

BRYANSTON SQUARE TRUST
(Established by a Statute of 1813)

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 5th June 2023 at 6pm
at the Embassy of Switzerland, 16-18 Montagu Place, London W1H 2BQ**

Trustees Present:

Ms Debbi del Favero – Co-Chair (DdF)
Ms Elizabeth Buckley – Co-Chair (EB)
Ms Suzanne Goodman (SG)
Ms. Beth Miles Barry (BB)
Ms Judith Burnley (JB)
Ms Denise Farley (DF)
Mr Peter Rosenthal (PR)
Mr Michael Goodman

Mr Philip Jones
Mrs Mina Goodman
Mr Michael Andersen
Mr. Tim Barry
Mrs Janet Freeman
Mr Brian Roberts
Mr Roger Palmano
Mr. and Mrs. Devoto

Others Present:

Cllr Barbara Arzymanow, Mr Michael Bolt (Former Chair, Marylebone Association), Mrs Julie Redmond (Current Chair, Marylebone Association). Messrs. Salvatore Giorgio (SG) & Marc Forestier (MF) - Clerks to the Bryanston Square Trust, Ms Karen Wilson (The Portman Estate)

Apologies:

Ms Raffaella Bush

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1) Minutes of the 5th July 2022 AGM & Activities since the AGM

The minutes of the 5th July 2022 AGM, the 2022 Bryanston Trust accounts and the 2023 Budget were circulated to all those present.

EB began by welcoming all those in attendance. She thanked Peter Rosenthal on behalf of the Committee and all Trustees for his hard work and contributions as Acting Chairman of the Bryanston Square Trust over the past 2 years. She also conveyed that Peter had asked EB and DdF to preside over the 2023 AGM, since the Bryanston Square Trust Executive Committee had recently named them Co-Chairs for the 2023-24 period. EB thanked the Swiss Ambassador and his staff for their generous hospitality, once again, in hosting the 2023 AGM. The 2022 AGM minutes were approved.

DdF then briefly highlighted the activities of the Bryanston Square Trust Executive Committee since the prior AGM: PR, JB and DF commissioned 6 new Garden Beds from Joseph Jones, the garden contractor of the Bryanston Square Trust. DdF supervised the inspection of plane and other trees by Tim George's team. All trees are healthy and some dead limbs were pruned as a safety measure. SG implemented Committee decisions on playground safety management, EB made significant progress on arrears collections.

2) Approval of the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2022

EB presented the 2022 accounts which were approved. EB noted that the Bryanston Trust's cash position was healthy but also emphasised the most important financial issue facing Bryanston Trust was the high arrears level, due in large part to some serial non-payers around the square. EB gave the current arrears level at £24k, down from the yearend level thanks to the efforts of EB, DdF and SG. EB also pointed out that the Committee worked hard over 2022-23 to clean WBM's Trustee address database, to ensure the Garden Rates and arrears notices were reaching the Trustees.

DdF said that while some Trustees had not paid out of ignorance, the Committee was prepared to use every means possible vis-à-vis serial non-payers, including legal action, interest penalties, etc, to ensure all Trustees paid their property's pro-rated share of garden maintenance costs. EB confirmed that although the Act governing the Garden was old, it includes the above legal options to allow the Committee to vigorously pursue non-payers.

SG asked all the Trustees present to help chase payments in their respective buildings, and to report any changes in ownership to the Committee.

DdF confirmed the Committee had also begun working with the various managing agents of Bryanston Square properties to make sure their residents were aware of their obligations.

An alternate solution to the arrears problem was proposed by several Trustees present at the AGM: Bryanston Square Trust Executive Committee should ask the Freehold managements of buildings around the square to collect the Garden Rates for the flats they manage, on behalf of Bryanston Square Trust. As Westbourne already calculates the rates each year, it would be very little work for their managing agents to add the Garden Rate amount to one quarterly invoice each year. The Committee agreed this would be a good solution and noted several Freeholds already did this. It also noted that more Freeholds plan to enact this system in 2023/24.

3) Ratify the 2023 Budget

The Budget provides for a 5% increase in 2023 Garden Rates, an increase that is less than current inflation. The overall contributions per Trustee are still very reasonable considering the enjoyment provided by the garden and the value the garden represents to Bryanston Square property values.

On costs, the main on-going expense items are garden and tree maintenance. The Committee noted that Joseph Jones (garden) and Tim George (trees) agreed to keep their costs flat year-on-year. DdF noted that she and JB are working with Joseph Jones to develop a multi-year planting budget to enhance the Garden; more news will be provided on this at next year's AGM. Regarding trees, DdF noted the Committee had decided to double the number of trees inspections to 2x a year, covering both plane and other trees. Tree excision costs are very expensive and these additional inspections should minimise the risk that such removals will be necessary, while preserving the beauty of the garden and enhancing garden safety.

While there were no capital expenditures in 2022, garden railing refurbishment work is planned over the next 1-2 years. More details on this will be presented at the next AGM. The Garden Railing sinking fund already set aside should cover these costs.

The 2023 budget was approved.

DdF announced that the next AGM will take place in March 2024 so as to provide a longer timeframe in 2024 to collect revenues, which are always reported on a cash basis.

4) Elect a Committee of Trustees

The AGM approved the nominations of the following Executive Committee members: Beth Miles Barry, Elizabeth Buckley, Judith Burnley, Raffaella Bush, Denise Farley, Debbi del Favero, Suzanne Goodman. Elizabeth Buckley and Debbi Del Favero were approved as Co-Chairs.

5. Any Other Business

In addition to the above-mentioned projects, SG said the newly elected Committee aims to enhance the sense of community around Bryanston Square. To achieve this, SG offered examples such as re-instating the annual Bryanston Trust Garden Party, Garden tours for Trustees to highlight the wide variety of plants, shrubs and trees, and gardening courses for children to encourage respect for the Garden. She welcomed additional ideas from Trustees to restore the community spirit that existed pre-Covid.

No other business was raised and the meeting closed at 18:35.