

# Lansdowne Road – Elgin Crescent Garden Committee Report January 2011

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Dear Resident,

The Annual General Meeting of the Lansdowne Road – Elgin Crescent Communal Garden will be held on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> of January at 7.30pm. The meeting will take place at 95 Elgin Crescent. A glass of wine will be available and all residents are cordially invited to attend.

A copy of the Agenda and the minutes of the last AGM are attached.

## **FINANCE**

The Garden levy (or precept) was £ 24,000 for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2010 and the accounts show a surplus of £ 2,100. We have again engaged the services of an accountant to help the Treasurer with the management of the accounts and a copy of the accounts are available from the Treasurer, James Tuckey, at 95 Elgin Crescent. We try to ensure that both the Garden Party and Fireworks evening break even, at worst, and I am glad to report that we met this objective in 2009. For the current year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 the precept is £ 26,100 and we will again achieve a surplus, before one-off expenditures, which in the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 include works to the Rosmead steps, the fence alongside the main access gates at Ladbrooke Road and the major tree works. Further details of these works are provided below. As a result of these expenditures, likely to total circa £22,000, the current year will show a deficit. However we anticipate ending the year with about £10,000 in the bank. For many years your Committee have planned to hold, at any one time, a surplus of approximately one year's precept in order to meet one off expenditures, such as those carried out in 2010. Any surpluses arising are added to the Reserves which are essential to enable general maintenance projects to be carried out.

For the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, we have received a request from RBK&C to not increase the garden levy. The basis for this request is that the Borough has been incentivised by the national government to keep council tax flat year-on-year. Though our garden precept is not part of the official council tax system, it is however collected by the council. As such it counts towards the overall number.

It is therefore our recommendation to leave the garden precept at its current level for 2011/2012.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

As previously reported in April of 2009 the main access gates at the Ladbrooke Grove end of the garden have been substantially repaired. In the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 no further infrastructure projects were undertaken. Projects that have been completed last year are the steps to Rosmead Road, major tree works and the beautiful restoration of the garden benches under the auspices of

Helena Stranack. This year (2011) we aim to replace the security fence along the ramp leading from the main Ladbroke Grove double gates.

The Rosmead railings project, as discussed at last year's AGM has been delayed after the Committee re-assured itself that the railings pose no immediate danger to residents of the Garden. The need for restoration of these railings and their supporting wall remains present and the Committee has received a proposal from Christopher Braddock architect to undertake an initial feasibility study at a cost of £ 1650. This would include: sketch proposals; photographs and assessment of surrounding precedents; meeting with LBKC planners; assessment of requirement for other consultants including structural engineer and tree expert; assessment of methodology for construction process, including access and security arrangements; preparation of programme; initial cost plan based on budget prices from three contractors; advise of all associated costs relating to local authority and other consultants; preparation of report for Garden Committee and potential funding bodies.

Once this initial study is completed, the Committee proposes to call an exceptional AGM to discuss the timing and funding of this project.

#### **GARDEN RULES**

At last year's AGM the Committee proposed to have the latest version of the garden rules to be submitted to the court for ratification, as this process had not been done for several decades. Following the AGM's decision to proceed, approval of our rules has been obtained from Kingston upon Thames Crown Court in March 2010. Copies of the rules are available from the Chairman at 115, Elgin Crescent.

#### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Our 2010 80's themed summer party was once again a success. That event together with our Bonfire party generated a profit for the garden, helped yet again in part by the generosity of the organisers, the Montgomery family and Stefan Pinter respectively.

The Committee is committed to the aim of ensuring the Garden events are open to all residents and are genuinely accessible to everyone. Notices are always posted on the notice boards in the Garden, but any ideas you have to widen the participation in our events to include more residents are welcome.

#### **PLANTING AND TREES**

As previously reported the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010 has been a relatively quiet year in terms of planting and trees, with mainly general maintenance work being undertaken as well as some enhancements in overall planting of shrubs. It also saw the change of guard from Mary-Lu Bakker to Nicola Heywood at the January 2010 AGM.

Our major project this calendar year 2010 in the garden has been Tree Enhancement.

After considerable research into companies and costs we decided to appoint Bartlett Tree Experts to advise us and carry out all the necessary work. They came with the highest recommendations and are considered to be amongst the very best in their field. Bartletts have an excellent relationship with the RBK&C Council, based on many years of professional collaboration.

Health and Safety was one of our major concerns. We had a very large amount of dead wood to remove. Some of you may have noticed that we had quite a lot of branch drop earlier on in the summer.

We also wanted to prolong the life span of some of our very old trees by reducing the crowns, and reducing some of their branches and thinning them out. This involved a much closer look at some of our trees, culminating in a special survey / Health & Safety Report on one of our old Horse Chestnuts.

One of our main aims was to create light and space on the Lansdowne Road side of the garden, which over the years had become overgrown thus depriving residents of light. We achieved this by selective crown reductions, raising canopies, thinning out, and the removal of some branches, a few of which were also an H & S issue.

The majority of the work was carried out during a two week period in December 2010. We will be planting four new trees early this year (2011), these will be in keeping, and our main concern will be (long term) succession planting. Residents are invited to submit their views on succession-planting to Nicola Heywood at [nicolaheywood@googlemail.com](mailto:nicolaheywood@googlemail.com).

This year we also planted Silver Birch, Laurels, Thornless Brambles, Dog Woods and Philadelphus amongst others and removed some smaller trees/shrubs due to issues such as overcrowding and/or context. It is the Committee's aim, where practicable and taking into account the opinions of residents, to stay true to the original Victorian layout and planting of our Garden.

Many thanks to all of you who helped on the project. The Committee wishes to thank Paul our gardener and also Bartlett Tree Experts for all their help, advice, and hard work.

Everyone involved thought that the Garden is very special indeed, with its variety of beautiful trees and shrubs it's perfect for wild life too. To encourage this further we have used some of the wood from our trees to create a new eco / insect friendly area. Mary - Lu, our resident Bird Expert has reported that she has seen twenty five different species of birds in the garden this year.

The judges for the K & C Brighter Gardens scheme praised the garden highly but unfortunately this year we didn't quite get a prize, fingers crossed for next year.

#### **COMMUNAL GARDENING DAY**

Many thanks to so many of you who raked massive amounts of leaves on the day after our Bonfire party. Removing the autumn leaves is a tough task for Paul our gardener to complete on his own and this year the old saying of 'many hands make light work' was put into practice in a big way. Please do come out at again this year at 10am on the day after the Bonfire party. Bloody Mary and warm coco incentives might well be provided again.

#### **COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS**

We will distribute flyers for the main events and post notices in the relevant places as per usual, but if you wish to be included in our email mailing list, please forward your address to the Secretary.

## **COMMITTEE**

As at the beginning of January 2010 the Committee comprised of those mentioned below with their respective roles and responsibilities:

Michiel Bakker	Chairman
James Tuckey	Treasurer
Michele Wolfson	Secretary
Verena Chalk	Dogs
Julia Heath	Keys
Nicola Heywood	Trees and Planting
Valerie Montgomery	Events
Michael Staveley	Infrastructure
Christopher Williams	Infrastructure

Michele Wolfson will be leaving the Committee. The Committee wish to thank her on behalf of all the residents for her tremendous contribution not only as Secretary over the past five years, but also as general go-to person for all matters administrative as well as being a super-chef at various children's BBQs . The other eight existing members are proposed for re-election. In addition we propose that Victoria Fordham of 71 Elgin Crescent ([victoriafordham@hotmail.com](mailto:victoriafordham@hotmail.com)) should be elected as Secretary.

## **GARDEN RENAME**

At last year's AGM the Committee reported it had been approached with the suggestion of proposing a rename from the rather descriptive and cumbersome "Lansdowne-Elgin Communal Garden" to "Rosmead Garden", Rosmead Road being the very link between Lansdowne Road and Elgin Crescent. As the minutes of last year's meeting will attest, a vote was carried out at the AGM and a narrow majority was achieved. However, since the issue appeared to split the room in half, it was decided to postpone a final decision to a future AGM.

The Committee proposes a final vote on this issue at the upcoming AGM.

## **DATE FOR AGM**

The date for this AGM was determined during last year's AGM. We will propose Monday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2012 as the date for next year's AGM.

Other important dates for 2011:

London Open Garden Squares Day:	Sunday June 12 <sup>th</sup> 10AM - 5PM
Summer Party 2011:	Saturday July 2 <sup>nd</sup>
Bonfire Party:	Saturday November 5 <sup>th</sup>

**We hope to see you shortly at this year's AGM on Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> of January at 95 Elgin Crescent at 7.30pm.**

Yours sincerely,

The Committee.