

MAUNSEL FOURTH (HOUSING CO-OWNERSHIP) SOCIETY LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

2017 was the most horrific year since the Blitz for the local community, when at least 71 people including 18 children lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower Fire on the night of 14 June. Many people were made homeless and thousands of people in the wider community are deeply traumatised at the loss of their friends, relatives and neighbours. Residents of Wesley Square have played their part – helping on the night and subsequently with the relief and recovery efforts.

Our nearby neighbour, the Notting Hill Methodist Church with its staff and Minister, Mike Long, became a major respite centre on the night and days following and it continues to host many community meetings on Grenfell recovery matters. Because of the Fire we did not participate as planned in the Open Gardens Squares weekend, which took place immediately after the Fire happened.



Tributes to the Victims at the Church

At our April committee meeting Gary Thomas, the community engagement officer at the Westway Trust, spoke about the Trust's plans for the area west of Ladbroke Grove beneath the Westway. These plans have obviously changed since the Fire.

For example, the BBC DIYSOS programme are keen to redevelop the bay beneath the

Westway at St Mark's Road as a new Dale Boxing Club, currently in temporary premises (having lost their purpose built space in Grenfell Tower), a community café and rooms for local meetings.

The council's plans to build a new adult social care hub at Maxilla Gardens are on hold for the time being as the premises are currently being squatted.

Unfortunately and despite many local objections, the council gave planning permission for an excessively high building to be built at the John Brown site. This will tower over a part of Wesley Square. However, having obtained this permission, the owner is now seeking to sell the site.

Difficulties encountered by some co-owners from sub-tenants continue to take up much committee time. The current problems result from a failure to follow correct sub-letting procedures after some alterations were made to a flat.

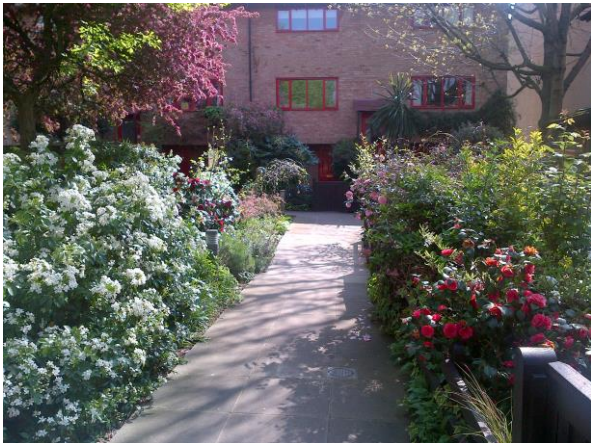
Safe bicycle storage for the Square will be proposed at the AGM, to provide spaces at a small annual rent – leaving the stairs and front gardens free of bikes at last. You should register your interest in renting one or more spaces at Klrstymalcolm@aol.com

A problem occurred with the drains backing up along the Lancaster Road block. Initial works resulted in a temporary improvement, but a camera inspection showed the problem was due to root penetration from trees. The roots were cleared but if the problem recurs, we may need to have the sewer pipes lined.

It was confirmed during the year that drones are not legally allowed to be flown in private areas.

The brick barbecue circle also became a focus of concern during the year. Many co-owners were being affected by misuse of the circle - by excessive noise late into the night, the presence of strangers in the dark and the use and dealing of drugs. Following a ballot, it was agreed to turn the circle into a garden to discourage the nuisance. Planting has begun, although the rose garden project has had to be abandoned.

A low key Garden Party was held in September, coming in under budget and was a big success. We had a bonfire on 5 November and some magnificent fireworks, kindly provided by Bob Larkins.



The gardens in Spring

The garden continues to flourish and looked particularly wonderful in the springtime. A number of trees have undergone a major pruning and the beautiful but sadly very overgrown bay tree removed (with approved planning permission).

John MacArthur, who has been our fantastic voluntary Treasurer for many years, has retired from this post and is succeeded by Ana Caludi Muldoon. Grateful thanks are offered to John for all his amazing work and also to Ana for agreeing to assume this very onerous task.

During the year we bade farewell to our old friend Rick Armiger, who has moved to the

Netherlands and welcomed Kym Acri's return to the Square.

For information, the council has established a local community centre called The Curve in Bard Road (close to the Monsoon building, near Latimer Road station). All local residents are welcome and encouraged to use it and it is now running a range of activities, particularly for local children.

In December a special committee meeting considered the implications of the council's aspiration to buy a property in the Square to rehouse a family displaced from Grenfell Tower.

The committee has taken legal advice, with the aim of resolving the question as a matter of urgency.



Grenfell memorial hearts

People are asking about the future of the site once Grenfell Tower is demolished, which is unlikely to happen until some time in 2019. At the moment some form of memorial garden and renaming Latimer Road station to reflect the Grenfell community are options being seriously considered by Survivors and the Bereaved.

The Bereaved Families will have the right of veto over any final proposals.