

HUNTLY GARDENS PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION

GARDENS REPORT 2024 (to be presented at 2025 AGM)

THE gardens are looking well-tended and GardenWise continues to offer a top quality yet affordable, friendly and flexible service.

This year we carried out three major projects, one being extensive tree work on the South Side when various dead trees, and several that were pushing through the fence, were removed. Branches that were overhanging the pavement were cut back in accordance with Glasgow City Council policy.

We also enlarged the central rose beds, meaning the surrounding perennials are now more spread out and looking much more attractive. And it gives the roses room to breathe, retaining them as the focal point of the central area. Thanks, as always, to Doreen Quinn for tending them.

Latterly, there was more extensive tree work on the East Side. Again, dead trees were taken out along with those that were damaging the fence. But some self-seeded saplings were left in place to fill the gaps for the future. This work cost £2,040. Cutting back the ivy is an on-going job costing £595, making a total of £2,635.

GardenWise will also be organising the repair of the wooden edging on the North Side grass verge at a cost of £585. Our Chair, Lawrence Weaver, allowed the exterior of his home to be used by a film company and he asked for a £300 donation to the HGPA, which will pay for more than half of this work. The remaining £285 will come from garden funds.

The cost of the East Side tree work, ivy control and edging totals £3,220 which doesn't appear on the 2024 accounts as we hadn't been invoiced by year end. At the time of writing (early January), our bank balance is £7,877 which, minus the aforementioned works, leaves £4,657. I will be able to give a current balance on the night of the AGM.

There has been some discussion around letting more light into basement flats including 'topping' our mature trees i.e. cutting the tops off them. I would strongly advise against this for various reasons and Brian, our gardener, concurs, as does the arborealist who carried out the tree works. This is what Brian (GardenWise) says: *"I met with the tree surgeon and we walked round the perimeter so he could give me a verbal report on the health of the trees. We discussed the benefits or otherwise of topping the taller trees."*

"In summary:

**The general health of the mature trees is good. We could see no issues or disease at the base of the trunks where it is inclined to start.*

**He suggested removing lower limbs and dead limbs, especially on the common limes. He advised against topping as in his opinion, and mine, it spoils the shape and visual appeal of mature trees.*

**It was suggested that the removal of a few holly trees might let in light and create a feeling of space in the perimeter areas.*

**Some Rhododendrons could be lowered to reduce the 'tangle' with the lower branches of the mature trees. This will improve the visual appearance of the trees but isn't necessary for any other reason.*

"So, basically, it's all good. It's a beautiful mature garden with no problems other than visual which requires only occasional attention for health and safety reasons more than anything."

If it's felt that we do want to let more light into the gardens, I would therefore recommend that we do it in stages by Brian's suggested methods. I would strongly oppose 'topping' which, apart from being ugly, actually encourages stronger top growth which then has to be dealt with on a regular basis.

I believe we can keep the Annual Maintenance Charge as is while still being able to afford any further desired tree work.

ENDS