

BRYANSTON SQUARE TRUST

Meeting of the Executive Committee
held by video-conferencing on
Friday 27th March 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present:

Mr Colin Wagman	(CW) Chairman
Ms Emily Fletcher	(EF)
Ms Suzanne Goodman	(SG)
Sir John Spurling	(JS)

Absent:

Ms Judith Burnley	(JB)
Ms Denise Farley	(DF)

CW said that DF had informed him that she did not propose to attend the meeting but she had made her views clear to the committee. He had not had any response from JB to the messages calling the meeting.

1. Temporary closure of the Square garden in response to Covid-19

CW explained that there did not appear to be clear guidance from the Government whether gardens such as the Trust's should be closed in the face of the Covid-19 epidemic. However, he had observed, particularly on the previous Sunday, that visitors to the garden were not behaving in compliance with the regulations on social distancing. Adults were standing together in close proximity in groups and children were running around, sometimes close to others. He feared that such behaviour might be alleged to have led to infection of individuals and might give rise to claims against all the Trustees and that it was the responsibility of the Committee to avoid such a contingency, however remote.

CW said that the present meeting had been called to reconsider the Committee's earlier decision to close the garden in response to a letter from Paul McGonagle in which he explained that the closure was causing a serious negative impact on him and his family and suggesting measures which the Committee might take to make the use of the garden safe. CW, whilst sympathising with the difficulties caused by the closure, felt that it would be possible for the McGonagle family to exercise in public spaces in a way that met the current regulatory requirements.

JS said he thought that the garden should be kept open but with notices clearly stating that all visitors must follow the regulations on social distancing and used the garden at their own risk. He had not observed the kind of behaviour mentioned by CW. He pointed out that the garden at Montagu Square remained open.

SG said that she had seen the kind of behaviour described by CW on several occasions on the days immediately before the garden was closed. She felt that the Committee should not enable anything that might undermine NHS in the present crisis. CW suggested that the

Committee consider the possibility of some limited access to the garden under supervision but EF and SG doubted the feasibility of monitoring the proper use of the garden and EF doubted whether sanctions could be imposed that would prevent conduct in the garden that might create the hazard of infection. PR said that he felt that, on balance, it would be best to keep the garden closed.

After further discussion, the Committee voted on the proposition that the closure of the garden be continued for the time being. 4 members voted for and 1 against. CW said that, even if DF's strongly held opinion that the garden should be re-opened were taken into account, the majority view was for continued closure.

It was agreed that the decision would be kept under constant review in the light of the effects of the epidemic and the Government's response to it. He would prepare a suitable reply to Mr McGonagle and PR said he would produce a minute of the meeting.