

KGS Garden Community & Social Report for 2023 - with dates for 2024

Our ever-flourishing community centred on its sustainable & beautiful gardens offering sanctuary & neighbourliness beneficial to mental health & well being

KGS demographics (Westminster Ward Profiles Report 2020)

- Residents predominantly aged 30-44 (then 25-29s, 45-59s followed by 60s plus)
- International & National
- Singles, couples & families with young children

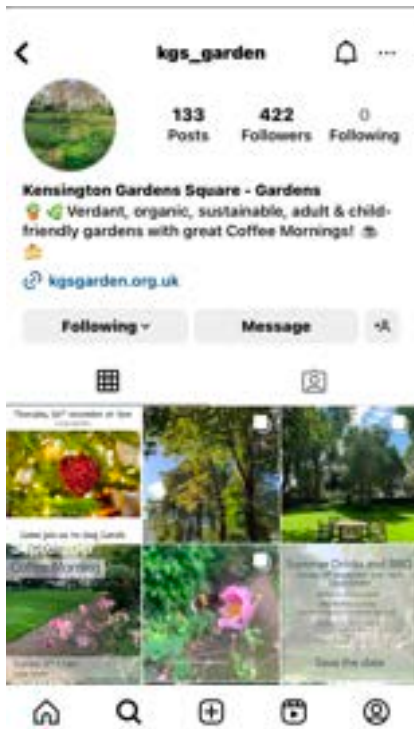
Residents of differing durations, with the gardens clearly important to all

Dates for your diary - to end 2024

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| Carol Singing | Thursday, 30 November 2023, 19:00 | £10 tickets per adult / children come free (no charge to garden funds). Text Emma on 07909 907834 to book tickets |
| Bulb Planting - Small & Large Gardens | 2nd & 3rd weekends in November 2023 | Apply to Dieter & Susanne for specific times. No experience is required to participate & gardening tools can be provided. This makes the gardens even more your gardens as you watch bloom the bulbs that you planted |
| Coffee Mornings | Sunday, 5 November 2023, 11:00 | Every first Sunday of the month, come hail or shine! Freshly ground coffee & a variety of teas provided. Bring your mug. No charge |
| Coffee Mornings | Sunday, 7 January 2024, 11:00 | Do bring a glass & some fizz to celebrate the New Year |
| RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch Weekend | 26 - 28 January 2024 | For everyone, but particularly young children. Ask Dieter (07825 442722), our resident environmental expert. He will announce other wildlife survey initiatives as they occur. |
| Children's Easter Egg Hunt | Date before Easter to be confirmed | Apply Emma |
| Open Garden | Sunday 9 June 2024, 13:00 - 17:00 | Both gardens open to the public. Ticket receipts used by London Parks & Gardens to continue their work protecting the green heart of the capital. Let Emma know if you'd like to join in helping. It's a great chance to understand more about how the LG is being managed to meet environmental needs (information also found in Dieter's annual Large Garden report) |

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| Shakespeare in the Squares: either <i>All's Well that Ends Well</i> or <i>The Comedy of Errors</i> . | Saturday 22 June 2024, time to be confirmed | Highly suitable for children with the costumes, actors' liveliness & their playing of instruments proving particularly attractive, as well as the relatively short duration of 90 minutes with interval. Tickets via Eventbrite with a KGS residents priority booking period. Limited number of children under 10 go free. Any questions to Emma or Caroline |
| Summer Garden Party | Sunday 8 September 2024 date to be confirmed | Come & celebrate the end of Summer with your neighbours. Basic BBQ & salads provided. Please bring offerings with you. Following requests, guests may be invited but please bring provisions |
| Halloween | Sunday 27 October 2024 | Bring your own pumpkins. Apply to Emma |
| Carol Singing & BBQ | Thursday 5 December 2024, date to be confirmed | Apply to Emma or Caroline |
| Private parties & gatherings | | To book parties over 9 people, email caro.eganstrang@icloud.com or text her on 07734 101068 |

As always, Emma will send out information closer to the date which can also be found on KGS_Garden (instagram) with Dieter's photographic snapshots. We have him to thank for the design of all our posters, some of which you can see below.



SOCIAL EVENTS of note during the past year include:

Carol Singing in the Large Garden

Residents came together to sing well-known Carols organised by Emma, our very own Santa Lucia & enjoyed sausages grilled by Dieter, mincemeat pies & mulled wine (Caroline handcrafted) around Dieter's fire-pit for warmth. Last year was our first year - with the idea coming from a resident. It was such a success with a real sense of festive happiness - & we very much appreciated the warm messages we received afterwards.



Monthly Coffee Mornings

Emma's invitation of attractive table decorations & good quality coffee has brought a cheer which has attracted us all & which we all carry forward when we are hosting. These mornings have been the bedrock which have built up the sense of neighbourliness we now possess with 25-35 residents attending each month. Within this within is a strong core of regulars together with new faces whom we much welcome.

You, the residents, are so generous with your offerings of delicious home & delicatessen bakeries & savouries: Italian treats French treats, Spanish treats (Guillermo, that paella!) with an extra special thank you to Phil who always creates cakes of such magnificence & deliciousness using recipes from around the world. And thank you to Paul who created & gifted Emma, Dieter & I our own special Garden Square mugs from which we sip with pride.



Community Coronation celebrations

The coronation was celebrated with a special coffee morning. Residents brought coronation themed foods & decorations with special thanks to Nadia but also many others. A vibrant occasion. I sent a selection of photographs to Sebra News (magazine on Bayswater life) with these making their final cut.

No national celebrations in 2024, but if anyone wants to organise an event for the community, please contact Emma or Caroline



Open Garden Sunday

Over 120 visitors up from 85 in 2022 arrived from far flung locations such as Seattle, Australia, from across the UK & locally returning some said, to see Dieter's ecological developments with the Large Garden. Perhaps him having taken the instagram account from 68 followers to its current 422 has had an effect?

Emma welcomed visitors whilst Caroline guided the Open Garden expert round the Large Garden. He left saying that of all the garden squares around, ours was the most progressive & effective in its ecology & sustainability. He made specific mention of Dieter's work on mulching & soil regeneration, his encouragement of the insect life cycle with the wildlife meadow & insect houses & his policy of 'nothing leaves the garden' & no plastic bags enter. One resident suggested that Dieter should apply for the Large Garden to get one of the British Ecological Society's awards. Do you know what 'dead wood standing' is, the favourite of the Open Garden expert - look it up! Disappointedly, whilst Tim urged him a number of times, he didn't have time to go round the Small Garden as he was in a rush to see yet another garden square.

Wonderfully appreciated by Emma & myself (we were shattered manning the gates with so many visitors) was Olga coming down with homemade lemonade, Tim with tea culminating in Tarquin with homemade Pimms..

Theatre: Shakespeare in the Squares' production of Twelfth Night

What a success, despite a veritable deluge! Martin Neil's total organisational command enabled his outstanding backstage & actor/ singer theatre troop (unsurprisingly, Judi Dench is their patron). Caroline researched & got all set up with Emma liaising operationally with the company to much appreciation from them. Dieter moved furniture, strung up banners & ensured non-attendees had garden seating & spaces reserved for their sole use whilst Wendy loaned her basement to be a much valued Green Room.

Emma & I, not having done this before, were unsure how residents would respond & so swung into action selling tickets. Our community made this into a sell out with a waiting list who sought to bribe & cajole us for tickets :). Ticket sales matter to the acting troop who work in perilous times!

Residents made up parties of friends & held picnics. Domus, our sponsor provided a wonderfully attractive free refreshment bar with rugs & cushions laid out. And then **the great deluge**. It poured, it was freezing - & yet most people amazingly stayed put. You were magnificent. And the equally amazing actors didn't miss a beat.

One resident, in the garden early the next morning, as we waved farewell to the portaloos, said the event was even more memorable for the rain. Probably true but let's hope for sunshine next year! The event was self supporting with no charge to garden funds.



Summer Garden Party

Hosted by Emma, 55 people attended this year's garden party, a testament to the neighbourhood community that's been built up over the past few years with many staying into early evening.

Private Garden Party Bookings - fee incurred when over nine people.

There were circa 15 parties & a few BBQs. It is lovely to see friends, families & increasingly neighbours coming together to enjoy themselves. Everyone who held them was wonderful in caring for the community around & restoring the garden to as they were. Thank you to Dieter for going behind & helping party givers put up gazebos, move furniture & for checking the garden the morning after. More furniture is on order!

Survey of your views on the gardens & their development & use

With much input to the questions from helpful others, I was able to launch the survey earlier this year. I am already aware of improvements that can be made to the next set of survey questions as it's become evident from conversations that you have insufficient insight on some matters to give a clear view. Thank you enormously to Brad for his input in the questionnaire design & construction.

The results will & should reflect differing views of residents for us all to consider. The views & ideas provide understanding to inform planning for next year & beyond. Thank you to everyone who completed it. The

survey closes this weekend & you will receive the original data with a summary sheet shortly afterwards & before the AGM.

In Summary

As we have become more of a community, we have become ever more thoughtful & caring of each other & of the gardens. Noise from residents inside the gardens is rare & when it has inadvertently happened, stops promptly on request. *Our community enormously appreciates us all recognising the need to keep voices down due to sound resonating around our squares with great ease.* Sadly, there has been a sizeable increase in noise from street alterations with there being a view that activities associated with drug dealings have been pushed into our square by neighbouring streets who have set up Neighbourhood Watch schemes. We do want to say here, please do not approach people in the square who are being difficult. Instead, contact Emma who will give you the relevant police contact details.

The social events we have described have led to a community whereby it is impossible to dash out to grab a taxi or bus or get some milk without exchanging chat & being waved at by any number of fellow residents which feels wonderful. To summarise with just a few of the comments made to us by residents ..

'thank you ... I used to enter the gardens & it was like the London Underground, everyone kept their heads down & no-one looked at anyone. Now I enter the Large Garden & I am greeted & I talk to & called across to have a drink with my neighbours. You've created a community.'

'Cannot thank you enough for adding such vibrancy to the square. You have helped create a truly connected and caring community.'

That we have been part of this means SO much to us. But we would say it is you who have made it so special. We have the most marvellous community & neighbourhood. As my husband Tim says - the gardens provide a bridge to our community. Hurrah, as Emma would say!

Very wonderful wishes to all of you for a superb festive season Caroline & Emma



Emma Fulton (in the black & white) & **Caroline Egan-Strang** (in the green & orange)
Garden Community & Social Team

