

Rosmead Garden

Annual General Meeting

Committee Report

January 2014

Dear Residents,

Time flies! The Annual General Meeting of Rosmead Garden will be held on Monday 20th of January at 7.30pm. The meeting will take place at 95 Elgin Crescent. You are cordially invited to attend. We would like to draw your attention to the 'Rosmead Railings Restoration' project, which will be an important part of the meeting.

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

FINANCE

The Garden levy (or precept) was £26,160 for the financial year to 31st of March 2013 and the accounts for the same period, prepared on a cash basis, show a deficit of £4,443, compared to last year's surplus of £1838. Income was virtually unchanged but expenditure during the year was about £6,000 higher than in 2012 as we had 'one-off' garden expenditures, such as the tree removal, spring closures on the Rosmead and Ladbrooke gates etcetera. We ended the year with circa £18,000 in the bank. We try to ensure that the Garden Party and Fireworks evening, taken together, break even and I am glad to report that we met this objective again in 2012. We engaged the services of an accountant again 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.

For the current year to 31st March 2014 the precept was raised by 6% to £27,730, notwithstanding more representations from RBK&C to hold the precept flat. We anticipate that we will again achieve a surplus, before one-off expenditures and on current estimates we are likely to have cash in the bank at the end of March 2014 of circa £19,000, compared to £18,000 at the same point last year. 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 over the last couple of years. 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 31st 2015, The Committee are proposing to double the precept to £55,000 in order to fund part of the cost of renewing the Rosmead railings. Furthermore, we anticipate holding the precept at this level for a number of years for the same reason. Please see the section on the Rosmead railings project, below, for more detail

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT – ROSMEAD RAILINGS

Following the discussion at last year's AGM, the Committee have done a considerable amount of work on the question of how to repair or replace the Rosmead Road railings and garden wall which are in a very poor state. This is an issue which successive Committees have grappled with but without a plan emerging. As we told you last year we resolved to take action! A working group including Nicola Heywood and James Tuckey were asked to take matters forward and this is where we have got to:

- The railings and the supporting wall are in danger of collapse: in some places being held up by the proximate trees and shrubs.
- An architect, Susan Walker and engineer, Brendon Malone were engaged to survey the existing structure and draw up preliminary plans. Both have considerable experience with garden railings in London. Details are shown on the display boards which will be available at the meeting. We will seek planning consent for the works shortly.
- By raising the brick retaining wall 500mm, we are able to re-use the existing spear headed shafts - after refurbishment- and significantly increase the overall height of the structure thereby improving security. The shafts are original dating from the 1850's and are amongst few examples in London to have survived the WW2 search for iron and steel.
- We have obtained budget prices from appropriate contractors and the overall budget figure is £130,000 including VAT. This figure includes a contingency of £10,000- a sensible precaution at this stage -and also assumes we will introduce a fob activated locking system on both the Rosmead and Ladbroke gates. The budget includes the cost of removing the existing vegetation around the wall and replanting with mature shrubs, but does not include rebuilding the steps, which we would not propose to do at this stage.
- A significant component of the building cost results from the need to provide additional reinforcement to support Rosmead Road, which is at a higher level than the garden alongside. We have approached RBK&C asking them to meet this additional cost but, to date, without success.
- We are also looking at other possible sources of external funding but, even if successful, are unlikely to raise more than a modest contribution. Therefore the residents will have to meet the lion's share of the cost.
- The Committee have considered a number of different ways of raising the required funds from residents including: raising the precept, resident loans, external borrowing and donations/sponsorship. We are also looking at a charitable trust structure.
- However, the most secure way to start the funding process and the Committee's preferred solution is to use the precept as the principal driver of funding, with resident loans providing the cash-flow to complete the project this year.
- The Committee has received initial indications from a number of Residents who are in principle prepared to contribute to providing such loans.
- The Committee proposes to continue to explore alternative sources of funding to reduce, where possible, the reliance on the precept.
- Our proposal as mentioned in the Finance report above is to double the precept for 2014/2015 will allow us to set aside circa £30,000 towards the project.
- Without other funding sources the precept will need to be maintained at this level for a maximum of five years.
- The Committee's preference is to carry out the work in 2014, avoiding the summer if possible, Residents' loans will have to be secured before a physical start can be made.

The Committee proposes therefore to increase the precept by 100% for the next financial year and to indicate its intention to keep it at this level for a maximum of 5(five) years. The AGM will be asked to vote on this point.

GARDEN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Email, mail drops and noticeboard notification will continue as per usual, but we would like to remind you there is a basic website where residents are able to find general information about our Garden, including the rules and notifications. The domain name is: www.rosmeadgarden.info . Your feedback and contributions to the site would be welcome.

SOCIAL EVENTS 2013

Last summer's "**Wild West Party**", with music legend Bobby Mason on guitar and vocals will go down in history as one of our best, if not the best, though with the dynamic Montgomery duo at the helm we are now making a habit of saying that. Valerie has again graciously offered to be our glamorous organiser in chief. This year's (2014) party will be themed "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves" and will be held on Saturday the 28th of June. We are looking forward to the costumes!

The **Bonfire Night Firework Display** was for a final time created, lit and donated by Stefan Pinter. The Garden will be forever grateful for Stefan's 21 years of consecutive, uninterrupted and sequential years of Fireworks! This special occasion was marked with a 'celebratory' fireworks bench which proudly sits, gold-leaf 'n all, at the Rosmead end of the Garden. Thanks to Mary-Lu Bakker for acquiring and to Nicola Heywood for gloriously restoring said bench. This means there is now a vacancy and in an ideal world we would like to keep the Fireworks 'in-house'. If anyone amongst you is interested in stepping in the Maestro's shoes, please do let us know.

PLANTING, TREES AND GENERAL GARDEN USAGE

This year we ran the garden very carefully on a tight/reduced budget, as our Treasurer pointed out at the start of the year that we were in danger of dipping into our reserves, (which was unadvisable). Our overall agreed spend was reduced (to £16,400). Our gardener's basic salary remained constant (at £12,500) without the extra days we normally allow for in both Spring and Autumn for pruning and clearing up, and for working on the perimeters of the garden (both inside and out) at Ladbroke Grove and Rosmead Road. We then budgeted for a reduced sum onto of this for all our maintenance costs (£4,000). We managed to simply maintain the garden and to continue all the work on the lawns. However, we planted nothing this year, and did very little repair work to the Gravel boards, which edge the lawns and some of the beds. In contrast to other years we also put down a very small amount of new gravel. However, within this tight budget we allowed as usual for essential Tree Works (at £2,000), which we carried out.

We were delighted because keeping within this reduced/tight budget allowed us to commission Hal Appleyard, Arboricultural Consultant, from 'A.C.S. Consulting' to conduct a Tree Inspection of all the trees in the communal garden, including the significant trees in each of the "no man's" lands. This gives us a complete picture of all the trees in the garden, their health, and 'stage in life'. Overall we are pleased to report that it is a very good picture, "the tree stock is generally in good order, having been managed well in the past". Going forward we will update the report every 3 years, at a much reduced cost. It now gives us a clear schedule of work.

Rosmead Garden Questionnaire

Thank you for your time filling in the Garden Questionnaire. We have received 23 responses and the results are attached. We are pleased to note that 70% of respondents are broadly satisfied with the balance between planted areas and open spaces. Your answers will now form the basis of a mid- to long term management plan for the Garden which the Committee will share with you in due course.

London Garden Open Squares Day - This Summer it was an even bigger success. The numbers rose from just over 400 in 2012 to over 600 in 2013. Thanks to Mary-Lu Bakker and Poppy Fordham for holding the fort on the day with the volunteers, and to Anita Dent for the fabulous charity 'pop-up' cafe.

Please note: The date for this year is Sunday 15th June - from 12 - 5 pm. (Rosmead Road gate)

Rubbish - Thanks to our many fellow residents who helped tidy up the garden this year, taking away rubbish, broken glass and Dog Mess. Please help us this year too, bins overflow occasionally (with domestic rubbish?) and an excess of Dog Mess. Whenever possible, please take any rubbish you come across home with you. Our gardener Paul comes just once a week and he has the garden to look after as well as doing the clearing up! Also it would be helpful if you could encourage everyone to take away food to, don't leave it in the garden, it just encourages foxes, rats and other vermin.

Garden Waste - Please don't put your garden waste into the Communal garden, or onto the pathways as we have no means of disposing of it. Can we encourage everyone to use our Councils 'Green Bag Scheme'. The next collection is on Tuesday 28th January. You can apply for your free 'Green bag' on 0207 361 3001 or email; streetline@rbkc.gov.uk. They also supply Bio-degradable leaf bags in Autumn/Winter at a small cost of £8.10 for a pack of 25. Again the contact details are as above, or you can pick them up from The Market Office at 72 Tavistock Rd., W11 1AN (just off Portobello) Tel: 0207 727 7684. NB: opening times Monday to Saturday 9AM to 1PM.

COMMUNAL GARDENING DAY

It's a Garden tradition for Residents to contribute to the removal of autumn leaves each year, the morning after the Bonfire party at 10AM. Many thanks to so many of you who joined the raking on the day last year, we could do with more of you this year. Removing the autumn leaves is a tough task for Paul our gardener to complete on his own.

COMMITTEE

As at the beginning of January 2013 the Committee comprised of those mentioned below:

Michiel Bakker
James Tuckey
Virginie de Selliers
Victoria Fordham
Julia Heath
Nicola Heywood
Valerie Montgomery
Michael Staveley
Natali Bottoli

Both Natali Bottoli and Virginie de Selliers were unable to devote sufficient time to Committee matters and Juliet Wilkinson and Gerard Cunningham have kindly accepted to join the Committee. All members are proposed for re-election. It is proposed the following three members will hold the role of officers: Michiel Bakker – Chairman; James Tuckey – Treasurer and Juliet Wilkinson – Secretary.

DATE FOR AGM

The date for this AGM was determined during last year's AGM. We will propose Monday January 19th 2015 as the date for next year's AGM.

Other important dates for 2014:

London Open Garden Squares Day:	Sunday June 15 th
Summer Party:	Saturday June 28 th
Bonfire Party:	Saturday November 1 st
Communal Gardening Day:	Sunday November 2 nd

We hope to see you shortly at this year's AGM on Monday the 20th of January at 95 Elgin Crescent at 7.30pm.

Yours sincerely,

The Committee.