

## **SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER**

An awful lot seems to have happened since the last newsletter back in May, and



that's without taking into account the national picture and the government's ever-evolving policy on tackling the coronavirus. One consequence of lockdown was that we had our first (and hopefully last) virtual AGM on July 1 via Zoom -- everyone's new favourite toy except perhaps for those over 70. We'd like to thank those freeholders who did grapple with the technology to join us – an impressive (given the circumstances) tally of 15, together with managing agent Crispin Sampson-Bancroft who made it all happen. Anyway here's a

rundown of some of the most important changes that have occurred in recent months:

### **HELLO AND GOODBYE**

The biggest change which everyone will by now almost certainly have registered has been the appointment of a new company to maintain the garden. We had been using Garden Associates, run by Robert Player, for the past five years but with the advent of lockdown his company temporarily ceased work. With a communal garden as big and as varied as ours we were obviously in urgent need of maintenance cover and managed to secure the temporary services of Gravitass, whose owners Jan and James previously worked at Clifton Nurseries and are already building up an impressive portfolio of gardens including Portman Square. As I think most would agree they have done a spectacular job and many people who perhaps have only really been enjoying the garden fully since lockdown have remarked that it's looking the best it's ever been.

Since it had been over five years since the garden contract was competitively tendered the Board decided in May that the opportunity should be taken to invite bids for the full garden contract. Following the receipt of a number of bids we decided to award a three-year contract to Gravitass. We remain immensely grateful for all the work Robert and his team have done over the

years but look forward to a fresh set of eyes to complete the execution of the garden Master Plan that is now in its fourth year.



While on the subject of new faces we have two additions to the Board: Suzanne Labbett is in charge of event planning and Viv Robins – that’s me – is the new editor of the Newsletter.



Suzanne has taken over from Irina Miklavchich who has decided to return full-time to the world of finance, with our thanks for doing such a professional job.

One role that has again become vacant is that of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. The main task is to liaise with others in the area via an email group which circulates information about any crime-related issues they think local residents should be made aware of. If you are interested please contact our managing agent Crispin Sampson-Bancroft on [crispin@wb19.co.uk](mailto:crispin@wb19.co.uk).

## **WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN**

The new irrigation system to replace and augment the old system that had reached the end of its life has now been installed and really came into its own during the recent heatwave.

However, you will know that the news has not been entirely positive since in July a so-far unidentified vandal slashed all the bark off the trunk of this little crab apple tree which is dying as a consequence. If anyone has any information about the perpetrator please let Crispin know.



There was drama on the evening of July 16<sup>th</sup> when a London Air Ambulance touched down in the garden to get medical help to the scene of a nearby emergency. The team on board, which included two consultants and an

advanced trauma doctor, went on to administer a general anaesthetic to the casualty by the roadside.



It all made for 90 minutes of high excitement for residents, most busily deploying their mobile phones, before the helicopter took off again about 9.30 pm, just within the daylight flying hours permitted in the summertime.

### **PLEASE KEEP PLAYING BY THE RULES!**

The garden has really come into its own since lockdown and has been used by more residents than ever. But if its peace and tranquillity are to be maintained for the benefit of all it's important that the rules governing its use continue to be followed. Please be mindful of the need to be considerate to others at all times, particular by avoiding excessive noise, and note the rule about requiring approval for parties of more than 10 people

All the rules are listed on our website and include restrictions on dogs' use of the garden together with a plea to parents not to leave young children in the garden unsupervised or let them climb trees, pick flowers or play in the flower beds or with garden equipment such as hoses & sprinklers.

### **DATES FOR THE DIARY...OR NOT**

As you will know some of the mainstays of the social calendar have been falling like ninepins – first Shakespeare in the Squares, then the Summer Party, and now the Open Squares weekend which had been optimistically re-scheduled for later this month. The Board is currently considering whether, and if so how, we should proceed with the traditional Bonfire Night event on 7<sup>th</sup> November and is liaising closely with other gardens. Keep an eye on the website, or indeed the next Newsletter, for further news.