



Annual General Meeting 2025

HOUSES MANAGEMENT BOARD GARDENS – REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN 2024

Once again the gardeners had a very busy year and were not helped by the excessive rain which made everything grow so fast! Pawel works one day a week for the three winter months and one and a half days for the remainder of the year with occasional extra help from Patrick.

Unfortunately, we have lost the great help and insight from Eddie who has been very ill. Although he only occasionally had inputs to the work on the estate his botanical and horticultural knowledge was immense which is not surprising since he was once the head gardener and manager of St James Park (Patrick was gardens manager of Kensington Gardens....eventually the two together increased the area they looked after to include Green Park and the gardens in front of Buckingham Palace). So we have had the 'A' team looking after our Estate!

This year much of the work was routine maintenance; the regular mowing of the many lawns, cutting hedges and weeding. Last year I said we had ended the rolling programme of thinning out and lowering the height of the numerous shrubberies on the estate which had become overgrown and full of brambles. However, we decided to extend the programme to the four half-moon gardens in the Princes Gardens loop. The shrubs there have been cut back considerably and I believe not only do they look a lot better for this but the security of the area has been improved (and the visibility improved from some of the downstairs windows of neighbouring houses!)

In Queens Drive we have a lovely little garden which is maintained by a team of local residents led by Isabel Mahoney; it's so good that this year it was awarded a prize for outstanding biodiversity by Ealing Council. To add to this biodiversity the gardeners have recently planted two cherry trees in this garden. They are the same species of tree which at one time was found in every garden on the estate. Sadly, the passing of time and the aging of the trees have resulted in very few still being alive. However, the Residents Association is devising a scheme to encourage the planting of more of these cherry trees on the Estate. More information will be forthcoming soon.

We have also had to contend to the ravages of Ash die back disease which is spreading throughout the UK. It's a fungal disease which causes the Ash tree to slowly die. The gardeners cut down three of the medium dead Ash trees along the eastern side of the service road of Princes Gardens but we had to engage contractors to cut down three larger trees. In addition to this the contractors had to scale a large Oak tree in Princes Gardens to remove a lot of dead branches which were hanging over a footpath and as such were a potential hazard.

I am sure many of you will agree that the display of Crocuses in Vale Lane has been wonderful this year and then they were followed by the Daffodils in many parts of the Estate. I hope to plant more Daffodil bulbs this autumn.

John Stone
Houses Management Board Gardens Co-ordinator for 2024