

M I N U T E of the M E E T I N G
Grosvenor & Lansdowne Crescents Proprietors Committee
Tuesday 21st October 2025 at 17.00
Bishops House 4 Lansdowne Crescent

ATTENDEES:

Angus M R Tod (chair), Ross Robertson (Treasurer), Leonora J H Mc Andrew, Kate Bruce, Sarah Henderson, Catherine Ilett, Millicent Masters, Stuart Mackenzie, Richard Spalding, Anne Tod

APOLOGIES :

Gordon M Wyllie (Secretary), Alastair P.O. H. Guild

NEW MEMBERS:

Upon opening the meeting, the Chair announced that a Proprietor had been proposed by the Secretary by e-mail that day to be Co-opted onto the Committee in the same way that the previous five members had joined the Committee at and post the August A.G.M. Sarah Henderson said the Chair had previously discussed at a Committee Meeting that twelve was probably a sufficient number for the Committee. This proposed membership of a candidate who had been recommended by the Secretary that day by e-mail from holiday was put to a vote and rejected by 6 against and 5 for. The Committee further agreed that if a vacancy arose in the future the proposed proprietor could be accepted.

DECLARATION:

Discussion had taken place at previous meetings regarding the need for a Declaration de fidele Administratione. A number of Committee members had questioned why, at this specific juncture, there was a need for the signing of this declaration after 40 + years without doing so. The Chair said he noted Ross Robertson's objection to signing this document but he concurred with the professional legal advice provided to the Secretary that agreement to such a document should be obtained, as unanimously approved by all Proprietors and so minuted at the A.G.M.

Further discussion was postponed until the next Committee Meeting

FINAL

MINUTE:

The minute of the meeting previously circulated, dated 19th August 2025 was approved.

MATTERS ARISING:

The Chair confirmed that the detailed Gardeners Report from Richard Le Sueur of Blackhall Garden Services, following his tour of the Garden with the Chair and two other Committee Members on 16th September had been received that day. The detailed report with a number of items quoted for or discussed for the purposes of Garden improvement was tabled. It was agreed that as the Report had only arrived that day its detailed consideration would await the next Committee Meeting. The Chair explained that it was the absence of this report, together with the non-availability of the Secretary and another Committee Member that had made him propose the postponement of the Garden's Committee Meeting today against which there had been such strong pushback from some of the members present.

The Gardeners had also raised in their report the increasing cost of van parking, now £6.95 per hour. It was agreed to accept the cost of van parking as part of the gardeners' monthly remuneration at a cost of approximately £55.60 per month

Stuart Mackenzie kindly agreed to source visitors' tickets for the gardeners to provide for these costs.

FINANCE:

The Treasurer presented the Income and Expenditure Account for the period to 15th October 2025 together with a proposed budget. Arrears of Assessments for the previous year were now standing at approximately £3,000.00. Thanks were given to Committee members involved in securing many of the arrears payments. Reminders for this years contributions were to be sent imminently. The previous Treasurer requested his name be removed from the bank signatories. The Treasurer and Chair will complete the appropriate bank forms.

Committee Member Mrs Masters arrived at this point.

TREE SURVEY:

The recent tree survey report from Adam Riedi was discussed. The main recommendation discussed from the report were related to the complete felling of three individual trees and the possible felling of one group of trees (Leyland Cypress).

FINAL

The Committee discussed at length the recommendations in the Tree Report as well as the strength of feeling in the Crescents for the trees in the Garden. It was agreed that the legal responsibility for Health and Safety and wider legal responsibilities were the overriding factors as was ensuring the most cost-effective solution. Two quotations for tree felling were agreed. These would be obtained by the Chair and one Committee Member

It was proposed that Adam Riedi provide a walk round of the trees for all interested parties to explain the current state of the trees and any potential risks resulting should there be defects or weaknesses

It was noted that no tags had been placed on the trees as had been agreed in the original scope of works. The Chair advised that Adam Riedi had agreed to complete the tagging on the occasion of the walk round.

GARDENERS REPORT:

It was agreed that the gardener should undertake the trimming of the roadside growth. The other proposals were considered and could be undertaken in the Spring of next year. Teak oil was offered to treat the garden benches. The creation of steps would be considered inside the West Gate to increase safety.

It was suggested that a “wish list” of garden items (i.e. plants, soil etc.) be circulated should any Proprietor wish to donate to the Garden. Action S.H. to draft a list to be included in the Newsletter.

It had been identified previously that many construction companies had a desire to contribute to the Community and might be willing to supply aggregates for the paths. It was agreed that a Committee Member would attempt to identify potential suppliers. Action S.H.

As Stuart Mackenzie had to leave the meeting at this stage he raised a point of concern that he felt that as he had instituted the Gardens Newsletter and the website the use of What's App for garden communication should very definitely not be allowed. Richard Spalding agreed and said all firms of social media were not appropriate for Gardens business and said he would take down the Gardens Facebook page .

At this point Stuart Mackenzie left

CONSTITUTION:

The Chair suggested that as the final draft of the Constitution had only been received by Committee Members half an hour before the meeting it might be best to carry over the consideration of the proposed Constitution to a full meeting devoted to this subject alone,

as suggested in the preamble to the Agenda provided by the Secretary who could not be present for this meeting.

In his introduction to the Agenda the Secretary stated that Kate Bruce and he, who had been designated by the Committee to discuss the draft Constitution intended to meet again to discuss comments received from members and he awaited hearing from her about convenient times.

The Chair stated that he was not against a draft Constitution, despite the fact that it had been drafted by a self-selected group "The Working Party" against his express instructions to Richard Spalding. The Chair had wished to implement the arrangements mandated by the Proprietors at the A.G.M. that the two lawyers on the Committee would jointly formulate proposals for rules to govern the operation of the Garden's Committee and the management of the Garden.

The Chair suggested a further meeting in the near future when the entire Gardens Committee could be present (Stuart Mackenzie, Gordon Wyllie and Alastair Guild had not been able to attend present meeting). This would allow the Committee time to scrutinise the document delivered half an hour before the meeting. Once the Committee had agreed the draft it could be forwarded to the Committee's lawyers who could confirm the Constitution in no way diminishes or alters the rights of Proprietors. The document could then be unanimously recommended by the Committee to all proprietors.

Kate Bruce then stated that she strongly disagreed with the Chair's proposals. The meeting at the Hoxton had been for the purpose of approving the Constitution which was then to be sent for approval by the Committee there was no need for the draft to be referred to the committee's lawyers and the next step should be an immediate poll of proprietors

The Chair said his understanding from John Conway was that the Committee would get an opportunity to scrutinise the draft Constitution and it would be referred to the Committee's lawyers for approval as not infringing any current rights of Proprietors. It had been agreed that the lawyers would give legal clearance to the Constitution but would not take an obstructive approach.

Kate Bruce said she had had a recent conversation with John Conway when he had taken a completely different view to that the Chair reported. Kate said she did not trust the Chair as he had always been against the Constitution and asked who did the Chair represent anyway?

A number of Committee members present agreed the Proprietors meeting they had held at the Hoxton had the authority to approve the Constitution and scrutiny by the Garden's Committee or its professional legal advisers was irrelevant.

The Chair repeated that he was not against a Constitution for the operations of the Gardens Committee but repeated he would wish such a Constitution to be unanimously recommended by the Garden's Committee whose endorsement would surely provide

Proprietors with assurance that approval of the terms of the Constitution was in their best interests as certified by the Committee's lawyers. The Chair pointed out there had been some very significant changes to the original draft Constitution following the first meeting between Kate Bruce and Gordon Wyllie and the final draft proposed had only been delivered half an hour before the meeting with the Secretary noting on the current Agenda that he expected further consultation with Kate Bruce.

Ross Robertson said that a vote should be taken to approve the draft Constitution. Four other members of the Committee: Richard Spalding, Sarah Henderson, Catherine Ilett and Kate Bruce agreed with Ross Robertson.

The Chair said it was not appropriate to hold a vote on such an important matter when the Committee had not been afforded time for proper scrutiny of the proposals and had had no time to consider recent proposed alterations only brought forward that afternoon.

Ross Robertson said a vote should be taken and when the vote was taken the result was five votes in favour of approving the Constitution without taking legal advice and four votes in favour of further scrutiny and the referral of the proposed Constitution to the Committee's lawyers for final approval.

Richard Spalding said he would therefore initiate arrangements for a poll of Proprietors to approve the Constitution.

Ross Robertson said the Committee should get on with matters in case the Chair had a heart attack.

Anne Tod the Chairman's wife demanded Ross Robertson withdraw his remark

Ross Robertson refused to withdraw his remark or apologise for it.

The meeting concluded at 7.00 p.m. as Richard Spalding had a concert to attend. Leonora MacAndrew who was hosting the meeting said it was the most unpleasant meeting she had attended in forty years of attending Garden's Committee Meetings.