**Minutes of the Meeting of the**

**Fitzroy Square Frontagers’ & Garden Committee**

**Held at House No. 15 FS**

**on THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2015**

**at 5-6.15pm**

1. Introductions and Apologies: Pierre de Weck thanked those present for coming.

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

Rosaleen Hubbard (Hon.Secretary)

Claire Bruce (No.18)

Heide Eyles (No.22)

Kitty Edwards-Jones (No.25b)

Peter Frank (No.27)

Wesley Skow (No. 8)

**Apologies:** Neil Phoenix (No 24)

David Griffiths (Hon Treasurer)

Reg Gadney (No 15)

Fay Maschler (No.15)

Lauren Kemp (No.17)

Jo Rhys-Jo (No.3)

Charles Stephens

Roberto Kouyoumdjian (No.6)

Rebecca Carrigan (Flat 3, No.14)

Julian Flitter (No’s 29/30)

Birgit Maas (No.16)

**2. Approval of minutes of the 20th May 2015**

Wesley Skow (WS) wished to make two modifications to the minutes sent by Neil Phoenix: the minutes should reflect the fact that he is a committee member and that he was present at the AGM and in paragraph 11, “WS added we should be seeking consent as a matter of respect to all Frontagers”, should be replaced with “as a matter if law”.

**3. Discussion of Governance and Proposed by laws - Need for revision and legal advice**

It was decided to obtain legal advice on the legislation surrounding the garden. The advice should include the issue of easements and WS various issues/objections as well as governance. WS was under the impression that his proposal circulated prior to the last Committee meeting, and in particular the idea that all decisions should be made by consensus, was still on the table. The minutes of the AGM and the recollection of those present at the time make it clear that this is not the case. WS’ proposal had been pretty much unanimously rejected at the AGM. Edward Turner’s (ET) constitution discussed at previous Committee meetings was adopted in principle at the AGM although not in its details. It was agreed, however, that there was a lot of overlap between WS’ proposal and ET’s proposal and therefore it could be used in the drafting of the new constitution.

It was agreed that a subcommittee including Rosaleen Hubbard (RH), Tim Eyles (ET) and WS would determine the issues to be looked at by the lawyer as well as propose a law firm to carry out that task. WS thought it was important to determine who has the authority to make decision and who decides on the funding of those decisions, to differentiate clearly between what is maintenance of the garden vs capital improvement and to look into the issue of easement. It was decided that there was enough expertise on the Committee itself to undertake the task of finding a law firm and determine its brief and that it was not necessary to draft people outside the Committee into the subcommittee. All Committee members would be kept informed.

**Action point: RH** **to coordinate the meeting of the subcommittee to discuss which law firm should be appointed and the issues to be looked. Recommendations at the next meeting.**

It was thought that it was appropriate to draw from the central fund to fund the law firm research as this was an administrative matter.

**4. Report of the Garden Director**

Gardener: From his report, ET highlighted the need to give a proper farewell to Ted Merwood who resigned. It was decided that a Fitzroy Square print would be offered to him at the Frontagers’ party. The new gardener, David Dubrau is very willing but needs some guidance and encouragement in order to step in Ted’s shoes.

**Action point: ET to commission the Fitzroy Square print and to manage more closely David Dubrau**

Bicycle rack: The need to have a bicycle rack in the garden was discussed in light of the fact that a new one is being built on Fitzroy Street. The possibility of having one in the new shed for a few bicycles possibly allocated on a lottery basis was discussed.

**Action point: The subcommittee on the shed (see next point) could make proposal on that issue.**

Shed: The shed continues to be a security issue. It was decided that the subcommittee appointed at the last meeting should meet and propose a course of action:

**Action point: Rebecca Carrigan (RC), Kitty Edward-Jones, (KEJ), WS and Charles Stephens (CS) should meet and make proposals at the next committee meeting. WS to take the lead.**

Climbing frame: The climbing frame continues to be an issue with its roof and its slide. WS is worried about the liability that the Frontagers may bear in light of the proximity of the frame and the rickety shed. Planning permission has not yet been granted for the climbing frame.

**Action point: RH to ask Neil Phoenix to continue to follow up this issue with the Council as he has all the contacts.**

Gate: The gate on the South side: no news on that issue.

**Action point: RH to ask Neil Phoenix to continue to follow up this issue with the Council as he has all the contacts.**

Border extension

**Action point: ET to proceed as decided at the Committee meeting in the Autumn.**

Tree surgeon: Modern Arboricultural Services or The Tree Company have been asked for a quote for the job to be done. ET has a preference for Modern Arboricultural Services.  They appear to be smaller and more flexible than The Tree Company. Modern Arboricultural Services will remove the plane tree in the centre of the garden, as well as the plane tree and 7 Robinias in the central shrubbery.  This would leave just two Robinias on the outer rim of the garden, including the one overhanging the gate and the one in the border on the north west side.  These two trees are particularly decorative, and their loss would be very evident at this time of year whilst they are in bloom.  In contrast, the central Robinias are scrappy and inelegant, and their loss would not detract from the architectural strength of the large plane trees on the periphery.

Obtaining planning permission to remove trees takes 8 weeks from receipt of application ET suggest that the work is scheduled to be carried out in early September.  The tree surgeons will apply for permission to remove them and there is good case for removing them as it would be in line with John Brooke’s garden design and therefore a preservation issue.

**Action point: RH to ask Neil if there is a preservation order on the central plane tree. ET to ask the Modern Arboricultural Services to get on with the removal of the trees.**

Lawn decompaction: ET explained that in order to maintain the health of our existing plane trees, we need to ensure that the lawn is decompacted.  Deep soil decompaction is a specialist activity and I have a had a quote from a company which uses a tracked vehicle to drill to a depth of 1 metre and uses compressed air to fracture the soil all around.  This decompaction costs £4,000, but only needs to be carried out every 7 years.  In addition, surface aeration using a conventional hollow aerator can be undertaken every year to maintain the health of the grass, although there is also some benefit to the trees; this is not a specialist activity, and can be undertaken by David Dubrau using hired equipment.  David will also be top dressing the lawn where there are obvious depressions (for example, on the central mound).

**Action point: ET to proceed.**

Window boxes: It was noted that not everyone is happy with the current system.

**Action point: ET to manage the contractor more closely and Pierre de Weck PdW to put the issue for debate at the AGM.**

**5. Any other business**

**Action point: Claire Bruce (CB) to ask DG when is the Council’s deadline to determine any increase/decrease in the garden fee.**

Filming guidelines are to be put on the agenda for the next meeting. WS highlighted the nuisance caused by the last shoot. CB agreed that the shoot was intrusive and too big but stated that she was not in charge of filming any longer as her role has been taken over by RC and Roberto Kouyoumdjian (RK0.

6. Date of next meetings

Wednesday 16th September 2015 - 5pm

Wednesday 25th November 2015- 5pm

Wednesday 13th January 2016 - 5pm

6.15pm. Meeting ended.