

LORD MORAY'S FEU SUMMER 2023

AGM Thursday, 22nd June 2023

Educational Institute of Scotland - 46-48 Moray Place at 6pm

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Feuars responsible for the upkeep of Lord Moray's Pleasure Grounds will be held on Thursday 22nd June 2023 in Moray Place Gardens, starting at 6.00pm. The accounts for the year to 31 March 2023 are enclosed at the end of this newsletter.

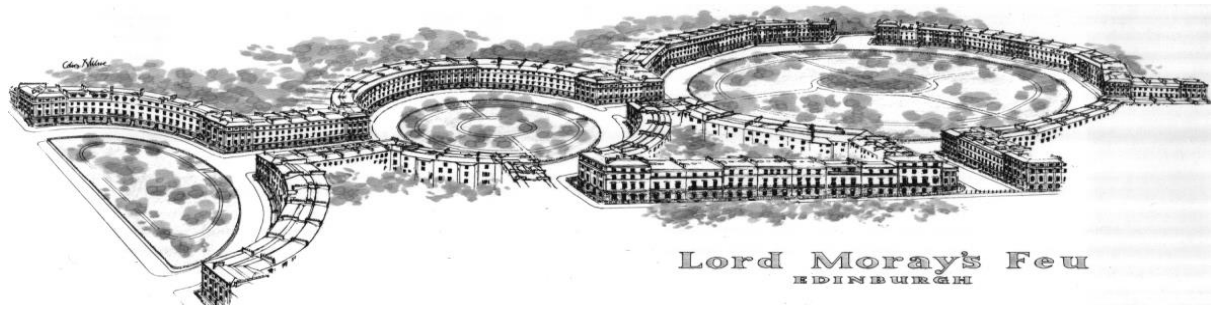
Nominations for election to the committee, and any resolutions for consideration at the meeting, should be lodged with the Secretaries at least two weeks before the meeting (by 5pm on Thursday 8th June 2023) when they will be posted on the notice board in Moray Place Gardens. Anyone wishing to vote on behalf of a feuar should provide written authority to the secretaries by the start of the meeting.

Whitelaw Wells, Secretaries, 9 Ainslie Place. Tel 226 5822

AGENDA

1. Introduction on forthcoming considerations from our Interim Chair Andrew Dixon
2. Apologies
3. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. Copies of the draft minutes of the annual meeting held on 23rd June 2022 are available at 9 Ainslie Place or on the web site.
4. Convenors update on progress in the gardens
5. Treasurers' report and approval of the accounts for the year to 31 March 2023
6. Assessments for the current year (set out in the Finance Convenor's Report).
7. Resolutions
 - To test the feasibility of a bicentenary legacy project in 2023/24 with a view to making a recommendation to the 2024 AGM
8. Elections to the Committee of Management.
9. Appointment of secretaries and treasurers.
The Committee recommends the re-appointment of Whitelaw Wells, Chartered Accountants.
10. Any other competent business

Attendees are invited to stay for a social drinks reception in the Moray Place Garden.



Moray Feu Gardens Newsletter Summer 2023

Dear Feuars and residents,

The newsletter covers highlights from 2022/23 and a summary of significant works planned in 2023/24 as well as our finance convenors report, agenda for the AGM and proposals for assessments. I would like to thank Fiona Young for returning as chair last year and Paul Broda who steps down after many years service. His horticultural expertise and relationships with the Royal Botanic Gardens have made a huge difference to our gardens. I'd like to personally thank the sponsors, donors, volunteer team and audiences for making the bicentenary such a success and our gardeners John, Mel and Sarah for all their hard work.

Andrew Dixon - Interim Chair and Chair Bicentenary

1 Report on 2022/23 – in summary

- Bank Gardens has seen resurfacing work on the steep paths, installation of a new seating area and major planting of the bank.
- Planting of borders has commenced in Ainslie Place following consultation with residents with more to follow next year.
- New notice boards have been added to each garden.
- We have planted over 28 new trees, almost 50 new shrubs as well as over 6,000 bulbs throughout the gardens.
- A list of all tree species will soon be available on our web site. www.morayfeu.com
- The Bicentenary featured more than 30 events, 3,000 attendances and the publication of The Moray Feu Book which has sold as far afield as Canada.
- Videos of our talks by Simon Laird and Lorne McNeal are available on web site.
- The bicentenary raised over £12,000 for partner charities including Live Music Now.
- Moray Feu Gardens featured twice in Edinburgh Life.
- Books and gift cards are still available on our web site. <https://morayfeu.com/product-category/products/>
- The Residents Association was formed and has recruited volunteers to a range of working groups. It now has a web site www.mfnra.co.uk The Residents Association AGM will be on Tuesday 5th June 6pm at St Johns Cornerstone.
- Randolph Crescent Garden has seen new planting of the entrance banks.

2 Plans in 2023/24 -

- Moray Place Gardens is undergoing major lawn treatment 'Tining' which will strengthen root growth following the drought of 2022
- Following trimming of the holly hedge work will start on painting 50% of the Moray Place Garden railings in July 2023 with the rest in 2024.
- Subject to agreement at the AGM we will research the feasibility of a Bicentenary legacy project for a covered seating or meeting place in the gardens.
- Bank Garden Arches Stonework - As indicated in the 2021 AGM Newsletter we have reserved funds in the 2023/4 budget to start repairs of stonework on Bank Garden arches as identified in the consultants David Narro Condition Survey. The repairs to 5-6 arches are primarily in areas where high levels of erosion to the parent sandstone is now leading to accelerated rates of deterioration of the stonework. The work is expected to be phased over a 5-year period.
- **Key Exchange** - The Garden Committee intends to change the locks to the gardens in the next year. This will require all keyholders to hand in their old key and collect a new one.

Why are we doing this? We currently don't have a definitive list of who has access to the gardens – and we know that people don't always return/pass on their keys when they move out of the feu. Without a definitive list it is hard for us to manage the gardens effectively, especially when issues arise between garden users. It also means we can't communicate efficiently to all garden users (as we don't know who they are). Furthermore, owners are legally liable/responsible for their tenants if the tenants enter the gardens – but we suspect many owners/tenants are not aware of this. Changing the keys also gives us the opportunity to check that landlords and tenants are aware of their responsibilities. Other gardens change their keys regularly, sometimes as often as every year. We last did this in 2014.

3 **Randolph Crescent Garden**

There will be a separate Annual General Meeting of the feuars who are proprietors of the Randolph Crescent Garden on Thursday, 6 July 2023. Notice of that meeting is going to those proprietors together with this Newsletter, along with a Report for last year from the Randolph Crescent Garden Committee.

4 **Dogs on leads in Moray Place Gardens**

We have agreed a revised policy of dogs on leads in **July & August from 10am to 8pm**. Our dog convenor, Navraj Ghaleigh, will in due course set up a focus group (comprising both dog owners, and others) and a possible survey later in the year after the experience of this summer has played out. We will accept common sense when there is no-one in the gardens but must insist on a strict dogs-on-leads policy when there are any other people or picnics in the gardens in July and August.

We are planning new signage that encourages respect for dogs as well as outlining the responsibilities of owners under the Scotland Control of Dogs Act 2010.

5 Horticulture news from the gardens

John Hughes and Melvyn Clench, ably assisted by “summer students”, Sarah Powell and Emma Gray, continue to conserve, uphold and maintain our gardens admirably well ensuring that our gardens continue to provide pleasure and an important bio-diverse green space for all in the Feu. Sarah has worked with us in our gardens since June 2021, full-time during the summer recess and one day a week during term time. Sarah, who is now doing final exams will be part time with additional support from Emma Gray, a 2nd year student from RBGE.

Highlights

- Planting 28 new trees and almost 50 new shrubs throughout the gardens.
- Planting over 6,000 bulbs, predominately in the Bank garden but also in Moray Place and Randolph Crescent gardens.
- Planting the three “Scientists Apple Trees” in collaboration with and in support of the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation
- Completing the final phase of planting in the steep bed above the compost bins in the Bank garden. This is already having a significant benefit to this long-neglected area of the garden which will continue to improve as the new planting matures.
- Continuing the process of reinstating ground level planting in the slope above St. Bernard’s Well. The ground level cover is becoming well established and spreading following the removal of a of neglected and overgrown Portuguese Laurel, Privet and Holly. This is vastly improving the biodiversity in this part of our gardens.
- Seeing the Wild Orchids, which have established themselves in the bank above the path through the Lime Walk, continuing to thrive and increasing in number with three separate species identified.
- Seeing the Primrose bank in the Bank Garden continuing to thrive and spread – all from just four plants planted by John Hughes many years ago.
- Completing the first shrub bed in Ainslie Place garden. Time constraints dictated that only one bed could be established this year but up to five other similar beds and some specimen shrub planting are currently planned over the next planting season.
- Reinstatement works in Randolph Crescent Garden and the extension of the hedge in the south-west corner and replanting of the beds either side of the entrance gate.
- Hollow tining and top dressing of the Moray Place lawns should improve drainage and encourage root growth which will improve the lawns.

Sad Losses - The magnificent Wych Elm beside the barbecue in Moray Place garden succumbed to Ganoderma Fungus, rendering it structurally unsound and requiring it to be felled over the winter. The site will be left fallow for three years before a replacement Red Chestnut tree is planted in this location. Several Ash trees have been affected by Ash Dieback and are being closely monitored. Several limbs were removed from Ash trees last autumn on safety grounds.

Cause for Concern - The Cherry beside the north gate in Ainslie Place is ailing under attack from honey fungus. The major eastmost limb had died and has been removed to take stress off the tree and to hopefully encourage it to fight off the fungus. It produced a beautiful display of blossom this spring but is being closely monitored.

5. Treasurers' report

Overall, income of £216,500 is up £27,500 on last year but in line with budget after adjusting for the Bicentenary sponsorship and donations. The increase is due to AGM approved increases in assessments and increases in outside subscriber rates. Assessments were up £21,700 as result of increased rates.

Outside subscriber income and dog registration income remained constant overall. As feuars will be aware significant effort has been put into Bicentenary events and celebrations as demonstrated with £16,500 ticket sales, £6,900 book sales, £9,800 donations and £7,500 sponsorship, shown as a separate column in the accounts.

Total expenditure, including depreciation, of £200,500 compared against last year of £128,000 (so up £72,500, although £55,600 related to the Bicentenary). Non-recurring variances included:

- Various expenses for Bicentenary events £55,643
- Flexipave installation in the bank garden £15,100

There were some increases in cost against last year: -

- Tree surgeon was up £3,300 due to 5 days work by Peter Martin
- Hire & repair of equipment up £804

Others:-

- Wages & pensions were £68,000, an increase of £7,600 on last year. Wages are the Feu's major expense accounting for 47% (2022 49%) of the expenditure (excluding bicentenary expenditure).
- Plants decreased by £2,700 with £2,400 relating specifically to Randolph last year which wasn't repeated in the current year.

Overall, therefore a surplus of £16,015 was reported against £61,378 last year (down £45,363), however ignoring the Bicentenary Fund the surplus was £30,993 (down £1,863).

The surplus was split £22,844 Front; £5,150 Bank; £2,999 Randolph Crescent and deficit £14,978 Bicentenary Fund, the bicentenary deficit being financed by a surplus in 2022.

It should be remembered expenditure is allocated to the specific garden, where possible, with general costs allocated Front:Bank 60:40. Randolph Crescent's allocation is based on gardeners time.

Moving to the Balance Sheet, closing reserves have increased to £175,459, split £77,262 to Front; £68,606 to Bank; £5,902 to Randolph Crescent and £23,689 to the Bicentenary Fund. Cash at 31.3.23 is £146,392 against £124,280 last year. This increase of £22,112 is effectively the surplus in the year of £16,015 plus depreciation and loss on disposal (non-cash items) of £8,211, less fixed asset additions of £2,977 plus reduction in debtors of £2,085 less reduction in creditors of £1,223. Debtors include outstanding assessments of £4,186 and prepayments (VAT recoverable & insurance) of £4,736. The assessment debtor is £1,095 lower than last year. Creditors are down £1,223 on last year due to trade creditors having been paid.

Finance Convenor's Report for 2023 AGM Newsletter.

1. Performance against Budget (2022/23)

Income is in line with the budget. Expenses (excluding Bicentenary) are lower, due to a number of infrastructure and capital projects being re-phased to the next financial year.

Income and Expenditure – Front and Bank Gardens Only			
	2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budget
Income	£'000	£'000	£'000
Assessments receivable	148	149	154
Other income	17	17	17
Total Income	165	166	171
Expenditure			
Gardeners' employment costs	68	63	77
Infrastructure and maintenance	24	20	44
Secretariat fees	21	21	24
Other expenses	33	26	35
Total Expenditure (excl. Depreciation)	146	130	180
Net Surplus for the year	19	36	(9)
Capital Expenditure	10	3	7

Notes

- The surplus for the year is higher than budgeted, which is due to a number of infrastructure and maintenance projects being rephased to 2023/24.
- Expenses were generally close to budget, except for;
 - The money assigned to the Ainslie Place garden redesign (£2k) has been rolled over to the next financial year. This work commenced in April 2023
 - Tree surgery costs where the usual offset from sale of the timber has not yet happened. (£1.5k adverse). This is offset by the horticulture contingency (£1.3k favourable).
 - Electricity for the gardeners' bothy (£0.9k adverse). As well as the steep rise in electricity generally, most of our hand tools are now being recharged in the bothy, partially offset by reduced fuel costs (£0.3k favourable).
- The main maintenance expenditure, the new path for the Bank garden steep zigzag slope, was completed this year at a cost of just under £16k (against a budget of £15k).

4. Capital expenditure was £3.0K against a budget of £10.3k, because of:
- supply difficulties causing deferral until next year of the Bank garden steep slopes lawn mower (£4.0k) and a chainsaw £0.5K).
 - deferral of the benches (£2.3k) because of shortage of gardener time for their installation.
 - reclassification of noticeboards (£2.5k) as a revenue expense.
 - extra investment in portable rechargeable garden power tools, costing £1.9k above budget.

2. Assessment Levels for 2023-24

At the last two AGMs we have proposed that, from 2023/24 onward, assessments would be increased in line with inflation. Inflation is currently at 9%: however, your committee feel that an increase of this level would be unacceptable to feuars and hence propose an increase of 5%. Inflation rates are clearly impossible to predict and unless these drop sharply a similar increase will be necessary next year.

This results in a budgeted deficit for 2023-24 of £9k. This deficit and the capital expenditure of £7k will be accommodated by using our reserves (which include the surplus from 2022-23). A significant benefit of holding reserves is the ability to smooth increases when it is difficult to predict inflation rates.

This means that we now project to reach the target of 9 months' reserves in 2027/28, one year later than originally planned.

The outside subscribers fee is set in accordance with assurances given at the 2018 AGM that this fee would rise over time to reach a level which is at a premium to that paid by an average domestic feuair. The increase is therefore set at 6.5%, in line with the inflation prediction for the next year.

	Actual 2022/23 Assessment	Proposed 2023/24 Assessment	Percentage Increase on Last Year
Front gardens	10.16p	10.67p	5%
Bank gardens	8.96p	9.41p	5%
Outside subscribers	£350	£373	6.5%
Dog registration scheme	£40.25	£42.30	5%
Bike shed spaces	£50	£50	No change
Awning hire	£60	£100	See note 3 below

Note: All figures include VAT

1. The Front and Bank garden poundage rates refer to the RV (rateable value) of properties.
2. It is possible that in future years we may need to consider a differential increase between Front and Bank gardens, to reflect the amount of maintenance work scheduled for Bank.
3. Awning hire has been increased to help cover the cost of replacement, which will be needed shortly.
4. Assessments for Randolph Crescent Garden proprietors are covered in a separate report for them.

3. 7-Year Budget Planning

Key economic assumptions

The long-term budget is revised each year to reflect the most recent accounts and in the light of changing economic circumstances. We continue to be in uncertain times and a cautious approach continues to be appropriate, including:

- General inflation has been included at 6.5% for this year and next (2024/25)
- A general contingency continues to be included

Infrastructure programme

The timing of major infrastructure and maintenance projects is a key element of the budget. The main items included for the year 2023/24 are:

- Painting of 50% of the Moray Place railings (£11k)
- Path repairs (edging and gravel) for both Moray Place and Bank (£13k)
- Repairs to arches in Bank garden (£11k)
- Tining of the Moray Place lawn to improve water drainage (£6k)
- New benches (£2k)

Gardeners' employment costs

- The proposed gardeners' employment costs for 2023/24 includes an increase in the number of gardener hours due to the employment of an additional part-time student.

Secretariat costs

The Whitelaw Wells fee reflects the increases experienced by Whitelaw Wells. They report that: *Whitelaw Wells, like all other businesses, are experiencing significant external cost pressures. Many costs are increasing well above headline inflation reported in the press but this is worse in the accountancy profession due to an extreme shortage of staff and costs such as PII insurance and computer costs suffering particularly higher increases. New clients are approaching us saying fees have doubled or their current accountant has written to them saying they don't have the resources to do the work so can no longer act. We are conscious of fee increases but are keeping them below general market rates.*

The following should also be noted, both of which add to the time Whitelaw Wells has to spend communicating with feuars and outside subscribers:

- There are 477 properties in the feu and 36 outside subscribers. However, only 267 have agreed to pay by direct debit
- Only 353 have agreed to receive communication by email

Reserves

At the 2021 AGM a Reserves Policy was implemented, such that the long-term aim is to establish reserves equivalent to nine-months forward expenses; three months being required for normal cash flow in the period from the 31st March year end until the annual assessments are received at the end of June, and a further six months of actual reserves against unforeseen circumstances.

Based on this latest budget revision, by 31st March 2024 we should have 6.8 months of reserves and expect to reach the full 9 months of reserve in 2027/28, one year later than originally planned.

New Deposit Account

We are now in the situation where we hold significant funds in our account with Whitelaw Wells at the *Royal Bank of Scotland*. The *Financial Services Compensation Scheme* protects us should our bank cease trading – but only up to £85k. Our reserves mean that we may well exceed this limit. For this reason, we are opening a separate deposit account with the *Skipton Building Society*, where we will hold some of our reserves. These funds will be managed by Whitelaw Wells.

Lord Moray's Feuars						
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT						
For the year ended 31 March 2023						
Randolph Crescent						
Gardens						
	Front	Bank	Management	Bicentenary	2023	2022
	Gardens	Gardens	Agreement		Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Assessments on Feuars receivable	88,868	60,148	8,710	-	157,725	136,023
Assessments on outside subscribers	5,255	3,504	866	-	9,625	9,794
Bicentenary ticket sales	-	-	-	16,512	16,512	-
Bike Shed spaces	-	521	-	-	521	600
Book sales	-	-	-	6,857	6,857	-
Dog registration income	3,471	2,314	572	-	6,358	6,181
Donation	1	-	50	9,797	9,848	21,899
Hire of awning	500	-	-	-	500	729
Key deposits (net of costs)	152	102	-	-	254	383
Sponsorship	-	-	-	7,500	7,500	13,500
Profit on sale of ash/oak	-	-	-	-	-	3
Voluntary contributions	-	-	-	-	-	12
	98,247	66,588	10,199	40,666	215,699	189,126
Bank interest receivable	462	308	-	-	770	12
	98,709	66,896	10,199	40,666	216,469	189,138
EXPENDITURE						
Gardeners salaries - permanent	28,517	19,012	4,701	-	52,230	47,727
Gardeners salaries - temporary	4,461	2,974	735	-	8,171	5,929
Employers NIC	155	103	26	-	284	336
Life assurance	62	41	-	-	104	104
Pensions costs	3,966	2,644	654	-	7,264	6,406
Training	284	189	47	-	520	718
Compost, fertilisers & weedkiller	546	85	-	-	630	1,053
Plants - trees, shrubs, plants and bulbs	594	690	96	-	1,379	4,071
Fuel	397	264	65	-	726	831
Machinery hire, repair & maintenance	1,762	1,175	290	-	3,228	2,424
Small tools & equipment	647	431	107	-	1,185	964
Tractor insurance/registration	206	138	-	-	344	-
Consumables	341	227	56	-	625	5,307
Events	96	64	-	55,643	55,803	-
Electricity - bothy	1,225	817	-	-	2,042	402
Gardeners travel expenses	214	143	-	-	356	264
Arborculturalist's reports	650	110	-	-	760	908
Tree surgeon	5,926	280	-	-	6,206	2,850
Benches maintenance	30	18	-	-	48	2,283
Childrens equipment maintenance	577	-	-	-	577	432
Garden structures maintenance	384	-	-	-	384	495
Notice Boards maintenance	1,078	747	-	-	1,825	330
Paths and steps maintenance	-	15,968	-	-	15,968	2,874
Railings and gates maintenance	822	11	107	-	940	-
Insurances	3,124	2,082	-	-	5,206	4,906
Dog bags and tags	521	347	86	-	954	921
New planting protection	68	45	11	-	125	466
Secretaries administration fee	819	546	135	-	1,500	1,350
Waste collection	513	342	85	-	940	784
Sundries	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	4,587	3,464	-	-	8,051	9,808
Loss on disposal	96	64	-	-	160	-
Bad debt	-	-	-	-	-	-
	62,668	53,021	7,200	55,643	178,532	104,943
Secretaries & Treasurers' fees	12,600	8,400	-	-	21,000	19,750
Hall hire for LNG meeting	90	60	-	-	150	100
EGM fee	-	-	-	-	-	1,242
Website maintenance	366	244	-	-	609	1,218
Debt collection & searches	141	21	-	-	162	508
	13,197	8,725	-	-	21,921	22,817
Surplus/(deficit) for year	22,844	5,150	2,999	(14,978)	16,015	61,378

LORD MORAY'S FEUARS						
BALANCE SHEET as at 31st March 2023						
ASSETS EMPLOYED						
			Cost	Depreciation	2023	2022
			£	£	£	£
Machinery & equipment			109,928	78,790	31,138	32,954
additions			2,977	-	2,977	7,993
disposals			(200)	(40)	(160)	-
charge for year				8,051	(8,051)	(9,809)
			112,704	86,801	25,904	31,138
Current assets						
Assessments outstanding					4,186	5,281
Prepayments					3,932	3,645
VAT					804	2,081
Petty cash					230	230
Bank deposit accounts					145,062	122,975
Bank current account					1,100	1,075
					155,314	135,288
Current liabilities						
Creditors					(5,759)	(6,982)
					(5,759)	(6,982)
Net current assets					149,555	128,306
Total net assets					175,459	159,444
Randolph Crescent						
	Front	Bank	Gardens	Bicentenary		
	Gardens	Gardens	Management	and Amenity		
FUNDS EMPLOYED			Agreement	Fund	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund b/f	55,775	64,361	641	38,666	159,444	87,922
Prior year adjustment	(1,357)	(905)	2,262	-	-	-
Results for year	22,844	5,150	2,999	(14,978)	16,015	61,378
General Fund c/f	77,262	68,606	5,902	23,689	175,459	149,300
Transfer from Amenity fund	-	-	-	-	-	10,144
	77,262	68,606	5,902	23,689	175,459	159,444
AMENITY FUND						
Balance brought forward						10,144
Transfer to Bicentenary						(10,144)
	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bicentenary Summary						
				Income	Expenditure	Surplus/ (deficit)
				£	£	£
Year to 31 March 2022				33,443	(4,921)	28,522
Year to 31 March 2023				40,666	(55,643)	(14,977)
Total				74,109	(60,564)	13,545
Amenity Fund						10,144
Total Reserves at 31 March 2023						23,689
<i>Wink Wink</i>						
Chartered Accountants						
Treasurers						
24-May-23						