



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Management Committee Meeting
7.15pm on 6th January 2015 at Southside Community Centre***

Present: Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Stuart MacKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : John McKinlay - Craigtinny (**JMcK**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) : Jon Gray - Warriston (**JG**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**) : Rik Hart - Warriston (**RH**) : Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) (observer) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**) (observer).

1. Apologies: Patrick Gibb - West Mains (**PG**) Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Rosy Naylor - West Mains (**RN**) : Liz Grace - Midmar (**LG**) : Brian Bleakley - Midmar (**BB**) : Ian Woolard - City of Edinburgh Council Allotments Officer (**IW**)

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising: Rent Increase: **SMcK** said that the recent meeting with Donald Rennie, retired solicitor, had been very productive. **PW** explained the legal argument underpinning the letter Mr. Rennie had drafted. The upshot is that the present level of rent could be described as "fair" in terms of Allotment legislation. An increase of the order proposed would contravene legislation. There has been no reply to our letter.

SMcK said that the letter proposing alternative revenue generating ideas had received a cool response. This would be taken forward at future Strategy meetings.

GC suggested pressure should be brought to bear on councillors to reduce the wages of over-paid executives and senior managers, which would go a long way toward salvaging the Council's poor standing with the public and help to balance the budget.

SMcK said the decision on the budget is expected on 15th February.

Telferton: **DR** reported on a meeting he had attended with Council officials, including **IW**, and representatives from Gladedale Estates, owners of Bett Homes, concerning a proposal to amend the Local Development Plan to remove the greater part of Telferton allotments from land designated protected open space and develop it for residential use. The remaining part would be upgraded at Gladedale's expense. **GC** noted this proposal is similar to the Laing Trust's proposal for Field 3 at Midmar, which they want to develop for housing with a small area reserved for a new allotment site. The site committee at Telferton is not prepared to agree to the proposal.

SASA: **PW** said that he, **SMcK** and **IW** had attended a meeting with officials at the Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture premises to learn of their work and hear a proposal to involve members in research. A great many heritage varieties of potato are stored and grown by SASA and they have invited allotment holders to grow some of those not available on the market to see how well they performed. Over 40 have responded to the piece in December's Newsletter and the first trial will take place this year. **ACTION - SMcK.**

Apple Press: It was confirmed that **DR** will investigate the purchase of an apple press and masher with a budget of £300 in time for use in the autumn. **ACTION - DR.**

4. Allotment Officer's Report: **IW** has submitted a report. It includes news that the creation of a small allotment site on part of the bowling green at Victoria Park has been agreed. It should be ready for use by the end of March. **JG** said that due to security concerns a good fence will be required. The likely size of these plots was discussed. It is understood that they will likely be quarter sized plots of around 50 square metres as otherwise it will not be possible to fit the intended number of plots onto the land available. There was discussion on the rent applied for smaller plots. At last month's meeting - but not minuted - the proposal to levy a £25 minimum charge for "raised bed" plots was put forward and agreed to in principle by **IW**. David Jamieson, Head of Parks and Greenspace, has subsequently stated that this would be difficult to collect. **GC** said that FEDAGA's main concern should be that the quality of allotment plots is good. If they are given away cheaply then they will not be valued by the user and will be less likely to be looked after properly.

Spending Priorities: **IW** has reported that no further spending can now take place from the allotment budget. **DR** said that this was due to strict financial management of budgets and all spending for the Financial Year must be in train by the end of December. **IW** has proposed that the main path at Lady Road, which has been identified as in need of repair, should be lifted and completely resurfaced. It was **AGREED** that this should not happen as the cost, £3K, is too large. Money would be better spent on doing good quality "hot tar" patches to eliminate the trip hazard posed by potholes on the path. **DR** said that it is important that a consistency of approach is applied. The remedial path work at Findlay Avenue has still not happened, despite it being identified as a safety issue. This should be dealt with as urgently as the work at Lady Road. **PW** said that the repair work on the gate at Lady Road has still not been done and is now becoming urgent. **ACTION - DR** to liaise with **IW**.

DR said that there are other pressing concerns, such as the repeated vandal attacks on Saughton Mains. In the most recent incident another shed has been burned down. **RH** said that the problem at Saughton Mains should be looked at as a matter of priority. **PW** said that preventative measures should be looked at, such as motion sensitive spotlights and CCTV linked to the local police station.

RH said the vandalised fencing at Warriston has been repaired, but a 40 metre length elsewhere needs to be erected. This part of the site boundary has never been properly secured, with ploholders erecting barriers to the best of their abilities. **DR** said this should be placed on a wish list. **EW** will write to site representatives to ask for lists of items requiring consideration in this year's spending decisions. **ACTION - EW.**

5. Consideration of Reports: Secretary's Report: **EW** said the fruit tree offer had been very successful, with around £420-worth of trees ordered. It was **AGREED** that delivery should be made to Inverleith and purchasers will be contacted so they can uplift their trees from the FEDAGA Shop. **ACTION - EW** to liaise with **SMcK**.

An appeal from SAGS has been received for allotment records to be placed in an archive. **EW** holds some old FEDAGA papers which will be handed over and **GC** was asked if he would consent to providing documents. **ACTION - EW** and **GC**.

Website and Newsletter: **EW** said that an edition had been sent out in December and the January issue is being put together. The website has been edited to remove out of date news items.

Treasurer's Report: **PG** has supplied a report which is appended to these Minutes. He has notified the bank of the change of treasurer but has not received a reply. **BB** is continuing to receive statements which are being passed on. **EW** proposed that as the smaller sites noted as having no bank accounts - and therefore no financial transparency - were unlikely ever to address this an agreement be sought with representatives to purchase a worthwhile commodity on their behalf with the money being held in trust for them. This was **AGREED. ACTION - EW.**

Trading Report: **WA** has offered to weigh out and bag up the loose onion orders. As it will be necessary to do this prior to the arrival of the potatoes he will liaise with **BB** to arrange an earlier delivery to his home address. **ACTION - WA. BB** has reported that the delivery is scheduled for 21st February.

RH suggested a shop rota be decided upon. After discussion it was **AGREED** to concentrate sales on the two Sundays after delivery: 22nd February and 1st March. Thereafter remaining items will be sold by arrangement with the Inverleith association. **EW** and **NMcC** will attend on the 22nd and **WA** and **GC** on the 1st. **SMcK** will supply **WA** with paper bags for onion sets from the shop. **ACTION - SMcK.**

Site Reports: **EW** said that some ploholders at Cambridge Avenue had donated raised beds to the Sikh Sanjog Healthy Life group with **IW's** approval. This is a temporary arrangement until the group locate a longer term space. **DR** said that the potholes at Restalrig have been repaired but now rats have been noticed. He will inform **IW.** **RH** said the cracks in the wall at the entrance to Warriston were worsening and the pavement is collapsing. This is possibly due to a burst water pipe. This is clearly not within the remit of the allotment service and should be referred to councillors and possibly Scottish Water. **WA** said flooding persists at Carrick Knowe and enquired about raised beds. He will liaise with **SMcK** who can pass on the lessons learned from the installation of raised beds to combat flooding at Inverleith. **GC** noted that the woodchip delivered to Midmar disappears very quickly and so is much appreciated.

Strategy Report: **PW** has written to Council officials and senior councillors pointing out this forum has not met for a long while and should be reactivated as there is much to discuss.

SAGS Report: **PW** said he will not be standing for election to the SAGS committee this year. He hoped that a representative from FEDAGA would take his place to ensure good communications are maintained. **SMcK** is hosting a SAGS-sponsored visit by the Minister for Local Government and Community Empowerment, Marco Biaggi to Inverleith on 20th January. It was **AGREED** that, if time permits, he also visit Warriston. SAGS President Ian Welsh will also attend.

6. Any Other Business: **RH** said that he had heard of threats amongst some Warriston ploholders to withhold rent this year as they feel they will not be able to sustain the proposed increased demands if the budget proposals are adopted. **PW** said that non-payment should not be encouraged as this starts the eviction process, but it is lawful to make quarterly payments instead.

7. Date of Next Meeting: ME said that as the numbers attending had increased recently the capacity of the room has been stretched. She had made enquiries and a larger room is available, but only on the second Tuesday of the month. It was **AGREED** that future bookings should be for the larger room on the second Tuesday and if possible existing bookings will be rearranged. **ACTION - ME.** [ME has subsequently confirmed that this is possible and the date of the next meeting will be **Tuesday 10th February.**]

Summary of FEDAGA accounts 1 Aug 2014 - 31 Dec 2014

Bank Balance 1 Aug 2014 **£5,702.53**

Income to 24 Nov 2014		
Previous Bond Interest	£29.54	
Bond Interest November	£10.27	
Fee from Portobello	£51.00	
WCF potatoes Overpayment	£97.30	
Total		£188.11

Expenses paid to 24 Nov 2014		
SAGS fee	£75.00	
Treasurer Expenses	£22.94	
Site fees and commissions	£620.99	
SSC (South Side Centre)	£20.00	
Secretary expenses	£114.10	
BBQ	£225.90	
Total		£1,078.93

Bank Balance 24 Nov 2014 **£4,811.71**

Income expected to date of summary		
Bond Interest*	£8.99	
Total		£8.99

Expenses Committed but not yet Banked		
Third Prize	£25.00	
SSC membershipo x10	£50.00	
Site Cheques sent but not cashed		
Redhall	£122.67	
Past site fees due to sites with no bank accounts		
Dumbryen**	£179.70	
Findlay Ave	£37.00	
Hutchison Loan	£16.00	
Chesser	£27.65	
Total		£458.02

Cash available assuming all expenses are paid **£4,362.68**

Bond **£4,508.06**

Total Uncommitted Funds **£8,870.74**

Notes

* Bond income varies month-to-month from 8.99 to 10.60 per month

** This is based on Dumbryden having 40 plots due fees for 2012-14, plus £19.70 in commissions