

## Montpelier Square Garden

### MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Date** 18 February 2008  
**Held at** Deutsche Evangelische  
ChristusKirche  
19 Montpelier Place

**Committee Members present** Mr Bernard Asher, Chairman  
Lady Marshall, Garden Chair  
Mr Daniel Qurici, Treasurer  
Mrs Avril Cox  
Mr Nicholas Davy-Thornhill  
Mr David Eckhardt  
Mr Yoshi Nishio

**Apologies for absence** Mrs Jean Fletcher, Secretary

Members of the Association present were:  
Mrs Vivian Eckhardt, Dr Peter Harper, Mr  
Steve Kordas

#### **1. To consider the Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 5 February 2007 were distributed and approved.

#### **2. Garden Report**

Mr Asher was pleased to begin by announcing that once again, the garden had been recognized in competitions: 4<sup>th</sup> Prize (London Squares) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize (Westminster In Bloom). He thanked Lady Marshall for her continuing hard working in maintaining the high standards to which we have all become accustomed.

Lady Marshall explained that most of the work during the year had been to the trees, most notably for the removal of the large plane in the south west corner which had died. Because of the increasing risk of extreme weather, it is necessary to be especially vigilant with regard to the height and cover of the trees. To this end, Lady Marshall and Mr Qurici will be meeting with TreeCare on 22 February and they will report back.

Several other areas are in need of attention where plants have died or deteriorated through a combination of age, honey fungus and day to day damage. Specifically, the hedge in the north eastern corner is very bare, and Lady Marshall proposes replanting with twenty five pot grown 6ft holly, at a cost of approximately £35 each. While 3ft plants would be cheaper, it was felt that this would be a false economy since they would take several years to mature.

Intruders continue to be a problem. Mrs Fletcher had suggested in a committee meeting that we run the irrigation system just before pub closing time in order to wet the square and make it less hospitable. Lady Marshall proposed that, additionally, we illuminate one of the large trees. Many garden squares in London now do this, and as well as acting as a deterrent to intruders, it is visually stunning. This would necessitate the burying of an electric cable under the lawn in order to provide the power needed, but this is not expected to be a large expense.

Foxes have also been very much in evidence, leaving rubbish strewn around the square garden, and causing a danger particularly to children. The main attraction for these creatures was thought to be household rubbish being left out overnight, and extra vigilance was called for to ensure that residents did not put out their refuse too early. Mr Asher mentioned that this was a subject on which the Knightsbridge Association was also working. Mr Eckhardt agreed to contact the relevant council departments dealing with foxes as vermin, and if no cost was involved, instructing them to take the necessary steps to eradicate them from the square.

The pine tree that was planted by the seating area some years ago has now grown to a sufficient size to act as our Christmas tree. A separate tree will no longer need to be purchased, and the electricity supply to be provided for the year round illumination (discussed above) can be used for the Christmas lights.

#### **3. Financial Report and Precept**

Mr Qurici informed us that the costs for 2007 were in keeping with most years, with a modest surplus of £1,106 remaining.

Looking ahead however, it is clear that costs will rise. Lady Marshall has agreed the new maintenance contract with the gardeners, and while it is fair, there is an increase of approximately 20% (on what is the most significant annual expenditure).

As a safeguard against unforeseen circumstances and expenses, it was deemed prudent always to keep £20,000 in reserve. Currently the balance stands at slightly below that figure.

Finally, Mr Qurici reminded those present that the precept had been kept at the same level for the past four years.

In view of all of this, the Committee has proposed an increase in the precept to £500 per house per year, and this was accepted by all those present.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

Mrs Jane Bradbury, absent due to an injury, was thanked and congratulated for her very convivial Christmas Carol evening, which this year raised £1,500 for the Salvation Army.

Mr Eckhardt asked if there was sufficient insurance in place to protect the Committee and Members in our increasingly litigious society. Mr Asher has looked into this question extensively and is satisfied with the present level of cover. Mr Qurici added that even our accountants are covered under our policy.

Mr Qurici suggested providing more seating in the square, perhaps by buying two or three more benches. There were conflicting views on both the desirability and on the positioning of any additional seating. Mr Asher suggested that the Committee hold a brief meeting in the garden to consider this in situ.

Mr Asher announced that after ten year's of service, he would step down as Chairman of the Committee. Mr Qurici thanked him on behalf of all present for his guidance over the years and accepted the Chairmanship. Mr Asher has gracefully agreed to remain as a member of the Committee.

Mr Kordas was invited to join the Committee as Treasurer, and he was warmly welcomed by all present.

The next Annual General Meeting is provisionally scheduled for the last Monday in January (26/1/2009). Mr Eckhardt suggested changing the date of the AGM to a less gloomy time of year to encourage more Members of the Association to attend. Mrs Fletcher to explore this possibility and report back to the Committee.



Minutes by Mr Yoshi Nishio, Acting Secretary