

Arundel and Elgin AGM November 7th 2016

Farm Girl Café, 59a Portobello Road.

Committee Calum MacInnes (Chairman), Natalie Faure Beaulieu, Nicolas Bellet, Kit Davis, Carrie Ferman, Guy Nixon, Fiona Fleming-Brown, Robert Sargent Apologies- Tassy Barham

Calum opened the meeting as Chairman and thanked everyone for coming, the committee for their hard work and working so well together and to Chris and Anna for their hard work in the garden.

Garden report- Tassy was unable to make the meeting so Chris gave a brief review of the year which highlighted the substantial amount of planting, especially daffodils and tulips, and working through the beds to improve the gardens general appearance.

In the coming year, the replacement of the railings at the Kensington Park Road end of the garden will be the key project and all efforts should be made to protect the hedges. If the hedges are lost then he would recommend laurel rather than privet as it is a lot easier to maintain.

The pagoda is falling apart and should be replaced by a new one. Some of the shrubs are getting too large and will need to be cut back and the hazel is being taken out and will need to be replaced.

There are currently 3 sheds in the gardener's compound 1 large and 2 small. One of the small sheds needs replacing with a cost around £300. Chris also requested a Billy Goat for sucking up leaves into a bag, the cost is around £1000 but it will save a lot of time and raking is bad for the grass. A new hedge trimmer with a longer blade was also requested. A question was asked if the Billy Goat and hedge trimmer could be rented but it was decided that this would be too expensive. It was also asked if we can share with other gardens. We should ask if others are interested.

A replacement for the hazel was discussed and it was voted that it should not be replaced at this time.

Chairman's Report- it was agreed that there should be a pre-application process for the new railings. The planning officer will come with the builders and architect to reach an agreement first. There were 3 options for the base below the railings, brick, stone and render. It was agreed that a brick base similar to Rosemead garden was the preferred choice. The building time for the KPR end will be 8-12 weeks and it will not be in progress during the Notting Hill carnival. Both sides could be done over 2 years.

I was agreed that the fireworks this year were a success and well attended. There was an interest in inviting back the 'fire twirling man' and it was agreed he would be invited back next year. A request was also made for mulled wine to be available that could help cover the cost. It would require a licence, this will be looked into. The summer party and open day also went well with more than £250 raised for charity.

Shakespeare was very good but the slower take up of tickets may count against us when the company decides which gardens to perform in next year. It was suggested that St. Peter's church could be offered as a wet weather venue and Guy asked if we should do more marketing.

Finance report- (Nathalie) The format of the accounts had changed to make them more comparable and easier to understand. Tree pruning was a lower number but that is because of a mismatch of dates from last year. The turnover from keys continues to grow while the cash balance of £40k is primarily money for the railings that has not been spent yet. The gardener's wages had increased by 3%, as previously agreed. Apart from these issues the financials are similar to last year.

Trees-(Guy) -A question was raised about the chestnut which looks like 'autumn came early'. It was explained that this was bleeding canker and caused by bugs.

The usual questions about the lime trees were raised and although it was agreed that they would not be planted today there is nothing that can be done until they are old enough that they have to be replaced. Stakes had been put in various places to show where new trees could be planted. If these trees are established there would be a better chance of being permitted to remove some limes. A vote was taken and it was agreed that fastidious oak should be planted as it is tall with a thin canopy and will not block too much light.

The issues with the mulberry were discussed and that a support will be put in place too stop it falling further.

AOB-There was no discussion needed this year about the precept as that was agreed last year.

The committee resigned and all the existing members agreed to stay on the committee and LeeLee Brown agreed to join.

The meeting was then told by Sophia ? about an initiative to house refugee families and whether we would like to sponsor one family. It would cost £10,000 over 3 years for rental accommodation and money. RBKC have a target of 50 families but only one has been placed so far. It was agreed that she should come to the next meet and it could be discussed in more detail.

