



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Management Committee Meeting

7.15pm on 14th March 2017 at Southside Community Centre

Present: Committee: Dave Roberts - Craigentiny Telferton (**DR**) (Treasurer, Acting Chair) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Alison Hewitt - Warriston (**AH**) : Alice Bain - Warriston (**AB**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**) : Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**); Observers: Stuart Swarbrick - Ferry Road (**SS**) : Ian Woolard - Edinburgh Council Allotment Officer (**IW**).

1. Apologies: Stuart McKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) : John Grace - Midmar (**JG**) : Peter Wright - Lady Road (**PW**) : Rosina Weightman - Saughton Mains (**RW**) : Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**).

2. Actions from 14th February: **EW** reported on the Community Planning for People and Planet consultation he had participated in. It was notable that community food growing/allotments was one of the top three issues identified for action by participants along with housing and transport. A draft report will be issued in August followed by a consultation and final report by the end of the year. The findings will be fed in to influence Council policy. **AB** said that on checking up on the Lothian Pollinator Project she discovered that it appeared to have closed. She will pursue this with **SMcK**. **ACTION - AB**. **AB** also reported on the meeting she had with Masters students researching a northeast Edinburgh Community Food Hub. Their report will be presented to Parliament on 29th March.

3. Site Reports: **EW** said that gravel had been laid on the lane approaching Cambridge Avenue and the area now looked much better.

EW had received a site report from John McKinlay at Craigentiny. 2 small repairs suggested after a Police visit have been passed to **NMcC**. 3 new ploholders have arrived. A quantity of good quality compost has been purchased from Forth Resource Management and he commended this supplier to other sites as they give reductions for allotments of £25 per bulk bag if 2 or more are ordered.

EW reported on an accident at Inverleith where a Forest Craft van delivering a shed slipped off the path onto a plot causing some damage. It was fortunate that no-one was injured. It is understood that Forest Craft have quickly repaired the damage and done some improvement work on the plot to make amends.

EW said that West Mains have organised a seed and seedling swap for 14th May and an Open Day for 30th July. A working party to tidy the wildlife zone around the pond and the cabin area has been organised and plans for the AGM in the autumn are in hand.

SS said new ploholders have arrived at Ferry Road. He reported that the uplift of the trade waste bin has been erratic.

DR said Craigentenny Telferton had staged a "Pop Up Cafe" event in February attracting 120 people and promoting their intention to become a community orientated allotment site. Profits had been donated to Basics Bank, a charity running food banks for the homeless. There was a discussion about donating allotment produce to such enterprises.

IW said that he intends to attend FEDAGA meetings twice a year, in spring and autumn. Offers have gone out to tenants for the new site at Lochend Square. There are 12 small plots and 15 raised beds. A metal container is provided as there are no huts allowed here. With the addition of this site the total number of ploholders is now in excess of 1500. He will turn on the water supply across the city at the end of March. He has been able, due to the mild weather, to allocate new ploholders throughout the winter. He has been making enquiries of those on the waiting list and, with allocations and resignations, has been able to reduce the number to around 2400. The waiting time varies a great deal between sites with the shortest time being around 2 years at Stenhouse, Northfield and Dumbryden and the longest, 10 years, at Inverleith. The number of ploholders declining to pay their FEDAGA/Site Association subscriptions is small, around 30. Final demands for payment of invoices are out now so this figure may change. Budgetary restraints mean that there is no new capital available for new sites. Any that are developed can only be funded from other sources such as Neighbourhood Partnerships. He confirmed that the proposed site at Lismore will be self starting and paid for by aspirant ploholders grouping together to apply for community grants. The repair and maintenance budget, reduced to £15K, will be mainly spent on tree surgery this year, with other work including path repairs on various sites, fence repairs at Warriston and new gates at Saughton Mains. He said he was keen to provide NatSol compost toilets and proposed a pilot project. It was **AGREED** that this should be funded by application to an environmental grant as it should not come from the general allotment budget. In his opinion, the sites are generally looking good and regular 2-3 weekly plot inspections will soon recommence. He noted that the Trade Waste uplifts are variable with sites in the west of the city experiencing better service. He has tried to take this up with the service provider but has not yet had a satisfactory response. **DR** urged him to put his complaint in writing as ploholders are paying for a service they are often not receiving. Finally, 2 ongoing projects have been signed off: strimming the bund at Carrick Knowe and the leaf mould pens at Warriston.

4. Show Report: NMCC has purchased the radish seeds for distribution to those entering the childrens' class. It is understood that the next subcommittee meeting will be in April. **ACTION - JG.**

5. Secretary's Report: **EW** had circulated a written report. He noted that the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens has an initiative encouraging politicians to visit community gardens and volunteered to contact SAGS to check if there is a similar programme for allotments. **ACTION - EW.** The SAGS AGM will be on 17th June and a delegate from FEDAGA is required.

6. Treasurer's Report: **DR** reported that there is no change since his last report in January. He reminded the Committee that it had been agreed to reinvest the Bond with the Cooperative Bank for a further year in the expectation that interest rates are expected to increase later in the year. He said that the rates at the Cooperative are no worse than elsewhere and the funds are covered by government guarantee in the unlikely event that the bank fails. It was **AGREED** to take no action and review the investment later in the year.

7. President's Report: No report.

8. Maintenance Report: **NMcC** said that she has met with **IW** to discuss FEDAGA's nominated priorities. She said that some noticeboards have become dangerous with hinges rusting away. If opened, the window could fall from the frame. These should be looked at and added to the list of items for review.

9. Strategy Report: **IW** said that the 3rd Allotment Strategy Report was nearing completion and would be launched in the summer.

10. Social and Educational: No report.

11. Trading Schemes: **EW** said that sales at the Shop were down on previous years leaving a relatively large amount of unsold stock. It was **AGREED** to reduce potatoes to £2 per bag and onions and shallots to £1 per 500g and publicise a Discount Shop on 2nd April. **ACTION - EW. DR** undertook to open the Shop. **ACTION - DR.**

12. Any Other Business: **AH** said she had interrogated the Council's Planning Portal and had not identified any proposals affecting allotments. **SS** said that he was finding difficulty in sourcing quotes for a powered soil screening device for communal compost at Ferry Road. He requires these to progress a grant application. It was **AGREED** that FEDAGA could explore the practicalities of purchasing such an item of equipment for use at all member sites, bearing in mind that transport of such a large item of equipment may be problematical. **ACTION - EW.**

13. Date of Next Meeting: 11th April.