



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## ***Minutes of FEDAGA Management Committee Meeting At 7pm On Tuesday 14 April 2020 - Virtual Meeting Via Internet***

### **Present**

Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) (President); Ernie Watt (**EW**) (Cambridge Avenue) (Newsletter); Dave Roberts (**DR**) (Telferton Craigentiny) (Treasurer); Liz Grace (**EG**) (Midmar) (Secretary); John Grace (**JG**) (Midmar) (Allotment Show); Neiria McClure (**NMcC**) (Claremont Park); Alison Hewit (**AH**) (Warriston); Paul Kerr (**PK**) (Redhall) (Minutes); Heather McPherson (**HMCP**) (Northfield); Margaret Williamson (**MW**) (Stenhouse); Alice Bain (**AB**) (Warriston); Janet Bradbury (**JB**) (Saughton Mains); Alan Gordon (**AG**) (West Mains); Jane Robinson (**JR**) (West Mains).

### **1. Apologies**

Not available at this time

### **2. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the last Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 March were proposed by **EG** and seconded by **EW**.

### **3. Matters/Actions Arising**

The proposed FEDAGA small grants scheme is to be discussed further at the next meeting.

It was generally agreed that SAMH as a charity could join FEDAGA for free. It was **AGREED** that **DR** get in touch with them to work out the best arrangements for them as they do not configure with our normal membership arrangements which are for site associations and their members.

**SMcK** has been in contact with the Council regarding the public consultation on the new Allotment Regulations to find out what is to happen with the information/comments received but has not had a response. It was **AGREED** he ensure that the regulations are not enacted without further discussion.

### **4. Site Reports**

#### **Saughton Mains (JB)**

Site remains open and fairly well used, within the constraints of social distancing and other operational Covid 19 requirements. The toilets and other communal areas have

been closed. Some ploholders are self isolated and are concerned their sites look overgrown and uncultivated. The Association will support any ploholder in this category, should it become an issue.

There are a plethora of signs reminding people to abide by social distancing at all times, to sanitise any gates and locks used by people for access and exit, to wash hands after touching surfaces that other could have touched etc.

Regular emails and facebook posts have reminded people to follow the requirements or risk the site being closed. People have also been asked not to have bonfires, be conscious of how members of the public might view activity on the site such as sitting down eating and drinking tea, and make sure they do what needs to be done on their allotment and then go home.

Our annual skip hire was cancelled, this is something we do in April to give new ploholders, and old ones, the chance to get rid of unwanted rubbish, excluding wood and soil, from their sites. We hope to organise one later in the year.

We have a small rubbish bin which the Council empty. Partly because we haven't had a skip, it fills up very quickly and overflows, and we end up with a dump of rubbish to deal with. This weekend a flatscreen TV and other small electrical equipment has been dumped there and we are wondering how best to deal with the problem.

**DR** commented that any incidents of fly tipping should be reported to Ian Woolard.

**JB** added that if there are any further problems the communal waste container may be closed to further use.

**SMcK** remarked that there had been a similar problem at Inverleith.

**EG** commented that most sites seem to be managing okay and communicating with their ploholders by email. Sites should consider helping ploholders who are less able to manage and falling behind with routine maintenance of their plots.

**SMcK** has spoken with Ian Woolard regarding the position with neglected plots.

**JR** spoke with Ian Woolard last week on site and he said that he would be lenient on neglected plots during the current crisis.

## **Cambridge Avenue (EW)**

A compost delivery took place at the end of March. Most ploholders benefited from the reduced rates for Caledonian Horticulture bulk bags - some taking 1, some 2 bags per plot.

Due to social distancing and the access to the site being a single narrow footpath a rota was drawn up to give people a slot to barrow their compost in without coming into contact with others. This went very well.

One standpipe has required a repair as the wooden post was rotten. On investigation it was found the pipe is leaking below the surface. This may be repaired "in-house", failing which it will be reported to Ian Woolard.

The site has been busy, but everyone is keeping a good distance from each other and washing facilities have been provided by each tap, with a cloth, a bucket, shampoo (in lieu of handgel) and bleach spray. In addition, the taps, gate handle and padlock have been washed down on a regular basis with soapy water.

## **Warriston (AB)**

Plot holders are sticking to the guidelines, distancing, no fires, gloves on gates etc, and the site never seems overly busy at any one time. There's no great build up of cars in the car park either, in fact it would appear there are more bikes around.

### **Northfield Drive (HMCP)**

Everyone is socially distancing themselves and being responsible and we really have had no problems.

Of course our water will probably be delayed until next Spring!

### **Restalrig (DM)**

We have adopted a policy where plot holders are advising adjacent plotholders when they are going to be on site to maintain social distancing. This appears to be working well.

We've also set up an assist line by email and Facebook where plotholders who find themselves in a position that they cannot get to site can notify and ask for help with things such as watering.

However fortunately we all seem to be in good health at this time.

I've also noticed a lot of dumping on our site from non site origins. I've asked every one to try and keep the gates locked at all times.

### **Stenhouse (MW)**

We have had lots of people at the allotments so most plots are well tended. We need to control the plots of those who are being shielded. Ian Woolard has allocated all empty plots except one which hopefully will be allocated soon. We are keeping the onsite toilet open, as essential, and people will be careful about washing hands.

The message about the bonfires has gone out. We would welcome any tips about disposing of invasive weeds organically.

### **Midmar (JG)**

Notices are displayed on both gates and plot-holders are observing the restrictions. Activity is moderate – normal cultivation, preparation of seedbeds, and quite a lot of minor constructional work. Perhaps average for the time of year. No bon-fires evident. The car park is not usually full. A few family groups are working together, sometimes with dogs – some groups are sitting around talking rather than working.

### **Redhall (PK)**

Some fly tipping of an old bedframe and a mattress recently occurred on the site. The person(s) who did the dumping must have had a key but their identity is unknown and they were not seen. The matter was reported to Ian Woolard who thought that the closure of the Council's Civic Amenity Sites due to the Covid 19 Emergency measures may have been part of the story. Plotholders have been asked to report any suspicious activity or dumping of this kind.

## **5. President's Report (SMcK)**

**SMcK** mentioned a recent article in the press regarding an incident at Inverleith

allotments where the Police had spoken to a plotholder for being on the site. The Police have been advised to leave allotments alone.

The Council have been contacted regarding the outcome of the public consultation on the new Allotment Regulations but there has been no response as yet.

No allotment sites in Edinburgh applied for the tool project grants under the SAGS scheme.

The SASA potato trials order has been cancelled for this year.

**JG** queried the way information was so slow to come out regarding access to allotment sites during the Covid 19 crisis and the lockdown period. He suggested that email was perhaps not the most effective way for information to be distributed to the FEDAGA committee members when urgent communication was necessary. WhatsApp and phone were mentioned as being better avenues of communication.

**Action Point-** **SMcK** asked **EG** if the FEDAGA Committee membership list had up to date Contact phone numbers for everyone. **EG** to create a WhatsApp group of FEDAGA contacts.

## **6. Secretary's report (EG)**

Nothing new of interest to report

## **7. Treasurer's Report (DR)**

There has been very little expense over the last few months. The balance is currently £12,133.80. There was a clear profit of £ 367.50 on potato/onion/shallot orders. Ian Woolard has been contacted regarding the subscription moneys due to FEDAGA from the annual allotment fees.

## **8. Maintenance (NMCC)**

Nothing new of interest to report.

## **9. Planning (AH)**

Nothing of interest to note in recent planning applications

## **10. Annual Show (JG)**

### **Show report, April 2020**

In March, before the Covid-19 restrictions came into force I had a meeting with Councillor George Gordon and his assistant Stewart Forbes about venues. George promised he would find a suitable venue for us, suitable for a more ambitious larger event that might involve Edinburgh-wide food-growing organisations (via Edible Edinburgh). Since the restrictions have been imposed I have not heard from him.

My understanding is that the restrictions, or some of them, will remain in place well into September. In the last few days, the Dundee Flower and Food Festival, scheduled for the week before our Show, has been cancelled due to Covid-19.

Regretfully, I think we should officially cancel our Show too, and aim for a larger event in 2021.

**JG** advised that due to the Coronavirus pandemic and restrictions with social distancing particularly for over 70's likely to continue late into the year, we should cancel the annual allotment show this year. He also mentioned that in the last few days the Dundee Flower Show had been cancelled and Gardening Scotland had gone into liquidation. The question was then asked if everyone was in agreement with the show being cancelled and the consensus was that this was the appropriate action to take in these unprecedented times. It was suggested that, if circumstances permit, individual shows could take place on allotment sites at the end of the growing season.

## **11. AOCB**

**HMCP** - there is still no piped water supply on Northfield allotments.

**SMcK** – Peter Wright is not very well at the moment. Everyone wished him a speedy recovery.

The contact details of the supplier of leek seedlings to Gardening Scotland has been obtained and this information is to be shared with all allotment sites in due course.

**EW** enquired if it was possible to obtain membership list details from Ian Woolard. **EW** had been approached by a plothead at his allotment site and asked why they weren't being kept up to date on the position with access to allotments during the current lockdown. **EW** commented that it would be much easier for FEDAGA to update the membership on any news on access restrictions and other matters if we had their email contact details. This was important as the Council hadn't done a particularly good job on keeping plotheaders up to date on any restrictions during the current crisis. Every member who has paid their annual allotment fees has given their permission for their email address to be provided to FEDAGA.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 12 May 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.**

