

## **Friends of Bushy and Home Park**

### **Annual Report for 2022/23**

I was surprised to realise that this is my seventh annual report to Members. Proof that time flies when you are enjoying yourself. Being Chair of the Friends is quite rewarding when one can see the positive differences we can make.

That said, I have to spend some of my time explaining to some park users that we, the Friends, and in particular myself, do not actually manage the parks.

Neighbouring communities fully appreciate these parks and a widening set of visitors from further afield have discovered them, too. The Friends help visitors enjoy the parks, with information, education, and guidance. At the same time, we keep an eye on the potential for deterioration in the parks which can be caused by the weight of visitor numbers and by their sometimes-ill-informed behaviours, and of course we like to keep The Royal Parks' and Historic Royal Palaces' staff up to the mark!

The past year has seen further evidence that our climate is no longer as constant as it once was. We had a serious drought for several months. That was followed by storms which caused some damage and then a very wet period with dramatic rainfalls. It has made the life of the parks and their management anything but straightforward.

I was invited at one point to participate in the long-term planning for the Bushy Park Woodland Gardens. I joined a variety of experts from The Royal Parks as they sat round the conference table and swapped views about the impact of different climate change future scenarios. All scenarios look bleak as some species of flora and fauna will be affected. The real difficulty facing those experts is that nobody knows how the future will pan out so, at best, they can only make informed guesses.

The staff and contractors in The Royal Parks and in Historic Royal Palaces are doing their very best to conserve the parks for whatever the future holds.

Speaking of which, you will have seen an enormous amount of work taking place in Bushy Park in the past year, initiated by Phil Edwards, Park Manager and assisted by Jo Scrivenor, the Assistant Park Manager from Richmond Park, to both of whom we owe gratitude. They have worked hard to redesign and replant the Woodland Gardens.

Paths have been restored, widened, and aesthetically redirected. They are now better able to accommodate wheelchairs and children's buggies. Along some of the edges are small railings to constrain footfall, there are newly seeded and planted areas, and places for new seating benches.

Fences are being improved, with metal estate-style fencing replacing worn out and rotting timber paling. Metal fencing has a lifespan of up to 100 years compared to up to 25 years for wooden fencing. This new fencing opens views into and out of the Woodland Gardens and allows more light for growing plants, while still protecting them from the deer. It will be painted once the bright steel has oxidised.

Trees are being lopped and removed where they are diseased and dangerous, and to improve light and soil conditions allowing new growth below the canopy. More invasive Rhododendron Ponticum has been removed from the Woodland Gardens.

The watercourses are being improved by new revetments and extensive silt removal, with waterside planting being introduced to increase resilience.

Camellias, azaleas, and rhododendrons are being pruned for the first time in many years, with the aim of increasing their flowering and their lives for several more decades.

The Woodland Gardens are now being redesigned with new planting to come, changes to various glades, and plans for a small arboretum in the Waterhouse Plantation.

Refurbishments to the Pheasantry café currently under way will enable further improvements to the outside area.

For much of this work I am pleased to tell you that the park manager consulted the Friends before decisions were finalised. We were asked to help with redesigning the Woodland Gardens, with ideas for the future of the Children's Playground, and with tree removals and replacement planting. For several of us Trustees therefore, it has been a very busy and productive year as we have been engaged in these plans, and we look forward to the results continuing to emerge over the next few years.

In Home Park there is less obvious change. It continues to be a peaceful place, at least it was until the return of the annual RHS Flower Show, after which it rapidly restored itself to the tranquil space, we all enjoy. The palace, the gardens, and the park have again featured on Channel 5 television programmes during the year, where you can spot your favourite gardener, wildlife officer, or estate manager.

I should record here some changes among park staff which you will wish to note. First, the appointment of Dan Steel as the manager of Longford River, a role which has been established to ensure dedicated care of the river and its banks all the way from Heathrow to Hampton Court. Second, the appointment of Vincent Quartermaine as Head Gardener at Bushy Park, following the resignation of Sharon Evans from that post. Third, the arrival of Alex Wigley as the new Head of Gardens and Parks at Historic Royal Palaces, taking over from Terry Gough. Lastly, our congratulations to Jill Beckley in the Park Office on her promotion to the post of Technical Officer at Bushy Park.

While I am mentioning people, I would like to take a moment here to record our appreciation of Sheena Harold, who died after a short illness in January. Sheena, as many of you know, was the Chairman of the Teddington Society and often almost single-handedly got things done by the Society for the good of the community. She was a long-time member of the Friends and supported our activities generously and enthusiastically. She is sadly missed.

Issues affecting the parks.

You will be aware that a decision was reached in 2022 by The Royal Parks to confirm the permanent closure of Chestnut Avenue to through traffic.

This followed a two-year trial and a period of public consultation and is part of a wider Movement Strategy affecting all eight Royal Parks in London. The intention now is for the temporary planters which obstruct the avenue to be replaced by permanent structures. The aim is for the middle section of the avenue to continue as an area for visitors' recreational purposes, adding usable space to the park and enabling wildlife safe passage.

Car parking charges in Bushy Park remain on the stocks but await parliamentary time for legislation to permit implementation. We have no indication when this may happen.

Chestnut Sunday will be restored to the Bushy Park calendar in 2024. A public communication to this effect was published by The Royal Parks before Christmas. The aim is to hold a community-based and eco-friendly event. The Friends will partner with The Royal Parks to facilitate planning Chestnut Sunday and engaging with participating groups in the year ahead.

We had to engage in a small and short-lived altercation with The Royal Parks early last summer over a planning application submitted by them to Richmond Council. It was about a new catering kiosk location proposed near Ash Walk. Suffice to say that following our discussion with those responsible for the application it was shelved.

We have more recently suggested that the Children's Playground is an obvious location for an additional catering kiosk, should they be looking for a spot in future. As my own grandchildren enjoy the playground when they are looking after me, I am only too aware that a welcome addition would be a small catering facility by the playground. That, and substantially improved toilet facilities. These suggestions are being considered in the medium-term plans for the park (because such proposals must find their place in priorities and budgets). While we wait for those facilities, you can expect to see improved landscaping of the playground and new play equipment over the next year or two.

Meanwhile, the Ice Cream van which is pitched up near the Children's Playground each summer, powered by running a continuous diesel engine in a most eco-unfriendly manner, is to be powered instead by electricity from this summer onwards.

Turning to Home Park, Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) suffered massive loss of income during the pandemic and had to reduce staff numbers. The HRP business model has been significantly changed following this massive loss. Different staffing arrangements, the continued closure of Lion Gate, reduced opening times for the palace, and changes to estate, gardens, and park maintenance are consequences which you will spot.

### Projects undertaken in 2022

#### *Queens Planting*

Members will know that it was our plan to commemorate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee with suitable major planting in Bushy Park and Home

Park. As it turned out, the planting was to become a commemoration of the late Queen's reign as much as a Jubilee installation.

In the Woodland Gardens, in what is known as Mary's Glade which is a large area near the Waterhouse Pond, we have accomplished our plan. A team of Royal Parks experts and two Friends Trustees spent some months designing the layout of the space. We then donated £10,000 to The Royal Parks to procure the trees, shrubs, and flowers. In late January 2023 we undertook the planting, with those expert designers and many volunteers involved. A few days later we added some bulbs and other woodland flowers with some volunteers who could not make the first day. The glade will eventually carry a plaque explaining what it is and how it was created.

We are still waiting for Home Park to decide what and where it wishes to use our funds for this commemorative purpose, but it is hoped it will be a small copse of trees.

### *Ann Sayer Legacy*

We plan to use the substantial legacy from Ann Sayer, a former member and volunteer, to reflect her interest in the parks. Several members who walked routes with Ann have helped us to produce three walking trail route guides. These impressive documents are available at the Visitor Centre. We will also commission a special bench to indicate the start and end of the trails. The aim is for the bench's design to reflect Ann Sayer's achievements. The installation of the bench will await improvements to the surface outside the Pheasantry café area to be finished in 2024. A single specimen tree is being planted for Ann in the Woodland Gardens, and the remainder of her legacy will be used for tree planting along the trails around the perimeter of Bushy Park.

### *Electric Buggy*

We had proposed to The Royal Parks that an electric buggy should be introduced to ferry park visitors with personal mobility difficulties from the Diana car park to the Pheasantry. This was to mitigate the effect of closure of Chestnut Avenue to through traffic on such visitors. I am pleased to report that our suggestion was agreed, and Bushy Park has been given the use of a buggy for the coming year to test demand for such a service. The buggy will be driven and supported by volunteers from the Friends, with a service initially operating a few days midweek and one day at weekends. The details are still being determined but we hope to be running this from early May onwards.

### *Benches*

Members will be aware that during the recent Autumn period we asked for suggestions for locations for additional benches around Bushy Park. This was an initiative by Phil Edwards, the park manager, who wanted the Friends to help him using our members' knowledge and regular use of the park. Those members who participated identified some 30 to 40 locations. The first benches are going into the Woodland Gardens, but others will be spread around the rest of the park in due course.

### *Nature Day*

The Royal Parks ran a Nature Day in Bushy Park in the summer in which we participated, too. It aimed to engage families and other visitors with an understanding of the nature which can be found in the parks. The event was very successful, with many children attending with their parents. One highlight was a quiz game based on "Whose Poo?" I should point out this was the poo of different animals. Another highlight was guided walks of the park's Nature Reserve, an area only open to the wider public occasionally. The same sort of Nature Day was run in all the Royal Parks during the summer. We were told subsequently that the Bushy Park event was the most successful, in numbers attending, in the enthusiasm of visitors, and in the participation of the Friends.

### *Space Sapling*

Members will be aware of my annual update report on the ongoing tale of the Space Sapling. This is the tree grown from a seed drawn from Isaac Newton's apple tree, several seeds of which were taken into space by astronaut Tim Peake, as an experiment to determine if six months in space had any effect on seedling growth. Well, sad to say, and despite great care for it, the tree has died. That suggests the outcome of the experiment shows space travel for an apple seed is not beneficial. However, as part of Bushy Park's joint project with NPL, the sapling has been digitally scanned by the laboratory. This will provide an image to support educational purposes. The remains of the tree have been preserved in a display case. So, we can describe the unusual story of the Space sapling to interested park users at the Visitor Centre, for infinity and beyond...

### Projects planned for 2023 and further years

We hope to further improve protection of the Skylark nesting areas. These birds are ground-nesting, and they are disturbed by dogs and walkers who do not keep to the paths and predated by other species. The bird is in decline nationally and it is one of the summer pleasures to be enjoyed in Bushy Park where they can be heard singing.

We are still aiming to assist Home Park improve the Kingston Gate. It is not easy access for people with disabilities and families with pushchairs. We have offered funding and are engaged in further discussions with Home Park managers who are obtaining designs and costs.

We hope to fund a small copse of trees in Home Park.

We aim to start the electric buggy service in Bushy Park.

We will progress the planning for restarting Chestnut Sunday in 2024.

It will be a major activity for the Friends to support the emerging Tree Strategy being drawn up by The Royal Parks in the year ahead. We will help fund succession planting of trees as more are suffering disease and climate damage.

We will plant the Ann Sayer commemorative tree and commission the design for a bench to be located as the start and end point of the Trails.

We intend to fund a replacement bridge in the Woodland Gardens in the next few years, aimed at enabling wheelchair access.

Finally, a long-term teaser project to whet our appetites. You may know of historical viewing mounds which were created in large estates in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which enabled the Lords of the Manor show off their huge estates to impress their guests. There may even have been one somewhere in Hampton Court Palace grounds. Well, Phil Edwards hopes to create a viewing mound in Bushy Park. It will occupy the huge mountain of spoil that was deposited behind the Pheasantry when the café was constructed and which currently forms part of the park yard, providing no benefit whatsoever. That pile reaches up to treetop height. Stand on it and you can see vistas across the park, and you are at the same height as the birds and bats which live in Broom Clumps, that oasis of trees alongside the road to the Pheasantry car park. You are also looking down on a pond that has accumulated naturally from rainwater behind the spoil-heap, and which will provide a habitat for aquatic life. It needs suitable natural planting to encourage more pollinators, a nice snaking path up to and over it, and access points for visitors at each end. Phil has already persuaded his Chief Executive, and my colleagues and I have supported the idea. If the Trustees of The Royal Parks approve the idea and put it into their overall plans and priorities it could happen in 5- or 6-years' time.

### Membership

Susan Hugill, our excellent membership secretary, reports that membership now stands at almost 1500. The numbers have steadily increased over the past year, with almost 100 new joiners.

The new fee rates were introduced in January and some existing members have readily chosen to adopt the new rates. Those who prefer to remain on the old rates can do so. The new rates are applied automatically for new joiners.

### Donations

Every year, members and visitors show their appreciation for the parks and for our endeavours as Friends, with their generous donations. 2022 was no different. Our thanks to all for your gifts to the parks.

### Volunteers

We currently have 70 volunteers who operate the Visitor Centre and provide other assistance. They are a friendly and enthusiastic team who enjoy helping visitors. The Visitor Centre is now operating in its fourth year and over 13,000 visitors dropped in to learn about the park during 2022.

We have volunteer litter pickers, volunteer walk leaders, and volunteer buggy drivers, in addition to those who staff the Visitor Centre. We are hugely grateful to all of them, as they make a significant difference to the parks.

I want to record here our huge thanks to Trustee Rosemary MacColl who has organised the Visitor Centre as our Volunteer Coordinator. For the past 15 years she has recruited and trained them and supports them as they gain experience. She also edits our Facebook presence and she has been a vigorous member of the committee. Rosemary is stepping back from the coordinator role and

trusteeship this year. You may not be aware of what she has done, but those of us who do, are immensely appreciative.

#### Walks & Talks and Events

Rebecca Harvey has continued to manage a very successful and ambitious walks and talks programme. It was unfortunate that the Normansfield theatre suffered its boilers being condemned in January this year, as until then that venue had been an excellent home for our talks.

#### Keeping in Touch

Jeannie Edwards has edited the four seasonal newsletters. David Meanwell keeps the website relevant and secure for visitors to use. Susan Hugill, Rebecca Harvey and Jeannie Edwards have issued occasional and urgent informative messages to members. I hope members consider they are kept up to date and informed sufficiently, without feeling overwhelmed by our communications. We try to keep the balance right.

#### Trustees and Officers

Our Trustees and other officers of FBHP have continued to work hard during the past year on behalf of the membership and in support of both parks.

#### And finally

We continue to enjoy these two parks as they face climate change and increased numbers of visitors. The Friends work closely with the police, the volunteer Rangers, and the management teams in both parks. We are grateful for all their hard work.

I want to record my thanks to all the trustees, officers of the committee, volunteers, other helpers, and especially you the members for your continuing interest and support. It is the aim of us all to ensure the protection and conservation of these wonderful parks, for the long-term enjoyment of future generations.

Colin Muid

Chair

Friends of Bushy and Home Parks

March 2023.





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period  
from

01-Jan-22

To

31-Dec-22

CC16a

### Section A Receipts and payments

|   | Unrestricted funds<br>to the nearest £ | Restricted funds<br>to the nearest £ | Endowment funds<br>to the nearest £ | Total funds<br>to the nearest £ | Last year<br>to the nearest £ |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>A1 Receipts</b>                                    |  |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
| General Subscriptions                                 | 5,668                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 5,668                           | 5,499                         |
| Gift Aid  | 1,781                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 1,781                           | 1,679                         |
| Bank Interest   | 39                                     | -                                    | -                                   | 39                              | 1                             |
| Donations   | 7,679                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 7,679                           | 4,263                         |
| Merchandise sales                                     | 20,294                                 | -                                    | -                                   | 20,294                          | 16,347                        |
| Ann Sayer legacy                                      | -                                      | 1,005                                | -                                   | 1,005                           | -                             |
|   | -                                      | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>                | <b>35,461</b>                          | <b>1,005</b>                         | <b>-</b>                            | <b>36,466</b>                   | <b>27,789</b>                 |
| <b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>    |  |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
|   | -                                      | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>                                      | <b>-</b>                               | <b>-</b>                             | <b>-</b>                            | <b>-</b>                        | <b>-</b>                      |
| <b>Total receipts</b>                                 | <b>35,461</b>                          | <b>1,005</b>                         | <b>-</b>                            | <b>36,466</b>                   | <b>27,789</b>                 |
| <b>A3 Payments</b>                                    |  |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
| Education   | 2,107                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 2,107                           | 389                           |
| Merchandise purchases                                 | 11,169                                 | -                                    | -                                   | 11,169                          | 8,535                         |
| Donations   | 10,076                                 | -                                    | -                                   | 10,076                          | 7,500                         |
| Printing & stationery & postage                       | 2,253                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 2,253                           | 1,580                         |
| IT/computing/website                                  | 1,513                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 1,513                           | 1,697                         |
| Insurance   | 647                                    | -                                    | -                                   | 647                             | 609                           |
| Miscellaneous   | 2,281                                  | -                                    | -                                   | 2,281                           | 1,285                         |
|   | -                                      | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>                                      | <b>30,046</b>                          | <b>-</b>                             | <b>-</b>                            | <b>30,046</b>                   | <b>21,595</b>                 |
| <b>A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)</b> |  |                                      |                                     |                                 |                               |
|   | -                                      | -                                    | -                                   | -                               | -                             |
| <b>Sub total</b>                                      | <b>-</b>                               | <b>-</b>                             | <b>-</b>                            | <b>-</b>                        | <b>-</b>                      |
| <b>Total payments</b>                                 | <b>30,046</b>                          | <b>-</b>                             | <b>-</b>                            | <b>30,046</b>                   | <b>21,595</b>                 |
| <b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>                     | <b>5,415</b>                           | <b>1,005</b>                         | <b>-</b>                            | <b>6,420</b>                    | <b>6,194</b>                  |
| <b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>                     | <b>-</b>                               | <b>-</b>                             | <b>-</b>                            | <b>-</b>                        | <b>-</b>                      |
| <b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>                    | <b>38,741</b>                          | <b>11,000</b>                        | <b>-</b>                            | <b>49,741</b>                   | <b>43,547</b>                 |
| <b>Cash funds this year end</b>                       | <b>44,156</b>                          | <b>12,005</b>                        | <b>-</b>                            | <b>56,161</b>                   | <b>49,741</b>                 |



## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

| Categories  | Details  | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
|---|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>B1 Cash funds</b>                                | Cash at bank   | 44,156                          | 12,005                        | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   | <b>Total cash funds</b>                                | 44,156                          | 12,005                        | -                            |
|   | (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s)) | OK                              | OK                            | OK                           |
|   |  | Unrestricted funds to nearest £ | Restricted funds to nearest £ | Endowment funds to nearest £ |
| <b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>                     |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
|   |  | -                               | -                             | -                            |
| <b>B3 Investment assets</b>                         |  | Fund to which asset belongs     | Cost (optional)               | Current value (optional)     |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
| <b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b> |  | Fund to which asset belongs     | Cost (optional)               | Current value (optional)     |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
|   |  |                                 | -                             | -                            |
| <b>B5 Liabilities</b>                               |  | Fund to which liability relates | Amount due (optional)         | When due (optional)          |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |
|   |  |                                 | -                             |                              |

  

|   |                |                |                  |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees | Signature      | Print Name     | Date of approval |
|   | Adrian Heywood | Adrian Heywood | 15-Mar-23        |

## Independent examiner's report

to the Trustees, Friends of Bushy and Home Parks (Reg. Charity 1137203)

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022, which include the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the Treasurer's report.

Respective responsibilities of trustee and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

This report, including my statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body for my examination work, for this report, or for the statements I have made.

## Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed:



Jason Hughes

9 Claremont Rd, Teddington, TW11 8DH

Date: 3 February 2023