

Arundel and Elgin AGM – October 4th, 2017
St Peters Church Kensington Park Rd, London W11 2PN

Attendees:

Calum MacInnes (Chairman), Guy Nixon, Kit Davies, Fiona Fleming-Brown, Nick Bellet, Robert Sargent.

Apologies:

Tassy Barham, Nathalie Faure Beaulieu, Carrie Smith, Leelee Brown

The meeting opened with the Chairman thanking the committee who then introduced themselves. The minutes were approved.

Chairman's report:

CM gave an update on the railings project and handed out material to the meeting. A pre-application was entered to ensure approval first time. A higher base was agreed but not a brick wall, which would have stopped more rubbish entering the garden.

He thanked the gardeners for their work and highlighted the 2 new benches and the repair of the 2 old metal benches. The gardeners have requested new larger hedge clippers to speed up cutting and new sheds. The point was raised that investing in the garden would save money in the long run which was agreed but it was explained that we have traditionally underinvested due to concerns over the size of the precept.

Issues raised included the broken A frame of the swing that needs to be re-cemented and the pagoda which is also broken and needs to be fixed. The meeting was made aware of the thefts that have taken place and concerns over food left behind that will attract rats. Highlights of the year included the second year of Shakespeare and the garden open day which we switched to a new charity.

Treasurer's report:

This was given by CM in the absence of Nathalie. A total of £120,000 is being raised for the railings; £40k for 2016-17-18. The cost is now £153,600 due to higher costs, including Brexit. The total time to do both sides is 8 weeks and if both ends are completed at different times, it would cost an additional £7,000.

A vote was taken to agree on the £33,068 shortfall. The vote was to raise an extra £35,000 to cover the extra costs incurred since the original quote was put together. This was passed.

Questions:

Will there be solid security railings for the whole-length of the garden? Yes, there would be, and the existing box hedge would be replaced by laurel which is lower maintenance.

Do we have liability insurance. Yes, we do.

Why has the printing and website costs gone up over the last year? Due to the communication over railings.

It was suggested that we should tender for the gardening contract. It was agreed this was a good idea.

CM also started a discussion about the fundamental lack of investment in the garden. There had been a policy of holding back raises in the precept to keep costs to residents as low as possible, but this had led to a situation where the gardeners are constantly having to make do; their sheds are falling down, they need an improved hedge cutter, they need a leaf clearing machine called a Billy Goat in order to save significant time and not damage the grass, and there is investment required for the children's play ground at the Ladbroke Grove end. It was also considered important to build up a cushion of cash for emergencies and any unforeseen accidents. To that end, there was a request to raise the precept on an on-going basis from around £40,000 pa to £80,000 pa starting from next year. This was voted on and unanimously accepted.

There followed a discussion about the gardener's remuneration. Three options were discussed: It was decided and voted on that the gardeners will be paid for an extra 10 days of work. This is to help with the time taken to cut the hedges (approximately 6 days in the year), although the new laurel hedges around the new railings will be less time intensive, meaning that the extra total cost to the garden will be £3,200. There will also be scope for the gardeners to complete other projects beyond the normal routine of the garden maintenance.

Trees:

GN introduced Melode who will be taking over responsibilities for trees on the committee. He discussed the current planting plan for the garden and added that a number of new trees had been added to the garden.

GN explained that decisions on the management of existing trees is based on the recommendations of the tree surgeon and the final decision rests with James Burton from RBKC.

A question was asked on the support of the mulberry. It is up to James Burton to decide which trees are supported but the type of support could be changed to make it more attractive.

The issue of vandalism was also raised.

Events:

F F-B gave an overview of the gardens 4 events.

1. 1- Open day for NGS. The proceeds went to caring charities. It was agreed that we would do the NGS again this year. On the 20th May.
2. 2- Shakespeare. More people attended this year and it was agreed that we should continue next year although it is a lot of work for the committee. It is not for profit.
3. 3- Summer party. It was agreed that the party was a success and the format should be repeated. Entertainment from Sharky and George for kids and adults a singer with a backing track. This event needs a great deal of support.
4. 4- Bonfire night. A format that works well, the best attended event.

Should we have sub-committees for these events? Wildlife

KD planting of wild flowers particularly good for bees.

A question was asked about whether we have bird boxes. No

Garden

Work has been done on the area around the swings, this includes the planting of box.

There is a new magnolia and work has been done on various beds on the Arundel side including pruning the bushes outside no. 30 and bed outside 32.

There is a plan to do more maintenance to improve the rhododendron area and to keep children off.

Resignation of the Committee:

The committee resigned en masse and then put themselves forward for re-selection with the exception of Rob Sargent, Nicolas Bellet, Guy Nixon and Fiona Fleming-Brown who are leaving the committee.

Three new members put their names forward to join the committee, who are LeeLee Brown, Meghann Kelly and Carrie Ferman.

Robert Sargent.
Secretary.