MONTAGU SQUARE
GARDEN TRUST

TRUSTEE PACK

2025

FEBRUARY 2026

CALLING NOTICE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
MONDAY MARCH 2nd 2026 6.30PM
At Wetherby Prep School 48 Bryanston Square

1st February 2026

Dear Trustee,

Please accept this letter as a calling notice for the 2025 Annual General Meeting of Montagu Square Garden Trust.

Included with this letter

- Agenda for the AGM
- Committee Report for 2025
- Accounts and Financial Report for 2025
- Draft minutes of the last AGM held on 3rd March 2025

Yours sincerely,

Montagu Square Garden Trust

We know that some residents prefer to receive information by hand, but if we have your email address it makes it much easier for us to send out information and updates. If you haven't received this notice electronically it means we don't have your email so please contact Lisa the Garden Clerk gardenclerk@montagusquare.org so she can update our records. .

www.montagusaquare.org
gardenclerk@montagusquare.org
07446 759075

MONTAGU SQUARE
GARDEN TRUST

AGENDA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
MONDAY MARCH 2nd 2026 6.30PM
At Wetherby Prep School 48 Bryanston Square

1. To consider and approve the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 3rd March 2025
2. Matters arising
3. To receive the Annual Report of the Committee
4. To consider and, if thought fit, to accept the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st December 2025
5. To levy the Garden rate for the year to 31st December 2026
6. To elect the Committee for the year to 31st December 2026
7. Any other business

At 6pm before the AGM there will be an opportunity to meet fellow Trustees and the Committee with drinks being served

Step free access is available from the mews behind Wetherby School to the 1st floor Hall.
Please contact the Garden Clerk, Lisa Payne if you require assistance using it.
Lisa can be contacted by email: gardenclerk@montagusquare.org or leave her a message on 07446 759075

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COMMITTEE REPORT

Montagu Square Garden continues to provide a valued green space for residents of the Square, offering areas for relaxation, socialising, as well as a lovely outlook to enjoy from home.

This year, planting has focused on perennials, shrubs, and wildlife-friendly species, with spring bulbs and summer perennials providing seasonal colour and interest throughout the year. The garden is in heavy shade during the summer months, giving it the character of a woodland garden rather than a traditional open square. While this environment presents challenges, particularly in achieving sustained summer colour, it also offers opportunities to develop a richer, more layered planting scheme. We remain committed to improving the planting year on year, informed by observation, experience, and the ongoing advice of our consultant, Stephen Crisp, to ensure the garden continues to thrive within these conditions.

Autumn Colour in the Garden

Significant work has been carried out on the garden's trees. Several bays were cut back, and major trimming was completed on the plane trees. Clear Cuts carried out this work to a high standard and, despite several major storms this year, there were no serious branch falls. Tree management is a significant responsibility for the Trust on behalf of residents of the Square and comes at a substantial cost. This is why paying your Garden Rate promptly is so important in ensuring the ongoing safety and care of the garden.

Jelani, our gardener, has continued to maintain the beds, paths, and communal areas with care and consistency throughout the year. His work has focused not only on presentation but also on the long-term health of the garden. Environmentally conscious practices, including composting, mulching, and careful water management, have been particularly important during what was a very dry summer, when trees and plants were under considerable stress. These approaches have proved effective, and as a result very few plants or trees were lost.

Shrubs and hedges are now being allowed to develop a more natural form, supporting both plant health and wildlife. The hedges in particular are beginning to grow above the railings, gradually providing the increased privacy that many residents have requested, while still maintaining the open character of the garden.

The garden hosted several community events over the year, helping to reinforce its role as a shared space at the heart of the Square. The Summer Party and Shakespeare in the Square provided relaxed opportunities for residents and neighbours to come together, enjoy the garden in warmer months, and make use of the space in different ways.

The Late Summer Party

Participation in London Open Gardens allowed visitors from outside the Square to experience the garden, offering a chance to share its character and history more widely. The Christmas Lights Switch-On in December was another highlight, with residents gathering to enjoy mulled wine, hot Ribena, mince pies, and festive lighting, helping to lift spirits and bring people together during the darker winter month.

Finally, we would like to remind residents of the importance of keeping their contact details up to date with the Garden Clerk. Having accurate information on file allows the Trust to communicate efficiently and promptly about all matters relating to the garden, including garden rate notices, access updates, upcoming events, and important maintenance or safety information. Keeping contact details current ensures that residents receive information when it matters most and helps the Trust operate smoothly on behalf of everyone in the Square.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to the careful stewardship of the garden. Our aim is to maintain and respect its history while continuing to make considered improvements and enhancements that support its long-term health, resilience, and enjoyment. By balancing preservation with thoughtful development, we hope to ensure that the garden remains a well-kept and welcoming space for current residents and future generations alike.

JOIN THE COMMITTEE

The current Committee is small. Members are Peter Blott (Treasurer), Sarah Lang, Sue Smith, Noella Hacquard, Tracey Bower, Elizabeth Kendal and Catherine Bourdon-Marsh, supported by our Garden Clerk, Lisa Payne.

With over 200 residences in the Square, we need more people to help ensure the garden reflects the diverse needs of our community, young families, empty nesters, older couples, singles, and everyone in between!

Committee roles are flexible and based on the time you have available. Ways to get involved include:

- Christmas Lights Switch-On Organiser (29th November 2026): About an hour of prep plus a couple of hours on the day.
- Gardener Liaison & Garden Walkthroughs: For those with more time, work closely with our lead Trustee to help keep the garden in top condition.

Even if you can't take on a specific role, simply attending meetings and sharing your input is valuable. Committee dates for 2026 are set in advance, there are four more meetings scheduled.

Joining the Committee is a great way to meet neighbours, contribute to the life of the Square, and help shape this shared space. Even a small commitment makes a big difference.

If you'd like to get involved, please email Lisa, our Garden Clerk. The Committee will also be available to answer questions at the drinks event prior to the AGM, or after the AGM.

MONTAGU SQUARE GARDEN TRUST

ACCOUNTS
year ended 31 December 2025

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE - GENERAL FUND		2025	2024
Income		£	£
	Garden rates received	81,854	84,272
	Misc. income	1,460	1,256
		83,314	85,528
Expenditure			
	Gardener & garden improvements	39,105	42,098
	Clerk's Fee	9,553	11,880
	Tree work	13,626	7,914
	Insurance	1,303	1,132
	Water	1,359	-3,315
	Electricity	-1,423	12
	Sundries	3,340	3,026
		66,863	62,747
	Excess of income over expenditure	16,451	22,781
Allocation to reserves			
	Painting fund	2,000	2,000
	Surplus / (Deficit)	14,451	20,781

BALANCE SHEET AND RESERVES		31 Dec 2025	31 Dec 2024
Assets and liabilities		£	£
	Cash at bank	81,726	68,650
	Other current assets	0	0
	Creditors and Accruals	0	-3,375
		81,726	65,275
Reserves			
	Painting fund	24,697	22,697
	Surplus /(Deficit) Prior Years	42,578	21,797
	Surplus /(Deficit) Current Year	14,451	20,781
	Accumulated Surplus	57,029	42,578
	Total Reserves	81,726	65,275

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Commentary

The Trust received £81,854 from the garden rate levy in 2025 (2024 - £84,272). Overall the trust recorded a surplus for 2025 of £14,451 (2022 - £20,781). Total reserves at the end of 2025 were £81,726 (2022 - £65,275).

Garden Rate Levy for the Year to 31 December 2026

The The Committee recommends that the 2026 garden rate levy be maintained at the same level as 2025 (a rate of 1.412 pence in the pound on the annual values taken as 8% of the 2005 building insurance values).

DRAFT MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MONTAGU SQUARE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Held at 6.30pm on Monday 3rd March 2025 at Wetherby Prep School

Present Peter Blott (Acting Chair), Sarah Lang, Sue Smith, Nicholas Posnansky, David Lane, Sara Lane, Suzanne Sime, Bethan Lewis-Powell, Tracey Bower, Ronnie Walid, Mary Hicks, P. Vardavas, Zainab Gulamhusein, Alan Bristow, Jeremy Lang, Maria Koutscudakis, Chris Morris, Sebastien Goldenberg **Clerk**: Lisa Payne **Apologies**: Anne Bristow. **In attendance**: Stephen Crisp

1. Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on 6 March 2024 were approved, subject to a minor correction to the year (noted by Nicholas Posnansky).

2. Matters Arising

No matters arising, other than hanging baskets, which were taken under Item 4.

3. Annual Report of the Committee

The Annual Report had been circulated to residents electronically and in hard copy, and published on the garden website.

The Chair thanked residents for attending and paid particular tribute to Anne Bristow, who is stepping down from the Committee. Her contribution was warmly acknowledged by all present.

Thanks were also extended to Westbourne Management, and to Oliver Sampson-Bancroft and Salvatore Giorgio, for their work as clerks to the Trust. The Committee confirmed that Lisa Payne has been appointed as Clerk, as a better fit for the Trust going forward.

The Committee reported the appointment of Jelani George as Gardener, replacing Joseph Jones Ltd after 20 years of service. It was agreed that a dedicated gardener working two days a week better suits the garden's needs. The Committee thanked all involved in the recruitment process.

Plans were announced for a summer party, with Elizabeth Kendal co-ordinating.

Garden Consultant Presentation – Stephen Crisp outlined his approach, emphasising the importance of understanding the garden's history before making changes. Key points included:

- Planting focused on drought- and shade-tolerant, evergreen and flowering species
- Improving soil health through mulching to retain moisture
- Lawn improvement, pruning, and Masaria inspections
- Tactical irrigation: infrequent but deep watering
- Annual or bi-annual visits to support gardeners and Committee

He confirmed herbs could be planted on the south-facing side of the garden.

DRAFT MINUTES continued

4. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2024
The accounts were presented and showed a healthy cash reserve of £68,000, including £25,000 ring-fenced for repainting the railings. The Chair highlighted the major expenditure on the play area (£76,000), of which £54,000 was funded by voluntary resident contributions, for which the Committee expressed its gratitude. Utilities and water showed a negative figure due to a £4,700 refund received during the year.

The Committee noted concern regarding garden rate arrears, which had peaked under the previous clerk. The Committee and Clerk are actively addressing this.

Despite a Westminster Council subsidy for hanging baskets, the cost for 2025 was quoted at £5,899.50 (up from £4,300 in 2022). Annual voluntary contributions were approximately £3,000, and Residents' Association reserves were exhausted. Following discussion, including environmental concerns around watering, it was agreed to pause hanging baskets for 2025, with an explanation to be included in the next newsletter.

The Chair clarified that income is recorded when received, not when the Garden Rate notice is issued.

The accounts were approved subject to a minor correction noted by Nicholas Posnansky.

5. Garden Rate for 2025
A 2% increase in the garden rate for the year to 31 December 2025 was proposed and approved without objection.

6. Election of the Committee
All existing Committee members were re-elected. The Chair thanked members for their continued commitment and reiterated the invitation for additional Trustees to join.

Sue Smith suggested forming sub-committees (e.g. garden maintenance, events). Sarah Lang confirmed work is underway to define roles, responsibilities, and an annual cycle of activity. It was agreed there would be four core Committee meetings per year, with others as required.

7. Any Other Business
- Garden feedback: Sarah Lane commented that the garden was "a lot more interesting" than in previous years.
- Football in the garden: Residents were reminded of the "no ball games" rule and asked to report incidents with date and time.
- Rubbish bins: Concerns about insufficient bins outside the garden were noted. This is a Westminster Council matter; residents were advised to contact the Council directly.
- Playground: Concerns were raised about the final design differing from original plans. The Committee explained the outcome reflected funding and health & safety constraints.

The formal meeting closed at 7.15pm.

MONTAGU SQUARE
GARDEN TRUST

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:

Established by Act of Parliament 1813

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