

*Minutes of Management Committee Meeting, 9th June 2020  
(Virtual online meeting)*

**Present:** Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) - President; Liz Grace (**LG**) (Midmar) - Secretary; Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Craigentinny Telferton) - Treasurer; Jan Bradbury (**JB**) (Saughton Mains); Maureen Edwards (**ME**) (Lady Road); John Grace (**JG**) (Midmar); Lorna Henderson (**LH**) (Carrick Knowe); Alison Hewitt (**AH**) (Warriston); Paul Kerr (**PK**) (Redhall); Heather MacPherson (**HMacP**) (Northfield); John Nisbet (**JN**) (Craigentinny Telferton); Jane Robinson (**JR**) (West Mains); Barbara Seel (**BS**) (Leith Links); Stuart Swarbrick (**SS**) (Ferry Road); Ernie Watt (**EW**) (Cambridge Avenue); Margaret Williamson (**MW**) (Stenhouse); Peter Wright (**PW**) (Lady Road).

1. **Apologies:** Alice Bain (**AB**); Neiria MacClure (**NMac**)
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Proposed by **SMcK** and seconded by **DR**.
3. **Matters Arising:** None.
4. **Site Reports:**

**SMcK** noted that many sites had taken advantage of the leek plant offer and feedback was positive. Quality is excellent and, in many cases, a great many more than the advertised 50 per bundle were supplied.

**Victoria Park - Judith Crabb** reported that all ploholders are very busy and making the most of the opportunity to garden in the amazing weather. Good use is being made of the communal hose!

**Craigentinny /Telferton - JN** queried the advice from last month's meeting regarding the legality of bonfires during lockdown after this had been challenged at **Craigentinny Telferton**. On checking with the Council he found that legislation had not been changed, so this was merely advisory. **JB** said the Allotment Officer had issued a ban on allotment bonfires but this did not cover independent sites. **LH** said this guidance was issued to help vulnerable residents with respiratory conditions who were confined to home as they were self isolating.

**SMcK** suggested that it was not necessary to have bonfires as the brown bin service is back up and the recycling centres have reopened. He also recommended that ploholders compost as much as they can on site rather than burning it. **JN** noted that the numbers on site have dropped slightly as people are returning to work. The site committee is still

advising social distancing, no sharing of tools etc. and updating any changes that are made.

**Saughton Mains - JB** provided the **Saughton Mains** report. Covid 19 requirements such as social distancing are still being adhered to and all communal facilities are closed. Plottolders are appreciative of being able to access their allotments during the pandemic. The padlock on the main gate seized up but was quickly replaced by the Allotments Officer - many thanks to him. The site is generally looking good, helped by regular grass cutting of paths by volunteers and the dry weather. Some plots are not being cultivated due to self isolation and they may need help to bring them back. Vacant plots have been re-let. Many of the leek plants recently ordered have been planted out.

**Midmar - EG** said 24 bundles of leek plants were ordered for **Midmar** and a further 2 for West Mains. The operation went smoothly, the plants were in excellent condition and people are appreciative. The site is in good order but the committee is in contact with the Allotment Officer regarding the welfare of one plotholder who has not been seen since lockdown and whose plot is causing concern with overgrown fruit trees as well as being overgrown and untidy. As yet, no reply.

**Northfield - HMacP** said **Northfield** is now in possession of 2 intermediate bulk container 1000 litre water tanks, the first kindly purchased by FEDAGA (£15) which had a faulty valve so a second was procured. A working valve has been located and the first tank has been filled thanks to the Allotment Officer. It is uncertain if the tanks will be re-filled and this is a temporary arrangement in lieu of a piped water supply which has been long promised. Conditions on site have again resembled a dustbowl. **HMacP** will provide some photos for the June Newsletter.

**ACTION - HMacP.** A planning application has been lodged for a development of two five-storey residential blocks between the site and Willowbrae Road which will have a detrimental impact on plotholders by reducing afternoon sunlight and adding pollution from cars using the proposed carpark. These concerns have been lodged with the planning department. For the first time since its creation the allotment is pretty much full.

**Warriston - AH** reported that bin collections from **Warriston** are very slow and infrequent. The Allotment Officer has been alerted to this.

**Redhall - PK** - several orders of leeks were received on Monday using the company detailed in last month's FEDAGA Newsletter. The quality of the leeks is excellent.

**Claremont** - Things are fairly quiet at Claremont. Ian replaced our gate padlock which had given up the ghost.

## 5. President's Report:

**SMcK** said that he is still waiting for the promised members list from the Council. This has been chased up again but the wait goes on. He noted that **DR** is also still waiting for the subscription money which was paid to the Council along with rent in January and February. [See also Treasurer's Report.] **SMcK** noted with sadness and frustration that

SAGS is now really struggling as key representatives, himself included, have resigned. It is to be hoped that an active organisation can again be pulled together. It was suggested that too much is asked of volunteers who are operating with no external funding. **JB** asked if there was anything FEDAGA could do to help. **SMcK** said the main activity is the tripartite group involving SAGS, the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to enact the Community Empowerment Act as it affects allotments. He suggested FEDAGA should now get involved directly to ensure the plotholder's voice is heard. **ACTION - SMcK.**

#### 6. Secretary's Report:

**EG** said the Midmar Secretary is archiving Gilbert Clark's SAGS and FEDAGA papers. An item of interest is that one allotment show trophy is solid silver and had been insured. This will be investigated. **ACTION - LG.** A request from a Midmar plotholder to use the communal area for a family gathering was withdrawn before the committee could decide. They were uneasy as it was not clear how social distancing between children could be guaranteed. **EW** said the National Allotment Society and SAGS Covid 19 advice, adopted by FEDAGA for the website, was that no unauthorised people should be present on allotments during the lockdown, but it was established that this is not official Council policy. **JB** said a plotholder at Saughton Mains had applied directly to the Allotment Officer for permission to have a barbeque on their plot; this request was granted. There has been communication from Killandean allotments indicating that they will not be renewing their FEDAGA membership.

#### 7. Treasurer's Report:

**DR** said there was no activity other than dividend income from the Kings Seeds scheme of £809.76, which is an increase of 20% on last year. This will be distributed on a pro rata basis to site associations. **DR** also noted that the request for subscription money collected by the Council was formally made in March. This is being actively pursued along with the request for membership details. **ACTION - DR and SMcK.**

#### 8. Maintenance Report:

Ian Woolard reported "to update the expenditure list I had to order a new pump and vessel for Bridgend at 2.2K and the water repairs citywide were £270"

#### 9. Planning Report:

**AH** said that the Northfield planning application had been missed as it referred only to Willowbrae Road. To help her to catch all relevant applications it would be useful to have a way of identifying all allotments on Google Maps. Locating Northfield allotments was difficult as it is still represented on the Google Earth satellite image as a football field. **SMcK** suggested a pin can be dropped using the location information gathered for emergency services and he would provide this. **ACTION - SMcK.**

#### 10. Trading Report:

No report.

## 11. Show Report:

**JG** suggested that following the example of the National Vegetable Society we may hold an online version of the show in which competitors submit photos of their exhibits instead of the real thing. The NVS show has a limited number of classes and only one trophy. He suggested we adopt their rules. **JG** further suggested another aspect of the show could be a photo competition on the theme “My Allotment During Lockdown”. This could also include a written account on what people’s allotments have meant to them during this time. It is possible that this could be collated into a book if it is of good quality and there is sufficient interest.

It was **AGREED** that a subcommittee comprising **JG**, **SMcK**, **LH** and **EW** meet virtually to take this forward.

**ACTION - JG**. There was a brief discussion on the best way of pursuing this and it was **AGREED** that an online gallery to which photo files can be uploaded be investigated.

**SMcK** said that this is a historic time and a book might be a good way to provide a permanent record of how it impacted the allotment community. An article will be prepared for the June Newsletter. **JG** will try to procure the services of a judge.

**ACTION - JG** and **EW**. **DR** suggested that there should be activities such as scarecrows and veggie monsters that children could get involved in. **JG** said that short videos could also be encouraged. It was **AGREED** that as funds are usually spent on staging the Annual Show, money should be provided to facilitate these plans.

## 12. Any Other Business:

There had been an enquiry about the proposed FEDAGA Small Grants Scheme. **JB** reported that she had drafted guidance notes and circulated them to officers but this had been superseded by Covid

It was **AGREED** that **LG** and **SMcK** review them and they are then circulated to the Committee for consideration. **ACTION - LG** and **SMcK**. **DR** said that Craigentenny Telferton had responded to a request from a member of the public wanting to take aerial footage of the allotment by a drone. Permission may be granted once it is found out what exactly she wants to do with the video.

## 13. Date of Next Meeting:

14th July. (via Zoom. E-mail invites will be issued shortly before 7pm on the day.)