



Lord Moray's Feu SUMMER 2024

AGM Wednesday 19th June 2024

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 Wednesday 19th June 2024 starting at 6.00pm. The accounts for the year to 31 March 2024 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 Wednesday 5th June 2024) 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 from our 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 22nd June 2023 are available at 9 Ainslie Place or on the web site and at the meeting.
4. Convenors updates on progress in the gardens
5. Treasurers report and approval of the accounts for the year to 31st March 2024
6. Assessments for the current year (set out in the Finance Convenor's report).
7. Resolutions – Private resolution from Mr Duncan Wylie - Doune Terrace
 - To Restore the Georgian Railings on the south boundary of the Doune Terrace garden strip.
Details of the resolution and the position of the Gardens Management Committee will be posted on the Moray Place Garden notice board prior to the meeting.
8. Elections to the Committee of Management.
Re- election of Mike Baynham (Horticulture), Gregor Henderson (Infrastructure) and Frances Dobson. (Finance Convenor)
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.

Introduction from Chair

Welcome to all new Feurs. This year has seen some significant developments in the gardens thanks to the fantastic work of our gardeners John, Mel, Sarah and Emma. I'd like to thank all of the Management Committee for their time and considerable voluntary efforts that make our gardens run so smoothly. Feurs may not realise it, but collectively we manage the gardeners, the 7-year budget planning, the infrastructure, the external contracts for tree maintenance, issues around dogs, this newsletter, requests for events and all contractor access. The gardens looked spectacular for Open Gardens Day and were featured in the Guardian. Our finances are on a much firmer footing though we continue to operate with very tight budgets. Work is progressing to test the feasibility of our bicentenary legacy project to create a shelter and meeting space in Moray Place Garden. We will bring forward recommendations next year. In the meantime, our final bicentenary events were a photo exhibition at the Chris Close Gallery and a series of talks with the James Clerk Maxwell Foundation. Thanks again to all our donors, sponsors and volunteers. We plan to reinstate our summer festival drinks and BBQ event on Wednesday 7th August. Do watch out for further information.

Andrew Dixon
Chair

Garden news - new tree planting continues with 8 new trees over the winter and a group of birch trees in Bank Gardens. Since last year the first shrub bed in Ainslie has been established with more planned for the summer. The displays of daffodils, snowdrops and 'primrose hill' have continued to flourish and our wild orchids are back in larger numbers. The Rhododendrons on the upper path in the Bank Garden planted five to six years ago have produced spectacular flowers for the first time.

We lost an old Hawthorn in Moray Place and the beautiful late flowering Laburnum near the middle of the zigzag path in the Bank Garden in the recent storms. We continue to closely monitor a Cherry in Ainslie Place and another in Moray Place, both of which have suffered from fungus attacks.

In Ainslie Place we have planted a Holm Oak (an evergreen Oak) in the lawn and a Hawthorn (Crimson Cloud) in the outer border. Tree surgeons have undertaken work in Ainslie Place to remove an overcrowded Sycamore and to reduce the crown of the large Lime in the centre of the wind tunnel created by Great Stuart Street

The largest infrastructure project has been to surface the entry path in Bank Garden to improve drainage and provide an accessible and sustainable covering. With maturing roses and alliums in the adjacent bed, it provides a much more attractive entrance to the garden as a whole. Other recent improvements include the reconstruction of steps in Bank Garden and an experiment with more sustainable metal lawn edging in Moray. We have painted 50% of Moray Place Garden railings and plan to do a further 25% this year and 25% in 2025 to spread the work of hedge pruning and the costs of repainting. The new conversation benches in Moray are proving popular as is the BBQ area. Thanks to Paul Broda and the RSPB we have installed a number of birdboxes in the gardens.



Randolph Crescent

Randolph Crescent Garden's entrance beds have matured, and new bulbs and tree planting have added colour to the garden. Although last year's wildflower perimeter planting was hit by the dry weather, some growth is already showing for 2024. New lawn edging to the southern quadrant and a new dog waste bin have been installed.

Randolph Crescent Garden Proprietors AGM - This will be on Wednesday 9th October 2024 at the Cornerstone Centre, St John's Church, Princes Street, starting at 6pm. In addition to receiving the accounts and re-electing/electing committee members, the meeting will include a special item to consider the repainting of the railings and gates to the garden.

Mailing list - The Moray Feu Gardens Committee, via Whitelaw Wells, holds the mailing list for Randolph Crescent Garden proprietors. To enable the Randolph Crescent Garden Committee to send the proprietors its Annual Report and Notice of AGM for this and future years and other communications of interest to them, we plan to share the database of names, addresses and e-mail addresses of Randolph Crescent Garden proprietors with the Randolph Crescent Garden Committee on an annual basis. If you wish to opt out of sharing your contact details, please e-mail chair@morayfeu.com by 19th June 2024.

Web site - Whilst we have made several improvements to our web site we aim to migrate it to a new, easier to use platform in the next 12 months. It currently carries forms for contractor access, booking larger events in Moray Place Garden and for registering dogs. It also has historical information and links to our bicentenary talks. The names and contact details for the Gardens Committee are also on the web site. <https://morayfeu.com>

Dog Code - In 2016 we had just 47 dogs registered to use the gardens. This has grown to 193 in 2024. Our dog code is on all notice boards and the web site. Summer dogs on leads policy will be the same as last year. 10am to 8pm in Moray Place Garden in July and August but please also observe the code at other times. If there are picnics out it is essential to have your dog under control. We have recently had to take firm action with regards to dogs and owners not following the dog code. If you have a complaint about a dog incident it should initially go to our dog convenor Navraj Ghaleigh. Please note that Facebook is not the place to make complaints. We do not open Facebook messages. [Code](#)

Equipment - The Moray Garden Shed has various equipment for use by Feuars and residents. – There are tables, chairs and glasses. Please ensure that things go back as you found them. We also own a battery-operated PA system which is stored elsewhere - If you have any queries email Andrew Dixon at events@morayfeu.com

Key and Lock Exchange –the planned lock and key exchange has been postponed to Autumn 2024. After careful research we are buying new locks with more cost-effective key cutting. We will communicate to all Feuars in advance of the dates for exchange.

Residents Association - The Moray Feu and Neighbourhood Residents Association has over 100 members. Its AGM is on 6th June 6-30pm at Cornerstone St Johns where you can hear about its progress on matters such as traffic, parking, and short term lets. New members are welcome, and you can sign up for just £10 per person per year at <https://www.mfnra.co.uk> They have also taken over running community events.

Doune Terrace Railings proposal - A group of 3 Feuars are planning to bring a private resolution to the AGM for in principle agreement to reinstate the historic railings on Doune Terrace which were removed during the war. The final plans would require approval of all Feuars at an AGM. They would be subject to parameters set out by the Gardens Management Committee including the retention of the existing hedge and there being no capital or revenue cost to Feuars. Background will be posted on the Moray notice board and there will be a presentation at the AGM.

Finance Convenor's Report for 2024 AGM Newsletter.

1. Performance against Budget (2023/24)

Income was slightly higher than expected. The assessments received were higher than budget as this includes an element of outstanding debt from previous years which has now been collected. We have also benefitted from higher bank interest than has been received in previous years and an additional donation to the bank garden. Expenditure has been lower than budgeted, due to the delay of a number of infrastructure projects. These projects will now take place in 2024/25.

Income and Expenditure – Front and Bank Gardens Only (figures rounded to nearest £1k)			
	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Actual	2024-25 Budget
Income	£'000	£'000	£'000
Assessments receivable from Feuars	154	157	159
Other income (including outside subscribers)	15	16	15
Donations	2	4	0
Bank interest received	0	2	0
Total Income	171	179	175
Expenditure			
Gardeners' employment costs	78	69	80
Infrastructure and maintenance	53	46	42
Secretariat fees	25	25	26
Other expenses	27	20	24
Total Expenditure (excl. Depreciation)	183	160	172
Net surplus (deficit) from income and expenditure	(11)	19	3
Capital Expenditure	7	2	5
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	(18)	17	-2

Notes

- The gardeners' employment costs for Front and Bank gardens are slightly lower than budget as the gardeners spent a larger proportion of their time working in Randolph Crescent, and hence a higher proportion of their employment costs were charged to that garden. For the 2024/25 budget we have assumed that the time cross-charged to Randolph Crescent will be closer to the level of previous years, and hence the gardeners' employment costs charged to Front & Bank gardens will be greater than in 2023/24.
- The main Infrastructure, maintenance and capital expenses were as follows:
 - New path in the Bank Garden (£19k)
 - Repainting of 50% of railings in Moray Place (£11k)
 - Lawn tining in Moray Place, to help with water drainage (£6k)
 - New edging for flower beds in Moray Place (£4k)
 - New benches for Moray Place (£1k)
 - Two new dog poo bins (£0.8k)

2. Assessment Levels for 2024-25

The assessment increases are based on the following criteria:

- We have a number of planned infrastructure projects, which will be funded from the surplus from the previous year (see section 3 below).
- We have experienced a small loss in income due to a drop in the number of outside subscribers. This shortfall is equivalent of an extra 1% for feuars' assessments.

	2023/24 Assessment	Proposed 2024/25 Assessment
We are increasing the total gardeners' employment costs by 5%, to reflect wage inflation. to the surplus generated in the previous year, we are able to absorb the costs mentioned above, and restrict the increase in assessments to 3.5% . This is in line with the commitment made at previous AGMs to keep assessment increases in line with inflation		
Front gardens	10.67p	11.04p
Back gardens	9.41p	9.74p
Outside subscribers	£373	£386
Dog registration scheme	£42.30	£44.00
Bike shed spaces	£50	£50
Awning hire	£100	£100

Notes: All figures include VAT - *The Front and Bank Garden poundage rates refer to the RV (rateable value) of properties.

Randolph Crescent additional assessment: - The additional assessment for Randolph Crescent Garden Proprietors has been set by the Randolph Crescent Garden Committee at £135 including VAT (2023/24 £129.60 inc VAT).

3. Infrastructure and maintenance programme for 2024/25

The timing of major infrastructure and maintenance projects is a key element of the budget, and the surplus from the previous year will be used to fund these projects. The main new items included for the year 2024/25 are:

- Key and lock exchange (£9k)
- Repairs to the roof of the gardeners' bothy, which is currently leaking (£10k)
- New paving stones for the barbeque area in Moray Place (£3k)
- Two new dog poo bins (£0.8k)

The following projects will be rolled over from 2023/24:

- Painting of 25% of Moray Place railings (£5.5k)
- The money assigned to the Ainslie Place Garden redesign (£2k)
- Repairs to the Moray Place gardeners' shed (£1k)
- Purchase of a new mower (£4k)

4. 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 3.5% for this year and next (2025/26)
- A general contingency continues to be included.

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. At the 2023 AGM we expected to reach the full 9 months of reserve in 2027/28: we are on target to achieve this.