

MINUTES

GARDEN AGM 15th November 2016 at 3.30

Present:

Barbara & Mel Altshuler
Ian Callan
Rebekah Caudwell
Connie Freeman
Caroline Garnham
Giovanna Grassi
Kenneth Ibbett
Denise McLean
Keith Morris
Joe Porter
Avishek Roy
Valerie Saxby
David Saxby
Didier Tandy
Haydn Turner
Charles Wigoder

In Attendance:

Aaron Landeryou

Haydn Turner opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and advising this was the 18th Annual General Meeting of Hyde Park Gardens

He pointed out that David Saxby was instrumental in starting the Committee to run the garden when it was taken over from the Church Commissioners, and that we are very grateful for that as it was the best course of action.

Haydn then opened the meeting and the Minutes of the AGM of 2015 were produced by Aaron Landeryou of Westbourne Block Management. The Minutes were accepted.

Haydn Turner said there were three main functions of the meeting:

1. To review and agree last year's expenditure and set a budget for next year
2. Agree a Garden Committee which meets occasionally. Normally only four or five people turn up, so we are very happy to have a larger attendance today. Haydn invited those who would like to serve on the Committee, to let us know.

Those people are: Haydn Turner, Barbara and Mel Altshuler, Kenneth Ibbett, Charles Wigoder, Caroline Garnham, Ian Callan, Giovanna Grassi, Rebekah Caudwell, Keith Morris, David Saxby

3. To review the actual day to day working of the garden, which Robert Player of Garden Associates will go into when he joins the meeting.

The first order of play would be to re-appoint Robert Player, our Gardener, before he arrives to join the meeting. Our garden has again won a prize and been voted 3rd in this year's London Garden Society award for the Best Large Private Garden.

It was mentioned that Robert was originally appointed during David Saxby's time, and not only is he efficient and an excellent gardener, but he really cares.

The motion to re-appoint Robert Player was proposed by Barbara Altshuler and seconded by David Saxby and Kenneth Ibbett.

Haydn Turner advised he was very happy to continue as Chairman, but asked if anyone wished to take it over. He proposed sharing the position with Kenneth Ibbett as Joint Chairman and this was agreed by Kenneth.

He went on to say that on behalf of himself and Kenneth, we have had a series of agents over the years, and for the last couple of years we have had an excellent service from Westbourne Block Management who are totally helpful, totally available and we are very happy to continue this arrangement. This was accepted by all.

Aaron Landeryou of Westbourne then discussed the budget, and advised we are going to run in line with the current budget. There is an increase of 2.5% in Robert's fee, but we have made savings elsewhere in the budget.

We collect £55,000 and a further £9,000 from the reserve we have been building up. At present the reserve is £30,000. Each year we have had to dip into this.

One item which may be considered in the future is that the rest of the Hyde Park Estate has put railings around their gardens, and we may wish to follow suit. This would be a huge cost.

David Saxby suggested we required more lighting in the garden, particularly along the pathway. The problem we have had with both foxes and squirrels, and water getting into the lighting system was discussed. We asked David Saxby to look into a lighting proposal to review all the garden lights.

The problem of foxes and squirrels destroying the pipes of the watering system was discussed and we asked if it would be advisable to look into new proposals using an animal proof system.

Robert Player joined the meeting and we advised him that we wished him to continue maintaining the gardens.

Robert reported on the work he and his team were doing in the garden, and we complimented him. He said we need to develop the irrigation system and he is working with an irrigation company to come up with a proposal for the entire system. The amount was in the budget for last year which was not used, so we should have the funds.

Robert also said he was re-shaping some of the flower beds, particularly as the majority of residents look down onto the garden so he is trying to make it more interesting.

A tree which was lost has been replaced and the gardeners look for interesting herbaceous perennials, rather than use annuals.

It was agreed to invest in a working irrigation system which encompasses every area, and we need to improve the soil also with either manure or green waste.

Keith Morris said he preferred green waste to be used.

It was agreed to remove the square box hedge around the Catalpa tree which was initially planted to protect the young tree, but is no longer needed.

Some trees need removing, particularly the cherry tree which has been condemned. It was agreed to remove it and replace it with another mature cherry tree.

Connie Freeman thanked the Committee as her flat is in the direct line of fire, should the existing cherry tree fall!

We also asked Robert to replace some of the gravel path where necessary.

Haydn spoke about the general dispute with the Church Commissioners and the service charge they should have paid. The Committee have instructed Counsel to pursue it on our behalf. The amount owing is £57,000 and they have offered us £15,000 to walk away, but we have recently found more evidence. Aaron of Westbourne Block Management is working very hard on this and we are giving all of our support. Aaron asked those present if anyone had any old papers which may throw light on this point. We are hoping to resolve this matter with the Church sooner rather than later. Counsel's opinion is due shortly.

Haydn also spoke about the proportion of the garden rate charged to the residents, which were established many years ago and which are not right, so we need for next year to make a proposal so that each building will be allocated a % of the entire Garden Rate and it is up to each building to delegate how they charge it on to their constituent members. Examples were given of someone in a one bedroom flat paying 3.5% of the entire garden Rate, whereas a whole house is only paying 1.9%. This is clearly unfair.

Haydn spoke about the Garden Party held in June this year, and said it had worked well and he thought we ought to do it again next Summer. He reported that he had mentioned it to the newly appointed High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and suggested that they participate.

It was agreed we ought to have another party in the Summer of 2017 and Haydn proposed Caroline Garnham be in charge.

Any Other Business:

Charles Wigoder brought up the subject of dogs. There are too many instances where dogs are not being kept under control, and it is still a problem despite various letters going out to dog owners. The gardeners have to deal with a lot of dog mess every time they work in the garden. Rebekah Caudwell suggested that dog owners are encouraged to pick up any dog mess they find in the garden and not just that of their own dog.

Most dogs are now registered under the new Dog Passport System and in most cases dog owners are responsible but it is the odd one or two who still allow their dogs to run around the garden unattended.

It was pointed out by Haydn that, like all other gardens on the Hyde Park Estate, the Church wanted NO dogs allowed but the Committee had allowed them. It was suggested that if anyone sees a dog unattended they should report it and if any dog owner is the cause for more than two complaints, then that dog should be barred from the garden or only allowed when on a lead.

It was felt the whole strength of Hyde Park Gardens is that it is a community so we should be able to speak to any dog owner who is not respecting the rules.

Kenneth Ibbett spoke about the building works at no.23 and the fact they are making ingress into the garden. They have taken 2 metres off the pathway. Aaron said he is dealing with this situation.

The meeting closed.