

## HLRA report AGM 2018: gardens

It's been a wonderful summer and the Holly Lodge green spaces have been well used and appreciated. Gardening in the front of individual blocks and on balconies seems to be gathering pace. Support for our green spaces is always welcomed.

Sally Davies resigned as gardens rep this year for family reasons. Great thanks are due to her for her professional and considered gardening advice for HLRA.

Deb and Sally have been walking round monthly with the Camden Grounds Maintenance Monitoring Officer, Peter Freeman, to assess the gardens' maintenance with reference to Camden contract standards. This is HLRA's regular link with Camden. Individual residents can always contact Camden with gardens maintenance questions at [GroundsMaintenance@camden.gov.uk](mailto:GroundsMaintenance@camden.gov.uk) or [peter.freeman@camden.gov.uk](mailto:peter.freeman@camden.gov.uk)

In April 2017 a new Camden grounds maintenance **contractor**, iDverde, was appointed. The current static gardener (ie attached full-time just to Holly Lodge Estate) is Kat. She works one week a month on each road.

**Trees:** we are due trees to be planted this year for those lost over 2016-8. This will be done in the winter season. Details of proposed species and sites (usually as close as possible to where the previous tree was lost) will be available shortly.

**ASB in the gardens:** The York Stone areas in the formal gardens have had paint damage. This damage and deterioration of the tarmac paths is being addressed. We have raised the question of the recharging the costs of repairing ASB damage with the Estate Services Manager.

We have requested details of the plans, funding and timescale for the outstanding **restoration of the lawns behind Makepeace Mansions South** (the boiler house block).

The regeneration works were managed by Ivan Christmas and DF has the papertrail of the funding.

**It would be a great idea for a group of interested residents to take the lead on getting Camden to do this work.** It's a great project opportunity.

Communication with Camden has however been slow. Peter Freeman, the current officer, had no written notes at hand-over available from the last GM Officer (Victoria Whaley) so HLRA agreements and discussions from earlier years ago have been lost. HLRA have been keeping a clear paper-trail this year to get agreements in writing.

Our **general comments** over the year are that the gardens are looking neglected, and that there is evidence of long-term lack of pruning of shrubs at appropriate times of the year, lack of removal of perennial and invasive weeds, and poor management of hedges. Hedges are regularly out of contract tolerance for weeks on end. Monthly maintenance tasks are not being done regularly.

- HLRA has requested a copy of the month-by-month contract maintenance schedule (not yet received).
- HLRA has formally requested that poison/weedkiller not be used on the Estate. (final decision from Camden awaited)

**Agreements in place with Camden:**

- agreed (1 May 2018) that we would have a set of monthly walkabout minutes from Camden to be shared with the HLRA. (not yet in place)
- agreed (1 May 2018) that Camden contractor works outside the monthly maintenance contract are in future consulted on and approved by the HLRA before works start. (not yet in place)
- Camden agreed not to use ride-on lawn-mowers across the York Stone in the main gardens. (HLRA awaiting *written* confirmation.)
- Camden proposed to draw up a long-term plan for the formal gardens between HLM and MPM to include plans of action for works to specific areas of long-term neglect. (HLRA awaiting details)

Deb Froome

HLRA gardens rep

September 2018