



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

***Management Committee Meeting
7.15pm on 8th November 2016 at Southside Community Centre***

Present: Committee: Stuart McKenzie - Inverleith (**SMcK**) (President) : Ernie Watt - Cambridge Avenue (**EW**) (Secretary) : Dave Roberts - Restalrig (**DR**) (Treasurer) : Maureen Edwards - Lady Road (**ME**) : Gilbert Clark - Midmar (**GC**) : Alison Hewitt - Warriston (**AH**) : Jenny McKenzie - Dumbryden (**JMcK**) : Alice Bain - Warriston (**AB**) : Rosina Weightman - Saughton Mains (**RW**) : John Grace - Midmar (**JG**) : Paul Kerr - Redhall (**PK**); Observers: Willie Aitken - Carrick Knowe (**WA**) : Jake Booth - Carrick Knowe (**JB**).

1. Apologies: Mary Simpson - Saughton Mains (**MS**); Neiria McClure - Claremont Park (**NMcC**).

2. Actions from 11th October: **EW** had contacted interested parties regarding the Lothian Pollinators Project and the beehives at Bridgend. **SMcK** said the Apple Press had been in service at Inverleith.

3. Site Reports: **WA** said he had been in touch with Councillors regarding the need for maintenance on the soil bund at Carrick Knowe. He noted that the tree work promised (and paid for) a number of years ago is still outstanding.

EW reported on a successful request for Councillors to take action. A neighbour had fly tipped a large quantity of refuse in the lane by the entrance to Cambridge Avenue. After 4 months of inaction it took less than 2 weeks from making the complaint to the rubbish being cleared up.

RW said that 5 enthusiastic new ploholders had arrived at Saughton Mains and were busy tackling their derelict plots. However, she observed that quite a few recent arrivals are not yet working their plots satisfactorily.

JMcK had been gathering ideas to be put into implementation at Dumbryden. Raised beds will now be painted and leaf mould bays will be installed.

GC reported that in his opinion there had been no improvements made at Midmar by the Council over the last decade, apart from dealing with the rabbit infestation. However, he noted that due to too much undergrowth by the fence it was not possible to check how rabbit proof it is. **SMcK** suggested that as we have no power to force the Council to deal with this, it may be better to take the initiative and use a strimmer to clear the weeds. **JG** undertook to raise the matter with the Midmar committee. **ACTION - JG.**

JG said that a spring in the middle of the Midmar site has come back to life 20 years after being diverted and drained. It was **AGREED** that this should be reported to the Allotment Officer as it affected a path and could constitute a slip hazard. **SMcK** noted that ploholders are obliged to maintain paths bordering their plots under the terms of their lease.

AH said the large leaf mould heap at Warriston had recently diminished leaving weeds including bindweed and nettles. Discussions are taking place among ploholders about whether to keep this and, if not, what to do with the land it stands on. The Allotment Officer has agreed to provide help eradicating pernicious weeds. **SMcK** recommended that, based on the Inverleith experience, raised “apprentice” beds are a good idea and may be preferable to a single plot. There was uncertainty over who actually dumps the leaf mould, although it was likely to be the Council.

AB said that private contractors dump material on the Warriston compost heap but is not yet clear who they are or how these arrangements were originally made. Investigations into deliveries of leaves and grass cuttings are taking place.

AB asked the committee if they would give permission for their emails to be added to the Warriston website newsletter list, which they did. **AB** also **AGREED** to send **EW** an update on the Warriston website for the next FEDAGA Newsletter. **AB** has said, in addition, she would post news of the new committee on the Warriston website. **ACTION - AB.**

DR reported on frustrated efforts to get the Council to provide paint for the communal shed. If not maintained, he said, it would deteriorate and be rendered unusable.

PK told the meeting that 2 bee hives have been established and successfully run for a year in a secluded area at Redhall.

4. Secretary’s Report: **EW** said he had been contacted by Dean allotments (formerly Dean Gallery) about access to the trading scheme. He advised them that they should affiliate to benefit their members. It was **AGREED** that **SMcK** attend their AGM, if invited, on 15th November. **ACTION - EW** to contact Dean.

EW said that **JMcK** had developed a blog on the website which would be open to contributions from all members. This will be publicised in the next Newsletter.

5. Treasurer’s Report: **DR** presented accounts to 5th November. The current account balance is £9251.76. Committed expenditure of £1046.24 has yet to be subtracted from that figure. The Bond is £4519.68. Total assets are £12,519.74. An application for internet banking is being progressed. **DR** recommended that the Bond held in the Co-operative Bank should be moved to a higher interest account. It was **AGREED** to investigate this. **ACTION - DR.**

6. President’s Report: **SMcK** reported on 2 meetings he had attended. The Lothian Pollinators Project Group have completed a study showing that allotments are the best places for pollinators. This provides further justification for developing more allotments. It is likely that by including references to pollinators in bids for funding the chances of success will be enhanced. It was **AGREED** that **JMcK** attend future meetings as FEDAGA representative. **ACTION - JMCK.**

The other event was a Community Growing Workshop organised by the Central Scotland Greenspace Network (CSGN) at which it was reported that by 2050 there should be a tripling of space available for growing. The accent is on community gardens, but allotments have a big part to play as well. Over this timescale £1.5bn of funding will be available to community groups. It is notable this money is not

going to Councils. Also, this is not new money but existing funding repackaged. This news further supports the plan for new sites as outlined in the Council's Allotment Strategy Document.

7. Maintenance Report: NMcC had circulated a Repair and Maintenance Report from the Allotment Officer. This included the statement that "£5K will be removed as a cost saving". **WA** said the long delayed tree pruning work at Carrick Knowe, described as "ongoing", had still not taken place. **SMcK** said he had spoken to the Allotment Officer, who told him he intends to come to a FEDAGA meeting in the New Year. It was **AGREED** to write to site reps and ask for (1) items that have been requested but not completed and (2) new items to be considered. **ACTION - NMcC**. This will be discussed prior to the meeting with the Allotment Officer, which will be scheduled for March.

8. Strategy Report: SMcK said that Council officials are working through the responses to the Strategy Document consultation. He said that he had persuaded the Council to proceed to initiate planning for the creation of the first "DIY" site at the former Lismore Primary School prior to formal adoption of the Strategy. He said it would be advantageous to have other groups such as the pollinator group, CSGN and community orchards represented on the Strategy committee. It was **AGREED** that **SMcK**, **DR** and **JMcK** represent FEDAGA at future meetings. **ACTION - SMcK, DR and JMCK**.

9. Social and Educational: JG said that he will start organising for next year's Allotment Show in January. He identified publicity as a key issue, suggesting fliers in libraries, and said that moving the location away from a church may encourage more participation. He had ideas for promoting children's involvement and proposed approaching EcoSchools who may have their own growing spaces. **AB** said that the fun aspect should be promoted. **JG** also suggested a photo competition on the theme of pollinators on allotments. It was **AGREED** to prepare ideas for a meeting in February.

SMcK reported that the Head of Parks and Greenspace is in favour of reinstating the Allotment Forum. This would have the aim of bringing service provider together with service user. **DR** suggested those on the Waiting List should be included.

SMcK said FEDAGA should nominate someone to work with the Council on staging the event. **JMcK** suggested this should be someone already on the Strategy committee. No individual was identified. The event is likely to take place around springtime.

SMcK said the SASA Heritage Potato Trials were now over. There was discussion on the extremely variable quality of potatoes included, with Aura being particularly singled out for praise.

SMcK asked for suggestions for places to visit which could be organised for members next year.

10. Trading Schemes: Some sites have yet to place their orders, but it is not yet too late. **JG** expressed concern at the poor customer service from Kings after a packet of Gardeners Delight tomatoes turned out to be yellow plum tomatoes

instead. **SMcK** said this mistake was unprecedented and had cost Kings a lot as they have supplied commercial growers with this mislabelled seed. He explained that most seeds come from China and the error would have originated there.

DR suggested bulk orders of items such as netting which could be sold on to site associations at a big discount. **EW** said that in the past FEDAGA had ceased such trading as no-one was willing to act as Shop Manager. It was **AGREED** that in principle this was a good idea but how it could be made to work was the problem due to logistical difficulties. However, opportunities to identify suppliers who would be willing to offer discounts to member sites should be explored.

11. Any Other Business: SMcK suggested a workshop for those involved in contributing to the blog, newsletter and website. This should be opened out to members from site associations who might be interested in setting up such means of communication for their own sites. It was **AGREED** that a workshop would be held in place of the scheduled meeting on 10th January. **ACTION - EW and ME.** **AH** asked if the Council would be sending out information about subscriptions with the January invoices. **EW** said that he would prepare a statement encouraging payment of subscriptions so that members can continue to benefit from FEDAGA activities. **ACTION - EW.**

It was **AGREED** to lessen the number of regular meetings. There will be no meeting in December. In 2017 there will be meetings on the second Tuesday of the month in February, March, April, May, June, July, September, October and November. It was suggested that the December meeting should be a social occasion.

WA said that as he had volunteered to sort bulk onions into individual bags he would need to have them delivered a week prior to the potato order. It was **AGREED** he contact Brian Bleakley to arrange this. **ACTION - WA.**

12. Date of Next Meeting: 14th February 2017.