



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## ***Management Committee Meeting***

***7.15pm on 12th April 2016 at Southside Community Centre***

**Present:** Committee: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) (Treasurer) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Jon Gray - Warriston (**JG**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**); Observers: Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) : Alison Hewitt - Warriston (**AH**) : Chris Hughes - Warriston (**CH**) : Diane Hughes - Warriston (**DH**).

**1. Apologies:** John McKinlay - Craigentenny (**JMcK**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**).

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The Minutes of the 8th March meeting were proposed by **DR** and seconded by **SMcK**.

**3. Matters Arising: Council Allotment Strategy - PW** said the meeting scheduled for today had been postponed to 26th April. The third Strategy document is still being developed. The rent rise will be imposed in invoices to be issued in January 2017. **PW** said he had heard through a site representative at Stenhouse that work had started to extend the site. Although this had been anticipated there was no mention of it at the most recent meeting.

**Collection of Subscriptions:** **EW** said there had been a poor response to the piece in the Newsletter with only 7 replies, mostly wanting things to remain as they are. Respondents at Cambridge Avenue also wanted no change. **ME** reported that Lady Road had discussed this and had agreed that if income is reduced then the discounts on trading should be cut to make up the difference. The work that will be caused by having to find out who has paid to be a Site Association and FEDAGA member will be considerable. **CH** said Warriston had met and decided that keeping the arrangement as it is would be best. **SMcK** said that people must have a choice to opt out from paying for membership if they did not want to be members. He questioned how dependent Site Associations and FEDAGA would be on the income that may be lost. It could be made up in other ways. He suggested that FEDAGA propose a statement to go in with the invoice that will strongly encourage allotment holders to opt in and pay their subscriptions.

**PW** said the Council's legal department has advised that they cannot continue to collect money on behalf of a third party without consent. He believed the legal department will advise on the wording for the invoice opt out statement. **DR** said it will be our job to make the case that it is in everyone's interest to remain a member and show that by participating in trading schemes they make their subscription money back many times over. **PK** and **JG** both said that they expect a proportion of allotment holders will not pay to remain members. **SMcK** believed the administration headache will primarily be for the Council. They will have to show what proportion of subscriptions has been paid for each site. He questioned how those who opt out can be excluded from benefits and asked why

bother do so? Income generated from trading schemes is helpful to associations regardless of whether it comes from members or non-members.

There was a discussion about the possibility of making the Council pay a grant in respect of the assistance Site Associations and FEDAGA make toward the management of allotments. The invoice for a full plot would rise to £106.50 with £2.50 returned to Site Associations and FEDAGA. There was consideration of the value of high rents for centralised management. The fact could not be ignored that although ploholders were unhappy about paying extra there was zero enthusiasm for shouldering the responsibilities of devolved management.

**PW** summarised the consensus. We leave the invoice as it is and accept the necessity of including an opt out. As this will cause administrative problems for the Council we could suggest an alternative: £2.50 on top of the rent which the Council returns to us in the form of a grant. **EW** suggested FEDAGA insist on the inclusion of a statement describing the benefits of membership to be included in every invoice to encourage members to make the correct decision.

**Telferton Planning Application - DR** said the crucial hearing takes place tomorrow (13th). The Head of Planning will recommend rejection of the application. He expects a good result, but the builders have spent about £150K on the application and will appeal.

**Allotment Show - AH** has sent 47 letters asking for donations and has had 2 offers so far. **DR** has had a quote for £78 to provide indemnity, which was **AGREED. ACTION - DR**. He pointed out that Site Associations will require to provide their own insurance if they stage any Open Days. The cost is likely to be similar. **EW** said he will provide a publicity poster. It was **AGREED** to print 100

full colour posters and have them distributed to all sites and also to local shops, libraries, etc. **ACTION - EW. AH** said we need traders to take stalls on the day. This will be publicised in the Newsletter and on the website. **ACTION - EW**

**Heritage Potatoes - SMcK** said there was a very good response and he would soon be taking possession of 60 different varieties of Heritage Potatoes from SASA which will be distributed to participants. Those signed up will be able to participate in a tour of SASA on 1st July. **ACTION - SMcK.**

**4. Allotment Officer** - Again, there was no Report from the Allotment Officer apart from a statement detailing new plots at Stenhouse and Lochend Square.

**Spending Priorities - EW** said **NMcC** had yet to receive requests from sites. **ME** and **CH** had lists from Lady Road and Warriston, which they will forward to **NMcC. ACTION - ME** and **CH. EW** will reissue the request to Site Associations so that this year's Spending Priorities can be drawn up. **ACTION - EW.**

**5. Consideration of Reports** - The **Secretary's Report** has been circulated. **GC** said that he had replied to SAGS about a request for information about Victor Webb in preparation for archival work.

A second **Newsletter** had been issued for March and the April edition was ready to go out tomorrow as soon as the planning decision on Telferton is known.

**ACTION - EW.** The **Website** has been updated with news of the Planning Hearing and new Links.

**Treasurer's Report - DR** said he had not received any new bank statements so no update can be issued. He has been able to send cheques for backdated remuneration to Dumbryden and Hutchison Loan. The paperwork detailing new

countersignatories for the bank has yet to be completed but should be finished this week. As soon as he has access he will apply for internet banking. **ACTION - DR.**

**Trading Report - SMcK** said all the remaining stock in the Shop had been sold. **DR** said the total trading profit was £253. There were numerous complaints about potato substitutions and the poor quality of the onions. **BB** said he had been given notice about 2 substitutions early on, but had not received notice of the others until just before the delivery was made. It was **AGREED** to try to find another supplier for both potatoes and onions. **ACTION - BB. SMcK** undertook to approach Kings. He will also request a breakdown of online seed orders by site. **ACTION - SMcK.**

**Site Reports - EW** had been advised by **JMcK** that the Allotment Officer had agreed to provide roofing felt for the Craigentenny communal hut roof for £100. The site association would install it. However, the account had been closed and he was unable to do so. He has now offered to have the roof recovered by a tradesman for £450. Representatives from Lady Road and Midmar said they had paid for their felt with their own funds and installed it themselves.

**WA** said a digger was recently on site at Carrick Knowe to deepen the trench by the soil bund. As no drainage had been installed it was uncertain how this was going to help prevent flooding during periods of heavy rain.

**CH** said half a dozen or so keen new ploholders had arrived at Warriston.

**GC** criticised the Strategy for new allotment provision. He noted the priority area is north Edinburgh and Leith as this is where there are most applications. He said

this is because people know there is good allotment provision in that area. There are fewer allotments in south Edinburgh so consequently fewer people bother to apply. He also said he considered the Waiting List to be unreliable as there is no indication of applicants' commitment to working a plot. **PW** said that the Allotment Officer contacts the top 200 or so applicants every year to ensure they are still interested in a plot when one comes up.

**SMcK** reported that the communal hut at Inverleith had been painted a fetching shade of arsenic green. Roofing felt for the composting toilet had been bought. Compost from the toilet had been spread. The rabbit population is entrenched, despite efforts to eradicate them. Various solutions from using ferrets to jacking up sheds to clear out the warrens underneath were explored. Also, he had been advised that continual trampling on the tree roots by the so-called "path" or quagmire by the gate will eventually kill the trees. Armed with this information, he will contact Friends of Inverleith Park in a further attempt to get a better entrance path.

**DR** said the Restalrig AGM had agreed to request a power supply to the site. The Trade Waste bins have not been emptied. Plotholders had been requested to leave their sheds open on a recent Wednesday to allow for fumigation to deal with rats to take place. The guy turned up on the Tuesday.

**ME** said the Trade Waste bins at Lady Road had not been emptied.

**BB** said the Midmar AGM takes place next month. Their rabbits have largely gone. There will be a work day to improve the communal hut. He had been advised reflecting would cost £2200 so it was decided to DIY. New Trade Waste

bins had been supplied despite having been told the service would cease this month.

**SAGS Report - PW** reminded the committee that FEDAGA still did not have a representative on the SAGS committee. **EW** had included a brief description in his Report of work being done on consequential developments affecting allotments arising from the Community Empowerment Act, specifically to do with asset transfers and abandoned land.

**6. Any Other Business - WA** noted that the promised tree pruning work, paid for 3 years ago, had still to be done. He had again raised this with the Allotment Officer. He said the decision to cancel the Trade Waste Bin service had been reversed and understood staffing problems were making the service unreliable at present, explaining the missed uplifts.

**JG** said that despite some unexpected tree pruning by the walkway at Warriston there remains an urgent need to deal with overgrown trees which are threatening to cause damage to a wall. The subsidence by the entrance continues to be allowed to deepen with the pavement giving way and the wall showing increasingly large cracks. These works are all outside the allotment and not the responsibility of the Allotment Officer.

**7. Date of Next Meeting - 10th May 2016.**