

Minutes of FEDAGA Management Committee Meeting At 7pm On Tuesday 12 May 2020 - Virtual Meeting Via Internet

Present : Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**)(Inverleith)(President); Ernie Watt(**EW**)(Cambridge Ave)(Newsletter); Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Telferton; Craigentenny)(Treasurer); Liz Grace (**EG**) (Midmar) (Secretary) ; John Grace(**JG**)(Midmar)(Allotment Show); Neiria McLure(**NMcL**) (Claremont Park); Alison Hewit (**AH**) (Warriston); Paul Kerr(**PK**) (Redhall) (Minutes) ; Heather MacPherson (**HMCP**) (Northfield Park); Margaret Williamson (MW)(Stenhouse);Alice Bain(**AB**) (Warriston); Jane Robinson (JR) (West Mains); John Nisbet (JN)(Telferton/Craigentenny); Janet Bradbury (**JB**)(Saughton Mains) ; Lorna Henderson (LH) (Carricknowe); Stuart Swarbrick (SS) (Ferry Road)

1. Apologies

Yvonne Dawe (YD); Maureen Edwards (ME)

2. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the last Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 14 April 2020 were proposed by SMcK and seconded by DR

3. Matters/Actions Arising

EG has set up a Whatsapp group for FEDAGA members since the last meeting. It has been used recently to report break-ins at Warriston allotments and other sites.

4. Site Reports

Craigentenny/Telferton (JN)

We Have like others had to put in measures to protect Allotment holders from covid in the form of safety notices at all entrances and regular emails to all Allotment Holders with on going advice. Also our Annual Barbecue and open garden day have been cancelled our Grass cutting Rota has been suspended and no communal Machines are available for Allotment holders. The Allotments are being well maintained with only 6 plot holders self-isolating the other are following the safe distancing measures

JN requested clarification on bonfires on allotment sites as someone at his site has taken umbrage to the bonfire restriction . JR commented that there was currently a Citywide ban on bonfires.

Ian Woolard has advised no bonfires on sites until further notice. This is to protect the amenity of nearby residents during lockdown.

Carricknowe (LH)

The site report from Carricknowe is very short - it's all about the rabbits as last time. We

are trying to find where they are getting in. We will keep you posted on that. Ian Woolard knows about it, but not much can be done just now.

Inverleith (SMcK)

People are getting on with it, some plots are growing weeds and neighbours getting concerned about them spreading. I'd expect this to be a common problem if people are isolating. Is there an opportunity here to offer to help keep plots reasonably tidy? Either by strimming or even digging it over and planting for the season.

Someone had recently dumped a toilet complete with seat and rim loo flush next to the communal waste containers. The toilet has now been removed.

Cambridge Avenue (EW)

No report.

It was commented on that a rotovator had recently been stolen from Lethem Park and there had also been some petty theft from other sites including Saughton Mains, Warriston, Ferry Road and Midmar.

It was commented that Police Notices had been supplied to Warriston after recent thefts however some of the advice is more applicable to huts at home. The advice for plotholders with huts remains to Not leave anything valuable inside and to leave huts unlocked.

Claremont Park (NMcL)

The gate padlock has broken so plot-holder had to cut it off to allow people to get out and to get in. Replaced it with communal hut padlock for time being. Ian Woolard has been informed.

Plot holder set fire to some rubbish. Message sent out to everyone that this is not allowed as we are a no-burn site.

Ferry Road (SS)

Break in – Main thing was the break in/thefts on Sunday 3rd/Monday 4th May.

Damage to various points of perimeter, though not as bad as it could have been - they seem to have gone for the softer metal of the fences/chains rather than the hardened steel of the locks/gates so we were able to re-secure the site a bit. They don't seem to have done any malicious damage - windows were untouched, locks/hasps were cut off but doors not ripped off. It all looks very methodical. They got into the site's shipping container by cutting through the chain that held the doors closed. They stole three petrol lawnmowers, the petrol strimmer and the can of fuel from out of the shipping container tool store. They took a variety of electrical trimmers from the huts - most of which wouldn't have been any use, as the batteries/chargers are kept at home. Of the lawnmowers, at least one wasn't working and was due to be dumped anyway.

We've got some money in the site account - largely due to the subs returned from FED-AGA. We've invested in some better security for the shipping container - we got some speciality

container locks from an online locksmith, and we can order more keys as needs be - there had been a high security lock on the container before, but it was too hard to get keys for it and it was substituted by the chain/padlock that was on.

We'll look at getting another strimmer/lawnmower for the site. We needed to get a hedge trimmer anyway, glad we didn't one last year as that would have been gone too. We might look into multi-tools - most of the site work is occasional/sporadic, rather than daily use, but if anyone has any experience/advice it would be gratefully received. Longer term, we're going to look into encouraging/planting vegetation to grow up the bank to help make it harder to climb up the slope.

Rubbish - we're blessed/cursed with a long section between the gate and the first of the plots, and as some will know we encourage the ploholders to recycle as much as possible. With the dumps being closed, the material is piling up, but as soon as the lockdown is lifted - and we can get one - we're going to order a skip and get it cleared. I'm still encouraging the ploholders to get their lots tidy and pile it up by the gate, despite the ever growing piles/headache, as it means we know what size of skip to order.

The FEDAGA committee gave us some good tips as to who to use. Sourcing Compost - It's been hard to source compost, manure, etc. Some of the larger supermarkets have been carrying bags of multipurpose, but it's been really difficult to get more specialised composts such as seed or ericaceous. I'll attach the list I compiled and sent out to the people on our site mailing list - it's mostly geared towards local suppliers that can deliver to the site, as some ploholders don't have cars. Other members might want to edit/expand on what's in it.

As an experiment, I did try using some of my homemade compost to start off some Nasturtiums and sow a few tubs of carrots, but it's been filled with weeds sprouting - normally I'd just hoe them off, but it's made things interesting in the seed trays. Don't think my Mrs. would be pleased if I was sticking trays of dirt in the oven at home, so I'm going to stick with shop bought compost for my seeds in the future.

Victoria Park Allotments (Judy Crabb)

Everyone is hard at work, plots have never been so well tended!
We are all enjoying being able to 'catch up', whilst observing social distancing and count ourselves very fortunate in being able to spend time nurturing our crops.

West Mains (JR)

The site is busy and looking very tidy, thanks to good weather and people perhaps having more spare time just now. Social- distancing, hygiene requirements and the bonfire ban have been hammered home through notices etc, and seem to be being adhered to, although we've had to remind people incinerators make smoke too and are thus also banned.

The committee asked about to see if anyone was having difficulties as a result of having to isolate or by being a key worker. Only a handful of people came forward, and we are keeping an eye on their plots as required. 11-15 May is Water Saving week so a good time to report that we plan a blitz on wasting it on site, following a dry spring when lots of

hoses have been in use and in anticipation of the new regulations. Committee funds and volunteer time will be spent on repairing and replacing the fixed connectors on taps and we will be following this up with a campaign to get everyone to make sure their own connectors fit properly and that hoses do not leak. Our Spring Social event and the Open Day have been cancelled this year.

Saughton Mains (JB)

No further break-ins since the incident a couple of weeks ago on Sunday night. Fence repaired and anti vandal paint painted on inside of fence where vegetation was cut back last Autumn. Barbed wire over the main vehicular entrance gate replaced. Advice given to ploholders not to store valuable equipment in sheds and never to keep petrol on site.

Only minor items reported missing.

Lots of notices up on site reminding people of Covid 19 requirements (some people think there are too many, but we would rather err on the side of caution). Site generally looking good, we have arranged to cut the grass paths ourselves given the Council have other issues to deal with at the moment !

Some plots clearly not being cultivated at all as people self isolate, others have never looked better as people have more time to tend their plot.

Warriston (AH;AB)

Warriston is looking good as plot holders gear up for the season. Everyone is working within government health guidelines. There has been higher attendance on weekdays, but at no time does any part of the site become overly busy.

Sheds were broken into on Monday 4 May. Two strimmers and a lawnmower were taken and padlocks broken. Those involved moved on to Ferry Road Allotments where further equipment was stolen. Ian Woolard and plot holders temporarily fixed the fences that had been breached and the police were informed (they responded quickly). Plot holders have been advised not to leave valuable equipment on site.

Stenhouse (MW)

We don't have much to report this month. We had a large order of compost and bark from Caledonian Horticulture this week. Plots are mostly looking better than ever as people spend more time on them. People seem to be sticking to the social distancing and other guidelines and are travelling to the allotment by cycle and foot wherever possible.

The new plot holders are putting in a lot of effort. Ian Woolard has let the remaining empty plot and the new plot holder has been busy clearing the rubbish and the weeds. Other volunteers have covered over the dandelions with weed suppressing fabric on the plots where the plot holder is in the vulnerable group and shielding at home. People are sharing seeds and seedlings.

Community communication has been greatly improved by people being there and talking to one another. Initiatives like bulk compost orders and sharing of seedlings etc, have helped people to recognise others in the allotment. Thanks to Ian Woolard for being DIY man in repairing roof felt on one of the communal sheds!

Northfield Park (H MacP)

Nothing to report from us. It has been like a dust bowl down there but we were grateful for the one night of rain!

Midmar (JG)

Nothing new to report

Redhall (PK)

No further fly tipping has occurred at Redhall. Site gate has a Notice with COVID 19 guidance for ploholders regarding hand sanitising.

5. President's Report (SMcK)

Still awaiting email details for all FEDAGA members from Ian Woolard. Gardening Scotland has been cancelled this year but will return next year. SMcK is working with SAGS on building a new website. Leek plants (Musselburgh) are available to buy through the contact details given in the May edition of the FEDAGA Newsletter. The cost is £3 for 50 plus postage. Sites have to arrange bulk orders and a single delivery address. Orders must be made by Friday 22 May.

6. Secretary's report (EG)

The Whatsapp account has been set up and has already been well used.

7. Treasurer's Report (DR)

Ian Woolard has been contacted again regarding the subscription moneys due to FEDAGA from the annual allotment fees. As ploholders paid these fees in January FEDAGA should have had the money by the end of March.
The balance is currently £12,426.30.
EW to return FEDAGA cheque book to DR.

8. Maintenance (NMcC)

SMcK commented that there is a substantial ground drop-off near some plots similar to the position at Midmar. The solution is likely to involve hand rails and stakes. SMcK to update NMcC on planned works and costs in due course.
EG commented that as the paths at Midmar are very narrow it would be difficult to install hand rails.

9. Planning (AH)

Nothing of interest to note in recent planning applications

10. Annual Show (JG)

JG suggested that a virtual FEDAGA allotment show could be held this year. This is to be discussed further at the next meeting.

SMcK commented that the National Vegetable Society were doing a virtual show.

11. AOCB

DR commented that PW had not been well recently. FEDAGA wished him a speedy Recovery and a get well card is to be sent.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 9 June at 7pm using internet conferencing.

Please note-

All further meetings in person are cancelled until further notice due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Please also note the SSCC is closed. Future meetings will be held by internet conferencing using Zoom.