



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting, via Zoom
7pm, Tuesday 8th December 2020***

Present: Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) (President); Liz Grace (**LG**) (Midmar) (Secretary); Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Craigentinny Telferton) (Treasurer); Willie Aitken (**WA**) (Carrick Knowe); Jan Bradbury (**JB**) (Saughton Mains); Alan Gordon (**AG**) (West Mains); John Grace (**JG**) (Midmar); Lorna Henderson (**LH**) (Carrick Knowe); Alison Hewitt (**AH**) (Warriston); Tana Holmes (**TH**) (Portobello East Junction); Pamela McKay (**PMcK**) (Lethem Park); Stuart Swarbrick (**SS**) (Ferry Road); Ernie Watt (**EW**) (Cambridge Avenue); Margaret Williamson (**MW**) (Stenhouse); Peter Wright (**PW**) (Lady Road).

- 1. Apologies:** Neiria MacClure (Claremont Park); Paul Kerr (Redhall).
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Proposed by **JG**, seconded by **AH**.
- 3. Matters Arising:** **LG** is now notifying reps of these meetings on WhatsApp. **SMcK** said he had voted for Andrew Reid to the SAGS board on behalf of FEDAGA. **SMcK** is chasing Ian Woolard for postcodes of those on the waiting list in the vicinity of the potential new allotment at Balgreen.
- 4. Site Reports: Carrick Knowe:** Clearance of tree branches from felled trees along the boundary with the cycle path - Ian Woolard promised us this would be taken away in the winter. Advice on the dumping of waste along the same stretch (there has been a lot of waste material left there against the fence). Flood defences held up well over the weekend - no flooding from the tram track on Sunday morning.

Victoria Park: A well attended socially distanced meeting in November of plot holders agreed to go with the suggestion of FEDAGA re our application of a water butt. Some of us then pruned our perimeter fruit trees whilst others started constructing communal compost bins. A great combined effort which we look forward to enjoying the benefits of in years to come. We are now thinking of other ways to improve/enhance the site.

West Mains: Now the water is off we have anti-Covid alcohol hand wash available. We ordered 29 tonne bags of Green Goodness compost from Caledonian Horticulture for delivery between the end of November and Christmas. We also offered folks to purchase other items from their website to be added to the lorry loads so there was no extra delivery charge. One person ordered a bag of topsoil for a raised bed. The communal wheel barrows are available for this with anti-Covid spray.

Inverleith: We have made four kestrel boxes that the Council Forestry team will put up in the trees surrounding the site. We hope that now the rabbit fences are coming down we could encourage kestrels and owls to nest and reduce the mice and vole population. A hole large enough for a foot has been discovered in the fence by someone that noticed his shed contents have been moved about and has possibly been slept in. The hole coincides with a wooden compost bin that allows a step down off the fence. Ian Woolard has been asked for help to fix it and to possibly get the compost bin moved.

Saughton Mains: The heavy rain at the end of last week and over the weekend resulted in a number of plots at the southern end of the site flooding, some up to the depth of 12 inches. They are adjacent to the Water of Leith, but some of the water is likely to be run off from the site. It seems there hasn't been a huge amount of damage because many beds have been cleared of crops, but some topsoil has been washed away.

Site reps have met with the Conservation Volunteers and discussed the green composting scheme which is supported by a FEDAGA small grant. The Conservation Volunteers hope to produce concept plans, project specification and a budget cost before Christmas giving us time to circulate the scheme to our Committee for comments. We want to start on site in February so that the facility is available in March when plottolders start clearing sites and preparing for the growing season. We have a communal brazier on site to get rid of material that can't be composted without chipping. The brazier is a large former oil drum and needs to be replaced. If anyone knows where we could get one please let us know.

Our bulk orders of dry goods arrived a couple of weeks ago and have been distributed. We await our potato and onions orders in the first part of next year and our leeks in May/June. Some plots have not been cultivated all year and have become seriously overgrown. In addition, we know a number of plottolders have decided to give up their plots for one reason and another. This means there is likely to be a high turnover of plots on site. We think it would be very advantageous if new plottolders can be identified as soon as possible so that they can begin to clear sites and prepare them over the winter months before all the weeds start growing next Spring.

Ferry Road: Wheelbarrows bought in the Small Grants Scheme are out and being used. Leaf blower working out well. Was using it again the other day after cutting back the verges. There's no bristles to get gummed up with dirt when sweeping up the excess. There is a form on the Ferry Road website if anyone wants to book tools. Might pay to remove ads in New Year once Christmas is over. <https://ferryrdallotments.wordpress.com/>

Rubbish for recycling piling up by the gate again, but this is partly due to the Covid restrictions on the Car Club vans. They're being cleaned after each hire, so can't "hot seat" like we would Pre-Covid. Spoke to Caledonian Horticulture about prices for tipping - it's more and more difficult to take stuff in van to dump. Apparently it's £20 for a "mini-tip" and £30 for a "standard tip". Will take plain timber - no wood products like MDF or Chipboard, and have to remove as many nails as possible. Was also thinking this would be a good means to get rid of diseased plant material that can't be composted / some of the more rotten wood as opposed to burning.

Have put in the order for the Chipper/Shredder, but don't have a delivery date still. The supplier says it may be just before or just after Christmas. Will keep FEDAGA posted. It's payment after delivery, so no money gone yet and have a back up model identified. Have bought and received the folding van ramps - they're currently stored in our tool store on site. They're a "rest on" style so can be used with different vans.

Warriston: Flooding in the south side compound after the 'thundersnow' event. Plot holder Scott took on the task of laying some grit material on our very soggy main site path for which he must be given huge thanks.

5. President's Report: SMcK said there was still no progress to report on progression of the Rules and Regulations as officials are still working through the comments. He has been assured there will be a "final draft" imminently. There was a general discussion about recent developments at SAGS.

6. Secretary's Report: LG has been contacted by Brian Thomson, the Midmar Secretary, who comments: With regard to item 2 of the President's points on Pansy Walk (Balgreen), I would like it recorded that the former captain of the 47th Edinburgh Boys' Brigade Company Robert "Bob" Dott was a depute Director of Parks in the former Edinburgh Corporation and secured part time jobs for deserving young lads like myself at the Easter and Summer Holidays. My records show that I worked at Saughton Park from 10 July 1967 to 22 July 1967 and again from 8 March to 5 April 1968, the latter at Pansy Walk. I was paid the rate of 5 shillings and 8 pence per hour (28p). For 130 hours work, which included pricking out snapdragons and sweet williams, I earned £30/ 8s. We all have to start somewhere!

7. Treasurer's Report: DR said the balance stands at £13,442.71. Grant money has been given to Findlay Avenue, Baronscourt, Lady Road and Ferry Road. The Small Grants subcommittee will meet again soon. **ACTION - JB, DR and EW.** The Kings Seeds Trading Scheme has been paid for with £1700 for potatoes and £935 for onions and shallots spent.

8. Other Reports: Planning: AH said there were no planning applications of concern that she could identify as affecting allotments.

Trading: SMcK said that action had been taken to avoid over ordering too many potatoes as there will not be a Shop next spring. Unavoidably, we are left with 13 extra bags which will be sold by other means. **EW** raised a concern that with Covid restrictions only a limited number of people will be able to sort and prepare site orders, so the process will take longer. It might be prudent to investigate dry premises and suggested the barn at Bridgend. **SMcK** will investigate. **ACTION - SMcK.**

9. Any Other Business: SMcK said the Council's Food Growing Strategy initiative has finally published their report. **TH** felt it was a bit vague and did not go far enough. It seems to concentrate mainly on supporting community gardening and schools. Specific measures are lacking. Allotments are merely mentioned. There is no recognition of the need for new allotment sites to meet demand, other than to say that "DIY sites" could be supported where a local community identifies a suitable piece of land. **EW** said he would cover this in the Newsletter along with a piece about Prof. Sarah Bridle's book "Food and Climate Change Without the Hot Air".

AH asked about the clause in the Allotment Rules and Regulations whereby an appeal against eviction could be supported by neighbouring ploholders. **PW** said this was to facilitate the need for an appeals process as it was no longer policy to have a "three strikes and you're out" approach anymore. This topic will be returned to when the Council get back to us, hopefully early in the new year.

JB asked about when the free pallet delivery could be expected. **DR** said that it is in hands of Jewsons and we are in no position to ask for them to expedite matters. They will be in contact with reps when the delivery is due.

10. Date of Next Meeting: 9th February 2021 via Zoom. The meeting is not time limited but please keep your contributions brief and pertinent. If you wish to attend please contact **LG** who will arrange for an invite to be sent out prior to the meeting.