



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of FEDAGA Management Committee Meeting 7pm Tuesday 8 March 2022 - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Present

Stuart McKenzie (SMcK)(Inverleith)(President); Dave Roberts (DR) (Telferton; Craigentiny)(Treasurer); Liz Grace (EG) (Midmar)(Secretary); John Grace (JG)(Midmar)(Allotment Show); Alison Hewitt (AH) (Warriston)(Planning); Paul Kerr (PK)(Redhall) (Minutes); Alice Bain(AB)(Warriston); Margaret Williamson (MW)(Stenhouse); Heather MacPherson (HMacP); Stuart Swarbrick (SS) (Ferry Road); Alan Gordon(AG)(West Mains); Nils Tomes (NT)(West Mains); Jan Bradbury (JB)(Saughton Mains); Alex Taylor(AT)(Portobello), *Alison Leslie (Lady Road)
Guest - Ian Woolard – Council Allotment Officer

1. Apologies

Pamela McKay (Lethem Park), Neiria McClure (Claremont), Ernie Watt (Cambridge Ave)
{*Maureen Edwards (Lady Road)}

2. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Adoption of Minutes of meeting on Tuesday 8 February - Proposed by SMcK
- Seconded by DR

** Corrections and amendments to the minutes intimated to the secretary were made by EG before the minutes were finalised

3. Matters/Actions Arising

A general query was made by JG regarding the position with sites having physical committee meetings on their sites.

EG enquired about the resumption of physical FEDAGA meetings. SMcK suggested sticking with virtual Zoom meetings until everyone was comfortable with the idea. DR proposed that the subject be re-visited at the June meeting.

4. Allotment Officer's Report (IW)

1. The winter has been kind this year with very few frosts, a wet February was the only damp squib
2. The winter has been case of spend, spend spend - 50k set a side for wall repairs mainly Redhall. A New 30k fence at Warriston is being erected just now, and 3 new shredder's for Warriston/West Mains/Redhall coming soon, with Bridgend gaining a second hand one and all inclusive costs were coming in at just over 10k.
3. On top of the above I managed to finish many works at various locations. These were path repairs at West Mains, Stenhouse and Restalrig, a new wall for Warriston, new internal fencing at Inverleith and Midmar, new gate for India place and various felt works such as Dumbryden container which was

leaking and Bridgend pumphouse roof(part) ripped in the recent strong winds. Now looking at the various works required from April onwards at various location, re-felt the communal sheds at Newcraighall and Leith Links, contribution to the new wildlife gardens at Stenhouse and Baronscourt, Trees works at Redhall, Claremont and Prospect Bank and further Chalet repairs at Saughton. Will meet up with Neiria soon

4. Water going back on late March/early April. Newcraighall connection was leaking and this was dug up and exposed for the plumber to fix
5. Trade waste not working well at present, this is down to re-routing and this will be resolved soon
6. Many new ploholders being allocated plots just now and they all seem very keen to get going
7. Various tree pruning works occurring across various sites
8. Last week I started my site visits for the year and contacting plot holder were necessary. I think year on year the sites overall are improving
9. Water costs seem very high at the moment as more sites are metered
10. Leith Links meeting scheduled for this week. The new plots are getting there and a new fence and toilet will be happening soon
11. Special thanks to everyone who contributes to making their own site better.
12. The head of parks David Jamieson is leaving this month and Parks and Greenspace are being split up. Not sure what the outcome will be, however I should still be looking after allotments

MW thanked IW for the new wildlife garden created at Stenhouse allotment site.

JB – NMCC has put together a site maintenance list which includes he chalet roof a Saughton. IW indicated that he would be on this as soon as possible.

NT enquired about any other funds likely to be available.

EG enquired about the problem in knowing who the new ploholders are and could IW contact either her or SMcK to update?

DR proposed that IW should update EG or SMcK once per month.

Action Point - IW Agreed to provide monthly updates to EG/SMcK and will also send the new ploholders list from October (approximately 40 new ploholders).

SMcK requested a breakdown of who had paid the annual FEDAGA membership fee. We need to encourage sites not to waste water due to the cost. Another strategy meeting is necessary .

5. Site Reports

Midmar (JG)

There is much construction going on. Thought: FEDAGA should find a supplier of used timber.

There is concern (expressed by the Midmar Secretary) that we are never informed about new plot-holders (names and plot numbers), and therefore are not able to arrange any sort of welcome. This has been the case for as long as four years.

Trade bins have not been collected for two weeks.

The 4 new wheelbarrows are in constant use, preferred to the old ones. What should we do with old wheelbarrows?

We haven't had a committee meeting since early 2020 – the time has come to resume normal service. On the committee there is some reluctance to zoom meetings. So, shall we be outdoors in the cold or indoors (in the cabin).

Inverleith (SMcK)

Waste Collection - collections seem to have stopped after a shift pattern change somewhere. We've had one collection in a month. The unemptied bins are attracting fly tipping. Five bags of plasterboard waste had to be shifted. The problem has been reported to Ian, the Parks Manager and Councillor by us and the Friends of Inverleith Park. No one seems able to sort it out. We're also still short of one bin, stolen months ago.

New Plotholders - we seem to have quite a few new people this year. Some are reading the notice board and asking for an introduction pack, some aren't. We did agree with the Allotment Service they would make the connection, not happening.

Ferry Road (SS)

- Potato and Onion orders mostly collected from the community hut, though one or two still waiting.
- We're running the biannual soil improver (compost, manure) bulk buy scheme again. Adding the Plant Market in Fife for the Dalefoot wool compost this time, as well as Caledonian Horticulture/Garden Solutions, as a few plot-holders looking for Peat Free alternatives.
- Chipping area and new compost heaps to be constructed, the next time we organise a site day - probably in a couple of weeks, fingers crossed.
- Have received the Hot Bin Composter unit from the GCFE grant. Will hopefully set up on the site day - need to choose spot and build plinth.
- Still to order the Solar panels for the GCFE. Company is only open office hours, and it's been hectic at work and not had the energy to phone at lunchtime (30 min break). Had a day off work a couple of weeks ago, phoned them and of course it was the day of the bad storm down south and their phone lines were down. Will try again this week, will try Monday.
- Masses of chipping waiting to be done - again, will attack on the site day. Lots of scraped soil from digger work still to be moved too.
- Managed a successful dump run. If we can get the bin emptied, we will be back on top of the waste - having typed this, I fully expect that as you read this, that an old shed and its entire contents are being dumped in the recycling bays.
- Looking for ideas to fundraise for the site - spent a chunk of funds on projects and need to replenish them. Don't think there's an appetite for an open day.

West Mains (AG/NT)

This is West Mains' centenary year and we are hoping to celebrate it this summer through our open day. West Mains was established in the wake of the First World War to provide food, develop skills, and

be a healthy occupation. These are priorities that we still value one hundred years later. These days, we also aim to reduce food-miles by growing our food close to home, which contributes to Edinburgh's city plan for sustainability.

The planning application to develop the St Crispin's School site on our northern boundary was rejected in February 2022 by the Council's Development Management Subcommittee on a number of grounds, including the increased risk of flooding.

Stenhouse (MW)

We are delighted to report that our contractor has started on the Community Wildlife garden funded by Tesco *Bags of Help*. We are taking lots of before and after photos and will make them available for the newsletter as it progresses.

Redhall (PK)

Redhall allotments held their AGM on site, on Saturday 5 March.

6. President's Report (SMCK)

FEDAGA attended an **Edible Edinburgh** event at the Granton College. This was to launch a Good Food Directory. Thanks to Liz, John and Margaret – who will provide a report later.

As a result, we've been asked to take part in a **North Edinburgh Festival** on Saturday 7th May. I replied with - The problem with us attending this type of event is that people leave frustrated because the waiting lists prohibit anyone getting an allotment in the near future. I passed the email to Liz, we can discuss later.

A **solar lighting system** has been installed in the FEDAGA shop in Inverleith, cost was £210. A solar panel mount remains outstanding, expected cost around £25. I wish we'd done this years ago, it's a transformation as you'll see next time we ask you around to collect leeks in June.

Kings Seeds have sent me a list of all our customers using the discounted seed scheme. It means we can see how many non FEDAGA members are using the service....but should we?

FEDAGA were contacted by someone objecting to a planning application on land alongside **Joppa Terrace**. The main railway line forms the other boundary. The objection was that the development to build a dwelling would destroy an 'allotment site'. I visited and found no evidence of such a site. There had been some growing, many years ago, but most of the site was covered with self-seeded sycamore trees. Wrote back to explain as no allotments were there we would not be getting involved.

I had attended a **Scottish Allotments** 'Meet the Board' Zoom meeting aimed at members. Only one other member was present, from a private site in the north of Scotland. I again emphasised the need for action on allotment waiting lists.

SAGS don't publish their Minutes which is a good reason for someone from FEDAGA being on the SAGS Committee.

FEDAGA have been invited to attend the North Edinburgh Festival even on Saturday 7 May. DR

indicated an interest in helping.

AGM – SMcK proposed a virtual meeting. DR suggested the church hall in Portobello could be hired at a reasonable cost. A hybrid meeting was also suggested. Proposed date **25 October 2022**

7. Secretary's report (EG)

Correspondence

FEDAGA was represented at an Edible Edinburgh event- Inspiring Food- by Stuart McKenzie, Margaret Williamson, Liz and John Grace at the Edinburgh College Campus.

North Edinburgh Community Festival are looking to FEDAGA for support at their event on Saturday 7th May. We suggest volunteers from sites in the area represent FEDAGA on this day.

8. Treasurer's Report (DR)

DR had circulated the current Financial Statement. Current Bank Balance at 28 February 2022 is £13718.89. £1,000 has already been spent so far on the Gilbert Clark Foundation grants.

NT enquired if any of the bank balance could be returned to sites. DR advised that £2 is refunded to sites every year, for every member on their site.

9. Maintenance (NMCC)

Neiria McClure has made a list of all the sites' maintenance requests which she has received. It is quite short. Maybe you could look at your site to see if you need to add any relevant jobs you need the council to deal with. Contact Neiria with any requests. She meets with Ian Woolard to discuss and prioritise soon, before the end of the financial year (EG).

See Appendix 2 for current site maintenance requests.

10. Planning (AH)

No new planning applications affecting allotments found.

11. Trading (AH)

The shop was well attended despite bad weather and most of the surplus sold. The remainder was given away at the Edible Edinburgh event.

The leeks have been ordered and will be available in early June. Some surplus will be available for a shop opening afternoon.

As the recent newsletter noted, I would like to hear members' views on reducing the weight of onions to 300g, shallots to stay at 500g. One Scottish distribution company offers both 1 and 2kg bags of potatoes. Is this something worth pursuing? So far, feedback has been positive.

JG asked if FEDAGA had considered adding timber for plot projects, but this was not thought to be possible.

12. Food Growing Strategy (MW)

An event organised by Edible Edinburgh called took place last week (25th February) at Edinburgh College in Granton; SMcK, MW, JG and EG represented FEDAGA. The purpose of the event was to launch Edinburgh's Sustainable Food Directory. There were many stalls from organisations associated with local food. We demonstrated how to grow your own food and we gave away kits with seed potatoes and onion sets containing instructions on how to grow them. The Provost addressed the meeting; he quoted a figure of approximately 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK coming from the food industry. Edinburgh has a target of being net zero by 2030.

The College had organised various food preparation demonstrations. A very successful event.

13. Annual Allotment Show (JG)

At the recent Edible Edinburgh event I chatted briefly to the Lord Provost Frank Ross and very briefly to Councillor George Gordon (with whom I met two years ago). I would like to launch a bid for a Show linked to Edible Edinburgh in which the venue and general arrangements would be in the Council's hands. The recent event was in the Edinburgh College (Granton Campus), an excellent FE venue which would in fact be good for a show. Pros: big, spacious, has café; cons: not everyone wants to go to Granton although it is well-served with buses. There must be other options - George Gordon would know them all.

MW commented that it may be difficult for people to get there using public transport.

IW suggested Saughton Winter Gardens as a suitable venue. There is a large hall near the Café.

13. AOCB.

- SS enquired where SMcK had purchase the new solar lights for Inverleith from. SMcK- the Solar Centre.
- SS commented that the Roving Shredder day had been successful although the travelling part had taken a lot longer than expected. There had been problems accessing the Findlay Avenue site due to the narrow road.
- SMcK proposed that FEDAGA pay for the next Roving Shredder event. SS to speak to DR regarding this.
- AG commented on a recent problem with a tyre puncture affecting their Eliot Major shredder -see Appendix 1 for more details.
- DR enquired about the Service Schedule for the shredder. AG – the manual refers to a service after 20 hours use. This involves checking the tightness of the securing bolts for the cutting blades. A maintenance Log Book should be kept by any sites having a new shredder with dates and site contacts etc.
- DR - a big **thank you to Alison Hewitt** for all her work with this years' successful trading scheme

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 12 April 2022 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.

Appendix 1

Notes on Eliot Major Shredder Tyre Repair (AG)

Tyre punctured - with great difficulty I got the chrome cap off the axle and the wheel came off.

I pumped up the tyre and put it under water. bubbles came up by the valve.

I took it to National Tyres up the road. They do not have the gear for that small size of tyre and recommended Redpath Tyres in the Gyle who deal with trailer tyres.

Redpath found it had a punctured inner tube. There was no thorn etc in the tyre itself. He patched the inner tube and pumped it all up to the recommended 50 PSI.

To secure the wheel I had to hammer on the chrome end onto the axle.

Unfortunately using the hammer meant the axle came out the other side!

Supporting the other side allowed me to get the securing cap on.

I think it is properly on now and safe.

I suggest we need to frequently check the tyre pressures that neither are deflating.

It needed a car pump to inflate them. The tyre repair cost £15. *Redpath* tyres were good.

The manufacturers do not come out of this well. There is nothing in the manual re tyres or that you have to use brute force to get a wheel off and on. Both tyres were soft when I first moved the machine at the beginning of February, 6 weeks after we got it.

I assumed that was meant to be. However after I found the puncture I checked the pressure of the under inflated tyre and it was only 18 PSI when it should have been 50 PSI.

The recommended pressure is hidden on the inside of the tyre!

I suspect the machine had been in a warehouse/ sale room for months and the tyres were not checked at the pre sale inspection.

I intend to write to the dealer and manufacturer and, politely and constructively, suggest they improve their procedures and advice. The low pressure may or may not have

caused the puncture but is not what was advised (AG).

Additional Notes

Just to add that Redpath Tyres are the contractor that does the Edinburgh Council fleet tyres.

They have a call out service - might be an extra charge, where they will come to you on site and do the repair/replace the tyre.

Think this is more geared to trucks/vans that have blown a tyre, but as you say if it's like a trailer tyre they would have to fix those too.

They would have all the tools and the knowledge on how to fix it or at least experience to work it out.

It might be worth talking to Ian Woolard about this, as they would be a approved supplier and he might be able to sort it as an emergency maintenance thing (SS).

Appendix 2

Site Maintenance Requests For 2022 (NMCC)

Cambridge Avenue

Tree work

Plot11 decisions need to be taken

Plot10B (Rachel) Lime tree

Plot 8A (Helen) Holly Tree

Warriston

- Rebuild wall at east end of communal area.
- Drainage ditch on west-east path to be reinstated.
- Permanent replacement for barbed wire to external security fencing in main site plots 80 and 15. Fence has temporary repairs which would be good to improve if possible.
- Removal of overhanging branches at the back of plots 82 – 86.
- Metal drain across west-east path to channel drainage into woodland area (roads department to supply).
- Repair wooden fence at plot 107.
- Re-roof cottage in corrugated iron or similar (Ian Woolard's suggestion).
- Drainage channel at top of south path to divert water from football car park.

Stenhouse

There are a few things that need attention at Stenhouse. They are: Felt missing from the communal shed roof (left hand shed) Wire netting is loose at the bottom of the entrance gate Dip in the path near the turning circle and low lying area near communal sheds are filling up with water on wet days and as a consequence becoming a haven for weeds. I think we could do with some more grit to fill the hole and level up the path.

West Mains'

1. Repointing the external walls of the small toilet block. The mortar has eroded badly and there are places where you could insert a hand between the bricks. 2. There are brick boundary walls at the north and

south of the site, both of which need some repointing: it is likely that these walls are a shared responsibility with neighbouring houses. The wall to the south is a retaining wall holding back the garden soil of a neighbouring house, so needs to hold considerable weight. 3. Trim back the shrubs along the sloping boundaries, some of which are significantly overgrown. 4. Road-topping is needed on the access track in front of the pond, which gets very wet and muddy from surface flooding. 5. Replacing the padlocks on both front and back gates as the mechanisms have aged and they do not always close securely. 6. We have had a spate of thefts in recent months. Boundary fences seem in good condition but it is too easy for people to vault the Blackford Road gate, or access the site along the adjacent garage roofs on Watertoun Road.