

Gardens Advisory Group Report to the RCC March 2022

The Gardens Advisory Group, working in four teams, inspected the four sections of the Barbican gardens in January and February. The inspections took place at 8am once a week over a four week period. This arrangement accommodated GAG members' working requirements and those of the City Gardens team. Despite the early starts every member of GAG joined in at least one inspection and City Gardens Manager, Jake Tibbetts, joined two of the inspections.

The gardens are not at their best in the January/ February period but the inspection teams reported favourably on their findings. Despite the difficulties caused by the drought, heatwave and the wet and cold that followed in the autumn and early winter it seems that a very large proportion of plants, shrubs and trees have survived. It will be easier to assess whether any long term damage has occurred during the next round of inspections.

City gardeners have been busy weeding, pruning, and preparing for the planting and replanting that will take place shortly. Among the gardeners we met during the inspections was one who had recently graduated from the City's two year apprenticeship scheme and had now taken a full-time job. He was one of the dedicated team that cut the rushes in the lake in January when the air temperature was barely above freezing.

City Gardens shared with us their list of new plants and shrubs that are scheduled to arrive in February. The number and variety of these reflect the continuing need to replant and replace and the expertise of our City Gardeners. The new arrivals will be planted as soon as weather and work schedules permit. Replanting will include trees in the St Giles churchyard, including one to commemorate our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Overall GAG was very pleased with the state of the gardens and with the improvements that have resulted since residents agreed to a small uplift in the service charge to pay for more gardening hours.

Jim Durcan
Chair
Gardens Advisory Group