



# GARDEN NEWS

The latest news and updates from the  
Montagu Square Garden Trust

## WELCOMING OUR NEW GARDENER - JELANI JAMES

We're pleased to introduce Jelani James, who joined us as our Gardener in February. Jelani is an experienced horticulturist with over 15 years' experience in garden design, soft landscaping, and maintenance across London, including roles with Zero Emissions Gardening, Organiclea Community Growers, and Clifton's Nurseries.

Jelani is now working closely with our horticultural consultant Stephen Crisp and the Garden Trust Committee to maintain and develop the planting across Montagu Square. Current priorities include encouraging a more natural look to shrubs and hedges, enhancing seasonal colour, and supporting the overall health and structure of the Garden.



Please do take a moment to introduce yourself if you see Jelani at work, it's always lovely for those who care for the Garden to meet the residents who enjoy it.

## RUBBISH AND RECYCLING REMINDER

A quick reminder to all residents about rubbish collection around the Square:

- General household rubbish is collected on Tuesdays and Fridays 8.15am.
- Please do not put rubbish out overnight - foxes often get into bags and drag the contents into the Garden.
- Recycling is collected on Fridays 8.15am.
- There is currently no scheduled food waste collection but you can call the Council to arrange a collection or take food waste to specialist bins that are conveniently located on Marylebone Road and on Paddington Street, just opposite Paddington Street Gardens.

Please also avoid leaving rubbish by the small council bin at the top of the Square, as this attracts vermin and encourages others to dump waste. Instead, use the large bins located at the bottom of the Square on George Street and on the corner of Upper Montagu Street and York Street.

Thank you for helping to keep Montagu Square clean.

## GARDEN UPDATE

This year brought a hot and very dry summer, making it a challenging season for both plants and gardeners. Despite the difficult conditions, the Garden has shown remarkable resilience. Regular watering and careful management have helped to keep it looking beautiful, and our planting choices are increasingly being guided by the realities of climate change, with a focus on species that can better withstand heat and drought.

We enjoyed lovely displays of bulbs and spring flowers, bringing vibrant colour early in the year. However, as the Garden becomes more densely covered by mature foliage, achieving strong summer colour remains a challenge. We continue to explore ways to enhance planting in the sunnier areas to bring more brightness and variety throughout the summer months.

Our majestic plane trees have undergone two Massaria checks this year. Massaria is a fungus that can affect plane trees, and inspections involve climbing each tree to identify and remove infected branches. These checks are essential for the health and safety of the trees and represent one of the Garden's most significant annual maintenance costs.

It's important to note that the trees in Montagu Square are overseen by Westminster Council, and we cannot undertake any work on them without prior permission from the Council Tree Officer, who meets with us twice a year. Following our most recent meeting, the Council has agreed to allow the selective cutting back of some of the trees which will require three days work from our Tree Surgeon's Clear Cuts. We aim to have this work completed before Christmas.

The Garden Trust Committee is made up entirely of volunteers, each taking responsibility for different aspects of the Square's upkeep and management. A huge thank you to Sue Smith, who has taken up the mantle of all things green from Anne Bristow. Sue works closely with our gardener Jelani James, our consultant Stephen Crisp, and the rest of the Committee to ensure the Garden continues to thrive. Our thanks also go to John Smith, who has taken on responsibility for the trees and works closely with Westminster Council on their care.

We're always looking for new volunteers to join the Committee or assist with specific areas of garden care. The Square thrives when more residents get involved, share their ideas, and lend a hand, whether that's helping to shape planting plans, assisting with events, or simply supporting the ongoing care of our green space. If you have an interest in gardening, design, or community life, please email Lisa, the Garden Clerk, at [gardenclerk@montagusquare.org](mailto:gardenclerk@montagusquare.org) for more information on how to get involved. Our next Committee meeting will take place on 13 January 2026.

From time to time, residents ask why they are required to pay the Garden Rate if they don't personally use the Garden. It's important to remember that every property around Montagu Square benefits from the outlook over the Garden, and that our trees and green space add considerable value to properties on the Square. Maintaining them properly and safely is a shared responsibility, as set out in the Act of Parliament that established the Garden.

As a Committee of volunteers, chasing late payments is time-consuming and diverts energy from the work we'd all prefer to focus on - caring for and improving the Garden itself. We're therefore extremely grateful to everyone who pays on time and helps keep Montagu Square running smoothly for the benefit of all.

## SUMMER EVENTS IN THE GARDEN

This summer brought another wonderful mix of events to the Garden.

In early June, the Garden once again took part in the London Open Gardens Weekend. Despite truly atrocious weather, with unrelenting rain throughout the day, we still welcomed a steady stream of visitors, many of whom commented on how lovely the Garden looked in spite of the downpour. The day was organised by Noella Hacquard, with support from Catherine Bourdon-Marsh. A big thank you to them both for their hard work and cheerful perseverance in the face of the English weather!

Later that month, we hosted Shakespeare in the Square, performing *The Taming of the Shrew* to a sold-out audience on what turned out to be the most beautiful summer evening imaginable. Residents and guests enjoyed picnicking on the lawn before the play, and the performance itself was a delight, lively, witty, and wonderfully acted. This event is co-ordinated by resident Sue Smith and has truly become a much-loved fixture of our summer calendar, and we look forward to welcoming the troupe back again next year.

The Summer Party was originally planned for Midsummer's Eve, but with soaring temperatures and a tight organisational timeline, it was rescheduled to September. The result was a perfect late-summer evening, relaxed, friendly, and full of charm. Organised by Tracey Bower and Elisabeth Kendall, the evening featured a welcome drink, lovely live music, and a beautifully decorated Garden, glowing with fairy lights, candles, and flowers. Around 100 tickets were sold, and it was wonderful to see so many neighbours come together. A huge thank you to Manors Estate Agents for sponsoring the event,



Thanks to the generosity of local businesses who donated prizes and the enthusiasm of our community the raffle and party raised an impressive £2,476 for Newpin Community Drop-In Centre.

Thank you to everyone who helped, donated, or came along to make this summer so special. We're already looking forward to next year's events and to seeing you all in the Garden again soon!

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Mark your calendars and join us in the garden for our much-loved Christmas Lights Switch-On on Sunday, November 30th! It's a lovely way to start the festive season, catch up with neighbours, and share a bit of Christmas cheer together.

Mulled wine and hot ribena will be served from 5:30 p.m., with the lights sparkling to life at 6p.m., giving the garden its magical festive glow. To make things a little greener, please bring along a mug for your mulled wine

We also encourage residents to add their own sparkle by decorating windows, balconies and railings!

## GARDEN RULES

- **No Dogs** - no matter how cute or well-behaved, dogs are not allowed in the garden.
- **No cycling, ball-games and the use of any personal equipment** (such as paddling pools, games gear or radios) which interferes with other resident's peaceful enjoyment of the garden, is not permitted.
- **Picnics are fine, but no barbecues or fireworks.**
- **Advance Permission is needed for larger groups or parties** to use the garden this ensures that other residents have peaceful enjoyment of the garden. (A large group would be more than 8 people)
- **Don't lend anyone your entry card** and if it has been stolen or lost please report this to the garden clerk by phone or email asap. This ensures the security of other residents in the garden.
- **Please keep the gates closed** this also helps to ensure the safety of other residents in the garden
- **Any damage to the plants or fabric of the garden will be prosecuted**
- **Please take your rubbish home with you** or use the council waste bin on George Street
- **Only children under 10** may use the play equipment, and they must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.

## UPDATE YOUR MONTAGU SQUARE CONTACT DETAILS

To help us maintain clear and efficient communication, please make sure your contact details are up to date. Having an accurate address on file ensures you receive all important updates promptly. To confirm or update your details, simply email Lisa, our Garden Clerk at [gardenclerk@montagusquare.org](mailto:gardenclerk@montagusquare.org). Lisa only works on Fridays, so there may be a short delay before you receive a reply.