**Management Committee Meeting**

**7.15pm On 10 March 2015 At Southside Community Centre**

**Present**: Peter Wright - Lady Road(President) ; Patrick Gibb – West Mains (Treasurer) ; Brian Bleakley – Midmar – (Trading ); Dave Roberts – Restalrig (Wish list) ; Gilbert Clark – Midmar ; Maureen Edwards – Lady Road ; Willie Aitken – Carrick Knowe; Jon Gray – Warriston ; Neiria McClure – Claremont Park ; Lorraine Corbett

**1. Apologies:** Ernie Watt – Cambridge Avenue ; Stuart MacKenzie – Inverleith ; John McKinlay - Craigentinny ; Liz Grace – Midmar ; Rik Hart - Warriston

**2.** Minutes of Previous Meeting: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**3. Matters Arising: Strategy Group Meeting –** Peter and Stuart attended the last Strategy Group Meeting - David Jamieson – CEC Parks and Green Space Manager wants to produce a draft strategy with a new proposal on allotment rents which will have a 2 month public consultation period. The aim is to have this in place by January 2016.

Stuart asked if CEC wanted to produce a profit out of allotments but did not receive an answer.

Peter said that CEC were losing a lot of good will from allotment holders due to the recent rent increase issue.

A letter has been sent to City Of Edinburgh Council (CEC) reminding them of the agreement that there was to be no allotment rent increases until 2020.

The letter also contains 7 different proposals including issues on rents; a minimum charge for even the smallest allotments - FEDAGA have recommended a minimum charge of £25 for allotments ;definition of an allotment.

This letter will be used as a starting point for any further discussions with CEC on allotments.

Rents for other Community growing projects were also discussed at the strategy meeting – some such as Gorgie City Farm and other Community Gardens which are understood to pay rent .

CEC are looking at more devolved management. The Council Allotment Officer was previously dealing with 1200 allotment plots. However with the newly created sites he is now dealing with 1423 plots which has greatly increased his workload. Devolving some management responsibility to individual allotment sites would help him focus his time on the more important issues he has to deal with. However this would require that all allotment sites had an active Committee which some do not.

Gilbert suggested that a Councillor should be made the Chair of the Strategy Group as we cannot easily challenge Officials on decisions however a Councillor can do this on behalf of his constituents.

Gilbert made the point that an Allotment is defined as a piece of ground capable of growing food to support a family of four .However Allotments today have become more of a leisure activity/pastime.

Peter commented that the cost to City of Edinburgh Council of administering the Allotment scheme is £181,000 and he is currently waiting for breakdown of this figure from Bob McAllister. Taking out the allotment officer’s salary, the remainder is spent on site maintenance and the Capital cost for newly created allotment sites.

**4 Allotment Officer’s Report : IW**   **-**  submitted in writing –

1.    Fedaga association payment should now be released and settled now

2.    Continuing vandalism at Bridgend and lesser vandalism elsewhere. There were fires at Craigentiiny too. This is the worst spell I have known for many years. I have involved the police and community safety teams.

3.    Allocated work on most sites has been successful this year, however, there are still some works outstanding which will be finished of very soon. These include Lady Road, Saughton, and  Ferry Road

4.    Victoria Bowling Green new allotment site due to start at the end of March

5.    IW is giving top priority to letting vacant plots just now

6.    Northfield Drive new site is slowly taking shape as plots are re-let

7.    Water not yet installed at Drumbrae although track dug. Delay was due to water pipe being laid on top of an electricity cable and the track was made larger. Estimated completion date is the end of march

8.    Plot inspection programme started for the year.

9.    Water will be turned on at the end of the march and repairs carried out where needed

10. Warristion toilet to be transferred to Saughton and some fence repairs to be carried out after recent vandlism

Future orders for 2015/16

To determined as per wish list and updates sent to DR prior to each meeting

Brief letter summary(where no sites are mentioned no letters were sent)

Barnscourt    letter one plot 2

Bridgend        leased terminated on plot 17 letter one plot 32

Craigentinny letter one plot 13 and 19

Ferry Road    letter one plot 19

India Place    3 recent terminations with new offers out

Lady Road     letter one plot 7a

Leith Links    letter one plots 15 and 16a

Midmar 2        letter one plot 8,8a

Saughton      letter one plot 14,17,42,74,81,101,178,179

Stenhouse    letter one plot 26

Warristion     letter one plot 40a,47a,74,94,105

**5. Consideration of Reports :**

**Secretary’s Report:** Apologies

**Treasurer’s Report :** £3420.70 expected back from CEC to be divided proportionately between allotment sites.

Dave Roberts agreed to take over the Treasurer’s post from Patrick Gibb who is moving away from the area (thank you for your efforts Patrick).Dave Roberts who has done sterling work as wish list controller has handed over this role to Neiria McClure of Claremont Park.

**Trading report:** Brian Commentedon the problem with the seed Potato delivery this year which was outwith our control. The delivery man fell ill but did not contact Brian to inform him of the cancellation. It was proposed and agreed that the Potato delivery date would be changed from a Sunday to a Wednesday next year. The potatoes ,onions and shallots have all been sold so the order this year was spot on.

**Site Reports:**

Maureen commented on the planned work to the path at Lady Road which is being done soon on a Sunday.

Lorraine Corbett commented that the composting toilet at Ferry Road is broken and enquired about having it removed. She also enquired about the position with paying volunteers to do repair work on the site . The committee advised that each Allotment site committee could spend its own site funds as they considered appropriate.

One allotment site was recently broken into by thiefs cutting through the chain link fence . They had broken into some huts and stolen 5Kg of seed potatoes.

The theft was reported to the Police who have recorded the incident. Ian has also been notified and a repair to the fence is being carried out on Thursday.

**SAGS Report:**  Peter said that SAGS want to take Section 7 out of the Community Empowerment Bill as amongst other things, there is no definition of waiting times; no definition of an allotment site; no definition of a fair rent .The Scottish Government want to keep S7 in the Bill. .The big issue is in defining what an allotment site is- proposed a piece of land 250 square metres used for growing vegetables to feed a family.

Gilbert commented that there should be limit on permanent crops grown on an allotment such as fruit trees and fruit bushes which can quickly become large and overgrown.

**6. Any Other Competent Business:**

The keys for the Inverleith shop are to be returned to Stuart.

The takings from the shop from last Sundays trading are to be collected.

**7. Date Of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th April.**