

MEETING OF THE GARDENS COMMITTEE

Minutes

on Monday, 15th March 2021 via Zoom call

Present: Prof Howard Griffiths (Chair); Ms Kate Hargreaves (Head Gardener); Mr John Mears (Deputy Head Gardener); Mr Donald Hearn; Dr Hubertus Jahn; Miss Emma Easterbrook; Prof Alison Sinclair; Dr Paul Edwards; Ms Deborah Hoy; Dr Ole Nielsen (CRA); Mr Oscar Simms (UCS); Mr David Ewing (MCR).

1. Welcome to new members: The Chair, HG, welcomes Kate Hargreaves as the new Head Gardener and John Mears as the new Deputy Head Gardener. Both have already proved to be very engaged and have interesting visions for the gardens. The Chair also welcomed Dr Paul Edwards, Mr David Ewing and Mr Oscar Simms to the committee.

Upon Volker Heine's resignation the Chair thanked him for his long standing and valued contributions. It is suggested that an appropriate tribute is held in the Gardens when restrictions allow.

2. Apologies: Prof Heine; Dr Rebecca Lawson; Prof Anna Philpott; Mr Navin Ramakrishna.

3. Declarations of Interest: None

4. Minutes of November 2020: Approved

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the last meeting:

(i) KH and D. Hoy are due to meet contractors regarding access to and the ongoing maintenance of the Wisterias in the Masters garden. **KH, JM & D. Hoy met with Barnes on 18th March and it became apparent that on-going maintenance of the Wisterias would not be possible and it is relatively certain that both will not survive the build and will have to be replaced at the end of the project when the Masters Garden is reinstated.**

(ii) We welcome Damien Watt into the team as the new apprentice.

(iii) JM updated the committee on the progress of the Colony allotment redesign. COVID and furlough have slowed the process, however a site survey has been completed by John and he is now putting pen to paper. The design will be based around raised beds for ease of access, maintenance and usage. OS & DE were encouraged to feed in ideas from the student community.

5. Report from the Gardens:

- St. Regis: Hamilton Rd site is due to be completed by 21st May. There are still issues with water-logging and some plants have already succumbed to these wet conditions. CBC are under contract for a year to replace any failed plants. The area due to be seeded as lawn is still very water-logged and in its current state this cannot happen. KH & D. Hoy to have a site meeting with CBC to determine what drainage should be installed to alleviate the problem.
- KH stated that all the Gardens Team had returned from the day of the meeting (15.3.21) after being furloughed since early January. There are two vacancies in the department, one of which is being advertised currently and one which will hopefully be filled by the end of the summer.
- The *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* "Caucasian Wingnut" tree is due to have a picus test to determine the health of the tree and the rate of decay from the fungus within it. The company booked to do the test have informed KH their equipment has recently had to go in for repairs so this will inevitably cause a delay.
- The memorial plaque for Rebecca Chamberlain has been made and HG & KH to site visit Colony and bench to determine final placement.

- The College has received a gift of a number of varieties of Snowdrops from Dr Gordon Rae with more to follow. It was agreed that a suitable place to show the collection is the river bank, where it can be viewed by the wider college through the winter months. A “key” will be drawn up with the list of varieties and shown on the website. In order to prevent these from hybridizing the gardens team will endeavor to deadhead them and keep the patches separate. When the patches out grow their area, surplus will be lifted and planted on the Avenue and left to their own devices.
- New webpage: The new webpage for the gardens is well underway and receiving positive feedback. There are still a few issues to be ironed out before it goes live. KH to contact Johnathan Goodman about website integration; this will most likely be a link to the page from our current website. HG mentioned that when a similar upgrade was made for the Admissions webpage which had proved very positive. Other suggestions were to add music from the choir when viewing the gallery slideshow; KH to check with Chapel Administrator about music license. It is noted that the new page doesn’t include anything on the Colony & Memorial or Clare Court & St Regis; reason being that the initial re-write was purely to modernize Nevill Willmer’s words. KH will look to add details about these sites and the UCS & MCR reps were encouraged to submit content. KH has addressed the issues and suggestions made by the committee. Unfortunately it is not possible to have music from the choir playing when viewing the gallery slideshow.
- Social Media: the Gardens Department are now on both Instagram and Twitter and there are active links on the new webpage. As a side note, Instagram seems to be the more popular of the two.
- It is noted that there is a request for more edible herbs in the terrace planting area at the Colony and this is something KH & JM already intended to implement as it is the perfect area for such plants.
- Tree works for the wind damage and usual H&S checks are booked in to commence 22.3.21.

6. Update on Major Infrastructure Projects:

Unfortunately D. Hoy’s microphone was faulty and was unable to give this update. However KH & D. Hoy have been in discussion about the repair of the block paving area behind Castle House at the Colony. Currently there are three square tree pits with Silver Birch which have out-grown the space and the roots have displaced many of the paving blocks. These Birch will have to be felled and the discussion for their replacement is open. A couple of suggestions made were *Pittosporum tenuifolium* “Silver Queen” & *Amelanchier alnifolia* “Obelisk”.

Masters Garden: It was questioned about the privacy issue for the new Master and agreed that correspondence is needed with her. The possibility of an oval lawn in the garden during reinstatement was also discussed. KH recalled that planning requests all replacements are like-for-like, however she is confident the Gardens Team would be able to create the oval lawn and extend the planting scheme in the border after the current works have been completed.

7. Any Other Business

(i) Compost area development: DH raised that the current compost area the gardeners use is not fit for use and it should be brought up-to-date with a purpose built structure, much like the surrounding colleges. KH to contact Steve Coghill from Kings and Paul Stearn from Jesus for information on their contractors. HG stated that the committee fought to keep the compost area when the Thirkill drive parking bays were being refurbished.

(ii) It is noted that the Committee is keen for the Scholars Garden and other outside areas to be used by students and Fellows alike when government restrictions allow. The decision on gatherings within the college rest with the Head Porter Brenan Morgan.

7. Date of Next Meeting

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Additional note: Deborah Hoy also had intended to report that drainage on the Terrace at the Colony was to be improved, from notes she had submitted in advance of the meeting. Apologies for not bringing this to the Committee's attention

Distribution: Prof Howard Griffiths (Chair); Ms Kate Hargreaves (Head Gardener); Mr John Mears (Deputy Head Gardener); Mr Donald Hearn; Dr Hubertus Jahn; Prof Anna Philpott; Dr Paul Edwards; Dr Rebecca Lawson; Miss Emma Easterbrook; Prof Alison Sinclair; Ms Deborah Hoy; Dr Ole Nielsen (CRA); Mr. Navin Ramikrishna; Prof Volker Heine; Mr Oscar Simms (UCS); Mr David Ewing (MCR);

For information: Dr Jackie Tasioulas (Senior Tutor); Mr Paul Warren (Bursar); The Master.