Neighbours could get a ‘guerilla gardener’ rebate

Council looking to refund work by volunteer

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RESIDENTS IN Elephant and Castle may soon be celebrating a £9000 payout if the council allows a resident ‘guerilla gardener’ to green his block.

Richard Reynolds has made a name for himself by travelling the country and creating green enclaves in neglected spaces.

Yet his biggest project has been at Perronet House, where he has lived for three years.

In that time Mr Reynolds has been in constant conflict with the council for taking it upon himself to spruce up the area in front of the block in London Road.

Southwark argued that he was not employed to undertake the work so he had no right to do it.

Yet it looks as though they may finally let him get on with it and backdate the previous two years’ charges to tenants and leaseholders.

One hundred households may be given over £90 each for the previous two years’ gardening that he did voluntarily. Southwark has sent letters to each resident asking what they think of the proposal.

Mr Reynolds said: “I have not been given a contract but the council has sent letters out to every resident saying they will give them money and that I will do the gardening from now on.

“My guerilla gardening has finally resulted in what I would call a victory.”

When he arrived at Perronet House in 2004, Mr Reynolds claimed that its frontage was “an overgrown shrubbery.”

“It was full of litter and I have been gradually tidying it and greening it. People now comment on how attractive it has become.

“One of the council’s contractors told me that they had forgotten it was here and it was an example of how things can get lost in Southwark Council bureaucracy.

“But they were continuing to charge each flat £45 per year for a service they weren’t getting.

“Now I will carry on treating it as if it was my own garden and nobody will have to pay for it.”

A council spokesman said: “The council is currently consulting with residents at Perronet House on a proposal to recognise the work done by a resident, who, as a passionate gardener, has planted and maintained a section of the estate to a high standard for a number of years.”

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