

SAGS Report for GAF AGM November 2016

From: *Judy Wilkinson*

In the last year SAGS committee has been busy working on the fall-out from the Community Empowerment Act and supporting allotments and growing in many ways.

On the political front four members of SAGS committee are on the tri-partite working group with Scottish Government and local authority reps to produce the Guidance for Part 9 of the CEA and then monitor progress.

There are several clauses in the Act which may be of interest to those on the allotments waiting lists. Glasgow City Council will have a duty to provide allotments so no-one waits more than 5 years for a plot. Everyone has a right to a standard plot (250 sq.m.) but of course can ask for half or a quarter plot. It is imperative that everyone who wants a plot has their name on a waiting list and that this is shared with the Council. An indication of what size of plot people require and where they stay would also help in finding land for the sites.

The Council must also produce *‘a food growing strategy will identify land in its area that the local authority considers may be used as allotment sites, and other land that could be used by community for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit, herbs or flowers. It should also describe how the local authority intends to increase the provision of allotments and community growing, especially in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.’* The success of this will depend on the support and active engagement from those who want allotments particularly through Community Councils and Community Planning Partnerships. In addition the Central Scotland Green Network Trust has a remit to increase allotments by 200% across the central belt. Other sections on the Act including Asset transfer and Participation requests will also offer opportunities for civic engagement.

For GAF plot-holders the requirement in section 118 may be of interest:

Disposal etc. of allotment sites leased by local authority

(2) A local authority may not renounce its lease of the whole or part of the allotment site without the consent of the Scottish Ministers.

There may also be interest in section 123 ‘the delegation of management of allotment sites’; section 124 ‘Promotion and use of allotments - expenditure’ and in section 115 Allotment site regulations.

On other activities SAGS are engaged with and which plot-holders may be interested in look at the website www.sags.org.uk. The latest newsletter is full of interesting articles across a whole range of issues. In the summer we were actively engaged in the Garden for Life at the Gardening Scotland exhibition. There were presentations, discussion and workshops on horticulture at the Annual Scottish Allotments Conference on June 18th . Also, as a member of SAGS, Glasgow Allotments Forum were able to access funds for a series of Community Learning Exchanges for plot-holders and which have proved enjoyable and informative and for tools for new plot-holders.

If you have any questions about any of this please contact me. (judy@atlas.co.uk)