**Minutes of the Meeting of the**

**Fitzroy Square Frontagers’ & Garden Committee**

**Held at House No. 15 FS**

**On Wednesday 13th January 2016**

**At 5-6.45pm**

1. **Introductions and Apologies:**

Pierre de Weck thanked those present for coming and apologies were recorded.

**Present: (Committee)** Pierre de Weck (Chairman)

Rosaleen Hubbard (Hon Secretary)

David Griffiths (Hon Treasurer)

Neil Phoenix (No 24)

Claire Bruce (No.18)

Heide Eyles (No.22)

Kitty Edwards-Jones (No.25b)

Peter Frank (No.27)

Wesley Skow (No. 8)

Charles Stephens (No 20)

Rebecca Carrigan (Flat 3, No.14)

Roberto Kouyoumdjian (No.6)

Julian Flitter (Nos 29/30)

**Apologies:** Jo Rhys-Jo (No.2)

Edward Turner (No 25)

Birgit Maas (No.16)

1. **Approval of minutes of the 25th November 2015**

Rosaleen Hubbard (RH) apologised for the late distribution of the draft Minutes. It was agreed that Committee members could submit any written comments or proposed amendments by Wednesday 20th January a final draft version will be prepared and circulated for final ratification at the next full meeting of the Committee.

Roberto Kouyoumdjian (RK) confirmed that the Minutes of previous meetings have been placed on the website.

**Action Point: An explanation of how to access the website will be included in the proposed newsletter**

1. **Matters Arising.**

**Winter Party**

Following a discussion about the financing of the Winter Party and to ensure transparency given that catering is undertaken by Rebecca Carrigan (RC), a Committee Member, it was agreed that a figure of £1700 would be included in the 2016 budget. To avoid conflicts of interests and transparency RC will provide details of the aggregate ticket receipts and the FSF&GC budget allocation.

**RH proposed and Charles Stephens (CS) seconded that RC will provide details of aggregate ticket sales and FSF&GC budget allocation for future Winter Parties.**

**Action Point: RC will provide details of aggregate ticket sales and FSF&GC budget allocation for future Winter Parties**

**Discussion of Governance and Proposed by-laws – interim report of Sub Committee (SC**

RH provided a verbal update for the meeting – a more detailed note of which is attached to these minutes. All at the meeting approved the prioritisation of issues as follows:

* 1. Firstly invite additional members to join the SC, preferably form the business community, to help overcome the lack of progress, agree a work plan.
  2. Secondly the SC should address the less contentious and legally complicated issues (the procedural rules for voting and administrative management of the FSF&GC meetings. By-law proposals should be prepared for consideration at the 2016 AGM. (We have suggestions from Tim Eyles (TE), WS and David Griffiths (DG) which can be considered).
  3. Thirdly the scope and powers of the FSF&GC could be reviewed - a starting point could be a combination of the existing processes and the procedural rules (as referred to in ii above) subject to ratification at the 2016 AGM.
  4. Fourthly the SC could, if necessary, and with the approval of the Committee seek to clarify the legal positions regarding ownership of the garden, relative rights of the Frontagers and the Committee, etc.

**RH proposed that Julian Flitter (JF) join the Sub Committee. The proposal was seconded by Charles Stephens (CS).**

**Action Point: The Governance SC to put forward concrete proposals on by-laws in sufficient time for Committee Members to consider in detail before the AGM.**

It was agreed that it was very important for the Sub Committee to put forward concrete proposals on by-laws in sufficient time for Committee Members to consider in detail before the AGM.

One specific point raised by WS was in what capacity do members of the Committee attend – i.e. as individuals with individual interests or as a combined body with the best interests of the Frontagers as a whole?

Peter Frank (PF) has, on an individual basis written to the Home Office to seek clarification on the statutory position re the ownership of the garden. PF was content to share a copy of his private correspondence and will report back to the Committee if he receives a response form the Home Office.

**4. Report of the Honorary Treasurer**

DG gave a verbal report.

There are 3 business residents who remain in arrears in respect of the Garden Levy.

**Action Point:** **RC and HE** agreed to speak with Mr Volterra.

Estimated year-end total income is approximately £35.5K

Estimate year-end total expenditure is approximately £41.5k. This means that there could be a shortfall of £6,000.

Despite this expected shortfall the overwhelming view of those present was that the Garden levy should remain the same for the coming year.

All agreed that a budget should be prepared for 2016 and beyond (5 or 10 year budgets).

It was agreed that PW and DG would liaise over the preparation of a budget template and that future ‘extraordinary’ or non-annual expenses (e.g. obtaining legal advice or painting the garden railings) should be estimated. It may well be that an increase in the levy may be necessary in 2017, and it was agreed that it was preferable that Frontagers should be advised in advance if an increase was thought necessary.

Maintaining the residents levy for council tax payers at the current rate would mean an income of £9k. Maintaining the levy for business occupiers at the current rate would mean an income of £21,000 (in real terms a decrease of £1000).

**The Committee approved maintaining the garden levy for both residential and business occupiers at the current rate.**

**RH proposed and JF seconded the proposal that PW and DG prepare draft budgets for 2016/2017 and beyond.**

**5: Report of the Garden Director**

WS gave a verbal report on behalf of ET who had sent apologies.

**Christmas Lights:** Thanks were recorded for the Christmas light installation (and removal) undertaken by CS.

**Trees:** Work is still in progress in relation to the preparation of the application for the tree removals and trees that need surgery or removal but are of interest to the Council. Paul McQueen of Modern Arboricultural Services has prepared a technical report on the plane tree next to the gate. It is diseased but can be saved (although there is no long term prognosis). It does however need to be topped to reduce the weight burden on the trunk. ET is awaiting a costs proposal.

**Garden Design:** Following meetings with Sharon Perez **(**attended by ET, WS, Jo Rhys Jones (JRJ) and HE) a proposal for £1250 (5 days work for plant identification design and planting advise has been received. Approval was sought from the Committee to accept this proposal. Planting is best undertaken in the winter months and therefore a decision was required.

**The Committee approved, in the alternative, that a budget of £600 could be allocated.**

**Action Point: ET to review garden design plans in light of budget allocation.**

**Electricity supply to the garden:** CS advised that he had the key to the meters and that a reading can be arranged.

**The Gate:** JRJ has been working on creating a definitive list of names and contact details for residents of the Square so that the electronic key fob access to the Garden can be managed to effectively. JRJ had circulated for comment drafts of letters to residential and business Frontagers notifying them of the proposed introduction of the fob access scheme. All agreed the content of the proposed letters save for the sentence ‘*How much do you use the garden? ….. ‘*

**The Climbing Frame:** The recent staining (brown) of the roof of the climbing frame did not receive universal approval. Kitty Edwards-Jones (KEJ) offered to find an alternative stain (olive/green colouring) which she believed would be more in keeping with the environment.

**Action Point: KEJ to liaise with HE and RC on non-toxic colour stain for climbing frame**

**6. Garden Events**

HE and Claire Bruce (CB) provided a written report to the Committee. After a frank discussion it was agreed to retain the current terms and conditions of usage for exclusive and non-exclusive bookings.

**7. AOB**

1. **Crossrail 2:** CB sought volunteers to join a sub-committee to prepare for any appropriate representations by the FSF&GC in respect of proposals for Crossrail 2 that may have a detrimental impact on the Square and its occupants (for example any proposals to access the tunnel via the garden (as with the Victoria line development),, obtaining indemnification for damage or future damage to property etc. A sub- committee of CB, WS and PW will be created.
2. **Sub-Basement Developments** The new owners of No 19 have undertaken some exploratory excavations with a view to applying for permission to develop a sub-basement. In the interests of transparency PW notified the meeting that he was a friend of the new owners of No 19. The overall view of the meeting was that sub-basement development beneath Grade 1 listed buildings was undesirable and a risk to the fabric of the surrounding buildings. NP offered to meet the architects engaged by the owners of No 19 with CB.
3. **The Shed and bicycle store:** There was a discussion about the updating of the shed and the bicycle storage. It was agreed that provision should be made for bicycles storage inside the new shed. If the storage of a greater number of bicycles becomes an issuer the Committee will review the situation.
4. **Filming:** RC recorded that income from filming has increased. Whilst no one at the meeting raised any specific concerns about filming activities. WS did note that filming activity had increased significantly and there is some ‘pushing the envelope.’
5. **Dog Warden Matters:** Following a perceived increase in non-residents with dogs accessing the garden it was suggested that in the forthcoming newsletter Frontagers should be reminded of the rules about dog access to the garden.

**Action Point: Include a statement about dog access to the garden in the newsletter**

**8. Date of future meetings**

**Wednesday 18th May (Committee Meeting and AGM) time be confirmed**

**Wednesday 14th September 5 pm at House No 15**

**Wednesday 23rd November 5 pm at House No 15**

Meeting ended at 6. 45pm.

Claire Bruce left at 6.10 pm

Neil Phoenix left at 6.25 pm