



GROSVENOR

Minutes

Belgrave Square Garden Committee
26 Jan 2010 – 17:30pm
Seaford House, 37 Belgrave Square, London

Present:

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

Grosvenor: Nigel Hughes (items 5&6 only) (NAH)
Stephen Smith (SS)
Kathryn Samuels (Sec) (KS)

Apologies: Jose Redondo (JR)

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

Action

1.0 Introductions

1.1 MRL introduced KS, the new Office Manager (job sharing with Frances Collins) for those who did not meet her previously. Email contact: Kathryn.Samuels@grosvenor.com

2.0 Minutes of previous meeting

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed

3.0 Chairman's report

3.1 3.1 MRL thanked SS for conducting the garden walk. 67 trees from the report were looked at and 45 were accepted by the committee as requiring work. Some additions were made. Planning application has been sent to Westminster Council. The work will be put out to tender. SS advised BSG has a budget of £15,000. 40 trees dealt with last year at ESG came in at approx £10,000 so the BSG budget should be sufficient. EB asked that the committee be kept in the loop regarding 2010 pruning costs. SS to agree pruning level of hornbeam with JR. SS

3.2 4.6 MRL asked SS to contact St Peter's School in advance to arrange for children to come back and see the spring bulbs. SS

3.3 5.1 MRL advised that the new rules had been posted

3.4 9.4 MRL asked if anyone had any comments on the proposed cycle hire rack. It was

- agreed that it was not for the committee to interfere with this and planning consent had already gone through.
- 3.5 7.2 MRL asked for an update on the statue lighting. LF advised that the lights on the statue were now being turned off during daylight hours.
- 3.6 MRL advised that the new gate was looking good but the spring still needed to be fixed. SS
- 4.0 Landscape Manager's report**
- 4.1 SS presented a provisional 2010 budget. MRL advised that the committee would need the final proposed version by mid-March to give the committee time to review it and ask any questions before the next committee meeting. This should be emailed to all members and a hard copy posted to JC. AGL asked that an email version include some explanation to ensure expenditure is clear. For example, labour costs for 2009 had been budgeted at £82,000 but had come in at £62,993 and yet the 2010 budget was based on the higher figure. SS explained that the garden had been short staffed last year and 2010 should see gardening hours increased as budgeted. EB asked why there was such an increase in expenditure proposed for 2010. SS said this was largely due to the proposed resurfacing of the inner path. EB questioned value for money and whether the maintenance of the garden should go out to tender / contractors. MRL advised that this was a Grosvenor decision and did not feel it was the best way forward at this time. SS felt a balance between the garden team and contracted labour was the most effective. SS/KS
- 4.2 Andrew Maskell has put the playground improvements out to tender. The first quote has come in at £14,500 + VAT and he is hoping the other two will undercut this. Essential work this year is the replenishment of the bark will cost approx £2,500 plus labour. JW asked for a side meeting on the playground. MRL said this would not be necessary but would like to see the quotations with any plans and drawings. EB asked when the playground was built, who by and who signed it off and if they can be held responsible for failings. SS advised it had been built four years ago, designed by the Landscape Agency and signed off by Grosvenor surveyors. JC pointed out the importance of getting it right considering the heavy usage per metre square. SS/AM
- MRL asked for the following issues to be investigated:
1. The condition of the playground. What went wrong? Is anyone liable?
 2. What needs to be done to bring it up to health and safety standards? Can we make sure these details are verified by someone qualified to give their opinion?
 3. The cost to put things right? Can we have assurance that we won't have similar problems in four years time and that whoever signs off and carries out the work remains liable?
 4. The insurance terms. Are we in compliance? Are there a maximum number of children who can use the playground at one time?
 5. The last risk assessment. Can this be made available?
- 4.3 SS advised that three hollies were identified as requiring severe pruning but he would like to go further and remove them. LF and MRL are to join SS on a walk with Westminster Council to test the water for permission to remove them (autumn job). MRL felt it was better to go around with the council during winter while the hollies were looking their worst. JC felt the area underneath and around the hollies needed a major tidy up in the short term. SS/LF/
MRL
- 4.4 SS reported that AM had picked up on the unsightly state of the compost heap and was investigating the cost of sleepers and a better fence. JR
- 5.0 Committee membership**
- 5.1 NH advised that current committee numbers are at their limit but the committee are free to allow guests to observe at meetings.
- 6.0 Cocktail party**
- 6.1 Date: 23 June was voted as the preferred date with the 24 June kept as a free date in

- case anything comes up. MRL recommended advertising the event as a midsummer party.
- 6.2 Time: 18:30 – 21:00 was agreed
- 6.3 Catering: AGL suggested using the same company for everything: food, drinks, security and cloakroom. It was agreed that basic drinks and decent finger food should be included in the ticket price with the possibility of a cash bar later. EB suggested sourcing a good wine supplier and purchasing in bulk. EB also advised he could supply four Ghurkhas for security. MRL felt a cloakroom would not be necessary at the time of year. AGL advised the committee can approach a catering company with their requirements and obtain a price accordingly.
- 6.4 Who to invite: All key holders will be invited (no children or dogs). ABE asked if cash should be taken on the gate. MRL felt this would be too difficult. NH said cheques made out to “Grosvenor Estate Belgravia” and should be sent to Grosvenor as a total bundle.
- 6.5 Cost per head: ABE suggested deciding on a budget based on what the party would cost to stage and then pricing the tickets accordingly. An initial estimate of £25 - £35 per ticket was made. NH advised that a recent Grosvenor event with a glass of champagne, decent wine and canapés cost £25 per head. It was agreed that including additional choices of alcohol in the ticket price would potentially double the price which would be too risky as the organisers do not know the market.
- 6.6 Marquee: MRL advised that ESG committee will loan 4 marquees at no charge. This needs to be discussed with George Waite. Belgrave Square has one marquee which can be used at the gate.
- 6.7 Music: It was unanimously agreed that a band should be booked. The Elizabeth Street band were recommended as first choice but this should go to tender. EB suggested a piper to play for the first half hour. AGL to investigate a free piper. AGL
- 6.8 Raffle: Not discussed but agreed not to make this a charity event (see 6.9)
- 6.9 Purpose of party: The main aim was agreed as “making a community of the garden”, with members getting to know each other in an informal setting. JC suggested raising money for a garden related charity. EB suggested for the betterment of BSG. NH pointed out that the money raised would be small. EB suggested not saying anything on the invitation; the ticket cost aim being to cover the cost of the party. Any surplus could be used in BSG at the committee’s discretion. This was agreed. MRL said members should review after the first party whether to make this an annual event.
- 6.10 Smoking facilities to be discussed at the garden sub-committee meeting
- 6.11 Invitation design: ABE offered to design a draft invitation by the next meeting with the chairman’s name as the invitee. It was agreed that the Grosvenor logo should be on the invitation. NH advised that there was no Grosvenor budget for the party but Grosvenor would help in kind and be able to print the invitations. ABE
- 6.12 Name tags: MRL felt name tags were useful and would help to manage entry. AGL had concerns that they can be hard to read. It was agreed that name tags should be used and that they should be in block capitals and easy to read.
- 6.13 Location: The middle of the garden was agreed. It was agreed to close the garden to anyone not attending the party. MRL said that the invitations should state that the garden was closed to non-party goers. NH recommended selecting one gate for entry / exit to the garden and padlocking the other three. KS to check if this will be permitted. KS
- 6.14 Lighting: It was agreed that lighting would not be necessary as the timings were chosen to take advantage of midsummer daylight hours.
- 6.15 A garden party sub-committee was set up. MRL/ABE/
AGL/EB/
JC/CL/KS
Meeting 1: Wed 10 Feb – 08:30
Meeting 2: Wed 3 Mar - 08:30
- 7.0 AOB**
- 7.1 LF voiced concern about the amount of dog mess around the garden and proposed sending a letter to dog owners stating that the standard has dropped and that if the ABE

situation doesn't improve, the committee will have to say no dogs off leads. ABE to draft a letter. To include "if the situation does not improve, we will not be able to defend the position of dogs in the garden."

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 7.2 | LF felt a sign should be put up by the gates stating dogs must have blue dog tags. Unauthorised dogs are being walked in the garden. SS/KS to action. | SS/KS |
| 7.3 | MRL expressed disappointment with the outer paths. The finish still has not hardened and sticks to shoes. SS advised that he is awaiting a report from Dylan Pritchard (surveyor who deals with contractors) to see why the surface had not hardened and if this was because the paths were top dressed rather than totally renewed. MRL asked for this to be presented and discussed at the next committee meeting. EB asked that SS send a copy of the report to MRL. | SS |
| 7.4 | MRL asked about introducing Rhododendrons to the garden. SS agreed to look into varieties that will best cope with the non-acidic soil conditions. | SS |

DRAFT