

MONTAGU SQUARE GARDEN TRUST

**Annual General Meeting (AGM)
Monday 2nd March 2020, 6.30pm
Wetherby Preparatory School, Bryanston Square, London, W1H 2EA.**

CALLING NOTICE

Dear Trustee,

Please accept this letter as a calling notice for the Annual General Meeting of Montagu Square Garden Trust to be held at 6.30pm on Monday 2nd March 2020 at Wetherby Preparatory School, Bryanston Square, London, W1H 2EA.

Included with this letter

- **Agenda for the AGM**
- **Committee Report for 2019**
- **Accounts and Financial Report for 2019**
- **Brochure of Children's Play Area Refurbishment Project**

There will be an opportunity for those attending to raise questions in connection with the Garden and we look forward to your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Montagu Square Garden Trust

Westbourne Block Management, 19 Eastbourne Terrace, W2 6LG

MONTAGU SQUARE GARDEN TRUST

AGENDA

Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for Montagu Square Garden Trust at 6.30pm on Monday 2nd March 2020 at Wetherby Preparatory School, Bryanston Square, London, W1H 2EA (entrance in George Street).

- 1. To consider and approve the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 25th February 2019 (available on our website, www.montagusquare.org, with additional copies available at the meeting)**
- 2. Matters arising**
- 3. To receive the Annual Report of the Committee**
- 4. Presentation and discussion on Children's Play Area refurbishment**
- 5. To consider and if thought fit to accept the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2019**
- 6. To levy the Garden rate for the year to 31st December 2020**
- 7. To elect the Committee for the year to 31st December 2020**
- 8. Open forum**
- 9. 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 6.00pm.

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

MONTAGU SQUARE GARDEN TRUST

Report of the Committee for the year 2019 to be considered by the AGM

Our garden at the centre of Montagu Square is a wonderful, tranquil space in the middle of the huge dynamic city of London. We are privileged to live next to this resource, but there are increasing challenges in maintaining this garden, particularly with increased tree management requirements as the trees age and some become less healthy.

Trees

At the start of the year we had the unfortunate responsibility to take down the London plane tree which had become dangerously infected with *Perenniporia fraxinea* fungus in the north east corner of the square. It was a great disappointment to lose one of the marvellous trees that may have dated from when the square was built over 200 years ago, but an essential (and also expensive) obligation.

We continue to operate an extensive tree management programme in conjunction with F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company. Although we have not seen any signs of the specific *Perenniporia fraxinea* fungus elsewhere in the garden, there are signs of poor health on the plane tree no: T0719 located in the waist on the east side. A Picus test was carried out on this tree in April 2017, and a follow up has just been carried out. There is a small area of infection within the trunk, but, for now, we just have to keep monitoring the tree and testing every two to three years.

Bartletts are liaising with Westminster tree planning division as the time has arrived to do some extensive pruning on some trees, for which we have to have permission from Westminster Council. In the meantime our annual Masaria check will take place week beginning 10 February 2020. Please look out for signs to move your cars during this week. The contractors need a clear space below the trees so there is no risk of falling debris damaging cars. If cars are left in front of the signs we put up, the contractors are not able to check the trees.

The north east corner, where the plane tree was removed, is to be completely replanted with flowering shrubs, and a new native tree will be chosen to replace the plane tree.

Tree management has cost the Trust at least £9,500 each year since 2016 when Masaria was first seen in the garden (including £14,059 in 2019). £12,000 has been budgeted for spending on tree management in 2020. In earlier years before 2016 we had been spending far less on tree management each year.

Children's Play Area

A key issue facing the garden is the wall and paving around the east side of the south shed which is becoming a hazard through the root action of a plane tree which has been growing undisturbed under this structure for the last 70 years when the shed and walls were built. To find the solution for this tree will be complex, but it will enable us to update and improve the surrounding area and children's play equipment. It will be an enhanced space for children and adults and will include new planting and seating. This is a great opportunity to undertake an exciting reworking of this area of the garden and provide a legacy for decades to come.

A sub-group of Garden Committee have developed a project with Adolfo Harrison to refurbish the children's play area. This is outlined in the attached brochure. It would be a phenomenal addition to the garden and it would be great to undertake this at this time, and so avoid unnecessary expense on required short term maintenance on the existing wall and equipment. This development would, however, be a very large financial challenge for the Trust.

A presentation of the design and fundraising programme will be discussed at the AGM. It is vital to hear as many views as possible from residents before we commit to any plans.

Garden

Joseph Jones continues to maintain the garden, with the help of Petr and Tom. The plane tree canopy that covers much of the garden means that shade plants predominate in the garden. However, the spring is a riot of interest. New camellias have been planted and lots of new bulbs, including snowdrops which should mature over time.

Last summer the box hedge around the roses on the north lawn had to be removed due to box blight. It was replanted with geraniums, which were not totally satisfactory, so this spring the hedge will be reinstated with a box alternative. New gravel has been laid along the southern paths, and a similar process will occur on the north end of the garden.

Birds

Sue Smith has kindly taken over the job of liaising with Petr on feeding the birds around the Square. This spring 3 new squirrel proof feeding boxes will be put up. As the weather gets colder there will also be fat balls put out, and in the spring, worms for the new baby birds. We are keen to be involved in the green corridors being set up across London to encourage wildlife back into the city.

Social

Carols by Candlelight in December raised £1,207 for charity. A garden picnic was held in September which was enjoyed by a large number of families. Social events in the garden are dependent on volunteers to make them happen. We need people to step forward to help us in this respect.

As agreed at last year's AGM the Montagu Square Residents' Association was formally wound up in 2019. The hanging baskets will continue with monies raised separately from the Garden Trust's garden rate.

The Committee at present consists of the following:

Peter Blott (Treasurer)
Martin Bikhit (Social)
Julio Castro (Project)
Chris Morris

Anne Bristow (Trees, Garden, Project)
Noella Hacquard (Open Garden Squares)
Sue Smith (Birds, Project)
Sarah Dlubac

David Cruise, Nanette Pigaga and Pdraig Hays have left the committee. David became chairman of the Garden Committee in 2012 and has done a huge amount to maintain the garden as the fabulous space that it is.

Westbourne Block Management act as clerk to the Trust. At present the responsibilities of chairman are rotated between committee members. Peter Blott will be acting chairman for the Annual General Meeting.

Financial Report

The accounts for the year are set out on the next page.

The trust received £61,593 from the garden rate levy in 2019 (2018 - £44,193). The garden rate was increased in 2019 to provide additional funding to remove the diseased plane tree in the north east corner of the square. Total reserves at the end of 2019 were £19,219 (2018 - £19,278). Overall a surplus was recorded for 2019 of £1,476 (2018 - deficit £1,830). Cash in bank at 31 December 2019 stood at £21,262 (2018 - £20,602).

Garden rate levy for the year to 31 December 2019

The Committee recommends an increase in the garden rate levy for 2020 of 3% (a rate of 1.0120 pence in the pound on the annual values taken as 8% of the 2005 building insurance values).

Montagu Square Garden Trust Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019**Income and Expenditure - Year ended 31 December 2019**

	2019	2018
Income		
Garden rates received	£61,593	£44,193
Misc. income	£2,724	£796
Hanging baskets	£2,339	£0
	<u>£66,655</u>	<u>£44,990</u>
Expenditure		
Gardener & garden improvements	£32,803	£29,859
Clerk's Fee	£9,245	£4,082
Insurance	£1,154	£735
Water	£553	£1,068
Electricity	£1,830	£307
Printing / IT / Stationary	£502	£1,109
Play area refurbishment	£3,192	£0
Sundries	£1,900	£660
	<u>£51,179</u>	<u>£37,820</u>
Excess of income over expenditure	£15,476	£7,170
Allocation to reserves		
Painting fund	£2,000	£2,000
Trees fund	£12,000	£7,000
	<u>£14,000</u>	<u>£9,000</u>
Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>£1,476</u>	<u>-£1,830</u>

Balance Sheet and Reserves

	As at 31 Dec. 2019	As at 31 Dec. 2018
Assets and liabilities		
Cash at bank	£21,262	£20,602
Creditors and accruals	£547	-£210
	<u>£21,809</u>	<u>£20,392</u>
Reserves		
Painting fund	£12,697	£10,697
Trees fund	£6,522	£8,581
Total Reserves	<u>£19,219</u>	<u>£19,278</u>
Surplus / (Deficit) Prior years	£1,114	£2,944
Surplus / (Deficit) Current year	£1,476	-£1,830
Accumulated Surplus / (Deficit)	<u>£2,590</u>	<u>£1,114</u>
	<u>£21,809</u>	<u>£20,392</u>

Statement of Reserves

	Painting	Trees	Total
Opening reserve as at 1 Jan. 2019	£10,697	£8,581	£19,278
Allocated to reserve in 2019	£2,000	£12,000	£14,000
Spending against reserve in 2019	£0	-£14,059	-£14,059
Closing reserve as at 31 Dec. 2019	<u>£12,697</u>	<u>£6,522</u>	<u>£19,219</u>