

Meanwhile Gardens Community Association



Annual Report 2002



Meanwhile Gardens Community Association

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Map & illustrations

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www.groveworks.co.uk

Design Wayzgoose

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Our Mission Statement

Meanwhile Gardens Community Association aims to enhance the lives of residents in North Kensington and North Westminster by providing safe and inclusive open air leisure, play, and training and education opportunities in our four-acre community park.

In achieving this vision, we have identified a number of key principles by which we shall operate:

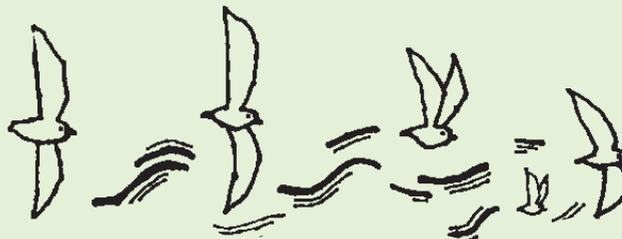
- we seek to work in accordance with sound environmental principles
- that MGCA is of, and belongs to, the local community
- we aim to be inclusive and reflect the diversity of the local community
- that our services provide opportunities for growth and that people wish to keep returning to use them.



Registered Charity No. 296921

Registered Company No. 2134343

Chair's Report



In 2002 Meanwhile Gardens has continued to see the benefits of all our past efforts. We approved a new three-year Business Plan, which focuses on consolidating our achievements of previous years.

This was a very busy year, with extensive planting in the Gardens. Thanks to our staff and volunteers, the Gardens are now blooming beautifully. In addition, the summer festivals and the skatebowl have continued to grow in popularity. We have enjoyed many compliments from our regular users and visitors.

With the help of number of successful bids for funds, we have been able to extend our key services. The Under 5s Playhut is now open on Saturdays and we will soon be able to employ an additional full-time Gardener.

We consider ourselves fortunate in that a number of staff and Committee members have stayed with us for many years. Unusually for Meanwhile Gardens, however, three of our valued staff members left in 2002. We said goodbye to Jackie Rosenberg, who managed the Gardens through the major changes of the last few years; to our Gardener, Catherine Miller, who worked so hard in the successful campaign to stop an inappropriate housing development on the Gardens; and just at the end of the year, to David Lennon, one of our Assistant Gardeners. Sadly one of our Committee

members, Edward Crawford, died this year – but his contribution and support will not be forgotten.

In December we welcomed a new Manager, Marie Burton. We are delighted that Marie is now working at Meanwhile and look forward to seeing the plans we have made for the Gardens take shape. We have also welcomed Cristiano Bonavolonta, who works both in the Gardens and at the Playhut, and Zuki Mayley, a new Saturday and sessional worker at the Playhut.

Our Management Committee continues to be vibrant and interested in all aspects of the Association's current projects. In particular, we will be working during the coming year to determine what happens to the old factory building. For over two decades this building has been an important base for our work. It is the Gardeners' workshop and storage space, a rehearsal space for the Metronomes Steel Band Orchestra and the Association's administrative centre. With support from our funders, as well as from the local community, we intend to improve these facilities.

Meanwhile Gardens is a distinctive and much loved open space. Thanks to everyone who has worked towards Meanwhile's success – staff, volunteers, trustees, users and funders.

Mary Gardiner

The Gardens

Work during the Year

This year we have had more paid gardening staff and volunteers, and this has allowed us to achieve a better level of maintenance. Regular work consisted of mowing and strimming, tree pruning and removal, plant pruning and pond clearing. Plant establishment was improved by spreading 100m³ of bark mulch on all the plant beds – a big operation involving a 4 tonne dumper, 360° digger and lots of volunteer help! This operation saved a considerable amount of weeding work in the long term.

Staff and Volunteers

There have been a number of staff changes in the Gardens. However, Alan has managed to guide a dedicated team of hard workers through the seasons.

Catherine left us in May and is sadly missed. In particular, the Association owes her a tremendous debt for her campaign against a potentially disastrous housing development on the Gardens. Protecting public open space from development is always difficult and requires stubborn resistance, which Catherine had in abundance!

Catherine was replaced by a team of temporary gardeners: Cristiano, both Davids and Craig, who have all worked hard to maintain the Gardens. Craig left in



August to pursue his chosen career as a geologist. David Lennon left in December when he was accepted into the police force. Michael continues the unglamorous but essential task of keeping the Gardens free from litter.

Many individual volunteers have helped us in the Gardens, but special thanks to Talya, Michael, Eric and Liam for all their hard work. We continue to work with both Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea Volunteer Bureaux, who have introduced us to some new volunteers.

We have had valuable assistance from corporate volunteer groups this year. American Express returned with a group of 20 volunteers who carried out work to the pond area. The DTI came with two volunteer groups of approximately 10–15 people who helped with pond clearing and weeding. 50 volunteers from Deutsche Bank helped spread mulch, paint fences and remove graffiti.

Links with other Organisations

We have liaised with Youth Offending Teams from surrounding Boroughs. Young people on reparation orders have carried out community work in the Gardens.

The National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens continue to give us advice and support. During the summer they hosted the launch of their new London map in our Scented Courtyard.



The Wildlife Garden

The Wildlife Garden is managed and maintained by Kensington & Chelsea MIND, who offer a horticultural training and employment scheme to people who have experienced mental health problems.

In the past year the course, which is accredited by the National Proficiency Test Council, has awarded certificates to 18 individuals and has developed a range of in-house work opportunities and work experience placements.

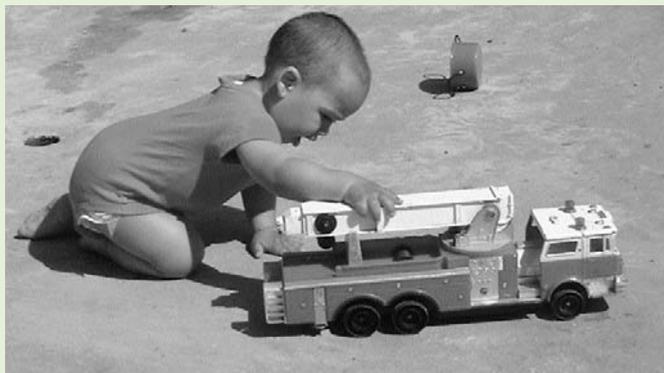
The Wildlife Garden project offers huge potential for creative interaction and partnerships with other groups. Using these positive contacts to combat the stigma that exists around mental health, the project has worked with:

- The K&C Ecology Service and will be participating in its educational programme.
- The 'Beauchamp', a new floating classroom project, run by the Beauchamp Lodge Settlement.
- A local herbalist to run sessions on the uses of native wild plants.
- A volunteer Artist in Residence, Siglinde Buhl, who has established a stone-carving workshop using Portland stone donated to the Wildlife Garden.
- Open Age, hosting planting activities for its groups of older local residents.

The Playhut

Our Users

The Playhut has attracted many new families and we now have over a thousand families registered on our database. Parents and carers are encouraged to become involved. They can either join the Playhut Sub-Committee or make their comments through our suggestion box.



Staff

Two experienced Playworkers are present from 9.30am to 6.30pm on weekdays throughout the year. In addition, since April 2002, funding from Golborne Sure Start has enabled us to open the Playhut from 12.00am to 5.30pm on Saturdays.

The Playhut aims to offer a service all year round with the exception of bank holidays. The sessional staff play



a vital role in the smooth running of the service. They are often called upon at short notice to cover for the permanent staff whenever they are sick, on annual leave or on training. We are fortunate to have a bank of experienced and reliable local people who assist us in achieving our aim.

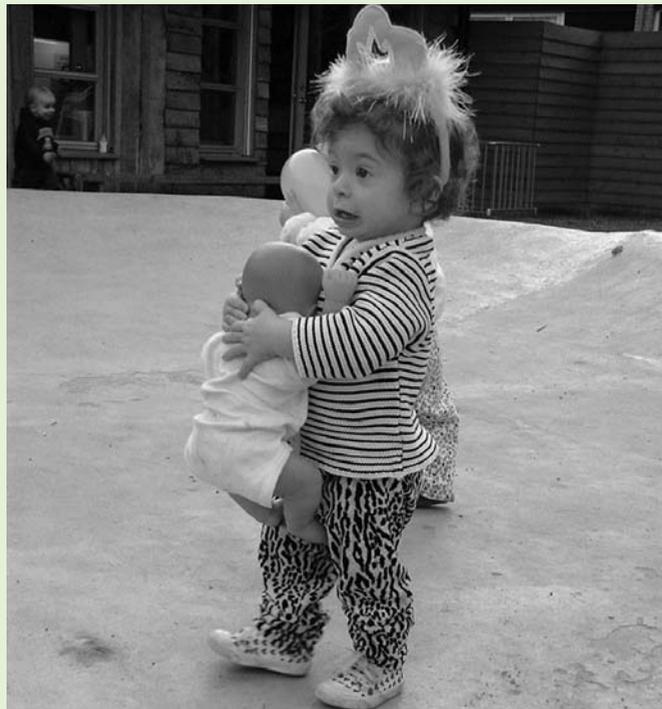


Activities and Events

During the year the children have enjoyed a variety of activities such as music sessions, parachute games, kite flying and story-telling. Together with the Playworkers they have created many exciting displays to celebrate a range of cultural festivals. We all enjoyed wonderful parties at Halloween and Christmas.

We have arranged regular visits from a discount book seller. This has become a very popular feature that enables families to buy a wide range of adult and children's books at very reasonable prices.

We organised two successful jumble sales. For adults, we have run a number of stop-smoking workshops and aim to increase these kinds of sessions in the future.



A Walk Through Meanwhile Gardens

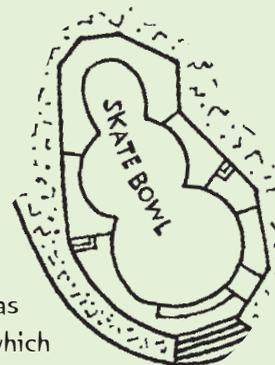
Twenty-six years ago the Gardens were merely four acres of wasteland. It was desolate, flat and covered with rubbish. However, thanks to the vision of a group of local people, the land was transformed into what is now a much loved green oasis in this heavily populated urban area. The Gardens run alongside the Grand Union Canal, extending from Great Western Road along part of Elkstone Road to Kensal Road.



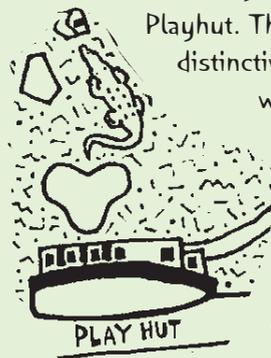
Starting our journey at Great Western Road, we have a choice of entering the Gardens either down the red spiral staircase or at the first entrance into the Gardens from Elkstone Road. This grassy end of the Gardens is surrounded by trees and shrubs and overlooked by the Carlton Bridge. It is a popular site for sunbathers and people who like to sit and relax on the grass.

During the summer months this area is transformed into a hive of activity and colour when it becomes our festival site. The free festivals are extremely popular events for local people to visit and enjoy the activities, and also a great opportunity to get involved. Many local residents have either performed on stage, or had a stall selling their crafts or food, or helped as a steward.

The festival site ends at the skatebowl. Since its refurbishment, this is a major attraction for young enthusiasts of skateboarding, roller-blading and BMX riding. While many are local residents, some travel here from across London and even from across the country. Needless to say, the skatebowl is busy all year round unless 'rain stops play'! It has its own annual event, a skatejam, which is well supported by local businesses.



Directly opposite the skatebowl is the purpose-built Under 5s Drop-in Centre known as the Playhut. This friendly wooden building has a distinctive boat-like shape and a grass roof, which helps to keep our large indoor playspace cosy. Our free service offers young children a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities which stimulate creative play in a safe and welcoming environment.





This year, the Gardeners have transformed the Playhut Garden with a varied selection of plants and trees. These include fig, rosemary, ceanothus, and magnolia. Wisteria, clematis and passionflower help soften the boundary fencing and perennial plants such as lady's mantle, hosta, bamboo and agapanthus provide colour and interest around the year. New topsoil was spread and graded before new turf was laid. Two benches, a storage shed and an outdoor children's play house were installed as well as a variety of new outdoor play equipment.

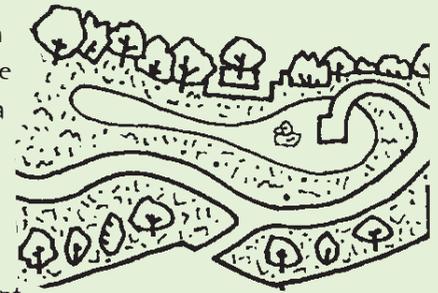
Leaving the Playhut, to the right of the path we pass the raised beds, a dry area planted with Mediterranean species such as myrtle, lavender, sage, catmint, artemesia and various grasses.

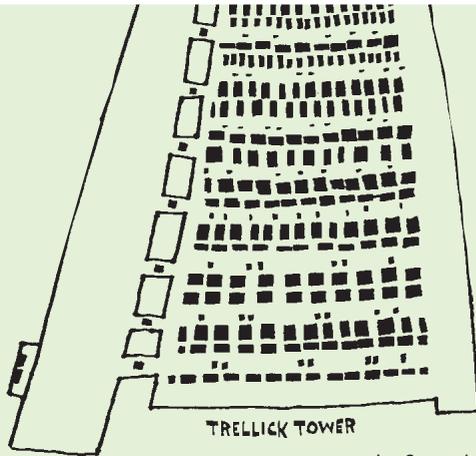
To the left is a willow area – one of our dog-free zones. It is disappointing that some of the willow sculptures planted in this space need further attention. However, we hope that they will establish over the years to allow young children to explore nature through the tunnels and spirals of the sculptures.

Following on, the path forks with a ramp/steps leading onto the canal towpath. On this canalside the soil has been newly conditioned before the planting of evergreen shrubs such as pittosporum, choisya, viburnum and photinia.

We carry straight on along the path to the large pond. This is a well-used resource for local ecology students, from primary level up!

During the year, plant beds were enlarged to the fence line. Some existing shrubs were removed and some dogwood thinned out and herbaceous planting of gunnera, hosta and sedge was carried out. Pond clearing is a popular job with volunteers, who enjoy putting on the waders and getting waist deep into the pond. Thanks to their help we can regularly free the pond from algae, weeds, litter, shopping trolleys and other debris.



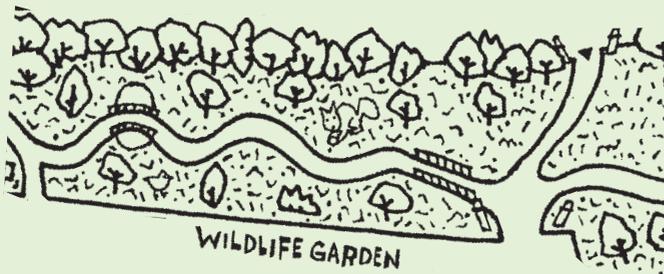


Overlooking the pond is Trellick Tower, a famous local landmark. On a windy day, passing Trellick can be an invigorating experience and sometimes you can almost be swept off your feet! Just

before the exit onto the Golborne

Road/Kensal Road junction there is another dog-free zone, where ground cover roses have been planted out.

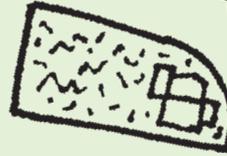
Beyond this point we cross over a wooden boardwalk and here the Gardens are transformed into a lush wild area. This is the Wildlife Garden.



Features of the Garden include rustic fencing, picnic tables, a variety of wildflowers and many well established trees. As we cross over a wooden bridge, to the right

there is a small pond and to the left a bog garden.

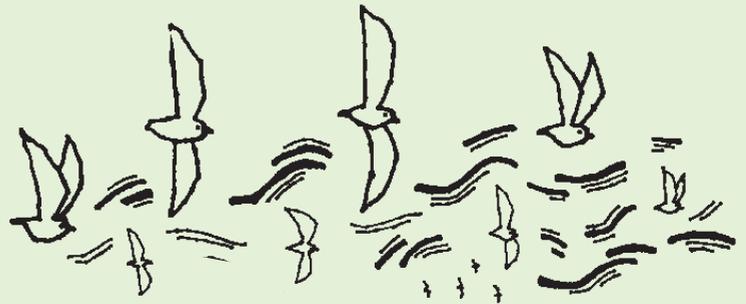
Before leaving the Wildlife Garden we pass its office and training space.



The winding path then leads to the plant nursery, mulch and compost area. Due to its present functions it is known as the “dirty” end of the Gardens! Here, most garden

waste is composted and brushwood chipped up for mulching. All this organic matter is later returned to the plant beds, minimising waste as much as possible. During the autumn, 30 dumper loads of leaves were collected from the Gardens and moved to our compost area! The plant nursery is used for storing donated and purchased plants prior to planting out in the Gardens. It is also used by the Wildlife Gardens Project to store plants grown by them for sale.

Just a few steps away we come to the ‘Factory Site’, a former factory building with a large Victorian chimney. Here is the Gardeners’ workshop and storage space. During spells of wet weather, time is well spent on rationalising and sorting out our equipment store and maintaining our collection of hand tools and machinery. The factory is also the base for volunteers, who equip themselves here before beginning their working day – usually with a warm drink!



Next to the factory chimney is a tiny office occupied by our small team of administrative staff: the Project Manager, the Administrator/Events Co-ordinator and the Playhut Administrative Support Worker.

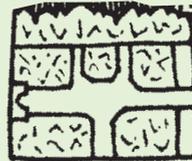
Together they undertake all the vital tasks of running the charity, including financial management, fundraising and monitoring for a wide range of funders, as well as day-to-day support for the Gardens and Playhut.

It is also important to mention that the factory building is where the voluntary Management Committee attend regular meetings to discuss a wide variety of issues that affect the Gardens.

The Metronomes Steel Band Orchestra have a rehearsal and storage space in the factory building. This area is particularly busy in the run up to the Notting Hill Carnival, when the Metronomes hold non-stop rehearsals

in the hope of winning the annual Panorama steel band competition.

Finally we end our journey at the Scented Courtyard, a quiet part of the Gardens. Many colourful flowers and herbs grow here, as well as a number of fragrant climbing roses. It is also a popular place for local schools to bring a class of children to plant spring bulbs such as crocus, narcissus, and grape hyacinths – and get muddy hands as they learn about gardening!



SCENTED COURTYARD

As we take a seat by the fountain, we might consider how far our four acres of wasteland has come since 1976, and how many people over the years have contributed to its transformation. It is the appreciation and involvement of the local community that gives the Gardens its energy and its reason to be.







UNION CANAL

SKATE BOWL

PLAY HUT

ELKSTONE ROAD

WESTWAY

WESTWAY PARK STATION

© SATISH K. TAMURA

Summer Festivals

Westbourne Green Park Family Fun Day Sunday 30 June

A 'community stage' enabled local people to demonstrate their talents. Children and adults put on a fabulous show which included martial arts, music, dance, poetry, along with solo singers and other performances.

H-One • The Worm • Larry King • Kyu-Yo-Bu-Shin • The Guilfoyle Academy of Irish Dancing • Paradise • Kayleigh Carina • Ellie May Et The Warwick Babes • Sunset • Snow-Drop Creations • Lebanese Break Dancers • Amber

There were also games, a bouncy castle, ball pit and colourful stalls. Face painting and circus entertainers were immensely popular with the children and the day ended with a great tug o' war.



Meanwhile Back at the Park 3 Skate Fest Saturday 13 July

Working with Third Planet International for the third year running, this free event has now become a firm favourite. Skaters and enthusiasts come to participate or watch from the local area as well as from all over the UK.

This year the competition was in a jam style format, with an under 16s competition and one for the adults. There was also a best trick competition for those really wanting to show off their skills.

Music by Dr Hooch • Breakin Bread Crew • Eddie Temple Morris from XFM • Ed Pitt • Alan Glass



Music & Dance Festival Sunday 21 July



DJ Smart Monkey • H-One • Pyramid Text • The Harir Band
• Unique Dance Troupe • Dark Roses • The Avenues Youth
Project • The Metronomes Steel Band Orchestra • and all
those talented people in the audience who joined in



Meanwhile Gardens' fourth Music & Dance Festival was held under threatening skies, but with an appreciative and enthusiastic crowd.

Fun activities for the children included a bouncy castle, face-painting and extravagantly costumed stilt walkers, as well as parachute games and dance with the ever-popular Mr Mojo.

A craft workshop put on for the first time was a hugely popular event, where children could make spectacular hats and masks to take home as souvenirs. A variety of delicious food was available from local stallholders set up within the Gardens.

The stage programme for the day was designed to celebrate a variety of local music and dance acts, and in particular to showcase young talent.

Notting Hill Carnival Sunday 25 & Monday 26 August



The Gardens are the ideal natural space for families with young children to discover a varied programme of live entertainment and performing arts. They provide a safe area away from the bustling roads.

During the weekend we organised a programme with the aim of encouraging younger audiences to participate. Performers and workshops included music from DJ Paul, jugglers and circus performers from Regenerarts Project, 'Got 2 Remember' African Drumming Workshop, The Mojo Workshops (dancing, music, parachute games and circus skills), face-painting and a bouncy castle. Food and drinks were available from stalls in the Gardens.



Under 4s Fun Day Saturday 14 September

This free event was a wonderful day for young children to experience a range of fun activities, including Netti the clown, face-painting, a bouncy castle, a craft workshop, activities run by community and health information groups, party food and balloons.

Thanks to a mobile animal farm brought to the Gardens from Millers Ark Farm, children and adults could feed and stroke a variety of animals, including ponies, rabbits, turkeys and chickens.



Accounts

Meanwhile Gardens Community Association Balance Sheet at 31 March 2002

	£	2002	£	£	2001	£
Fixed assets						
Tangible assets			891,595			866,504
Current assets						
Debtors	23,930		27,527			
Cash at bank and in hand	100,695			117,586		
	-----			-----		
	124,625			145,113		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(72,832)			(37,012)		
	-----			-----		
Net current assets			51,793			108,101
			---			---
Total assets less current liabilities			943,388			974,605
			====			====
Income funds						
Restricted funds			898,071			943,081
Unrestricted funds			45,317			31,524
			-----			-----
			943,388			974,605
			====			====

Meanwhile Gardens Community Association

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2002

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2002 £	Total 2001 £
Incoming resources				
Donations and core grants	69,209	—	69,209	—
Grant income received in furtherance of charitable activities	25,194	184,207	209,401	713,404
Investment income	1,852	—	1,852	4,550
Other incoming resources	10,965	—	10,965	7,402
	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
Total incoming resources	107,220	184,207	291,427	725,356
	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
Resources expended				
Charitable expenditure	90,867	228,968	319,835	169,723
Management and administration	2,560	250	2,810	2,021
	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
Total resources expended	93,427	229,218	322,645	171,744
	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds	13,793	(45,011)	(31,218)	553,612
Fund balances at 1 April 2001	31,524	943,082	974,606	420,993
	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
Fund balances at 31 March 2002	45,317	898,071	943,388	974,605
	====	====	====	====

These financial statements were approved by the MGCA Trustees on 6 January 2003. With the permission of the auditor, two pages of the company's accounts are reproduced on pages 17 and 18 of this report to illustrate the Association's financial status. These statements do not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the results and state of affairs of the Association. The full annual accounts and the auditor's report on these accounts are available from the MGCA office.

Management Committee

Mary Gardiner Chair
Eversley Mills Co Vice-Chair
Alison Sage Co Vice-Chair
Steve Shaw Hon. Treasurer
Susie Gretz Company Secretary
Lee Boland (*resigned February 2002*)
Eddie Adams
June Adams
Felicity Ashbee
Edward Crawford (*deceased April 2002*)
Margaret Hines (*resigned July 2002*)
Kaija Hinkley
Rose Kenny
Gareth Moors
Hannah Solloway

Staff

OFFICE TEAM

Jackie Rosenberg Project Manager (*resigned Sept. 2002*)
Marie Burton Project Manager (*appointed Dec. 2002*)
Chandrika Dalpat Administrator/Events Co-ordinator
Rachel McCormack Playhut Admin Support Worker

GARDENING TEAM

Alan Whittaker Head Gardener
Catherine Miller (*resigned May 2002*)
Assistant Gardeners:
Cristiano Bonavolonta
Craig Faull (*to August 2002*)
David Lennon (*to December 2002*)
David MacDonald
Michael Orrah

UNDER FIVES PLAYWORKERS

Milena Bacchi
David Bellamy
Cristiano Bonavolonta
Alix Howard
Kathy Jean
Rose Peel

SESSIONAL & SATURDAY PLAYWORKERS

Rowshanara Begum (*to October 2002*)
Samantha Graham
Sandra Hughes
Zuki Mayley
Ruthven Roberts
Elise Sinon

Thanks

Meanwhile Gardens would like to thank all those who have supported the Association so generously with their time, efforts, contributions, grants and donations during the year.

Our Funders

Revenue

Campden Charities • City of Westminster • The Community Fund • Golborne Sure Start •
New Life for Paddington SRB • Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Carnival & Events

Carhartt • City of Westminster • City of Westminster Arts Council • Dream Arts • Genesis Housing Group •
Golborne Sure Start • Network Housing Association • New Life for Paddington • Olympus Digital Cameras •
Paddington Social & Community Fund • Stone Ashdown Trust • Vans • XFM

Projects

K & C Environmental Ltd • Voluntary Action Westminster Community Chest Fund

Our Supporters

Gardens

Cllr Pat Mason • The Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens •
Kensington & Chelsea Volunteer Bureau • Richard Griffin at Portobello Press •
Satoshi Kitamura, map designer • UK Bench Restorations • Westminster Volunteer Bureau •
The Wildlife Garden Project

Under 5s Playhut

Our parent reps for all their help and support – Alex, Karen, Katherine, Lisa, Mariame, Michelle and Trevor • Jill Anderson – Under 8's advisor RBK&C • Ariella, Denise, Daphne and many other users who donated clothes and toys on a regular basis • Elise for cooking great food • Ellie for making special occasion cards • Felicity for donating books and cards • June, Eddie and Rose for helping at our fundraising jumble sales and for their various donations • Kathleen for her enormous efforts towards the Halloween party • Roc for his generous donation towards replenishing our sand • Susie for books, cards and support • Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority for loaning all Stop Smoking workshop materials and television • The anonymous benefactor whose generosity enabled us to commission an outdoor child-sized Playhut • All of the many parents who contributed so generously to our 'Monster Mouth' donation box

Carnival & Events

Mary Amayo & Sensai Stewart • Centre Stage • Coca-Cola • Hackney Festival Support • Paddington Arts • Red Bull • Sidewalk Magazine • Slam City Skates • The Mojo • Third Planet International • Simon Wade • Paul Witter • and our great team of stewards

We would also like to thank for their advice and support

Karen Buck MP • CASH – Community Accountancy Self Help • Guy Mayers Accounting Services • The Metronomes Steel Band • Notting Hill Social Council • The Venture Centre • Voluntary Action Westminster • Karen Warne for book-keeping Services

