

The Formosa Garden



Newsletter – Winter 2023

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ONE & ALL !

...although with Winter flu & Covid doing the rounds against a grim backdrop of public sector strikes it's perhaps not the start people will have hoped for. I for one seem to be suffering a bad case of déjà vu as friends say: "Well it can't be as bad as last year" – isn't that what we all said at the end of 2021?? And in December the omens didn't look particularly good weather-wise either as some uncharacteristically balmy temperatures gave way to a sudden cold snap, captured here by new arrival on the Gardens Brian Woulfe:



One casualty of the often heavy storms was our magnificent plane tree in the middle of the garden which had a huge branch torn off, requiring the skills of the tree surgeons to prune it back into a symmetrical shape:



But mostly in the final months of 2022 there was rain & more rain, although breakthrough moments of sunshine too:



As I write this the freezing weather seems to be back again so perhaps it's a good time to cheer ourselves up by looking ahead to the Summer months & some of the social events already taking shape. First up:

IT'S BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Yes, for the third year running we will be holding our wine-tasting in the Garden. This event provided the ideal morale-booster -- & ice-breaker – as we emerged from COVID & it will be back this year in **late June**.



As before the complimentary wines will be by courtesy of the Winery on Clifton Parade & there will also be soft drinks & hopefully some other form of light refreshments. Please look out for further details in the Spring Newsletter.

AND HERE ARE SOME OTHER DIARY DATES

This year's Open Gardens w/e is due to take place on the **10th & 11th of June**, with Formosa traditionally opening its gates to punters on the Sunday. Shakespeare in the Squares, a sell-out last year, is also making a welcome return with an extended season **between 7th June & 7th July**. The play is Twelfth Night but this time with a twist, set in the 1920s! This year it's Crescent Garden's turn to host & the exact date will be announced early next month, with tickets released in April. The Family Fun Day will be happening on **8th July**, and during the light Summer months we are also exploring the idea of a film night & a camping sleep-over for children. Then come the Winter we have the traditional Bonfire Night to look forward to on **4th November!** Sponsorship is invited for the Fun Day & film night.

TREES ATTACKED BY MYSTERY BUG

Some months ago now our gardeners Gravitas noticed that a number of trees in the Garden were showing signs of insect infestation – unsurprising perhaps given that the long period of drought last summer will have caused them to become stressed & therefore more susceptible to such attacks. We called in our tree expert Simon Jones to investigate & after confirming that the likely culprit was indeed some kind of insect, he is doing further research to try to identify it. Whatever it is it has no preference for any particular type of tree as at least three varieties have been affected. While we are waiting for Simon's final report, we have been recommended to increase the planting area at the base of each tree to at least a metre either side of the trunk. These areas will then be filled with mulch which will encourage more growth & a healthier tree to which the insects will not be attracted.



GARDEN WORKS IN PIPELINE



Many of you will have noticed that during heavy rains water is still collecting in a small area along Warrington Crescent. Work will begin on January 23rd to increase the drainage at the Formosa end of the garden and install a new soak-away channel to

drain rainwater from the path outside house numbers 12-14. This work is expected to take five or six days.

Then towards the end of February we will be carrying out the annual pollarding of all the trees around the perimeter of the Garden. As previously the bark will be re-cycled, and chips placed on the paths between the beds.

WHO NEEDS THE SUPERMARKET....



...if it's herbs you're after? Last Autumn we planted some lavender, rosemary & thyme in the Med bed so please help yourself if you want to add extra flavour to your dishes! Have a look at the Garden section on the Formosa Amenity website to see details of when best to pick the individual herbs & what they can be used for.

NEW FACE ON THE BOARD



The Formosa Board, which oversees the running of the Garden, has a new member – property consultant Jack Graham-Lindsey. Jack has lived on Warrington Crescent since the age of four – originally in

the house next door to the one he now occupies & where his mother still lives. Jack is a partner at fast-expanding Harding Green, which last year opened a new office in St John's Wood Terrace & kindly sponsored Formosa's Summer party last July.

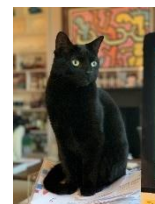
CALLING ALL DOG-OWNERS

Dog-owners are once again reminded that the garden has strict rules regarding dogs, which include the fact that all dog-owners are required to register their dogs with our managing agents Westbourne Management. No dogs are allowed off lead in any circumstances outside of the allocated times and any mess is the responsibility of the owner. All dog-owners are kindly asked to be vigilant. Any breach of any of the rules regarding dogs will be taken extremely seriously, freeholders will be fined and dogs potentially banned permanently from the garden.

DOES ANYONE KNOW THIS CAT?

We've had this appeal from cat-lover Erica Worth:

If my cat Misty comes to visit you, please can you not feed him. He suffers from allergies and certain foods can in fact do him harm.



He's a scavenger and loves every morsel -- but please refrain from giving in to his needs, even if he looks lovingly at you with those dreamy green eyes. Help Misty to keep well! Thank you.

PLEASE LOCK UP YOUR LADDERS!

As some of us will know to our cost break-ins do occasionally occur in the Garden, with would-be burglars often contriving to get in through or over the gates. But once inside sad to say their task risks being made easier by a number of ladders left out unsecured on some of the patios. A quick turn around the Garden revealed four or five examples of this on Sutherland Avenue & two at the back of Castellain Road. Please move your ladders out of sight if you can or attach them to immovable objects like outside staircases – otherwise you may be giving burglars a helping hand!



ARE YOU A BOOKWORM?



A small but highly motivated group of enthusiasts – that’s my next-door neighbour & me – are thinking of starting a book club. If the interest is there the plan is to hold the first

meeting at my flat **on March 15**, possibly kicking off with “How to Kill Your Family” by Bella Mackie which is currently in the best-seller lists. Six or seven people would probably be a comfortable number in my flat but if more sign up we could always start a splinter group. The main thing is to get the ball rolling! Please let me know if you would be interested in coming along by emailing me at vivvy.robins@gmail.com.

OTHER INTEREST GROUPS MAY BE AVAILABLE

We are also introducing a resident get together at Everyman with a monthly film night. Admittedly choosing a film that pleases everyone will be a bit of a challenge but we’re prepared to give it a go! And we’re always keen to hear from others who might want to set up a special interest group – for example a chess club, theatre or opera group or bridge or backgammon sessions. Again, just get in touch with me via the same email address.

BUS ROUTE CHANGES : WE STILL MISS OUT

The London Mayor Sadiq Khan has had to return to the drawing board after his original proposals to cut back 70 bus routes as consequence of the huge financial cost of Covid was met with a largely hostile reception from the 21,500 respondents to last year’s initial consultation. Plans to divert the no 98 bus away from Oxford Street have been dropped & the no 16 service, which was threatened with the axe, will now run between Brent Park & Paddington as a re-badged 332 service.

However as far as I can discover -- & the TFL website doesn’t make it easy! –the proposed re-routing of the no 6 will still go ahead, meaning that it will run between Willesden & Victoria via Grosvenor Gardens, no longer serving stops between Hyde Park Corner & the Aldwych -- so that particular very handy connection between Little Venice & the West End looks to have gone for good. And to add insult to injury TFL has just served notice that the 187 service which goes up to Waitrose & Sainsbury’s on the Finchley Road is running slightly less frequently. I’m sure I speak for all non-car drivers when I say the odds feel increasingly stacked against us!



NEWS IN BRIEF

- Wanting to put in a planning application but feeling confused about what the rules allow? Take a look at the handy checklist on the Formosa Amenity website from Board member Susanne Labbett, setting out the Do’s & Don’ts in clear & simple terms.
- We’ve now taken possession of the plaque we’re proposing to erect by the newly planted oak tree on the Sutherland Avenue side of the Garden in commemoration of the late Queen. We hope to have a picture in the next edition!

The Spring edition of the Newsletter will be published at the beginning of April so please do send any contributions to me at vivvy.robins@gmail.com by March 6th. And don’t forget that to receive the Newsletter by email you need to sign up with Westbourne Management, at info@WB19.co.uk.