

MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Date and Time: 20 November 2018, 6:30pm

Venue: 26 Montpelier Square

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr Christopher Didizian

Mr Neil Carthy

Mrs Jane Bradbury

Mrs Avril Cox

Lady Janet Marshall

Mr Ali Malek

Mr Davie-Thornhill

APOLOGIES

Mr Costas Michaelides

Mr Daniel Quirici

1. Mr Carthy was appointed meeting chairman.
2. The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21st March 2017 were formally proposed, seconded and approved.
3. Mrs Bradbury reported on the preparations being made for the upcoming Christmas Carols party on December 12th. The amount of work involved each year was becoming a great burden. Mr Didizian offered to purchase and deliver the wines and mince pies, as he does every year. Mr Carthy will distribute the invitations and help with setting up the tables, flares and microphone. Mrs Cox offered to assist with serving the refreshments on the night but simultaneously made the point that it was easy to get stuck serving drinks and then unable to circulate and so she suggested adopting a rota system. Mrs Bradbury welcomed all offers of assistance.
4. Lady Marshall presented the Committee with a report on the state of the garden and her 2019 plan:
 - a. We won the annual Garden Squares competition in the Small Private Squares category for an unprecedented third year in a row. Lady Marshall gave credit to Robert and his team of gardeners with special mention for the efforts of Adam and Peter.
 - b. Other than the gardening contract the main expense this year was the re-paving of the seating area. The initial plan was just to re-point the existing slabs but when our contractor (S G Builders, owner Steve Guy) lifted the paving they learned of the complete disintegration of the under layer. This complicated the work considerably but we are very happy with the final product.
 - c. The loss to disease of the two heart shaped shrubs at the East end of the garden was a blow but it did give us the space to enlarge the path and position a new double garden seat in a position that commands a delightful view of the whole garden. We chose a Lutyens bench in teak inscribed with "Montpelier Square".
 - d. The other benches were sanded and oiled in the summer and this improved their appearance greatly. All furniture is now affixed to the ground to prevent theft.

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- e. The irrigation system has received a much-needed overhaul with the installation of a new tank and a number of new sprinklers added to the main border. Gratefully this work took less time and was much less expensive than expected, thanks to the efficiency of Chris Blake from Botanical Gardener.
 - f. Mr George continues to do excellent tree work for the garden. This year's rota of work cost about £4,700 which was in line with previous years. Mrs Bradbury requested that some attention be given next year to the birches that are starting to obscure her view of the garden. Mrs Cox noted that the trees on the South side have grown considerably and they now extend almost to the roof line of the south terrace houses.
 - g. The main plan for 2019 is to re-do our paths. The surfaces have lost much of their gravel and the camber is too extreme in many places. This is due to the gravel being absorbed into the path material itself over many years. Adding more gravel will not solve anything as it would increase the camber further or find its way onto the grass. We need to employ someone to remove the existing gravel, slice 2-3" off the top of the path bedding, possibly re-lay an underlayer and then re-gravel the new path. With the inability to get big machinery through the garden gate this might be a very labour-intensive job. As a guide it had been mentioned that new paths in Manchester Square cost £30,000 though it was not expected that our paths would cost nearly as much. It was hoped that a proposal would be ready to put in front of residents at the next AGM.
5. The chairman and committee thanked Lady Marshall for all her efforts in the past year and presented her with a bouquet of flowers on the occasion of the garden winning the Garden Squares competition for the third year in a row.
 6. A financial report and draft accounts for the year to 31st December 2018 were presented by Mr Carthy.
 - a. Expenditure is expected to broadly match income for the year.
 - b. Plant expenditure was £2,700.
 - c. The Committee AGREED to keep the precept at the same level (£47,000) in order that reserves against future expenditure continue to be built up.
 7. Mr Carthy has received a letter from Barclays Bank asking for more information about our committee as part of their compliance procedures. It was AGREED to provide them with these minutes to answer their request. In particular:
 - a. Our name is Montpelier Square Garden Committee
 - b. Our purpose is: "A committee established under the Town Gardens Protection Act 1863 for the purposes of maintaining, managing and protecting Montpelier Square Garden and the fixtures, furnishings and plantings therein."
 - c. Our date of formation is 13 April 1867.
 - d. Our address is: Centre Garden, Montpelier Square, London, UK. (It does not have a postcode.)
 - e. Our mailing address is: c/o Neil Carthy, 26 Montpelier Square, London, SW7 1JY.

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- f. The committee members are listed at the top of this document. They control the committee. The garden itself is owned by the residents of the square who may, at our annual AGM, dismiss the existing committee members and appoint new committee members by majority vote, up to a total of 9 people.
8. Mr Carthy informed the committee that the lighting engineer had been on site in the previous week and had recommended the replacement of the fittings with LED lamps. This will improve the energy efficiency of the garden and should result in a warmer light colour. Any change to the lights will only occur after a test fitting is installed first so that the committee could see it in operation and determine its acceptability. It was AGREED to proceed with this work subject to that proviso.
9. There followed a discussion about security in the garden and the local area. A recent initiative by some residents of the square has resulted in a security guard and dog patrolling the area in the hours of darkness. This is independent of, and does not receive funding from, the garden committee. It was AGREED that Mr Malek will ask the security patrol if they would like to have a garden key and if the answer is yes then it would be arranged for them. Dogs are not allowed in the garden so entry to the garden would only be for the purposes of dealing with disturbances or intruders.
10. The rubbish deposited by foxes on the lawn is a perennial problem. The foxes attack rubbish bags left outside by residents on rubbish collection day. A notice has gone out to all residents asking them to use plastic bins.
11. The next AGM for the garden is scheduled for January 2019.
12. The meeting closed at 7:30pm.