

# MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014  
**Held at:** German Christ Church Basement

**Committee Members Present:**

Daniel Quirici  
Lady Marshall  
Neil Carthy  
Avril Cox  
Christopher Didizian  
Ali Malek QC  
Nicholas Davie-Thornhill

**Association Members Present:**

John Cox, David and Vivienne Eckhardt, Katherine Hawkesbury,  
Diane Kordas, Michael Goletka, Costas Michaelides and Dr Michael Pate.

Apologies were received from Jane Bradbury.

The meeting opened at 6:30pm. Daniel Quirici was proposed, seconded and approved as chairman of the meeting.

The minutes of the 2013 AGM were proposed, seconded and approved.

Mr Michaelides (House #1) has volunteered to fill the vacancy on the Garden Committee left by Mrs Nishio, who has moved out of the square.

Lady Marshall gave a report on the garden:

- The garden is currently giving a good display of Spring colour, despite the long, wet and windy Winter that we have just experienced.
- The adverse weather meant that the gardeners began the year well behind previous years' schedules but they have worked extra hours to make it up.
- Robert Player and his team continue to deliver excellent service to us in a skilled and willing manner. The extra catch-up work is not being charged as Mr Player believes the annual contract should cover such exigencies.
- We came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the annual Garden Squares Competition organised by the London Garden Society. This is an excellent result in a class containing over 50 other squares. Hyde Park Square came first.
- The pump on the irrigation system failed in August last year, a most inconvenient time during a long hot summer. Compounding this, our existing contractors were very slow to install a replacement. Consequently an enormous amount of hand watering was required which is not the best use of the gardeners' or Committee members' time. This lesson has

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been learnt and we have made inquiries from a competing firm about replacing or upgrading our system. We estimate that it will cost in the region of £5,000 to make our system fit for purpose. This will give us a more reliable system with greater coverage of the garden.

- We lost two trees in 2013: an old cherry tree on the West side and a young silver birch on the North side. Both trees will be replaced like-for-like.
- We continue to conduct annual tree inspections on our major trees. We passed through the severe Winter storms without damage and with only twigs falling so for that we must give credit to our tree surgeons, Tim George Trees.

Mrs Cox asked what would be required to move from third place to first in the Garden Square Competition. Lady Marshall answered that the both she and the gardeners work very hard in the week before judging to present the garden in the best possible shape. Lady Marshall also noted that We are a garden that looks its best in Spring, not Summer when the judging occurs, only a point or two (out of 100) separate the top three places and yet we have been consistently finishing in the top three or four places in recent years. These factors give confidence that the improvement work to the garden is bearing fruit. There is an element of luck and subjectivity in this kind of competition and, while it is far from our main priority for the garden, perhaps one day we will achieve a coveted first place finish.

The chairman gave thanks to Lady Marshall for her work and this vote of thanks was echoed by all present. A further vote of thanks was also given to Mr Carthy for his work on the administrative aspects of the garden.

Mr Carthy then gave the Treasurer's report. He reported that this year's income exceeds expenditure to the tune of about £4,000. Every year we reserve £2,500 for capital expenditure such as the irrigation system improvement works. The budget for bulbs and plants is to remain at £2,500.

A vote was taken and IT WAS AGREED to hold the precept at £32,500 for the 2015/6 fiscal year.

There was a discussion of the night time lighting of the trees. Mr Cox and Mr Eckhardt had questions for the committee regarding the current and future state of the lights. Mr Cox told the meeting that he would rather not have the lights in their current format but that if the colour of the light under the horse chestnut tree be changed to a mellower colour he would not seek any further changes. Mr Eckhardt offered to liaise with Robert Player or such lighting contractor as is required to effect this change. The meeting accepted Mr Eckhardt's generous offer of help.

Mrs Cox noted that the light fixture that had been shining into the windows of the houses on the North side of the Square is now pointed directly downwards and that if moved it may cause trouble in the future.

The meeting concluded at 7:30pm.