

West Mains Allotment Association Constitution

Adopted 4th October 2015. Amended October 2016, October 2017 and October 2018.

- 1 The society shall be known as West Mains Allotment Association (the Association).
- 2 The purpose of the Association is to:
 - promote the gardening and related interests of all allotment holder members on the West Mains Allotments Site (the site);
 - promote the best use of the site as a centre of gardening, with an emphasis on environmentally sustainable practices;
 - provide a means by which matters of mutual allotment and gardening related interest are communicated to all members ; and
 - through the Committee represent members interests with the Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Associations (FEDAGA).
- 3 Membership of the Association shall be all plot-holders on the Site, whether cultivating a whole or half plot.
- 4 Each plot (whether a whole or half) shall have one vote in any decision making. Where responsibility for a plot is shared, the plot-holders shall decide between themselves who exercises the vote.
- 5 The business of the Association shall be conducted by a Committee comprising three office bearers (Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer) and between two and five further members.
- 6 The Committee may co-opt up to three persons with special expertise in an advisory capacity (no vote)
- 7 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held once yearly to receive reports from the current office-holders, to appoint an auditor or competent person to check the Association's accounts, to elect the Committee and to conduct any other competent business.
- 8 Special General Meetings (SGMs) may be called by the Committee or by a written request to the Secretary signed by at least 20% of the membership stating the reason for calling a SGM.
- 9 Voting shall be conducted by show of hands (or secret ballot if requested by at least one member) and decisions taken by a simple majority.
- 10 A minimum of 21days notice shall be given for a General Meeting by email and by posting clear notices on the site Notice Boards.
- 11 Members of the Committee shall be elected for one year and shall be eligible for re-election for up to three terms, after which they shall stand down for a minimum of one year unless no replacement member can be found *.
- 12 Quorum for General Meetings shall be 17 members and for Committee meetings a majority of members.
- 13 The Committee may form Sub-Committees to carry out specific tasks such as:
 - Organise work parties keeping common areas tidy.
 - Organise any social functions.
 - Site Representative: Maintain a list of all plot-holders and act as the co-ordinator between the members and City of Edinburgh Council.
 - Trading: To co-ordinate purchases from FEDAGA for group or individual purchase by the plot-holders.

- 14 Provided the Committee is in agreement office bearers may, from time to time, delegate their powers, fully or partially, to other full members on a temporary basis.
- 15 In the event of a vacancy among the office bearers the Committee may call a SGM to elect a replacement, fill the vacancy from among the elected Committee members or co-opt a volunteer in an acting capacity until the next AGM.
- 16 Responsibilities of the Committee and Office Bearers are defined in Appendix II.
- 17 The Association's annual membership fee forms part of the annual rental charge for the plot and is paid to the Association via FEDAGA.
- 18 Whenever possible expenditure on behalf of the Association shall be approved by the Committee before being incurred.
- 19 Should the Association be dissolved for any reason the following action shall be taken:
 - All records shall be adequately annotated for re-use and lodged with the Secretary of (FEDAGA) or other nominated body.
 - The accounts shall be checked or audited and all moneys and equipment transferred to the care of FEDAGA or other nominated body. If the dissolution is temporary, the Treasurer of FEDAGA or other nominated body shall be asked to keep the moneys and equipment available for any renewed association. If the dissolution is permanent FEDAGA or other nominated body use the moneys and equipment at its own discretion.
- 20 No alteration shall be made to this Constitution and Rules except by resolution of an AGM or an SGM called for this purpose.
- 21 Motions for changes to the Constitution and site-specific rules should be sent to the Secretary at least 42 days before the proposed date of a General Meeting requested to consider them and notified to the members at the time and in the manner of giving notice for said General Meeting. For the motion to be put to a vote the proposer must attend the meeting to explain the reasons for the change or send a representative to do so on their behalf.'

* exceptionally, when a committee is formed with a majority of new members, then half the committee may stand for re-election for an additional year to ensure continuity.

Association Rules

The general rules are those produced by the City of Edinburgh Council, repeated below for reference.

1. Cultivation: 75% of the plot area should be under cultivation at any time. Plots should also be well stocked with crops in as healthy condition as possible, bearing in mind current weather and season. Unplanted areas should be reasonably free from weeds and not causing a nuisance to neighbouring plots. The soil should show evidence of being actively managed. Attention of plot-holders is drawn to the site inspection and termination procedures agreed by the Allotment Strategy Steering group.
2. Site rules: plot-holders are required to observe any rules that are particular to their allotment sites. If in doubt, plot-holders should contact their site association representative for advice.
3. Dogs: dogs may be brought on to the site but must be kept on a lead at all times and must not be allowed to become a nuisance to other plot-holders. Any fouling must be bagged and binned by the owner.
4. Livestock: the keeping of livestock, including bees, on the plot is not permitted.
5. Bonfires: generally, plant material and weeds should be composted on site. Plot-holders may burn only plant material arising from the plot itself, such as diseased plants and excessively woody material that cannot be composted. No material may be brought on to the site for

burning and no synthetic materials, plastic, paper, treated woods, metals or other non-plant material may be burned. Burning synthetic material and treated wood may give rise to toxic and carcinogenic smoke. Plot-holders are required to give consideration to other plot-holders when choosing where and when to have a bonfire, and must not leave the fire untended.

6. Trees: no trees other than fruit trees shall be cultivated or allowed to grow on the plot. If requested by the Council, the plot-holder must agree to the removal of any trees over 7.5cm diameter at breast height.
7. Other guidelines: other guidance is produced by the Council and others from time, such as advice on composting, promoting biodiversity, organic gardening etc, and the plot-holders attention is drawn to these.
8. Water conservation: plot-holders are reminded that water is not an inexhaustible supply and they should use it responsibly. Water conservation measures such as mulching are effective in reducing moisture loss and also help to control weeds.
9. Sheds, glass houses and other structures: The plot-holder is permitted to erect a wooden shed for storage of tools and materials; a glass house for cultivation of plants, fruits and vegetables; a cold frame. Plot-holders must observe Planning legislation at all times and must maintain structures in a reasonably good condition.
10. Barbed wire: plot-holders are not permitted to have or to use barbed wire on the plot. Use of barbed wire restricted to site boundary fences.
11. Personal conduct: plot-holders must not use the plot or allow the plot to be used for any illegal purpose and must be keep the peace at all times.
12. Rent: rent must be paid in full within 40 days of the date of invoice. In the event that rents remain outstanding beyond 40 days, the council reserves the right to terminate the lease.
13. Amendment of the rules: the Council, after consulting the Allotments Strategy Steering Group or other appropriate representative body, has the right to amend these rules from time to time.

Site specific rules

14. Site gates shall be kept locked at all times.
15. Paths between plots are the joint responsibility of the adjoining plot-holders and shall be kept trimmed and generally weed-free and clear of rubbish, with a minimum width of 45 cm.
16. Plot-holders shall ensure that their plots are free from excessive seeding weed heads.
17. Plot-holders and their associates shall not use weed killers or pesticides outwith their plots and spray drift to adjoining areas must be avoided.

Appendix: Committee and office bearer's responsibilities and powers.

A Committee

1. *Participation and empowerment.* Arrange and carry out the Association's business in a way that secures maximum possible participation of all members; communicate clearly and openly to the membership.
2. *Contribute to and implement policy.* Work with the Council, FEDEGA and other relevant bodies to promote allotment policies and practices in line with the Association's purpose.
3. *Build relationships.* work with the Council and other statutory and voluntary bodies in the management and development of gardening and related activities on the Site;

4. *Accountability.* Hold a minimum of 4 committee meetings a year for the purpose of organising the Association's business and properly record and publicise the meeting minutes
5. *Standards.* Assist the Council as appropriate in maintaining standards of cultivation and site management and in remedying defective amenities.
6. *Mediation.* Act as the second stage of mediation in disputes that arise on the Site between members or between members and other parties. Where any dispute arises: the problem must be discussed between the plot-holders concerned; if no solution is forthcoming the plot-holders may write to the Committee Convenor or Secretary requesting arbitration (and it is the committee's responsibility to be completely impartial in their arbitration); if the plot-holders do not accept the arbitration the matter will be referred to the CEC.
7. *Safety.* Committee members may enter individual plots uninvited in order to deal with immediate hazards that cannot wait until the plot-holder has been notified, or hazards that have been notified to the plot-holder concerned and not addressed in a reasonable period.

B Convenor

1. Oversee the overall observance of the Association's Constitution and the Committee's work;
2. Prepare a summary report for the AGM, outlining the previous year's activity of the Association, and its present and future direction; and
3. Act as Site representative as required.

C Secretary

1. Record the AGM and any SGMs (outgoing Secretary to record AGM);
2. Prepare summary report for the AGM and SGMs;
3. Maintain a record of other meetings;
4. Make records available on request to any member;
5. Carry out the Association's general correspondence and administration; and
6. Act as Site representative as required.

D Treasurer

1. Maintain the Association's accounts;
2. Organise the Association's trading activities;
3. Present audited (or independently financially checked) accounts to the AGM;
4. Retain receipts of an the Association's expenditure;
5. Maintain a bank account in the name of the Association;
6. Undertake correspondence on financial matters as necessary, and
7. Advise on the balance of account; on request by any member.

Appendix 2

AGM Standard agenda

The standard agenda for the AGM is:

1. Minutes of previous meeting (Secretary).
2. Summary report (Convenor).
3. Financial report and approval of the checked / audited accounts for the previous year (Treasurer)
4. Election of office bearers and members of the Committee
5. Appointment of an auditor / financial checker
6. Any other competent business.