



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## Minutes of FEDAGA Management Committee Meeting 7pm Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021 - Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

### Present

Stuart McKenzie (SMcK)(Inverleith)(President); Liz Grace (EG) (Midmar)(Secretary); John Grace (JG)(Show Convenor)(Midmar); Ernie Watt (EW)(Cambridge Ave)(Newsletter); Alison Hewitt (AH) (Warriston)(Trading and Planning); Paul Kerr (PK)(Redhall) (Minutes); Jan Bradbury (JB)( Saughton Mains); John Nisbet (JN)(Telferton/Craigentiny); Stuart Swarbrick (SS)(Ferry Road); Alan Gordon (AG)(West Mains); Lorna Henderson (LH)(Carricknowe); Alex Taylor (AT)(Portobello East Jn.); Heather MacPherson(HMacP) (Northfield)

### 1. Apologies

Alice Bain (Warriston); Pamela McKay (Lethem Park); Nils Tomes (West Mains); Chris McKinnell (Lady Road); Margaret Williamson (Stenhouse); Maureen Edwards (Lady Road); Steve Mathieson (Leith Links); Neiria McClure (Claremont)

### 2. Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Proposed – John Grace. Seconded – Ernie Watt

### 3. Matters Arising/Action Points from previous meeting –

**Action Point** -Windfall (AKA Nature Restoration Fund) money of £10,000 from CEC. Ongoing and money to be spent on range of items including shredders and rainwater harvesting by the end of the week.

### 4. Site Reports

#### Northfield (HMacP)

There is now piped water on the site however it is not as strong a flow at the standpipe as had been expected.

#### Carricknow (LH)

The grass banking which covers a large area has been strimmed. The banking now looks rather bare with the brambles having been cut back. There is to be a meeting next year to discuss what ploholders want. May consider planting apple trees with a dwarf rootstock along the line of the fence.

#### Inverleith (SMcK)

We held a very successful Apple Day arranged by one keen ploholder. We enjoyed juicing wheelbarrow-full of apples donated by the site. A lot was drunk there and then, more went home and

the remaining 25litres will become cider, ready for our Tattie Boiling next year. Our thanks to FEDAGA for the loan of the press etc.

A communal compost bin full of good compost has been opened up and offered to ploholders to come and get it.

Thanks also to Ian W. for keeping the water flowing.

A site order of potting compost will be made later, comments on the last non peat delivery have been invited before we make our choice.

Some ploholders have reported thefts of pears, myself included

### **Ferry Road (SS)**

- We're still "chipping" away if you'll pardon the pun - plenty of woody material being chipped up before it's gone into the compost heap. Really seems to be making a difference, as even with just the stuff we've been chipping, it's sped up the process and the heap kept sinking down. D. Redgate reported it was warm and steamy as he was levelling it off before putting on the cover.
- I've not noticed any fires, despite the ban lifting - not saying they're not happening, just I'm not aware. I'm hoping between the chipper and the wood recycling, folk don't feel the need to burn stuff.
- We've closed off this year's heap, opened a new one and we're working on emptying the old one from last year. We guesstimate we've put at least 10 metric tonnes into this year's heap, based on the returns formula from SEPA.
- We have a site work day planned for Saturday 20th November, probably the last one we'll manage this year.
- The Small Grant Scheme Leaf Blower has been hard at work - between D. Redgate and myself, we managed to clear and bag the entire main path's autumn leaves in a morning (I was on the back shift). This lasted about two days before it was covered in leaves again 😞 - but at least it's not as big a job this time.
- The trade waste bin has been emptied regularly throughout the season, which has been wonderful. We're still doing the recycling, but the non-recyclable, residual stuff goes in the trade waste bin.

### **West Mains (NT)**

Amendments have been made to the planning application by CALA for the development of the St Crispin's School site into housing. This site shares a boundary with West Mains Allotments. Comments can be made on this revised application until the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021. There are concerns that the plans, as they stand, will increase flooding and surface water on the allotment site unless drainage is improved within the St Crispin's site.

CALA homes suggested they create a swale (definition-artificial swales are designed to slow and capture runoff by spreading it horizontally across the landscape (along an [elevation contour line](#)), facilitating runoff infiltration into the soil.

Alan Gordon also added a short report about the possibility of hiring a roving wood chipper- he writes- I was going to ask sites to please see if there is interest. Ian Woolard is interested in the idea and mentioned about paying for it.

It would mean hiring a forestry company with a chipper to go round as many sites as can be fitted in during a day.

I am happy for folks to email me directly if their site would like to be included.

It would require someone at each chosen site to be free on the day to open the gate and the wood pile to be readily available and of the correct maximum size. The chippings would then be left for the site to use on paths or as mulch.

If there is interest, I would then approach forestry companies.

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

Saughton has had its first frost, hitting the last of the beans, raspberries late flowering dahlias and cosmos. With that, many ploholders have started to clear their plots and get them ready for winter. The green composting bins have come into their own, you wonder what people used to do with all their green waste before we had this facility. We need additional capacity, and have submitted a bid to the Gilbert Clark Foundation for materials to construct another 2 bays.

The Chalet veranda still needs to be secured back to the chalet after the storm that shifted the roof during the summer. We are keen to get this done asap so we can treat the wooden decking before winter. The chalet also needs to be repainted after the works to fix the roof back to the main building, but this may need to wait to Spring.

A number of plots have not been used for a number of months and we are keen to see all sites used productively. It helps to reduce the waiting list for allotments and always welcome new ploholders to the site.

### **Leith Links (SM)**

We are still waiting for a meeting with the developers and Ian Woolard to discuss the height of any new fence.

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

An allotment strategy meeting was held with the Allotment Service but I was unable to attend.

EG, EW and DR represented FEDAGA at the meeting held on 29 October 21 at Inverleith. EW made notes ahead of 'official' minutes which were being written by IW.

EW gave a summary of the meeting and a copy of the notes taken at the meeting will be circulated to the Committee members with the Minutes.

Out of approximately 1700 tenants there have been only around 1400 subscribers to FEDAGA. The number of ploholders who have not subscribed is much higher than previously thought although this could be partly due to the limited number of email addresses held by CEC.

GAF has asked for a Zoom meeting to discuss matters important to both organisations. SMcK, EG, EW and DR will attend probably in early December.

On the subject of toilet provision on allotment sites, FEDAGA is to consider a policy on how we progress this.

Apparently, there is a £12 cost for every invoice raised by CEC for annual allotment site fees. AG commented on the high cost of this (£12 x 1700 plots). JG enquired if this was just a notional cost.

DR proposed raising this with the Councillor who is involved with allotment sites policy.

LH commented that the brown bin invoicing system for green garden waste seemed to operate very efficiently and why couldn't the allotment fee invoicing system operate along similar lines.

**Action Point** - SMcK will speak to IW regarding this matter.

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

There was no correspondence of note.

A few errors in the October minutes were notified and will be corrected before the Final minute are posted on the FEDAGA website.

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

There is currently £16,335.29 in the bank account. This is high as we have banked the monies for the purchase of the POSG & L (potatoes, onions, shallots & leeks) and have still to pay the suppliers.

A reminder- people to put in their site submissions for the Gilbert Clark Foundation Grants which are due in by the middle of December.

Kings Seeds have been paid but no invoice has been received yet from Clydeside Trading.

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

Ongoing with IW.

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

Cala homes have submitted amended plans for St Crispin's School. There is no obvious change to the drainage issues which will potentially affect West Mains allotments. The last date for submission of new comments on the amended proposals is 19 November. The planning application is to be considered at a full planning committee meeting.

No other applications found which affect Allotments. Most sites are now monitored by AH, EG and JB.

JB advised AG that he could take a deputation to the planning committee meeting .LH suggested that AG could ask his local Councillor to speak on his behalf. EW mentioned the names of several local Councillors who could be contacted.

AH thanked EG ,EW and JB for assisting with checking planning applications potentially affecting allotment sites.

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

No news to report at this time.

## **11. Trading (AH)**

24 sites have submitted orders totalling just over £4700. Charlotte is the most popular potato, as usual, with 124 bags having been ordered, 360 bunches of leeks, and nearly 200 garlic bulbs and over 200 Elephant garlic cloves have been ordered. Thank you to all the sites who have ordered and paid promptly. Most people managed to use the new form and we now have contact details for people

who are managing their sites orders and will check during the summer if they are still going to be doing it so hopefully sites will get the information in a timely manner next year.

Only three items have had to be substituted, Dunluce early potatoes which were to be replaced by International Kidney. International Kidney are now sold out and will be replaced by Jazzy. Red Biztro shallot which will be replaced with Red Sun. This is a problem with suppliers. Some varieties of potato will be 2.5kg bags rather than 2kg as they have had to be sourced from different suppliers but the price remains the same. The orders will be delivered to FEDAGA a little earlier than usual at the end of January 2022. Details about collection will be given nearer the time. LH enquired how the order forms had been received. AH- mostly as electronic returns and only 3-4 as physical printouts.

## 12. AOCB

**Action Point** - Everyone to read the notes on the strategy group meeting before the next committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

EG would like **all sites** to send in information on their existing onsite toilet facilities. EW to include the request in the newsletter

SMcK - it would also be useful to know about old toilet facilities which are no longer functional and have been re-purposed.

SMcK requested that AH put a note in the next Newsletter about the substitutions for some potato varieties in this year's potato order scheme.

## 13. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 14 December 2021

**Please note-**

**All further meetings in person are cancelled until further notice due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Future meetings will be held by internet conferencing using Zoom.**

## Appendix 1

### Comments on Toilets (SS).

On the issue of the toilets on the site, I can't recommend Joe Jenkins and his "Humanure Handbook" highly enough. <https://humanurehandbook.com/>

You can download and read PDF copies of the book for free, there's a condensed version too.

I built a version of the "lovable loo" a few years ago as a stopgap until we got something better in place. It's made out of several stacked pallets, a toilet seat and several of the Kerbside Food Waste bins (they have a carry handle that locks the lid). I used what we had to hand at the time.

We have a dedicated compost heap that I empty the bins into once they're all full. The emptying takes about 10 minutes, including rinsing them out and propping them open to dry.

Unlike the handbook suggests, I'm not putting food scraps in, as there are enough concerns about Rats and Vermin on site. Instead I've been mixing the freshly cut grass in, as well as the occasional bag of spent coffee grounds when we get them. We've not harvested any compost from it this year, instead it keeps sinking down, which is fine by us, as it means we don't need to build another bay.

We're hoping to make some improvements to the toilet block over the winter - hopefully build a new, proper, lovable loo, take out the Sun Mar toilet as it's a pain in the proverbial to empty, and there's plans to put in a basic gravity fed, water hand wash unit - to take dirt off, then the hands can be sanitised.

The further step will be to experiment with heating the water using a compost pile - we've found that the piles of chippings heat up quite a bit after a few days. The goal wouldn't be to boil the water, but taking the chill off would be nice for over the colder, frostier days. Relevant video here from RED gardens: [https://youtu.be/xh\\_731DFSy0](https://youtu.be/xh_731DFSy0)