

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

(Period covered 15th February 1991 to 6th January 1992.)

1. The Garden in the last year

Lady Marshall has dealt in detail in her Report with the planting and general improvements to the Garden which we have achieved in the last year. The restoration of the gravel paths have greatly enhanced the Garden and serve to set off in particular the areas of new planting on the perimeter of the Garden.

Whilst I spend some hours every week dealing with administrative matters on behalf of the Gardens Committee from the comfort of my desk in the office, Lady Marshall is the person in our Square who devotes so much time in supervising the gardeners, dealing with day to day problems such as waiting in to liaise with our other contractors and dealing with the gardeners emergencies from cut fingers to clamped vehicles! Apart from her considerable gardening knowledge, her patience and the sheer amount of time she devotes to the enhancement of our Square, deserves the praise and thanks of all.

2. Completion of the railings project

At the time of the last AGM, we anticipated that the railings contract would be completed in the early part of 1991. Dates and estimates were adhered to. All the promised grants were received and the results of this project are there for all to see! I entertained to luncheon (at no cost to the Garden Fund!) Councillor Davis whose committee was responsible for giving the £20,000 grant to the Square and Mr. Leith Penny of Westminster Council who was the Officer in charge of liaising with us over the grant and who was extremely helpful and efficient. The letter of thanks from Councillor Davis states:

"I was honoured to be invited to present you with a cheque for Westminster's contribution towards the costs. I thought that the railings looked extremely attractive and will certainly enhance this beautiful Conservation Area."

3. Irrigation project

Lady Marshall has reported on the irrigation project and the Square now has the benefit of automatic watering to all areas of the garden. Prior to this project being carried out, only the lawn area and some of the immediate flower beds were capable of being automatically watered. We were therefore faced with the situation that the new planting on the perimeter of the gardens would die in dry

summers or have to be the subject of expensive hand watering. In an attempt to be entirely self-sufficient on the watering side, the Committee investigated the possibility of re-commissioning an artesian well which is below the Garden. Residents will remember that a drilling rig was present in the garden one day in April but unfortunately after two trial boreholes, it was evident that we would have to drill much deeper to achieve the self sufficient water supply and at this stage, we felt that the extra costs of sinking a much deeper borehole could not be justified in the context of current projects.

4. Social matters

A summer party to celebrate the restoration of the railings was planned and organised but unfortunately was rained off on the day. The carol service around the Christmas Tree on the 12th December was very well attended and was a delightful occasion. The Salvation Army played carols and thanks are due to Lady Barber for arranging for the Salvation Army to be present. We understand that in addition to the Garden Committee's contribution to the Salvation Army, a very good sum was collected for charity by the Salvation Army from those present. The Salvation Army have indicated that they would be very happy to return next year. This time with a full band!

5. Gifts to the Square from "outsiders"

After many many hours of talented carpentry, Dr. Klaus Zielke, a close friend from Germany of John and Eileen O'Brien's, presented the Square with a very handsome new garden seat. I have written to Dr. Zielke on behalf of the Square to tell him how much we appreciate this gift. The railings contractor, Mr. Derek Burvill, who gave us so much valuable advice prior to and during the railings contract thought it would be nice to commemorate his association with the restoration of the railings by providing a shrub for the garden and a delightful large rhododendron, was donated by him.

6. Garden rate for the ensuing year

Your Committee met late last year to consider the special community charge per capita which should be raised to ensure continuing maintenance of the garden for the forthcoming year. Taking into account anticipated expenditure next year including annual maintenance, planting of the tubs, Christmas Tree erection and sundry expenses, the Committee has unanimously resolved for endorsement at the AGM that we should raise the sum which equates to approximately £170 per community charge payer for the gardens for the next financial year. This figure is in fact only 85% of last year's garden rate, and represents a substantial reduction given that maintenance costs are actually increasing.

7. Conclusion

May I conclude by saying that I hope that all residents of the Square are enjoying the improved garden and the benefits of the time and energy put in by the Committee and in particular Lady Marshall, the Gardens Chairman, Daniel Quirici the Secretary and David Eckhardt the Treasurer.

Lesley MacDonagh, Chairman.

6.1.92.

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