

Gardens Advisory Group Report to the RCC September 2025

The Gardens Advisory Group, working in four teams, carried out their quarterly inspections of the four sections of the Barbican Gardens in June 2025. We were very pleased to welcome City Gardens Manager, Jake Tibbetts, to every one of our inspections. Many thanks to GAG members for their active participation in the inspections and for the reports and contributions on the areas inspected.

The very dry Spring and Summer impacted the gardens. The warm sunshine encouraged blossom and leaf growth. The rich greens of trees and plants together with lots of blossom made a welcome change from the early part of the year. The lack of rain has turned the lawns brown and discouraged the weeds. The good news is that the lawns will recover when the rains return. The bad news is that the weeds will also reappear.

The planting of trees carried out in the Spring appears to be working well. The Persian ironwoods beside John Trundle are settling well as are the three Pride of India trees planted on Speed lawn. There has been some feedback about the actual locations of the new trees in Speed. City Gardens will dig some more trial holes in Speed in the early autumn to identify potential locations where there is adequate soil depth. If the trial holes are successful then the trees themselves can be moved in the late autumn.

The City Gardens team, working on the Barbican Gardens, has settled with less staff turnover including retirements. The result is that the team is, on average, younger than it was but remains committed, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and hard working. City Gardens' willingness to continue to offer apprenticeships and training to develop, motivate and retain its staff has helped to reduce turnover.

The planted bed beside the Barbican on Aldersgate was a little disappointing with numerous bare patches. It was agreed that City Gardens would look again at the planting arrangements with a view to making changes in the autumn. The new planting in the igloos in the lake is flourishing. There are still some issues which relating to the degree of shade created by the climbing plants. The warmth and sunshine have contributed to the algae growth in the lake making it look greener than usual. The water will be treated to suppress the algae growth. Hostas which had flourished in Thomas More Garden beside the lake have gone. City Gardens is seeking to establish what happened. The high area adjacent to the waterfall still needs attention.

The temporary pumps that were providing the waterfall at the eastern end of the lake are still in place. The Barbican Centre has informed us that the pumps that provide the waterfall have stopped working. The Barbican Centre is investigating but the temporary drainage of a small part of the lake may be necessary to fully identify and resolve the issue.

We have been informed that the new Head of Resident Services, whenever he/she takes up her role, will be responsible for the Gardens. In the interim we are pleased that Dan Sanders has taken on the responsibility.