



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting, via Zoom 7pm, Tuesday 14th September 2021

Present: Liz Grace (**LG**) (Midmar) (Secretary and Acting Chair); Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Craigtinny Telferton) (Treasurer); Alice Bain (**AB**) (Warriston); Jan Bradbury (**JB**) (Saughton Mains); Alan Gordon (**AG**) (West Mains); John Grace (**JG**) (Midmar); Alison Hewitt (**AH**) (Warriston); Neiria MacClure (**NMacC**) (Claremont Park); Pamela MacKay (**PMacK**) (Lethem Park); Heather MacPherson (**HMCP**) (Northfield); John Nesbitt (**JN**) (Craigtinny Telferton); Stuart Swarbrick (**SS**) (Ferry Road); Ernie Watt (**EW**) (Cambridge Avenue); Kathleen White (**KW**) (Duddingston); Margaret Williamson (**MW**) (Stenhouse); Ursula Wright (**UW**) (Portobello East Junction).

1. **Apologies:** Lorna Henderson (**LH**) Carrick Knowe; Paul Kerr (**PK**) (Redhall); Stuart MacKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) (President); Kate Main (**KM**) (Dumbryden); Steve Mathieson (**SM**) (Leith Links).

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Proposed by **EW**, seconded by **NMacC**.

3. **Matters Arising:** **LG** has been in touch with the Southside Community Centre informing them that for the time being we will not be booking a meeting room. She will let Maureen Edwards, who raised the issue, know. **ACTION - LG**.

Now the problem with the annual payment to Bridgend and Midmar has been resolved, **LG** will issue an updated sheet showing all of this year's payments to sites for subscriptions and dividends from trading schemes. **ACTION - LG**.

4. Site Reports:

West Mains: **AG** said a space for beehives has been created.

Inverleith: **SMcK** submitted a report saying that the Council held a photocall on site to publicise its aim of Edinburgh becoming a Sustainable Food City and they will also make a short video for COP26 there. The site show will be on 19th September.

Carrick Knowe: **LH** submitted a report detailing a site meeting with Cllr. Frank Ross and the Allotment Officer regarding the growth of weeds between the site and the tram line. The Allotment Officer said he would organise a strim of the weeds and supply the site with a strimmer and training on safe use. Carrick Knowe will submit a bid to FEDAGA for funding for upgrading and renewing communal compost bins. The AGM and a site tidy up will be held on the weekend of 25/26th September. Beavers from the 19th Pentland Scout Group visited to work towards their Gardening Badge. They planted seeds and were given some produce.

Midmar: **JG** said Midmar Secretary Brian Thompson had digitised Gilbert Clark's allotment papers and copies on USB sticks had been distributed among interested parties including the Edinburgh City Archivist (FEDAGA) and Glasgow University (SAGS). Midmar have

decided against taking on the responsibility of storing, operating, insuring and maintaining a chipper. Instead, it was felt money should be spent on making steep paths safer. A 1 metre drop from a path into a plot has been made safe by the erection of a stout fence, arranged by the Allotment Officer, to whom thanks are due. It is likely this year's income from FEDAGA will be spent on repairing the cabin roof.

Leith Links: SM submitted a report saying that there will soon be a meeting with the developers of the residential site to find out about the changes to the housing to be built and to discover what type of fencing will be put in place to ensure site security. **NMacC** hoped to see the outcome of the meeting as soon as possible.

Saughton Mains: JB said the tool sharpening day was a great success. The site will arrange for delivery of two lorry loads of zoo poo in the coming weeks. She reported the widespread thefts of fruit and courgettes from plots. The Allotment Officer has been informed. She asked if other sites have experienced this and what to do about it. Sadly, there were other similar reports. Vigilance seems to be the best response. The possibility of birds and squirrels being the culprits was suggested. Certainly, they are fast workers and leave no evidence.

Stenhouse: MW said there had been a few recent bonfires as some don't recognise the ban. There has been discussion about the merits of a chipper with concern expressed about how it would be managed. Advice was sought about weeds encroaching from adjacent unattended plots. It was recommended to speak to the Allotment Officer as he often is aware of mitigating personal circumstances. If someone is unwell neighbours could organise to deal with weeds. **AG** suggested people be reminded that if for any reason they cannot address such problems they should inform the Allotment Officer.

Northfield: HMacP said that they are still waiting for the water to be connected. There has been a hole by the path for 6 weeks now preventing the ICB from being refilled. **DR** suggested they contact Cllr. George Gordon as it appears he is someone who gets action.

5. President's Report: LG reported that **SMcK** has spoken with the Allotment Officer about the Council's £10K allotment windfall and the implementation of the new rules and regulations. It is hoped to arrange an Allotment Strategy meeting later in the month. The Allotment Officer has undertaken to share membership lists with FEDAGA so that site administrators can communicate with members. **SMcK** will appraise Bob Mcallister of the Council Allotments Service on production of the recent Midmar Newsletter. **ACTION - SMcK.**

6. Secretary's Report: LG said there was a small but positive response to her proposal to postpone the AGM to next spring, so it can be deduced there is no strong feeling on the matter. An enquiry requesting a contact for Scotland Street Lane East has been forwarded. The Apple Press has already started being lent out. Arrangements have been published in the FEDAGA Newsletter with a link to a doodle poll where sites can book a date.

7. Treasurer's Report: DR said the figures for sites who had yet to be paid included in some cases amounts owed from last year as for various reasons some sites can't or choose not to have a bank account therefore have to be paid in kind. This is so transactions are transparent. For example Drumbrae may be provided with a wheelbarrow or a compost bin. Dumbryden is an example of a site who were paid last year but this year

have no site representative to accept payment. Arrangements will be made to ensure all sites get their funds or equivalent. **ACTION - DR.**

DR said the Gilbert Clark Foundation will be open for applications soon. The subcommittee (**DR, JB** and **EW**) proposed that the budget should be £3K and there should be a maximum of £300 per site. Match funding will be expected, especially where larger and well established sites are concerned. Last year's successful sites can still apply but sites yet to benefit will be given priority. The launch will be in October with a mid-December closing date. This was **AGREED** by the meeting. **ACTION - DR, JB** and **EW. SS** will arrange for items purchased to be identified by a stencil which he will arrange for. **ACTION - SS.**

8. Windfall Money: £10K from Council: The City of Edinburgh Council have indicated that an extra £10K can be added to the allotment budget this year on a one-off basis. **LG** said that **SMcK** intends to lead discussions at the Strategy meeting on how this can best be spent. Likely areas for funding would be rainwater harvesting from communal buildings, chippers at sites, establishing wildlife areas, planting community fruit trees and fixing leaky taps. It is suggested that Midmar and Saughton Mains may be likely sites to receive chippers but the burden of responsibility would need to be explored. A suggestion from Leith Links would be for new wheelbarrows and an apple crusher and juicer. They also suggest a formula for allocation within sites by suggesting 3 desirable items and balloting ploholders.

There was a general discussion on how to best use this unexpected funding. **AH** said water butts for the cottage at Warriston would be nice but would only benefit nearby ploholders. They may be able to accommodate a chipper. She will see if the former composting toilet block would suit.

LG suggested **NMacC** co-ordinate this which was **AGREED. ACTION - NMacC.**

JB said harvesting rainwater from the chalet roof would be a good idea but again would only benefit those nearby. Also, like Midmar, they are wary of taking on too much responsibility and hassle if they took a chipper. She had concerns about how the mechanics of such a scheme would work particularly if the machine was to be loaned out to other sites. **AG** suggested a chipper be hired for a day or a weekend and toured around participating sites but it was not certain that the funding would be available for non-capital expenditure. **ACTION - AG** to make enquiries.

DR suggested fencing, drainage and gates would be more promising areas to explore. **MW** wanted a noticeboard for the raised bed section at Stenhouse. She also suggested dwarf fruit trees.

JB questioned the proposal to spend money on "environmental improvements" with regard to wildlife areas. It was suggested that **JB** join the FEDAGA delegation at the Strategy meeting where the whole matter could be properly explored. It was **AGREED** that **LG** write to site reps and ask them to contact **NMacC** about projects requiring funding. **ACTION - LG.**

9. Other Reports:

Show: JG reported that this year's virtual show saw 59 entries from 24 ploholders from 11 sites. The judging is now taking place.

Maintenance: **NMacC** has not seen the Allotment Officer recently but understands that fencing work has been completed at Midmar and recent activity is mainly trimming trees and hedges.

Planning: **AH** asked for volunteers to take on a few sites to monitor potentially significant planning applications. **EW** indicated he would be willing to do so. **ACTION - AH and EW.**

AG reported that 120 objections from residents and allotment holders were lodged to the development proposals and so the matter has to be considered by the planning process. He is now waiting for their decision. Cala want a meeting with West Mains Allotment Association. He was advised to contact the Planning Advisory Service. **JN** suggested the site could send a representative to speak to the Planning Committee. **ACTION - AG.**

Food Growing Strategy: **MW** said the consultation is now on the Council's website.

Trading: **AH** has issued forms to all sites for potatoes, onions, shallots, garlic and leeks. Sites that have no representatives will have to organise themselves to participate.

10. AGM: **LG** noted her earlier report. The AGM will take place physically, if covid allows, in an appropriate location in the late spring.

11. Any Other Competent Business: None.

12. Date of Next Meeting: 12th October.