



TRUSTEE PACK

2022

FEBRUARY 2023



CALLING NOTICE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
MONDAY MARCH 6TH 2023 6.30PM
At Wetherby Prep School 48 Bryanston Square

7th February 2023

Dear Trustee,

Please accept this letter as a calling notice for the 2022 Annual General Meeting of Montagu Square Garden Trust.

Included with this letter

- Agenda for the AGM
- Committee Report for 2022
- Accounts and Financial Report for 2022
- Draft minutes of the last AGM held on 7 March 2022

Yours sincerely,

Montagu Square Garden Trust

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gardenclerk@montagusquare.org
020 3987 5050



AGENDA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) MONDAY MARCH 6TH 2023 6.30PM At Wetherby Prep School 48 Bryanston Square

1. To consider and approve the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 7th March 2022
2. Matters arising
3. To receive the Annual Report of the Committee
4. To consider and, if thought fit, to accept the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2022
5. To levy the Garden rate for the year to 31st December 2023
6. To elect the Committee for the year to 31st December 2023
7. Any other business

Note:

Prior to the Garden Trust AGM, there will be the Annual General Meeting of 'M' members of the Montagu Square (EMS) Limited at 6.05pm.

Step free access is available from the mews behind Wetherby School to the 1st floor Hall. Please contact Westbourne Management if you require assistance using this. Their number is 020 3987 5050.

We know that some residents prefer to receive information by hand, but the Trust is keen to send out more information digitally to those who would prefer paperless communication. Please use the QR code to sign up to our mailchimp account. MailChimp is GDPR compliant and you can unsubscribe from the mailing list at any time.





COMMITTEE REPORT

This was the year when we re-emerged from Covid, had in-person meetings, had the hottest summer on record and finally the play area was refurbished. It has been a busy year!

Play Area

In May the Committee was finally able to secure the funds to go ahead with the play area. Our contractors, All Seasons, started on May 10th. The ground works and new safety surface (a hybrid lawn) were completed by June 10th. Although it is recommended to allow two months for the grass to establish itself and grow through the matting, we opened half the play area in mid July to allow children to play during the hot summer weather.

The train was renovated and re-installed on new footings, hopscotch and a new path was laid and hard landscaping completed in preparation for new benches. The bespoke climbing frame was installed in mid September. The whole area was then inspected to ensure it met health and safety standards. The new play area was fully opened at the end of September.

The Committee has made a short list of possible benches to sit within the new shrubbery that will separate the climbing frame from the main garden area. A decision on these will be made based on the available budget with the aim of getting them installed before the Summer.

In the coming year we will focus our attention on the second phase of this project, the area around the substation



COMMITTEE REPORT

The Garden

Throughout 2022 Joseph Jones and his team have continued to maintain the Garden, never missing a beat. There were some big challenges this summer and a considerable amount of timed irrigation was installed and this has helped the survival of plants and grass over the very hot and dry summer.

As well as focusing on maintaining the garden, following on from suggestions made at the 2021 AGM regarding creating a more private and "natural" space, the Committee has spent time discussing how this might be achieved. We have particularly focused on the role of the hedges and borders and how planting could help us achieve this more naturalistic ambience to the Garden. These discussions have also made us consider how our responsibility lies, not just in maintaining the Garden, but also in ensuring that we plan for the long term. Creating a place that is both beautiful and sustainable for future generations.

We feel that we really need the vision of someone who has both practical and design experience. We are therefore delighted that Stephen Crisp has agreed to be a consultant to Montagu Square Garden Trust and will be working in collaboration with Joseph Jones and Hamish to focus on the long term vision and viability of the Garden.

Stephen, among other things, is currently the Head Gardener at Winfield House (the American Ambassador's residence in London) in Regents Park. We will be introducing him to all of you at the AGM. He will make a brief presentation, outlining his ideas and taking your questions. In particular he will talk about how he thinks we can create a more private and natural garden. An article profiling Stephen is reproduced on the following page.

Communications.

The garden is for everyone living around the Square and the committee is always keen for people to join us at our meetings and give us feedback. As part of a plan to improve our communications, Sarah Lang has redesigned the Montagusquare.org website and reintroduced a twice yearly newsletter. The website address remains www.montagusquare.org. Once on the site you can also sign up to our digital mailing list so any future newsletters will be sent directly to your email.

We will also be adding two new notice boards on the North and South sides of the substation to keep everyone updated as with Garden news.

Inside and Outside the Railings.

The remit for the Montagu Square Garden Trust and the funds collected by it is expressly for the area WITHIN the garden railings. However, we are often drawn into issues OUTSIDE the railings such as rubbish collection and anti-social behaviour, which indeed at times spills over into the Garden. Sue Smith has kindly taken on the challenge to liaise with Westminster Council and Barbara Arzymanow, our local Councillor. We also act as a group with Bryanston & Portman Squares and can speak as single voice to try and improve our neighbourhood.

Summer Garden Party

We would like to reintroduce a summer garden party. But to do this we need a resident to organise it and to find a sponsor. Would anyone like to head this up? Does anyone have any suggestions as to a possible corporate sponsor?

COMMITTEE REPORT

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

STEPHEN CRISP

The man in charge of central London's second largest private garden (after Buckingham Palace), on sustainability, his passion for collecting art and his flair for floristry

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

When Stephen Crisp took up the job of head gardener at Winfield House, the private residence of the US ambassador in London's Regent's Park, he knew he wanted to improve the 12.5-acre garden. What he had found on his first visit to London's second largest private garden was a 19th-century landscape, with borrowed views of Regent's Park, overlaid with a revived 1930s' garden that had been added to in the intervening years. It was, he says frankly, "frayed round the edges and lacking in vision." Aged 27, and fresh from a five-year post as head horticulturist at Leeds Castle, Stephen set out to make it one of the best private gardens in central London. Thirty years later, with the garden featured on the covers of two recent books, he feels he's got there.

His position as head gardener is unique in that his boss changes every four years. "I've always tried to be the fixed point," he explains. "I run the garden for the long term, and treat it spiritually as if it's mine, but actually I'm just a custodian." Although it's a home to successive ambassadors Winfield also functions as a venue for high-level meetings and lavish events. Stephen spent his first six months observing the garden, and decided it should be managed not as a collection of plants or themes but like a private estate that follows the spirit of the lightly wooded 19th-century landscape envisioned by Regent's Park's architect John Nash. Making it environmentally sustainable was a priority, and Stephen proudly declares that he and his team of two recycle every scrap of green waste on site, use pesticides minimally, mulch vigorously and create a variety of habitats for wildlife, including dead tree trunks for woodpeckers and bats. The approach to the house needed to make a bigger, more elegant statement so out came the paved driveway and the 29 x *Cuprocyparis leylandii* that were obscuring the long windows. Today's visitors see a restful combination of *Magnolia grandiflora* trees, clipped box and green planters filled with seasonal blooms.

For Stephen sustainability also means managing resources. "There is no point in developing a landscape if you can't then maintain it," he says. His scheme for the Summer Garden, the tired rose garden originally laid out in 1983, is a graphic arrangement of grasses, shrubs and perennials, with a canopy of square-clipped olive trees, that needs half the maintenance. Interestingly, there are few rare or unusual plants in the garden – he considers the breeding of echinaceas in shades of yellow and orange, for example, to be plain ridiculous.

Like many talented designers Stephen also finds inspiration from outside the world of plants. Frank Lloyd Wright's designs for stained glass were the starting point for the Summer Garden. He's a collector

of watercolours, mid-century glass, ceramics, contemporary prints. It's a passion he traces back to his boyhood in Walthamsow in east London when, from the age of ten, he would spend his earnings from a Saturday job on trinkets from antique stalls. He'd also been fascinated by his grandfather's chrysanthemums, and having grown geraniums in an abandoned greenhouse in his primary school he moved on to veg and other flowers at secondary school where, with remarkable boldness, he persuaded the teachers to move a glasshouse to a spot where it wouldn't be vandalised. He was offered a job in a local park but also wrote to the RHS to find out how to train to be a gardener. Some months later he was accepted for the two-year horticulture course at RHS Garden Wisley where, he says, he made the transition from boy to man.

Hungry for more experience, he applied there for an international place at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania and was accepted.

"Horticulturally that was like going from the 19th to the 21st century," he says. "Everything was much more modern, and the fountain gardens were so incredible." At the end of an exhilarating year he won a scholarship to the sub-tropical garden at Tresco, on the Isles of Scilly.

Both these trainings provided the groundwork for key aspects of his job at Winfield: Tresco gave him an appreciation of plant material in terms of form and texture, while Longwood showed him the possibilities of decorative horticulture. An essential part of the job at Winfield is creating the floral arrangements inside the house and in marquees. He shows me photos of his displays that show his flair

for the bold and dramatic. With typical forthrightness he says, "There are lots of great gardeners and lots of great florists but there aren't that many who can combine the two, and I think I do. Floral design is about scale, proportion, context and theming. It's using the same disciplines that I use in the garden."

Stephen is keenly aware of the lucky breaks he's had and grateful for the encouragement from people in the industry and the relationships he's developed with other head gardeners. He manages to squeeze in some mentoring but would like to help more young horticulturists, and do more designing. For the moment there's the new garden that spirals round the new US Embassy building at Nine Elms in south London to be established. But with the blueprint for the long-term management of Winfield House garden now set in place, the handover to Stephen's eventual successor should be an easier proposition. □

NEXT MONTH Biologist and gardening columnist for *The Telegraph*, Ken Thompson.

I RUN THE
GARDEN FOR THE
LONG TERM, AND
TREAT IT
SPIRITUALLY AS
IF IT'S MINE,
BUT I'M JUST A
CUSTODIAN



ACCOUNTS

year ended 31 December 2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE - GENERAL FUND

	2022	2021
Income		
Garden rates received	£73,423	£65,450
Misc. income	£559	£1,193
	£73,982	£66,644
Expenditure		
Gardener & garden improvements	£31,252	£30,942
Clerk's Fee	£9,780	£9,780
Tree work	£10,994	£9,134
Insurance	£866	£1,154
Water & Electricity	£1,668	£1,336
Sundries	£1,423	£4,189
	£55,984	£56,534
Excess of income over expenditure	£17,998	£10,109
Allocation to reserves		
Painting fund	£2,000	£2,000
Play area refurb (see note)	£21,522	£0
	-£5,523	£8,109
BALANCE AND RESERVES		
	31 Dec. 2022	31 Dec. 2021
Assets and liabilities		
Cash at bank	£19,058	£26,065
Other current assets	£3,737	£1,237
Creditors and Accruals	-£1,330	-£2,315
	£21,464	£24,987
Reserves		
Painting fund	£18,697	£16,697
Surplus Prior years	£8,290	£180
(Deficit) / Surplus Current year	-£5,523	£8,109
	£2,767	£8,290
Total Reserves	£21,464	£24,987

ACCOUNTS continued

OTHER INFORMATION AND NOTES

	31 Dec. 2022	31 Dec. 2021
Hanging Basket fund		
Reserve at start of year	£3,553	£4,801
Donations received	£3,357	£2,880
Paid out in year	-£4,370	-£4,129
Remaining reserve	£2,540	£3,553
Play area refurbishment project		
Voluntary donations received in year	£35,346	£19,013
Voluntary donations previous year	£19,013	£0
	£54,360	£19,013
Play area expenditure	-£75,881	
Allocated from general fund	-£21,522	
Agreement of total cash at bank at period end		
General fund	£19,058	£26,065
Play area voluntary donations	£0	£19,013
Hanging basket fund	£2,540	£3,553
Total cash at bank	£21,597	£48,630

Garden Rate Levy for the Year to 31 December 2023

The Committee recommends an increase in the garden rate levy for 2023 of 8% (a rate of 1.366 pence in the pound on the annual values taken as 8% of the 2005 building insurance values). This increase is recommended to absorb regular inflationary pressure on the Trust's expenditure and allow continuation of garden improvement projects.



FINANCE REPORT

The Trust received £73,423 from the garden rate levy in 2022 (2021 - £65,450). Overall a deficit was recorded for 2022 of £5,523 (2021 - surplus £8,109). Total reserves at the end of 2022 were £21,464 (2019 - £24,987).

Collection of overdue garden rates from a minority of Trustees continues to be an issue. As at 31st December 2022 the garden rate arrears were £26,080, although since the year end £11,269 of this has been collected.

The Garden Trust administers the procurement of hanging baskets on the square. These are paid for by voluntary donations and are accounted for separately from the Trust's main funds.

The children's play area refurbishment was a major achievement in 2022. The cost was:

Landscaping, including groundworks, Nordic lawn, pathways, paving, irrigation and planting (All Seasons)	£58,939
Playground Equipment (Playequip)	£13,828
Project management & other	£3,114
TOTAL COST	£75,881

This project was mostly paid for from voluntary donations received. We are very grateful for the generosity of all who gave voluntary donations to allow this to happen. Voluntary donations received were £54,360 (of which £19,013 were received in 2021 and £35,346 in 2022). The remaining funding of £21,522 was allocated from the Trust's general funds.

The Committee

Many thanks this year to everyone on the Committee who have given their valuable time to make the garden the lovely and uplifting place that it is.

The current Committee is made up of the following Trustees:

Anne Bristow, Peter Blott, Sarah Lang, Sue Smith, Martin Bikhit, Noella Hacquard, Sebastian Goldenberg and Julio Castro.

Westbourne Management act as clerk to the Trust. The responsibilities of Chairman are rotated between Committee Members.

If any Trustees would like to join us they would be most welcome.



MINUTES 2021 AGM

MINUTES OF THE MONTAGU SQUARE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Held at 6.30pm on Monday 7th March 2022 at Wetherby Prep School

Peter Blott (Acting Chair), Anne Bristow, Julio Castro, Sarah Lang, Sue Smith, Chris Morris, Salvatore Giorgio (WM), Mary Hicks, Anne Methlen, Robert Bramwell-Jones, David Lane, Sara Lane, B. Lewis-Powell, Alan Bristow.

Peter Blott opened the meeting by greeting all the attendees and saying that it was nice to be able to meet in person again after last year's virtual meeting via Zoom.

1. To consider and approve the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 1st March 2021. The minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising. No matters arising from the last minutes.

3. To receive the annual report of the Committee

The report of the Committee had already been circulated with the mailings and published on the garden website.

Anne Bristow started by giving a report on what was happening in the garden. The garden had lost a tree during the storm a couple of weeks earlier and that had been swiftly cleared by Bartlett, the tree company employed by the Trust. She was very pleased with the work they were doing in maintaining the trees. Sadly, two cherry trees on the south side will need to be taken down as they are dead. There is always a great display of colour in Spring but this year extra effort will be put into make the garden more interesting in Autumn.

A new bench has been donated to the memory of Thomas Healy and installed on the east side of the garden.

AB then outlined the play area project by showing plans and drawings and explaining all the improvements step by step. A newsletter describing the project had been circulated with the AGM pack. Phase one should start in Spring. Phase two of the project will see the repairs and repaving of the substation. The proposal includes the installation of two Georgian pedestals to dress the area, and matching planters with climbing plants.

Peter Blott expressed his gratitude, on behalf of the Committee and all the Trustees, to AB for the immense amount of effort put into the project. PB added that the Trust had the funds available at this stage to undertake phase one of the project but not yet the money for phase two.

MINUTES continued

One of the Trustees praised AB for the playground project, and asked if anything could be done to improve the privacy of the garden. He is a long-term resident and remembered the garden used to be a much more private. AB replied that more mature hedges had been planted but it would take time for them to grow.

She assured the meeting that the Committee and the gardeners will work together to create a more private environment.

4. To consider and if thought fit to accept the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2021

Peter Blott outlined that the format of the accounts had been slightly changed to better itemise the funds. In the new format, the funds for the hanging baskets and the voluntary donations towards the play area project are kept separated. Expenditure was broadly in line with the budget and the main concern had been the large amount of people in arrears. He praised Anne Bristow and WM for the effort put into collect the arrears, but he also outlined that still a significant amount of money to be collected. He also mentioned that the problem with the arrears is most often due to misunderstandings by new residents or out of date contact information.

The accounts were approved.

5. To levy the garden rate for the year to 31st December 2022

It was proposed to increase the rates by 25% to allow for inflation and the accomplishment of the aforementioned projects for the improvement of the garden. This was approved. The levy for 2022 will be set at 1.265 pence to the pound on the annual values taken as 8% of the 2005 building insurance values.

6. To elect the Committee for the year to December 2022

The Committee was re-confirmed but Peter Blott invited any Trustee who wanted to join the Committee to step forward as help is always welcome.

Sarah Lang thanked Anne Bristow for all the effort and time she put into the accomplishment of the project of the play area and the improvement of the garden.

7. Any other business

It was mentioned that some foxes are wandering about the garden and some people feel intimidated by their presence. Peter Blott outlined that it was a long-standing issue. It was possible to get rid of the foxes for some time, but more foxes would move back into the garden eventually. The secret was to keep the garden free of rubbish to avoid attracting them.

No other business was discussed.

The meeting closed at 7:20 pm with Peter Blott thanking all the attendees.



Established by Act of Parliament 1813

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