

MINUTES - AGM of HYDE PARK GARDENS COMMITTEE
6 p.m. Tuesday 26th November 2013

Present:

BARBARA AND MEL ALTSHULER
IAN CALLAN
KENNETH AND LILLIAN IBBETT
MYRTLE McGUIRE
HAYDN TURNER
CHARLES WIGODER

Haydn Turner opened the meeting by asking the Committee to formally resign, and to then elect a new Committee which would be made up of those attending the Meeting who all indicated they would be willing to serve.

Haydn Turner advised that he is happy if someone else wishes to take on the role of Chairman, but we all agreed to continue with Haydn as our Committee Chairman.

We then moved on to discuss the appointment of the new Managing Agents for the Garden, Westbourne Estates. Kenneth Ibbett spoke about this as he had been asked to handle this matter. He advised us that after we decided last year to re-tender for the contract to manage the garden, he sent everyone interested a full report of our requirements. A short-list was made and Kenneth Ibbett and Haydn Turner interviewed the three candidates on that short list, which did include the present agent, Farrars. Westbourne Estates had a terrific reference from Robert Player, and also had many interesting ideas about the garden, improving expenditure and they have followed up and are very keen to move forward. We have now signed an agreement with them and we are ready to hand over from 1st January 2014. Basically they handle many of the best private gardens around here and have a huge amount of experience with handling people who don't pay, people who have unpleasant children and dogs, etc.

Haydn Turner then discussed the matter of monies outstanding from Knight Frank in respect of the Church Commissioners, and said we have sent a formal lawyer's letter and if they do not pay we will pursue them and take it to the Small Claims Court. It goes back almost two years

Haydn complimented Kenneth Ibbett on doing a wonderful job in dealing with the new agents and we will circulate all members of the Committee with their Terms of reference.

We then moved on to discuss whether it was felt necessary to increase the service charge, which had been raised the year before last. The monies we had overspent two years ago because of work on the trees has been recovered last year, so we have approximately £60,000 in our fund.

We agreed it would not be necessary to increase the service charge for 2014.

We discussed the replacement of the current key system for the garden gate, with an electrical fob system. This way the Agents are able to record who has the key fobs and they can be enabled and disabled as necessary. We thought it was a good idea and that the new agent ought to be entirely responsible for the key system.

Kenneth Tibbett spoke about reviewing the Garden Rules. Also any new residents need to be made aware of the Garden Rules. We felt it was necessary to review the existing Garden Rules which Barbara will circulate to the Committee for comments and additions.

There was a discussion about dogs, and ensuring that people who are not residents are not allowed to use the garden. Also perhaps registering dogs. We felt that the new agents would be able to offer some guidance on how best to deal with this and enforce the new Rules when they are finalised.

We then asked Robert Player to join the meeting. We congratulated him on the garden and he told us it had been a disastrous, cold and wet Spring and they had reduced the number of tulips because the squirrels are taking 50% of the plants. We have put in 500 snowdrops and 300 daffodils and we discussed putting in a small fence in front of the circular bed close to the Clarendon gate to stop builders and other people from trampling on the plants there. We told Robert to go ahead with this.

The lawns have been scarified and aerated which has improved them.

In July they planted and prepared the garden for the annual Garden Competition, but unfortunately on the day the judges came they were unable to gain access because Knight Frank's builders had blocked the entrance with building materials.

Robert spoke about the Bayswater Road side of the garden which requires a lot of replanting and new soil. Robert said it would take three years because they have to take out all the dead, obsolete plants and bushes, and also to increase the fertility of the soil.

They have started at the Brook Street end as the Plane Tree there had to be taken down. They want to put in a natural hedgerow which only became available last week, and they expect to start planting in the next couple of weeks.

We spoke about strengthening the barbed wire fence and Robert said they had strengthened the double gates and would put in very dense and prickly vegetation – blackthorn, hawthorn, etc.

At present the view from Bayswater Road into the garden is quite “open” which is a cause for concern but Robert was asked to get on as quickly as possible with the planting rather than do it over 3 years.

Robert said that the Bayswater Road side of the garden is 216m long and 10m wide, totalling 1300 sq.metres. It is basically a two year programme, to be reviewed at the end of year one.

The new agent has suggested a website for the garden showing points of interest which we can look at if we wish. Also we discussed labeling certain plants and trees – perhaps on the most interesting species. Robert will guide us on this.

We briefly spoke about the Garden Lighting, and agreed it would be best for the new agent to advise on this as they have already been in touch with someone.

The meeting closed.