, Maureen Edwards, Stuart McKenzie. I thank them all.

John Grace, October 2019

Appendix 1, Prizewinners

	CLASS	TROPHY	HOLDER	SITE
1	Roses Classes 1 and 2	Evening News Trophy	Sandy Corlett	Midmar
2	Dahlias Classes 3 to 6	Andrew Judge Memorial Cup	Muriel Horsburgh	Lady Road
3	Gladioli Classes 9 and 10	St. Vincent Cup (2)	I& M Ferguson	Inverleith
4	Sweet Peas Class 11	Bill Nicol Memorial Trophy	Muriel Horsburgh	Lady Road
5	Flowers Classes 1 to 12	St. Vincent Cup (1)	Alice Bain	Warriston
7	Onions Classes 109 to 113	Murphy Cup	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
8	Best Onion Classes 109 to 113	William Nicol Cup	Janet Martindale	Claremont
9	Potatoes Classes 126 to 129	Garden News Shield	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
10	Vegetables Classes 100 to 137	St. Vincent Cup (3)	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
11	Site Vegetable Collection Class 201	GM Stuart Memorial Cup 1 st £25, 2 nd £10 3 rd £5	Restalrig	Restalrig
12	Best Veg. Coll. Class 200	Horsburgh Trophy	Not awarded	
13	Salad Collection Class 203	Salad Bowl	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
14	Best Veg. Classes 100 to 13	Nat. Veg. Society Medal	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
19	Best Organic Veg. Exhibit. Best Classes 100 to 137	Robin Harper Green Cup	Brian Horsburgh	Lady Road
20	Fruit Classes 400 to 406	Lady Road Fruit Bowl	Morag Black	Inverleith
21	Plot to Plate - Classes 500 to 508	St. Vincent Plate	G Wright	Lady Road

22	Children's Exhibit Classes 600 to 608	Watson Junior Trophy	Summerside Kindergarten	Warriston
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Appendix 2. Costs (subject to revision)

item	cost
stickers	19.90
	17.91
schedules	15.00
JG costs	83.20
engraving	206.40
	13.11
	20.80
judges	80.00
tables	159.60
refreshments	9.50
insurance	75.00
Hall	368.00
stewards	40.00
Total	1108.42