

MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Date and Time: 21 March 2017, 6:30pm

Venue: 26 Montpelier Square

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr Christopher Didizian

Mr Costas Michaelides

Mr Daniel Quirici

Mrs Jane Bradbury

Mrs Avril Cox

Lady Janet Marshall

Mr Ali Malek

Mr Neil Carthy

APOLOGIES

Mr Davie-Thornhill

1. Mr Quirici was appointed meeting chairman.
2. The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 9th February 2016 were formally proposed, seconded and approved.
3. Mr Quirici and Lady Marshall requested that the byelaws of the garden be circulated to the residents before we enter the busiest time of the year.
4. Lady Marshall presented the Committee with a report on the state of the garden and her future plans:
 - a. We won the annual Garden Squares competition in the Small Private Squares category. This is the first time we have won and a round of applause followed.
 - b. Our new compost bins were installed last year. Made of solid wood, they are a credit to the garden and were approvingly noted by the competition judges.
 - c. After a few years of heavy investment in plants and shrubs for the garden we are planning a minimal year. The aim is to maintain the high standard of the garden and to certainly replace shrubs that do not thrive but otherwise to control costs.
 - d. Trees:
 - i. Tim George continues to do excellent tree work for the garden. This year's rota of work will cost about £4,500 and more if we receive permission to fell the Ailanthus.
 - ii. We have been trying for a number of years to get Westminster City Council (WCC) to agree to allow us to fell the ailing Ailanthus. Lady Marshall asked the committee to consider enlisting the help of a well-respected arboriculturist, Keith Sacre, in this process.
 - iii. The committee APPROVED hiring Mr Sacre. The reasons given were:
 1. His appointment was approved of by our gardener, Mr Player
 2. His cost seemed reasonable
 3. He can mediate with WCC at the level of tree-expert to tree expert

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4. He can produce a long term plan for the trees (at extra cost) that will inform any discussion with WCC
 5. He can highlight emerging problems (e.g. disease etc.) with any of our trees
 6. Our commitment to Mr Sacre will be time-limited. The committee will hire him for 2017 and then review before any extension.
- e. We have an excellent working relationship with Robert Player and his team at Garden Associates and he will be attending our AGM.
5. The chairman and committee thanked Lady Marshall for all her efforts in the past year.
6. A financial report and draft accounts for the year to 31st December 2016 were presented by Mr Carthy.
 - a. Expenditure exceeded income for the year by £8,000. This is expected and was due to:
 - i. The construction of new compost bins, installed at the cost of £6,500.
 - ii. Expenditure on plants rising to £3,800 from £2,600. This will reduce in 2017.
 - b. The Committee has reserves in excess of one year's normal expenditure but that is because the railings are due to be painted in 2017 (see next item).
7. Mr Carthy informed the committee of progress on the tender for the repainting of the metal railings. We have received two quotes with a third quote to follow soon. Once all the quotes are received the committee agreed to decide on the winning contractor by email. The expected cost is c. £30,000. Mr Malek suggested that we inform our insurers of the project and for us to ensure the winning contractor carries all necessary insurances to cover risks to parked cars and pedestrians.
8. Mrs Bradbury reported on an extremely successful Christmas Carol party in December. The event was very well attended and raised over £3,000 for charity. The date for this year's party had already been fixed with the Salvation Army band as December 13th.
9. The committee approved having a summer party in early July to celebrate 150 years since the formation of the committee. Mrs Bradbury suggested a caterer for the event.
10. Items for the agenda of the upcoming AGM on May 17th were considered. We will be inviting residents to put their names forward to join the committee at the same time as we distribute the agenda.
11. The German Church was given permission to hold their children's Easter egg hunt in the garden again this year.
12. The meeting closed at 8pm.