



GROSVENOR

Minutes

**Eaton Square Garden Committee
8 September 2010: 4.00pm – 6.20pm
46 Eaton Mews North, London**

Present:

Committee: George Waite (Chair) (GW)
Lady Biscoff (BI)
Lady Bristol (BR)
Simon Davie (SD)
Mrs F Donald (FD)
Princess Galitzine (GA)
Barbara Pederson (BP)
Mrs Schulman (SC)
Mrs Woolley (WO)

Grosvenor: Francesca-Jane Giles (FJG)
Nigel Hughes (NAH)
Kathryn Samuels (Sec) (KS)
Stephen Smith (SS)

Guest: Chris Anderson (CA)

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

Action

1.0 Previous minutes and actions arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed
- 1.2 The committee asked SS to pick up on the following points;
 - The Vivien Leigh bench
 - Improving the planting in the south-east garden

2.0 Landscape Manager's report

- 2.1 SS reported on the staffing of the gardens;
 - CA has just retired after 41 years
 - Tony Carthy continues to look after the north side. Nick Butler has just been appointed to look after the south side. He gained his National Diploma this year and won the prize for top student at Merrist Wood College.
 - CA had been on sick leave since June until his retirement on 31 August. The garden has been looked after by three experienced gardeners in the interim, Julian Pritchard, Hamilton Periotto and Chris Gates.
- 2.2 With the appointment of Nick Butler the planting in the south-east garden would now be addressed.
- 2.3 SS reported that he had employed a specialist to clean the Vivien Leigh bench which had

- successfully restored the appearance of the marble. He had recommended lifting the seat to a comfortable level and straightening the angle. It was unanimously agreed to go ahead with these changes and turn the bench into a proper memorial. SS to email the committee when ready to go ahead. BR advised that she had been approached by a film company for permission to film the bench and had referred them to Grosvenor. SS
- 2.4 The department had recently bought a ride on mower, the cost and use of which will be shared between the gardens. This allows for better use of the gardener's time. CA advised that it formerly took him three days to mow all six lawns. The quality of the cut is good and it also picks up leaves. The compromise is wider stripes. It was agreed to use the Hayter mower for Open Day and events in the garden when a narrower stripe was desirable. SS
- 2.5 SS reported on tree work:
- Pruning would take place in the south central garden this year
 - Proposed felling a mature Ailanthus in the south west garden which is taking up a prime spot. Suggested removing a tired red flowering horse chestnut from the opposite north-west garden and replanting both spaces with matching trees to create balance and harmony, possibly with Liquidambar or Fastigate hornbeam. GW asked SS to prepare material and circulate in time for committee members to meet up to discuss options. SS
- 2.6 SS said that the potager had not worked well this year due to lack of staff continuity. GW asked to look at the problems and possible solutions;
- It was agreed that utilising Thrive's labour was a worthy endeavour to be continued but Thrive's hours should be seen as a bonus and not relied upon as part of the core running of the potager
 - Some permanent groundcover is needed. Lavender, box and yellow alpine strawberry were suggested.
 - Is there a need to increase staffing hours and budget?
- SS to arrange a meeting with the committee with plans and ideas to develop the potager and to discuss the budget and labour required to realise the plan. SS
- 3.0 The role of ESRA (Eaton Square Resident's Association) in managing the gardens**
- 3.1 ESRA had been set up to represent the residents of Eaton Square and it is currently reviewing with Grosvenor a number of matters including the service charges in the square. NAH felt that a Resident's Association should deal with all aspects of the square including the running of the gardens, rather than having a separate garden committee. BR, WO, BI, and GW did not want to change a committee that was working well. GW advised that all ES residents qualified to join the ESGC and although ESRA was also open to all ES resident's membership was currently optional and not automatic. It was agreed to keep NAH's proposal as an option and wait and see how ESRA develops.
- 4.0 Review of the Garden Committee constitution**
- 4.1 It was agreed that it was time to review the constitution along with the garden rules and use of the tennis court. KS to circulate documents. KS
- 5.0 Subject to the outcome of 2 and 3, agree a date either for the AGM or for an EGM to dissolve the Committee**
- 5.1 A pre-AGM meeting will be held on Thursday 27th January at 3.00pm. The budget and accounts will be discussed and a date set for the AGM. The constitution and rules will be discussed with any changes to be approved at the AGM.
- 6.0 Parties and events**
- 6.1 SD reported that income from events this year had been £800 whilst expenditure had been £3000. It was agreed that charging for parties needs reviewing so that whilst not making a profit from parties, they are seen to cover their costs. It was decided that;
- Non residents should pay £3,000 to hire the garden
 - Residents hiring a marquee should pay £500 plus additional labour costs (security,

- gardener on duty, the cost of tidying up)
- KS to send out rules relating to parties and a review of charging to be initiated
- 6.2 GW asked the committee to consider whether they wanted to become more commercial in offering the garden for events. SD suggested contacting the organisers of Chelsea Flower Show and looking at other advertising options. NAH asked the committee to consider employing a party organiser such as Shining Wit as the direction they were going with parties and events was beyond the scope of Grosvenor to manage directly.
- 6.3 SD reported that Best Gapp Estate Agents had offered to sponsor Eaton Square £1000 for Open Day 2011 for a table at the event. The Royal Hospital Chelsea Pensioners were interested in talking to visitors to the garden about the "Help the Hero" campaign. SD proposed a jazz / swing band next year for a change.
- 6.4 SD proposed a residents day. NAH advised he contact Denise Yhap to discuss. SD
- 7.0 Online tennis court booking system**
- 7.1 FJG demonstrated the online tennis court booking system. It had been introduced very successfully this year into Belgrave Square Garden and extending the scheme to Eaton Square Garden would cost a £100 initial set up fee and £10 per month running costs. Deborah Lochhead had received comments from Eaton Square residents that they would like the system introduced in Eaton Square. Points that came out of the discussion were;
- Privacy can be maintained with the identity of the booker concealed if required
 - Grosvenor can contact residents who book and don't play
 - The committee can choose how many times to allow a resident to book for one day
 - The committee can decide how far ahead residents can book
- It was decided not to go ahead with the system at the present time. GW suggested meeting up with Deborah Lochhead to discuss and better understand the comments that she had received from Eaton residents. SS to arrange. SS/GW
- 8.0 Date of next meeting**
- 8.1 Thursday 27th January at 3.00pm. Location: 46 Eaton Mews North
- 9.0 AOB**
- 9.1 BR raised the issue of a fox terrier that is not being supervised in the garden and may have damaged the lawn. Grosvenor was advised a year ago of the problem and no action has been taken against the dog owner. She felt all dog owners should have been contacted. The following points came up from discussion:
- The need to correctly identify the culprit before action can be taken
 - The need to review and understand the rules
 - The need for a process to be set up to enforce the rules
 - Caretakers need to take responsibility for enforcing the garden rules
- It was agreed to initially set up a meeting with Deborah Lockhead to discuss the issues. SS/GW
- 9.2 BI proposed a memorial. GW asked SS to put forward ideas for developing the fountain. SS
The memorial could tie in with this. GW asked if Grosvenor would contribute anything towards this project. NAH said that the tennis court fund was available for projects such as lighting and the fountain. Initial ideas for the fountain were;
- David Harber sundial
 - Memorial statue
 - A fountain that recycles water over stone or metal (no problem with algae)
- 9.3 BI proposed up lighting trees in the garden. BR welcomed the added security that this would offer. SS advised that a quote to light four trees in Wilton Crescent Garden had come in at £14,000. BI had received information suggesting a much lower cost. BI and GW to liaise with SS and present better details at the next ESGC meeting. NAH advised that planning permission would be required from Westminster Council for any lighting and that they would require the fittings to be 'low' energy. BI/SS
- 9.4 Rather than a Christmas tree, it was decided to light an existing tree this December; SS to provide better detail of the cost. SS
- 9.5 GW thanked CA for all his hard work in the garden; his dedication and contribution to the

numerous garden awards received during recent years; [Post meeting note: CA has attended virtually all ESGC meetings and therefore had a first hand knowledge of the ESGC questions; comments; and desires; although not essential, Gardens Department attendance at the ESGC meetings should be encouraged]. GW thanked SS and his team at the Gardens Department for all the hard work and dedication that was really making a difference in the appearance of the gardens [Post meeting note: ES won 'Highly Commended Certificate' at this year's London Garden Squares Competition.