

MINUTES GARDEN AGM
Wednesday 1st November 2022 at 5 pm
Held at The Victoria Public House W2

Present: Ian Callan
Haydn Turner
Kenneth & Lillian Ibbett
Giovanna Grassi
David Saxby
Jagath Kumatage

Aaron Landeryou (Westbourne Block Management)

Apologies: Barbara Miller, Mel Altshuler and Sabine Wood

Kenneth Ibbett was asked by Haydn to chair the meeting and welcomed everyone. The minutes of the previous meeting and agenda were approved

1. Reappointment of Gardeners:

The gardeners' report was read by those attending.

The committee were unhappy with the level of service that they were receiving from Garden Associates. Aaron and Kenneth explained that they had been working closely with Pete and George and that their work had improved in the past few months.

The committee were disappointed with the speed in which the Princess' flowerbed was cleared and replanted. The plants lack imagination and too few plants of any one variety were planted.

Giovanna believed that the committee should seek alternative quotations for the garden. Ian Callan pointed out how tight the labour market for such services was in central London now. Aaron explained what other smaller gardens were paying. The Committee did not feel that retendering was the correct course of action at present on the basis that Garden Associates have improved their service and it would be counter productive if they discovered that the committee would be looking at alternative tenders.

It was agreed that Garden Associates should continue with the garden but that the committee will review their performance in June 2023.

2. Improvements to the garden:

The Bee Colony which was introduced at the end of 2021 have now settled into their hive. There were two swarms during the springtime which Graham Young the beekeeper dealt with. In September, Graham delivered 40 jars of honey which the colony had produced over the summer. The jars were made available to those attending the AGM. Aaron will drop off the remaining jars to the houses for the porters to share amongst the residents.

The area behind the shed which has been used as a general dumping ground has been tidied up and much of the rubbish/junk removed.

5 fruit trees have been planted at the Brook Street end of the garden. A new Mulberry trees has just been planted opposite no.6 Hyde Park Gardens.

The Committee thanked Giovanna for her work on updating the benches in the garden. It was agreed that Aaron and Giovanna will meet in the coming weeks to discuss purchasing an additional table and chairs to go on the lawn opposite 3-6 Hyde Park Gardens.

A resident of 2-8 Hyde Park Gardens has been leaving their garden furniture in the garden. The committee felt that the furniture was in poor condition and made the garden look untidy. It was agreed that Aaron should write to the agent for nos2-8 and ask them to remove the furniture from the garden or the committee will remove it and charge the building.

Planter/Furniture – Residents are not permitted to store or leave personal items in the garden such as Plant Pots and Garden Furniture unless they have the express permission of the Garden Committee. Furthermore, residents wishing to put large Garden Furniture in the garden can only do so with express permission of the Garden Committee and with the understanding that it is for communal use. Residents wishing to “donate” plant pots to the garden must therefore get consent from the committee and not simply leave unwanted pots in the garden. On several occasions, residents have left broken or unsuitable/unattractive pots in the garden, claiming they were donating them to the garden.

David Saxby was very pleased with the lighting in the garden. Giovanna asked that the lights come on earlier from 6. 30pm each night. This was reluctantly agreed although Kenneth and Lillian have

reservation over unnecessary use of electricity at a peak time in view of the energy shortage and crisis coming this winter.

3. Re-appointment of Managing Agents.

The committee were extremely pleased with the work undertaken by Aaron Landeryou and the team at Westbourne, and they were duly reappointed as agents.

4. Election of Committee.

It was agreed that Committee members are expected to attend the AGM, set an example by adhering to the garden rules and be prepared to support the garden agent where necessary.

Those who wished to be on the Committee are:

Haydn Turner	Melvyn Altshuler
Kenneth Ibbett	Barbara Miller
Ian Callan	Sabine Wood
David Saxby	Giovanna Grassi

Sabine Wood of 14 Hyde Park Gardens approached Aaron during the summer to enquire about joining the committee. Aaron explained what committee members were expected to do and undertake and Sabine was happy to join the committee. Unfortunately, she was unable to attend the AGM as she is currently overseas. Kenneth proposed that Sabine be allowed to join the committee. Those attending agreed to her appointment.

5. HPG & the Church Commissioners

Aaron explained to David the changes of staff and agents at the CC. The current position is the that Commissioners do not wish to agree to any garden rate percentages in a formal agreement as requested by the Committee to resolve both garden charges and access rights to the garden. We also agreed to reconfirm the Committee's indemnity of Haydn Turner and Kenneth Ibbett against the Church Commissioners.

6. Dogs.

A small number of dog owners continue to not pick up after their dogs. In some cases, dog owners are allowing their dogs to roam the garden at night where they foul in the garden which is not picked. Giovanna explained that many of the dog owners end up picking up after other dogs which also wasn't acceptable. It was agreed that dogs would no longer be allowed off their lead from sunset until dawn in the garden. Anyone found allowing their dog to off the lead at night would be fined £60 on each occasion and /or have their fob cancelled.

It was agreed that the Dog Bins would now be emptied by a dedicated poop contractor. Historically, the gardeners have undertaken this role but it was not something they were paid to do or part of their job. The new company will charge £60 per visit and they will refill the dog bags and wash out the bins when needed.

7. Expenditure and Budget

With inflation likely to hit 10% in the coming weeks, the committee were concerned about the level of the reserve and also the annual charge. Kenneth suggested that the reserve should be set at 50% of the annual budget. This proposal was supported by David Saxby and approved by those attending.

Garden Associates have recently written to Kenneth informing him that they will need to increase their fees in order to stay in line with inflation. Their proposal would see their fees increase from £28,388.52pa to £34,344.00pa. The committee accepted that all contractors are having to increase their fees and therefore they agreed to the annual increase.

Aaron explained that in the past, Garden Associates had often 4 or 5 gardeners in the garden and that there were only 3 at present. The committee agreed that the garden required at least 4 gardeners so Aaron will inform Garden Associates that they are to increase their staff from 3 to 4 gardeners. This would add an additional £954.00 per month or £45,972.00 per annum.

It was agreed that Aaron would produce a draft budget which he would email the committee for them to approve.

8. Any Other Business

It was agreed that the Fob payment that residents make when collecting a fob should increase from £25 to £40.

It was agreed that the garden Website was tired and needed updating. The committee nominated Sabine to oversee this as web mistress.

Haydn asked that the garden continue to pay for the hanging baskets along the street. This was agreed by the committee. Haydn also remarked that there is a lamppost without a hanging basket. Aaron will see if he is able to arrange one to be installed by the council.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everybody for their contribution and the meeting was closed.

