

**KENSINGTON GARDENS SQUARE GARDEN ASSOCIATION  
2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held by Zoom conference meeting on Thursday 25th November 2021 at 19:30

**ATTENDANCE**

Member	Address	
Rishi Daggar	10-14	Incoming committee member: Garden Keys
Judith Schechter	10-14 (&54-55)	Committee member: Treasurer
Bruce Kapferer	10-14	
Judith Kapferer	10-14	
Charlotte Dicker	10-14	
Simon Glucina	26	Committee member: Chair & Secretary
Mary Notaras	26	
Caroline Egan-Strang	27-28	Committee member: Garden Parties
Emma Fulton	27-28	Incoming committee member: Community engagement
Mener Tsitsis	40	By proxy held by Chair
Shaw Warnock	58	
Susanne Gahler	59	Committee member: Small Garden & Garden Keys
Catherine Blake	60	
Fiona More	60	
Nick Bray	64	By proxy held by Chair
Dieter Wellmann	64	Committee member: Large Garden
Gully Sahney	68	
Wendy Wyver	71	
GMS Estates	72-74	By proxy held by Chair
Jan Kremer		Life member
<i>Jelena Vickovic</i>	<i>Apologies</i>	<i>Committee member: Community engagement</i>
<i>Jennifer Felderhof</i>	<i>Apologies</i>	<i>Committee member</i>
<i>Moray Angus</i>	<i>Apologies</i>	

1. The **Rules of the Association** state that a quorum is 7 members. The meeting was therefore quorate with 11 paid-up members – covering 20 frontages
2. The **AGM 2020 minutes**, available ahead of the meeting on our website, were referenced and accepted by the meeting without amendment and signed by the Chair as a true record. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the 2021 AGM agenda
3. **Chair's Report:** Simon Glucina summarised some of the highlights in the Committee's activities during the past year; in a challenging year, he wished to emphasise four points in particular:
  - First, that the gardens continue to go from strength to strength with more curation, diversity and colour and many improvements
  - Second, there had been a fantastic bounceback to social activities on lockdown easing, with very good attendance at coffee mornings and much fun had by those participating as well as a return to parties
  - Third, that the long-held goal of gaining title to the gardens for the benefit of our residents had after 18 years finally been achieved. We should be especially grateful to those who sought this out as a goal and worked on it for many years. The benefits of gaining title were especially apparent this year with the controversial private sale of our neighbouring Princes Square, with no long-term security of access for its residents
  - Finally, he thanked the committee for all their work this year. There had been some change in composition of the committee with some members (Brigitte Haults, Jennifer Felderhof and Jelena Vickovic) no longer spending time in London, and the committee was very pleased that Emma Fulton (no. 27-28) and Rishi Daggar (no. 11) had agreed to join the team.
4. **Horticultural report for the Large Garden** (Dieter Wellmann).
  - Dieter introduced the garden updates by showing a number of photographs themed 'Celebrating our Gardens' taken throughout the year.

- It was noted how the community expressed their appreciation to the ongoing work done in the gardens and especially the spring flower display in the large garden and the massive effort done by Susanne in the small garden to have flower displays throughout all seasons.
- The community used the gardens in a very respectful manner and the few exceptions were addressed and resolved. The majority of users now use the gravel areas for exercise.
- It was noted that new garden furniture became a contribution from The Whiteley Community Project. Two new round tables, 10 armchairs and 4 new benches brought welcome additional seating which was already well used.
- Dieter noted that there is a small plant nursery in the back of the large garden where people could leave unwanted plants for possible inclusion into the garden.
- It was noted that the yearly weather was wet and mild with snow on two occasions and one heavy hailstorm that caused some damage. The large garden started ponding towards the North-west corner and drainage pipes were added to allow excess water to flow out onto the street. The lawns were rarely irrigated but the peripheral plant beds and hedges were irrigated to maintain healthy growth.
- Three Elm trees were removed due to Dutch Elm disease. One more is likely to be removed in the next year for the same. The wood was used back into the gardens towards the south side. Consideration is given for replacement trees that require council approval.
- Other garden updates include:
  - The green shed received a living green roof, and the sheds sides will still be painted to better blend into the garden.
  - The 'worm farm' continues to be used and everyone was reminded that no plastics or bio-degradable plastics should be added.
  - Nine new bird nesting boxes were installed, and the garden continues to promote a healthy habitat for as many birds as possible.
  - The South-east corner gravel area was increased in size to support multi-use and intense exercise.
  - Replanting of some existing plants to ensure a good distribution across the garden.
  - Ongoing composting – now dealing with both gardens' arisings in the large garden.
  - Focus remains on soil improvement, insect habitats and wildlife in general.
- Ongoing garden tasks and actions:
  - Maintenance repairs to compost structures.
  - Planting of additional hedge planting to maintain a dense healthy hedge growth.
  - Ongoing grass repairs and seeding.
  - Replace and install new timber edge to lawn.
  - Additional gravel for pathway surface uplift.
  - Additional planting early spring including bulb planting (community event).

5. **Horticultural report for the Small Garden** (Susanne Gahler). In a similar way, Susanne presented highlights and plans for the small garden. Highlights included:

- Significant spring bulb planting
- Reseeding of central lawn, after the turf grass disappeared during winter
- Ongoing maintenance of enormously diverse horticultural mix, offering colour through seasons
- Laying of a new water pipe along the garden fence, allowing shrubs and flowers to survive in difficult spot (thanks to Jan & Mariella Kremer)

2022 plans involve:

- Storage area / shed at back to be repainted
- Further planting and improving the soil
- Tree maintenance work
- Stepping stones to back garden
- Renew gravel in Spring (3 years since last replenished)
- Renewed attempt to reseed the lawn in Spring, with readiness to change from lawn to garden with shade tolerant plants given challenges with not enough light (as suggested by Shaw Warnock)
- Additional curved bench to be installed at entrance recognising increased use of small garden by residents

6. **Community report** (Caroline Egan-Strang (Garden Parties) and Emma Fulton (Community Engagement))

- Emma introduced herself with her new role to look after the coffee mornings and other events with a focus towards involving and connecting the community.
- Caroline remains in her role to manage garden party requests on behalf of the committee. Highlights included:
  - Parties were able to take place again which has been happy & wonderful.
  - People have been thoughtful in how they have held them so that others can also freely use the garden.
  - A few parties have been held without hosts making the request to us. Reminder of the garden rules: > 9 people require prior arrangement and fees & deposit always apply.
  - BBQs – revised fee to £25 with permission required for all BBQs which are limited to 2 at any time and only in the Southern part of the garden.
  - We had 6 x parties and 4 x BBQs
- We encourage more children-based community events for example Halloween, Easter egg hunt, children play groups, summer water play days etc. that can easily become community events.
  - Other ongoing initiatives include – bulb planting day, the ‘Big Garden Birdwatch’ and London Open Garden weekend (albeit the Sunday only.)
  - We are looking at introducing new community events throughout the year and as always, we welcome your suggestions.
- We would like to remind people of the garden rules designed to ensure everyone can enjoy the gardens.
  - The meeting was reminded that it unacceptable for the gardens to be used as a lavatory
  - We ask that people request permission for parties of more than nine, and for any BBQ

7. **Land Registration** (Simon Glucina)

- The Association achieved a long-held goal with the Land Registry granting our Trustees title to the two gardens earlier this year. This is the culmination of 18 years of ups and downs, thorough searches of old records, and countless hours of committee and community effort
- The Chair expressed thanks to all involved, and in particular Wendy Wyver, Jim Rea, Ray and Magda Kilby and to Residential Land who have supported the application.
- The Chair mentioned that he felt especially grateful given the furore associated with the sale of our neighbouring Princes Square, reportedly for multiple millions with individuals benefiting from the sale and leaving Princes Square residents in a situation where they don’t have security of access to the Square that was originally laid out for them.
- With Land Registration having been granted, the Chair went on to set out the likely next steps, which will impact KGSGA, the land and governance of the Gardens.
  - When the Trust was established 6 years ago, it was on the basis that the Association could direct the Trust to transfer the title to a company set up to hold the land, the Association not having capacity to hold land in its own right.
  - KGSGA established a special kind of company called a Community Interest Company, with some particular statutory features suitable for our situation. The CIC’s members would be all of the surrounding freeholds, much as the Association’s members are. And the CIC structure incorporates an ‘asset lock’, meaning that the CIC is not permitted to sell land. Therefore the land would effectively be owned by and across the KGS community and sale of the land wouldn’t arise as an issue (per Princes Square) as it would be illegal.
  - The CIC’s constitution also envisages that it will succeed KGSGA and the Trust. We therefore hope in coming months to complete the steps of transferring (i) the land to the CIC and (ii) the business of KGSGA to the CIC. The CIC will then run the gardens in the same way the Association does now.
  - We will need freeholder member support for this transition, and the CIC also needs to be expanded from its current 4 members to the whole of the Association membership. We may seek to have an Extraordinary General Meeting to deal with the transition in the Spring, meaning we could start our financial year beginning in April on a new footing as KGS Garden CIC.

8. **Treasurer's report (Judith Schecter)**

- 53 frontages pay annual rates, which produced in the financial year, ending 31st March, 2021, an income of £34, 170, with normal expenditure of £31, 735.
- In cash flow terms, there was a small deficit of £2,681, mostly due to the non-recurring cost of legal fees associated with our Land Registration application.
- Our Reserves are £58,646, representing slightly less than two years' income. To the end of this financial year, we expect ca. £6,000 expenditure across both gardens.
- We welcomed The Whiteley Community Project contribution of £3,232 for additional garden furniture.
- The meeting confirmed the committee's recommendation of a garden rate of £640 per frontage, unchanged for a third successive year, with 25% reduction for the two Housing Associations. Members commented that in an increasingly inflationary environment it may be necessary to increase rates at the next AGM.
- The Treasurer asked for confirmation of re-appointing Treetops as our Auditors for the next year, which the meeting unanimously approved.
- One member commented that there had been a greater number of frontages in membership at some point in the past, have we lost some recently? The committee replied that over the last 4 years we have lost two member freeholds (nos. 48 and 29 (no. 29 was subject to a fire and then change in ownership) and gained one, for net down one. We hope to persuade 29 to re-join now that residents have returned to the building, and indeed other freeholds also.
- In response to a member query, the committee agreed to speak with the Charity Commission to see if registration of our entity may be possible which could help us qualify for lower supplier prices or gifting in some cases (e.g., IT sector).

9. **Election of Committee Members**

- The Chair recognised the contributions of three members of the committee standing down, in each case driven by them no longer spending time in London.
- The remaining committee members (Susanne Gahler, Judith Schecter, Simon Glucina, Caroline Egan-Strang and Dieter Wellmann) were re-elected, along with two new members, Emma Fulton and Rishi Daggar.

10. **KGSGA communications**

- Members were reminded of the various channels of communication used by KGSGA and were encouraged to ask residents to pass on email contact details to the association which assist with management of the gardens and building of the community

11. **AOB – Keys management**

- Susanne Gahler communicated information around keys management to the meeting, in particular:
  - We usually hand out 35-45 keys a year, but get less than 5 returns. As a result we do not have a reliable account of all the keys outstanding and used, despite our new database.
  - In the past we have therefore changed all keys every 7/8 years in order to regain some oversight of the actual garden users. Our last such key exchange was in 2013.
  - Our garden is one of the few in the immediate area that still uses physical keys; other square gardens now use fob-based systems
  - The committee will therefore discuss in the coming year whether such a new system would be beneficial
  - Any Member who has suggestions or would like to share experience on this matter would be most welcome
- Members commented that the committee should feel free to speak with other gardens about their experience of what works and doesn't, and perhaps speak with the London Gardens Trust also on this who may have some experience.

Members thanked the committee for the meeting, their efforts during the year and for an excellent accompanying presentation. The meeting ended at around 21:00.