



# GROSVENOR

## Minutes

**Belgrave Square Garden Committee**  
**16 Dec 2009 – 8.30pm**  
**Seaford House, 37 Belgrave Square, London**

**Present:**

Committee: Lord Ballyedmond (EB)  
Amanda Bond-Elliott (ABE)  
Jenny Cleaver (JC)  
Andrew Gordon-Lennox (AGL)  
Helen Oratore (HO)  
Mary Regnier-Leigh (Chair) (MRL)  
Lawton Fage (LF)  
Caroline Lister (CL)

Grosvenor: Nigel Hughes (NAH)  
Stephen Smith (SS)  
Andrew Maskell (AM)  
Fran Giles (FJG)  
Kathryn Samuels (sec) (KS)

**Apologies:** Julie Wetherell (JW)  
Jose Redondo (JR)  
Kate Raw (KR)

**Minutes copied to:** All attendees and apologies  
Belgrave Square Gardens website  
Belgrave Square Garden noticeboard

**Action**

**1.0 Introductions**

- 1.1 MRL welcomed all present to the meeting
- 1.2 SS introduced KS who will be taking over from FJG as committee secretary and is a point of contact as the new Garden's Department Office Manager and AM who is the new Assistant Landscape Manager.

**2.0 Minutes of previous meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

**3.0 Chairman's report**

- 3.1 MRL went round garden with SS. Points noted included:
  - Shrubs have been ordered to go around the Bolivar statue but have not yet arrived
  - Proposed 5 elliptical holes to be cut into the hedge around tennis court – elliptical will reflect the design of the pergolas and will be easier to grow above. Decision taken to defer until hedge has thickened.
  - Hornbeam hedging should have been pruned – SS to look at with JR

- 3.2 Tennis court gate has been repaired.
- 3.3 AM had obtained quotations for the proposed ball court in the region of £30,000. There are a lot of variants. Site would need to be levelled. Materials considered: Astroturf or concrete with a green chain link fence. NAH said planning permission would be a problem. Concerns were voiced about where to relocate the compost area. AGL felt a ball court would benefit younger garden users. A vote was taken on whether to proceed with the ball court (three for / six against). The committee decided not to proceed with the ball court at the present time.
- 3.4 (7.4) Badges were handed out to committee members. Spare badges will be held at the Grosvenor Gardens Department office.
- 3.5 The proposal to plant cherry tress in the inner circle was rejected. It was agreed a contrast should be maintained between the outer circle which has a greater presence of trees and the inner circle. Additional planting would be more beneficial elsewhere.
- 3.6 The hedge in the Quiet Garden is in need of renovation. SS agreed that this area would benefit from a tidy up. SS/JR
- 4.0 Landscape Manager's report**
- 4.1 SS presented key points from the tree report. Tim Laddiman has replaced Chris Yarrow. He has had to work with the Landscape Agency report and has prioritised work as: SS
- High – next three months
  - Medium
  - Low
  - Work to be considered
- SS will make the report available to anyone interested and proposed a garden walk to go over the details.
- 4.2 2 high priority fellings were recommended
- Lime tree opposite number nine to be felled. SS recommended this tree is retained as it is not problematic and has some benefit as it is on the perimeter
  - Catalper in same area to be reduced by 40%. SS advised that this is an interesting specimen and should be reduced as proposed and maybe propped up.
  - Two trees recommended for tomographs to investigate where the rot is. These trees had been previously drilled to check health and require further monitoring.
  - Tree 11 recommended for crown lift.
- These trees to be reviewed on garden walk. SS/MRL/  
JC/CL
- 4.3 Draw up cyclical pruning programme SS/AM
- 4.4 MRL asked if local authority consent is required for felling. SS advised this would be required and usually takes six weeks to come through meaning any felling would take place in Feb/Mar.
- 4.5 LB asked if a planting as well as a pruning programme could be agreed. MRL agreed and AM is to be included. SS/AM
- 4.6 SS advised that the autumn bulb planting day with children from St Peter's school had been a success. MRL proposed that the children should be invited back to see the results of their work. This was agreed. SS to set up a date. SS
- 5.0 Rules – draft proposal**
- 5.1 A revised version of the rules was proposed and, after some discussion, were accepted. Rules to be updated and the new version put onto the garden noticeboards and website. SS/FG
- 6.0 Suggestion of a cocktail party for key holders**
- 6.1 ABE Proposed a cocktail party for key holders. The provisional date of Monday 21 June was agreed, to be confirmed at the next committee meeting in January.
- 6.2 ABE asked for the committee's thoughts on funding. This will be discussed at the January committee meeting. NAH said there may be some Grosvenor funds available. NAH
- 7.0 Request for lighting in the garden – update**
- 7.1 NAH said a keyholder had requested lighting the garden at night so he can walk there safely. He was against this for the following reasons:

- Expense (had been considered previously and turned down)
- We don't really want people to be using the garden at night. Lighting would not light every corner and so would it be really safe?
- Feels a garden should be a place of darkness at night

The committee agreed.

7.2 LF voiced concern that the statues are lit up all day as well as at night. SS advised that the council are responsible for this spotlighting and LF will take this up with them. LF

## 8.0 Tennis Court Online booking system – update

8.1 FJG demonstrated the new system. She clarified:

- Members need 'Number ID' and 'Pin code' to log in. These will be posted out prior to the go live date
- Provisional go live date: 1 February 2010
- Clients who do not wish to book online can call the service desk between 09:30 and 16:30 to reserve the court
- No names will show on the system as some members didn't want to give names
- Grosvenor can access names so if members wish to report any misuse of the court, they should report the time or look up member number on the system
- Times booked by member show in green
- Times not available show in red
- Bookings can be cancelled
- Members can look up booking history
- Members can fill in members information if they wish to receive text / email alerts
- Bookings can be made three days in advance (today + three days)
- Good technical support is provided by the system provider for a small monthly charge

8.2 NH suggested the system be changed to allow members to book a week in advance. The committee decided to keep to 3 days to limit no shows.

8.3 JC asked if members could choose their own number log on. FJG demonstrated that the randomly generated pin numbers can be changed.

8.4 AGL voiced concern that members may contact the committee for technical support. FJG confirmed full user instructions would be sent out with pin numbers prior to go live.

## 9.0 Plaque Proposal for the Leonardo monument (Belgrave Square)

9.1 SS explained that the sculpture company proposed to put a smaller plaque by the Leonardo statue which would fit onto a post. They would cover the cost.

9.2 JC asked if this could be placed just inside the railings so as not to interfere with the planting

9.3 EB suggested a non-wooden post for durability

9.4 NAH asked all to consider that this is the proposed site for a bicycle hire rack. This will not obstruct the view of the plaque from the pavement.

9.5 SS to give sculpture company the go ahead with these issues raised to be considered SS

## 10.0 2010 draft budget

10.1 SS presented a rough budget for 2010. Figures for 2009 were based on approximations as all figures are not yet in. Four percent was added to 2010 to allow for inflation.

10.2 LB questioned whether top soil and sand is added every year. SS confirmed that they are.

10.3 LB questioned the amount spent on paths over the last three years and why this would again be a major expense in 2010. NAH confirmed that it had been agreed to replace the inner paths in 2010. Present surface is serviceable but chips off so an aesthetic decision. The committee would like to gain further quotations to ensure they are getting value for money. AM

10.4 SS to present a more fully worked budget at the next committee meeting. Decisions regarding budgets to be deferred until then. SS

## 11.0 Dates of 2010 meeting

11.1 Tue 26 January – 5:00pm

Tue 20 April – 8:30am

Tue 27 April AGM - 5.00pm  
Tue 8 June – 5.00pm  
Tue 5 Oct – 8:30am  
Tue 14 Dec – 5.00pm

12.0 **Any Other Business**

- 12.1 JC suggested that as the planting of the shed roofs had not been done that the committee should consider growing plants up the walls as an alternative. This was agreed for consideration and will be looked at on the garden walk. SS/MRL  
JC/CL  
?
- 12.2 JC asked if one rather than two gazebos can be used for parties. MRL thought this was reasonable. JC also asked about painting the gazebos. SS will look into this. SS
- 12.3 LB asked what can be done to improve the path surfaces. SS said that the Hogin gravel has not settled as expected, possibly due to heavy usage but advised that options are limited now that the surface is down. MRL summarised that firmer action is required. SS to look into:
- Installing shoe brushes (quick solution) SS
  - Have contractors delivered? Contact consultant at Grosvenor gardens to see if they have done a good job. SS
- Investigate materials to stick the surface down. LB had seen an article in the Historic Gardens Magazine that may offer some useful information. LB
- 12.4 LB asked whether the holly could be replaced with rhododendron. SS advised rhododendron does not do well in the garden's sandy soil. Other options can be considered when planting programme is drawn up. SS/AM