

MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Monday 26th March 2012

Held at: Montpeliano Restaurant

Committee Members Present:

Daniel Quirici
Neil Carthy
Jane Bradbury
Avril Cox
Christopher Didizian

Association Members Present:

David and Vivienne Eckhardt

Anna Birkett was in attendance. Apologies were received from Lord and Lady Marshall and from Anica Nishio, Ali Malek and Nicholas Davie-Thornhill.

The meeting opened at 7pm, after the wine and canapés had been served. Daniel Quirici was then proposed, seconded and approved as chairman of the meeting.

Mr Quirici welcomed everyone and praised the generous provision of refreshments supplied by the owner of the Montpeliano.

The minutes of the 2011 AGM were circulated, then proposed, seconded and approved.

The committee for the 2012/3 was proposed by David Eckhardt, seconded by Christopher Didizian and approved by the meeting. The members of the new committee are unchanged from last year.

In Lady Marshall's absence Neil Carthy was called to give a report on the garden.

- The new gardening contractors, Garden Associates, are working well and the garden is in excellent condition for the time of year.
- Work this year will focus on adding more colour in late Summer and Autumn.
- The local police force have offered to patrol the garden on an occasional basis at night-time. They will be provided with a garden key for this purpose.
- The annual treework is proceeding in rotation and this year we will be pruning the plane trees on the West side and the Bay trees in the SW and NW corners. The major change will be to the Bay tree at the SW corner, whose crown we plan to reduce by 40%.
- A Princeton elm has been planted on the North side, between the Plane and the NW corner. Several silver birches have been planted in the NE corner.
- Thames Water have announced a hosepipe ban starting April 6th. New planting will be reduced for the duration.

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The announcement of the hosepipe ban led to a discussion on remedial measures than could be taken to prevent the garden drying out. IT WAS AGREED that Mr. Carthy would investigate the feasibility of drilling a borehole to supply enough water to irrigate the garden. The meeting noted that there had been a failed attempt to drill a borehole in the garden about 20 years ago.

Mr. Carthy then gave the Treasurer's report. He reported that the finances were in a relatively healthy condition as a result of the two year policy of setting the precept to £35,000. The committee now has an accumulated cash reserve of £30,000.

Mr. Eckhardt proposed a level of £35,000 for next year's precept as insurance against future capital expenditures such as repair to the foundation stones supporting the railings or the proposed borehole. Jane Bradbury proposed a lower level of £30,000. A vote was taken and IT WAS AGREED to set the precept at £32,500 for the 2013/4 fiscal year.

Mr Carthy noted that the 2012 Byelaws have been approved by the County Court and have the force of law. The penalty for infringement is a fine not to exceed £200 or up to 14 days imprisonment.

Mrs. Bradbury briefed the meeting on the highly successful Christmas Carol party where over £2,500 was raised for charity. 60% went to the Salvation Army fund for the Homeless and 40% to the Operational Casualty Fund for soldiers injured while on duty. The next Carol party will be held on Thursday December 13th.

The meeting turned to a proposal to adjust the lighting of the trees to reduce the impact of the unsightly cluster of lights beneath the Horse Chestnut. The proposal, as outlined by Mr. Carthy, is to remove two of the offending light fixtures to the NW and SE corners and to replace the remaining fixture with a new in-ground light pointing vertically upwards. The cost is approximately £1,500.

Mr. Eckhardt raised the general principle that no change should ever be proposed that disproportionately affects any one household. He further stated that if any feature of the garden, such as the existing lighting installation, should 'blight' any member's house then that is unacceptable and the Committee should address the matter in an expeditious fashion. Avril Cox made the point that while her strong preference was for the removal of the lights entirely she felt that the proposal would go some way towards reducing the effect on her property. Mrs. Cox also noted that the SE corner was already well lit, obviating the need for additional light in that area.

The lighting proposal WAS PASSED, subject to the proviso that all residents be notified of and invited to comment on a 'dry run' of the new lighting, prior to any permanent change.

Mrs. Cox raised the issue of planning permission for the existing lighting installation. Mr. Carthy will begin the application process with Westminster City Council. The cost is £480.

Mr. Eckhardt thanked the chairman, the committee and Lady Marshall for their work during the past year.

The meeting concluded at 7:45pm.