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***FEDAGA Management Team Meeting***

***7.00pm on Tuesday 8 October 2019 at Southside Community Centre***

**Present**  : Stuart McKenzie (**SMcK**) (Inverleith) President ; Dave Roberts (**DR)** (Craigentinny; Telferton) (Treasurer ); Ernie Watt(**EW**) (Cambridge Ave); Elizabeth Grace (**EG**) (Secretary); John Grace (**JG**) ( Allotment Show);  Peter Wright (**PW**) (Lady Rd.); Maureen Edwards(**ME**) (Lady Road); Paul Kerr (**PK**) (Redhall) (Minutes); Alison Hewitt (**AH**)(Warriston); Neiria McClure (**NMcC**) (Claremont Park); Jan Bradbury(**JB**) (Saughton Mains);Yvonne Dawe(**YD**)(Saughton Mains)**;** Jane Robinson **(JR**) (West Mains);David Morrice (**DM**) (Restalrig)

Guests: Ian Woolard – Council Allotments Officer (IW)

**1. Apologies**: Heather MacPherson (HMacP)(Northfield) ; Alice Bain

(AB)(Warriston); Stuart Swarbrick

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th September had been

Circulated and were approved. Proposed by AH and seconded by DR.

**3. Matters Arising –** None

**4**. **Site Reports**

**Stenhouse** – have been approached by DR about repairing their two site

notice boards. DR is also dealing with a notice board repair at Hutchison.

Inverleith (SMcK) – pears have been going missing from trees at Inverleith.

This has been ongoing for a couple of months.

Lady Road (ME) – enquired about the First Aid Kits which are to be provided

to all allotment sites unless the site decides they do not want one. DR

confirmed that a suitable general purpose First Aid Kit had been selected but

letters had not yet been sent out to sites regarding this.

**Saughton** (JB) - pears may be going missing from trees. A refugee group has a plot at Saughton Mains and are doing well.

DR mentioned that a pest called Pear Midge can cause pears to drop

prematurely.

**West Mains** (JR) - West Mains were not emailed the details of the trading

scheme for potatoes, onions and shallots.

A survey has been done on the opinions of plot holders on the site constitution

Etc.- comments were received on the pond and biodiversity.The site cabin was

also commented on and people asked for improvements including a decking

area and porch . This opinion survey which is all about re-connecting with the

‘grass roots’ and engaging with plot holders ,will be discussed at their AGM.

**Claremont** (NMcC) – plot holders were notified that more help was needed

with clearing paths and cutting back bushes. There was a good response and

this weekend they will be clearing the waste away and having a BBQ

afterwards.

**Warriston** (AH) – A video of foxes at Warriston was shown on the One Show on

Thursday 21 September -the video clip is available on the BBC i-player until 22

October.

AGM is on 3 November 2019 at the Botanic Gardens.

**Restalrig** (DM) – AGM has taken place.

**Lady Road** (PW) – some plot holders are dumping their weeds in a pile in the

same area and not composting as they should. PW asked for suggestions on

how to prevent this. PW asked what FEDAGA’s definition of Organic was. JG replied that the definition was contained in the FEDAGA Annual Show Guide but it was not ideal as it used the term ‘etc.’ in the description, which was too vague.

**Midmar** (JG) - a successful Open Day took place several weeks ago. The communal cabin roof needs some repairs. Plums have been stolen from trees on site. A Pop-up shop for plants and seeds was held on site. Two new plotholders are very interested in hedgehog activity and two hedgehogs have been sited.

**Redhall** (PK) – a successful AGM was held on Saturday 21 September.

**Telferton/Craigentinny** – AGM will be held on 23 Octobe. A successful foraging /gourmet dining experience was recently held at the site from 4.30pm- 10pm where attendees were shown what foraged produce could be used and were then treated to a ten course meal using some of the foraged food. The event was organised by one of their working groups and cost £15 a head which was very good value and 21 attended the event.

**Cambridge Avenue** (EW) – there have been some problems with contractors accessing the rear of properties through the allotment site.

**Ferry Road (**SS) - checked the Grid Reference for Ferry road on the PDF which was sent and it was correct. The site AGM was held recently and as there were no other nominations for site rep. SS will continue in this role. They have submitted a nominations form for the AGM. There have been reports of theft of produce. For one couple, it's the second year in a row they've had their Squash stolen. Plot holders wanted to do a collective buy of bags of manure. The hedge that borders the crematorium needs a cut, but one of the plotholders from the top of the site has volunteered to borrow a hedge trimmer and do it himself.

**5. Allotment Officers Report (IW)**

Online applications are still proving to be very popular with an average of

Twenty new plotholders joining the list each week since the Spring.

The waiting list was validated in Spring 2019 and we started with 3,000

which fell to around 1600, however this has climbed since then.

The water at site is due to be turned off at the end of October . There were

many bursts when the water was turned on late March this year. However

these were repaired very quickly using a CEC outside contractor.

Summer this year was very different to 2018. I have never seen such growth

in all my years. Some plotholders have struggled and most have caught up

now. I am busy just now on my Autumn purge which is providing some

success . Overall most sites have been okay during the year apart from

vandalism at Warriston and some theft of produce. Some tenancy

terminations have proved difficult and some delicate handling was required.

I have used more of the maintenance budget this year on maintaining

grass, hedges etc. Help from our ground maintenance parks colleagues has

been scarce due to the Summer we had.To make the maintenance budget go

further on important items such as fencing etc. Maybe some sites could consider purchasing strimmers and hedge cutters with their site funds?

SMcK commented that cutting grass and hedges which was normally Council

Maintained should be the Council’s responsibility. Not as much has been spent

this year on improvements.

By Spring 2020 the allotment site at Newcraighall should be operational with 20-25 plots.

Piercehill could be a potential new site and new plots at Leith Links willbe created by 2021.

The Northfield site water supply issue is still ongoing but should be in place by

Spring 2020.

Lethem Park allotment site opened in late June 2019 with around 75 plots. So

far it is off to a good start. I am aware that they are having difficulties getting

the water connected to the mains. The current fees are £150 per year

payable annually in July.

CEC have changed their procurement system and this has been challenging

for me as many contractors I used to use are not on this system.

Rabbits are being reported at Carricknowe and Bridgend.

The last Allotments Strategy Group meeting was in June with the next one scheduled for December. Many good points were raised regarding

* the wording on 2020 allotment bills
* sharing contact details of plot holders with FEDAGA
* reviewing allotment Regulations
* water charges citywide
* Northfield water supply

A validation of the waiting list finished on 01/05/2019. 3,000 letters were sent out with around 1600 being returned. Of the 1600 returned around 500 were interested in being contacted with a view to forming allotment groups .

The wording of a letter to advise such groups is being developed. We looked at many possible sites with the property Strategy Group. There were some possibilities however many sites were rejected due to the land being “common good land”; apparently removal of this protected status may cost money.

The allotment Regulations are in the final draft stage and have been circulated

to the strategy group for review. The changes are with the solicitors who are

putting the final touches before it goes out for wider consultation.

This will be on the CEC consultation hub soon and will be open for comments.

It is hoped it will go to the selected Council Committee for approval in March

2020.

DR commented that some of the draft Regulations would need to be changed for example those specifying huts must be a specific colour and only one composting bin permitted.

The Scottish Ambulance Service has been supplied with information

regarding site locations, GPs etc. following a recent incident.

**6. Presidents Report**

SAGS - the EGM will be held on 23rd November approve the changes to change their status to a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This is a legal structure which has been purpose built for the voluntary sector in Scotland . It provides limited liability and a separate legal identity to organisations that want to become charities but do not want or need the complex structure of company law.

**7. Secretary's Report (EG)**

Receipt of nomination forms-at the last count was thirteen.

West mains will send their form after their AGM.

Rosina Weightman is resigning from committee and Saughton are

nominating Janet Bradbury for the committee

Stenhouse are nominating Margaret Williams for the committee.

Proposed change of FEDAGA name? This is to be discussed at the AGM and the

next Committee meeting.

Suggestions for speaker at the AGM - Edible Edinburgh or Deans, Livingston on

setting up private allotment sites.

**Action Point** - JG to look into obtaining an interesting speaker by early next

week for inclusion in the Newsletter and AGM agenda.

Using What3words-not possible because the app is not used by the ambulance

Service

FEDAGA Mission statement poster has been distributed to allotment sites.

**8. Treasurer’s Report (DR)**

The Dundee flower show excursion was not as well attended this year and

FEDAGA will need to consider whether to subsidise the event next year. Next

year the National Vegetable Society will have a presence which may attract

more interest.

**9**. **Maintenance (NMcC)**

Will speak to IW about works still to be done on the maintenance list.

**10. Planning**

Nothing found of interest relating to allotment sites amongst recent planning applications (**AH**)

**10. Trading**

No report . Potato/onion/shallot orders to be with Brian Bleakley by 16 October

**11. Annual Show report –**

**FEDAGA Vegetable and Flower Show, 2019, Draft Report**

The 2019 show was held on Saturday 14th September in the Methodist Church Hall, one week later than last year (which was itself one week later than ‘usual’). The later date was used to avoid a clash with the Dundee Flower and Food Festival.

The show succeeded in its aim of bringing together the Edinburgh allotment community. The show was publicized to Site Representatives, by posters, and via email distribution to plot-holders by Ian Woolard (Edinburgh City Council).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2012** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** |
| **Exhibitors** | 43 | 26 | 66 | 65 | 51 |
| **Entries** | 343 | 162 | 354 | 464 | 320 |

Entries were submitted from 18 sites (17 last year), the most exhibitors coming from Stenhouse (6) with significant numbers coming from Lady Road (5), Ferry Road (4) and Restalrig (4). An analysis of the gender-balance of competitors showed that 16 were male and 30 were female, with a few entries coming from male + female partners and those of unknown gender.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **category** | **2018** | **2019** |  |
| Flowers | 50 | 48 |  |
| Vegetables | 253 | 171 |  |
| Fruit | 73 | 38 |  |
| Plot to Plate | 75 | 55 |  |
| Children’s section | 13 | 8 |  |

**Trends in the classes from last year**

We made no changes to classes. Entries were dominated by the vegetable classes, as ever. Last year (2018) was an excellent summer for plant growth and that may account for the high number of entries in that year, but the lower number of entries this year occurs not just in vegetables, flowers and fruit, but also in plot to plate and in the Children’s section. Possibly the publicity was less effective.

**Support from the staff of the Methodist Hall**

There were unexpected difficulties in the run-up to the Show. There had been a misunderstanding, and the wrong hall had been booked by the Methodist staff; moreover, the café was being refurbished and therefore was unavailable. To provide basic refreshments, we ran a self-help facility in the café room, and our judges were taken to the nearby café Elephants and Bagels. On the day, the Hall staff supported us well, helping with the assembly and dismantling of the tables and providing the sound system.

**Other events**

We were fortunate to be joined once more by Mark Hocart, Dean of the Edinburgh Centre of Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC), and an expert on plant diseases, who was on hand to give advice to gardeners. We exhibited SASA Heritage Potatoes, plot-holders’ poems and ran tomato-tasting. Poems will be published in the FEDAGA Newsletter.

**Thanks to the judges**

The judges (Jim Mercer, vegetables; Eleanor Marshall, plot to plate) discharged their duties admirably, managing to complete the judging in the short time available. Both are keen to judge next year.

**Support from the Edinburgh Council**

Prizes were awarded by Councillor George Gordon, Chair of Edible Edinburgh. Afterwards he made encouraging remarks about Edinburgh allotments, and indicated his willingness to help us where necessary regarding Council matters. We are following up this contact.

**Costs (pending)**

Entry to the Hall was free to all and no charge was made for competing. The cost was £1064.94 which is equivalent to £16.14 per entrant and £2.15 per exhibit. The largest items of expenditure were engraving of the trophies (£283) and hire of the hall (£225). See appendix for breakdown of costs.

**Possible dates of next year’s show**

(If we are to avoid a clash with the Dundee Flower and Food Festival, we should avoid September 5th)

**Thanks**

It was my third year as Show Secretary. The success of the show is the result of excellent teamwork by a willing Committee: Neiria McClure, Alison Hewitt, Ernie Watt, Alice Bain, Dave Roberts, Peter Wright, Paul Kerr, Rosina Weightman, Maureen Edwards, Stuart McKenzie. I thank them all.

John Grace, October 2019

Full Report will have list of prizewinners and a selection of photographs.

**12. AOCB – AGM** on 22 October at 7pm

**13. Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday 12 November at 7pm**.**