

**MINUTES OF THE 2007 AGM OF THE ARUNDEL AND ELGIN GARDEN
HELD ON 5.11.2007 AT THE LAZY DAISY CAFÉ, PORTOBELLO ROAD.**

Present: Residents of properties surrounding the garden and the Committee members as follows: Nick Pedgrift (NP) Chairman, David Bailey (DB) Garden Trees, Ann Canning (AC) Secretary and Builders Permits, Pat Morton (PM) Garden Management, George Saadeh (GS) (Treasurer) Leslie Feeney Baily (LB) Children, Guy Nixon (GN) Newsletters, Sarah Edwards (SE) Keys, Tassy Barham (TB) Open Day.

The meeting opened with Charles Franklyn of Neighbourhood Watch giving information on Adopting Neighbourhood Watch and reassurance that crime was not out of control in the Borough. The Metropolitan website stated robbery increased by 4.7%, mugging down by 20% and residential burglary down by 10%. This shows that the police have been applying themselves and it has worked. There have been more vehicle crime, theft of mobiles and laptops. He said there were 2/3 muggings in Kensington per day. He said it was most important to report these crimes to the police because if they then see a spate of crime in a particular area they can send out patrols which residents may not notice as they are plain clothes who often patrol day and night. Crime is at an all time low level. This ward is called the Colville Ward and the community policing consists of one police sergeant, two constables and 9 PCSO's who are uniformed civilians and their job is to interact with the public and then report back to police. The Patrol Ward telephone numbers which can be used to leave messages are 020 8721 3013 and the mobile 07768178110. These are not to be used in emergencies. The benefits of joining the Neighbourhood Watch are that there are email bulletins, discounts on house insurance, access to police, annual conference, and literature on crime prevention.

1. Chairman's Introduction

NP recommended approval of last year's AGM minutes. These were adopted. He introduced the committee members and their responsibilities over the past year and said that at the end of the meeting each member would resign and new members elected.

2. Treasurer's Report

GS said that out of the 2007 total precept of £30,200, £30,440 had been spent. Money had to be spent in changing the Bye Laws to allow children to play ball games. Fireworks this year cost £1,500 as against the year before of £1,200 but the display was much longer. DB then discussed bank balance of £48,600. He felt it important to keep a large reserve just in case there was any large unforeseen expenditure as was the case a few years ago with £35,000 being spent to fight a resident's land-grab. DB mentioned various items which extra money could be spent on. Paths from £3,600 for hoggin and £25,000 for resin bonded. Summer party with steel band £2,000. If the Precept is dropped to £25,000, only some items could be carried out. The vote on precept level would be carried out at the end of the meeting

3. Garden

NP said we employed a new gardener about 18 months ago and also a garden consultant. The central garden has been redesigned and the grass considerably widened. There has been new planting and shaping of the south eastern corner although some planting had not been successful due to watering problems. 300 foxgloves had been planted. Discussion took place on the fact that the hedge had been lowered and the general consensus of residents was to keep the hedge higher. General discussion took place on whether services of Roz were required or whether a gardener could do both jobs. Some residents felt they wanted to see more open spaces and did not want to see overplanting. Pat said there were no plans to plant anymore of the garden. Residents asked whether they wished garden to be formal or less formal. DB pointed out to maintain a less formal area can take more time. It was agreed that the outside of the central garden should be less formal. Tom was asked to give his view and he felt it was best not to over-formalise anything. Residents felt it would be better to meet more often and look at garden design and although a sub-committee had been formed this had not happened. Guy said that they had visited other communal gardens and concluded that Arundel and Elgin was one of the best garden squares. It was decided that a walk-about with Roz would be arranged for a Saturday when residents could also attend. The Cruciform Herbal bed was discussed – some residents wanted this to be removed and it was reiterated that this bed was planted initially to stop children playing ball games. It was therefore decided that this would be an agenda item for the next AGM. Fresh proposals for watering involving a leaky pipe around the perimeter were suggested and agreed to be progressed.

4. David Hawkins – Gardener

There had been an issue with some committee members who think that he spends too much time in the garden and spoils their enjoyment. He works 17 hours per week and also carries out private jobs for residents. A resident expressed that they thought it was good to have someone in the garden who could keep an eye on things as it was like another form of neighbourhood watch. Guy explained that Leslie, Pat and himself had had a meeting with David Hawkins in which they stated his hours and that he was to leave the garden by 6pm during the summer months and at dusk in the autumn/winter. He was given a letter to this effect which he signed. A senior resident, Mr. Lewis, thought it was shocking that a gardener could be criticised for wanting to work longer hours unpaid and then have questions raised about his motives. It was agreed by residents they would like the garden designer to be employed for a further year and be in attendance at the next AGM.

5. Trees

DB stated that an extensive programme of tree work had been planned for this year. The epicormic shoots on the limes would be removed as usual. Dead wood and epicormics would be removed from the gleditsia. The mulberry would have a crown thin and lift to 2 metres. The plane would have a programme of general maintenance including a crown lift and removal of dead and crossing branches. Two, self-seeded robinias would be removed. The two hawthorns would be further pruned. The silver birch at the NW corner of the garden was now on its last legs and should really be felled. The AGM agreed to this Nem Con. A new silver birch would replace it. Later in the summer, the two cherries on the NE side would be pruned back to their previous points. NP raised the issue of the two holly bushes and suggested that the more central one of the two be removed or at least have its crown lifted. General discussion took place and it was decided that the garden designer should attend a meeting in the garden with residents and give her ideas. A resident raised the issue of the horse chestnut which was suffering from attack by moths. DB would make sure the leaves were disposed of to reduce infection.

6. Paths

Although a 24" width had been voted on at a previous AGM a lot of residents were not happy with the width or surface. The committee had looked into various widths and surfaces ranging from hoggin at £3,600-£10,000 to the most expensive bonded resin at £28,500 which is in Edwardes Square. It was agreed that the path contractors would lay down a sample path in the garden which residents could inspect and give their views. A resident commented that perhaps paths were not required and the area could be grassed over. The overall view was that the area would be too wet in the winter months and would not be suitable for wheelchair access and therefore a path would be needed.

7.Key Fob System

The system was explained and quotes of approximately £4,000 compared to maintaining the present system were discussed. It was agreed that the fob system would be reviewed again when keys are due for replacement.

8.Parties

There are at present two – the summer party and bonfire night.

Re Open Day - residents agreed they are happy to have one next year. There was not much support for the windfall of the film location fee being spent on a party and the Chairman's suggestion of hiring a marquee for the summer garden party did not receive support.

9.Play Equipment

NP stated that the area at the Ladbroke Grove end had been revitalised with new equipment and a willow tunnel and it was generally agreed that the two play areas could change the configurations and types of equipment to meet the needs of the different age groups but the areas themselves could not be increased.

10. Any other Business

Mr. Lewis spoke about access to garden for wheelchairs and the committee confirmed that when the paths were redone, they would include a ramp to allow wheelchair access at the Ladbroke Grove end in case the locks were broken at the other.

11. Precept Vote

NP called for vote on next year's precept. The recommendation from the committee was to keep it at £30,000 the same as last year. This was agreed on a show of hands.

12. Website

PJ Di Giammarino gave presentation of website to residents.

The current URL is Arundelmotionpixels.net. It will eventually go live on www.Arundelandelgingarden.org.

13. Election of new committee

The meeting ended with the committee resigning. PJ Di Giammarino was proposed and seconded but no committee members resigned. NP resolved the dilemma of a 10 man committee by saying that the chairman would refrain from voting to meet the constitutional requirement of nine voting members. It was hoped that as committee decisions tended to emerge through discussion rather than division, this would not be necessary. This was agreed to.

The meeting adjourned for a general discussion and a glass of wine.