

Gardens Advisory Group (GAG)

The current GAG Terms of Reference (GAGToR) were agreed at the 2018 RCC AGM. Since then there have been a number of developments which have led to the need to reconsider the role and membership of GAG and, as a result, changes to the GAGToR will be necessary.

Firstly, there is the urgent need to both preserve and improve biodiversity and create climate resilience within the Square Mile. Secondly, BEO no longer has a role within GAG. However, both the City Gardens Manager and the Barbican Gardens Team Leader will remain part of GAG.

The three Barbican gardens, the lakes and part of Beech Gardens in the “U” between the three Courts – John Trundle, Bunyan and Bryer – Barber Surgeons’ Garden, the adjoining strip with the ancient monument between London Wall and the Mountjoy beach and St Alphage’s Garden form the Barbican Estate, St Alphage’s Garden and Barber Surgeons’ Garden Site of Borough Significance for Nature Conservation (SBINC). Currently Grade II, the SBINC, shown on the attached plan*, will be upgraded to Grade I on the adoption of City Plan 2036, sometime in 2022.

As mentioned, the SBINC doesn’t include all of Beech Gardens nor does it include the remainder of the public realm planting in Ben Jonson Place, Breton Highwalk and Cromwell Highwalk, the planters around the Estate and the planting outside City of London School for Girls (CoLSfG). The unresurfaced part of Beech Gardens, Ben Jonson Place and Breton Highwalk are due to be re-laid under Phase 2 of the Beech Street waterproofing scheme, although if and when work will begin seems open to doubt.

City Corporation’s Open Squares Department (OSD) is currently preparing its Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 (BAP) for public consultation during May, prior to adoption in July. The BAP will have an impact not only on the SBINC but also on the remainder of the public realm. Barbican Wildlife Group (BWG) is a member of City Corporation’s BAP Partnership Group (BAPPG) as is Friends of City Gardens (FoCG) and anyone wishing to have any input into the BAP prior to the public consultation should do so through either BWG or FoCG.

The BAP will require a management plan for the SBINC (SBINCMP) other than Barbican Wildlife Garden, which already has a management plan approved by OSD. The requirements of the SBINCMP are quite likely to conflict with the Estate’s Open Spaces Service Level Agreement (OSSLA). In that case, the latter will require revision in order to comply with the former.

In any event, the long-awaited Estate Landscape Management Strategy is unlikely to emerge as a separate document to the SBINCMP, if at all. It would, however, seem to be a necessary requirement of the adoption of the SBINCMP that City Corporation agrees to manage the excluded public realm area as though it was included in the SBINCMP.

Recently, City Corporation adopted its Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The CAS requires City Corporation (i) under “Actions to support the achievement of net zero”, to advocate the importance of green spaces and urban greening as natural carbon sinks, and their

contribution to biodiversity and overall wellbeing; (ii) under “Actions to build climate resistance”, to make the Square Mile public realm more climate change ready through adding in more green spaces, urban greening, flood resistant road surfaces, adaptable planting regimes and heat resistant materials; and (ii) under “Actions to champion sustainable growth”, to enhance greening and biodiversity across our public realm and open spaces.

In the circumstances, I propose that the GAGToR are changed as per the following

Fred Rodgers
Chair, Breton House Group

- Plan to follow

The Terms of Reference for Garden Advisory Group (GAG) will be as follows:

(a) Strategic – that GAG should be involved in the preparation and monitoring of the Sites of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation (SBINC) Management Plan (SBINCMP) in accordance with the City of London Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 (BAP). However, until such time as a SBINCMP is adopted, then an annual action plan covering the area of the SBINC within the Estate (shown on the attached plan), should be agreed including:

- details of what the budgets might be for any projects, including the source of the funding.
- details, both the work and the financial costs, of the on-going management of the Estate.
- details of the overall income and expenditure figures for the Garden Maintenance,
- the percentage paid by the residents whilst giving GAG the authority to consider the amount paid by residents and make recommendations for changes to RCC.

(b) Quality – related to the standards to be applied to projects and on-going management and maintenance of the SBINC in accordance with the BAP.

(c) Operational – to see that the agreed quality outcomes are delivered day-to-day and to manage/oversee the active contribution from residents and other volunteers.

(d) Encouragement – to encourage residents to ‘green’ their personal space on balconies and patios by use of troughs and pots, particularly for the benefit of pollinators and air quality as well as involving them in the communal areas by, for example, in recording of species sightings.

(e) Links – provide a means for links with and among organisations with common interest in managing, developing and promoting the Barbican landscape. This will include working with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) to co-ordinate its roof garden into the requirements of the BAP.

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Deleted: City of London decides, at any time, to implement the recommended overarching Estate Landscape Management Strategy (ELMS) which among other aims should set out the Future Vision of the Barbican Estate landscape and a prioritised ten year action plan for the planning, enhancement, renovation and management of the Estate landscape. Also the ELMS and in particular the ten year action plan, should be linked to an overall Estate Landscape Masterplan.¶

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(f) Communications – ensure that information about the work of GAG is fully and accurately communicated to all residents, including by providing quarterly reports to RCC. Also to ensure that details of how residents can contact the Chair of GAG are published by both the BEO and The Barbican Association.

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To achieve the aims set out in the Terms of Reference, the necessary and appropriate communications between GAG, RCC, City Gardens and any other bodies should be set up.

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GAG Operational Notes and Inspection Areas

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The following are the operational guidelines agreed with the RCC for GAG.

1 GAG is set up by RCC as a Working Party, where the RCC selects the residents who will serve.

2 There will be ten residents on GAG, of which one resident will be identified in the Minutes as a representative of each of the RCC, Barbican Wildlife Group, Barbican Allotment Group and Barbican Horticultural Society. Residents will serve for a period of five years with a maximum of three members standing down in any one year. However residents standing down can be re-selected by the RCC if it so wishes.

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3 Resident members will advise details of their other involvement with Barbican organisations and give details of their relevant knowledge ad expertise so that it can be seen that all aspects of the hard and soft landscaping are covered. If there is a knowledge/expertise gap, then GAG will have the power to consult with other residents to cover this.

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4 In addition to the residents, the City Gardens Manager and/or the Barbican Gardens Team Leader should also attend.

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5 The Chair will be elected each year by the resident members of GAG Minutes of meetings of GAG will taken by the resident members, on a rotating basis. The individual to undertake these roles will be agreed at the previous meeting.

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6 Meetings should be scheduled for the following calendar year.

7 There should be four meetings a year, evenly spread throughout the calendar year.

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8 The Agenda for each meeting will be prepared by the Chair should be issued at least seven working days before the meeting. Any item for the Agenda should be notified to the Chair, at least 14 working days before the meeting.

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9 Draft Minutes should be issued within ten working days of the meeting, any comments and changes should be given within the subsequent seven working days.

10 GAG should produce an Annual Report on its activities to present to RCC for its June meeting.

11 A list showing all the areas that GAG is concerned with is attached and will be kept up to date. In addition, GAG will maintain a relationship with the GSMD regarding its roof garden.

12 GAG will set up inspections by small groups of resident members to ensure that all the areas on the attached list are regularly considered and any remedial actions are taken. Other residents recruited via the House Groups can be involved in the inspections.

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13 Lines of communication will be established to ensure that GAG has all the information to comply with its Terms of Reference.

14 GAG will ensure that residents are aware of its existence and official communications will be issued.

Deleted: 15 GAG will help to arrange residents planting days and other events engaging residents with their landscape. ¶