

# MONTPELIER SQUARE GARDEN

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017  
**Held at:** German Christ Church Basement

**Committee Members Present:**

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Daniel Quirici           | (8)  |
| Lady Marshall            | (21) |
| Neil Carthy              | (26) |
| Avril Cox                | (18) |
| Nicholas Davie-Thornhill | (32) |

**Association Members Present:**

David and Vivienne Eckhardt (29)

**Also attending:**

Robert Player of Garden Associates

Apologies were received from Ali Malek QC (13), Costas Michaelides (1), Christopher Didizian (44) and Diane Seymour-Williams (22).

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

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were proposed, seconded and approved, then signed by the chairman.

Battling a sore throat, Lady Marshall gave her report on the garden:

- We won the Garden Squares Competition in the "Small Private Squares" category for the second year in a row and we also received a RHS gold star. Those present applauded this news.
- In August we had a box caterpillar crisis when, over the course of a single weekend, our buxus maze and planters were attacked and almost destroyed. The box balls in the planters were killed by the pest but quick action on the part of the gardeners saved the maze. We remain vigilant for the return of the caterpillars.
- Our trees are in wonderful condition and extremely healthy. At least once and usually twice a year they are inspected by our qualified Tree Surgeon, Tim George. Tim looks for dead or dying branches and signs of disease such as massaria. He has concerns about the Ailanthus tree which is growing into the crown of the Horse Chestnut. In May we applied to Westminster CC to have the Ailanthus felled but we were refused permission. Instead we were allowed to make a sizable reduction to the crown of the tree. That procedure was handled admirably by Tim.
- A consequence of the health of our trees is that they have grown substantially over the past several years and now the garden gets measurably less light. Even in summer the grass is

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often in shade for all but a few hours per day. The committee is formulating a long term plan to manage our trees and is being assisted in this endeavour by Keith Sacre, a nationally renowned arborist.

- This year the railings took precedence over other infrastructure needs but we really need to address the irrigation system. It has been failing for a few years, always at the driest time of the year.
- Lady Marshall thanked Robert Player and his team for their work throughout the year.

The chairman gave thanks to Lady Marshall for her work and this vote of thanks was echoed by all present.

Mr Player then reported on the work performed by his team in the past twelve months:

- This time of year is dominated by the removal of the leaves. Plane leaves are separated and the rest composted. He estimates that we generate 10 – 15 tonnes of leaf waste annually.
- On the matter of the irrigation system he noted that the current system was installed c. 1992 and the garden has changed substantially since then. The current system is no longer fit for purpose. Any new system should be a system of popups and micro-sprinklers, not a drip feed system whose pores eventually block with lime.
- An unfortunate development in the past year has been an increase in the amount of rubbish the gardeners are clearing each week from the garden. The main culprits seem to be foxes attacking domestic waste and selfish car drivers disposing of their waste in our hedges.
- Since the last AGM he has implemented the plan for refreshing the paved area. The urn will be re-sited and the bed softened with a multi-stemmed birch. After a number of moves the sundial was moved from the grass to be settled in the main herbaceous border.
- Next year's planting will concentrate on the bare area on the north side near the Irises and the dark area that is on the opposite side of the path from the gardeners shed.
- In response to a question about the compost bin area Mr Player said that to allow the hedge to grow up sufficiently to obscure the compost bins totally would create an uneven outline but that he would investigate other solutions.
- Overall the garden is in excellent health and 2017 was an amazing year for growth, warm but not too hot and very moist throughout. He is happy with how the garden looks at present but work must continue to maintain it at the current level.

Mr Player received a round of applause at the end of his report.

Mr Eckhardt raised the issue of the lack of facilities within the garden for children and he requested that the committee consider ways of rectifying this deficiency. Mr Player observed that he must work within the aesthetic parameters defined by the committee and that he had not actively pursued a children's activity area to date. Mr Eckhardt asked the committee to consider re-purposing the NW corner path area to an adventure area for kids.

Mr Carthy then gave the Treasurer's report. He reported that for 2016 our expenditure exceeded our income by £8,099. For 2017 our expenditure is forecast to exceed our income by £10,604. Both these results are in line with projections and the high level of expenditure was driven by capital

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expenses: In 2016 we paid £6,000 for new compost bins and in 2017 we paid £29,000 to repaint our railings.

A vote was taken and IT WAS AGREED by majority vote to raise the precept to £47,000 for the 2017/8 fiscal year to cover any expenditure on our irrigation system and to rebuild our reserves. At this precept level each house will pay £1,000 per annum.

Mr Carthy informed the meeting that this year the annual Christmas carols party would be on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:45pm.

The meeting concluded at 8pm.