

Friends of Bushy and Home Park

Annual Report for 2024

This is my ninth annual report to Members. As I said last year, it is a privilege to represent you, the members, in our dealings with The Royal Parks (TRP) and Historic Royal Palaces (HRP), and with others who manage and enjoy these two semi-wild natural spaces. You, the members, are hugely appreciative of what the parks provide; be that the natural landscape, wildlife, history, somewhere to exercise, somewhere to observe nature, somewhere to restore our well-being.

That well-being and exercise opportunity which the parks provide is exemplified by **parkrun**. The global phenomenon which began in Bushy Park as the very first venue on 2 October 2004 and which celebrated 20 years with thousands of runners turning up in October 2024. Yet another part of history associated with Bushy Park.

The Friends role is to promote respectful use of the parks by visitors and to support the parks for future generations to enjoy. Faced with the impacts of climate change and of increasing human demand to use the space, it can be an uphill climb. Possibly the only type of hill in either park!

We began our life as the Friends as a campaigning group in 1990, objecting to threatened removal of Chestnut Trees. We found ourselves once again involved in a campaign, this time about policing in the Royal Parks. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has indicated that the Royal Parks' police unit is to be cut, with policing of the parks handed to local neighbourhood commands. A shortfall in funding for the Met is the reason. Despite considerable opposition from local councillors, MPs, the Friends' groups for each of the Royal Parks, and The Royal Parks charity, it appears the cuts are going ahead. The risks are that neighbourhood police will not deliver the same capability as the dedicated unit and that consequently the parks may become susceptible to greater public misbehaviour and feel less safe.

I turn now to a more positive story. The work you will have seen in Bushy Park has again been extensive and important. Bracken, which is invasive and cannot be left unchecked, has been cleared in several areas, while taking care to preserve areas for deer birthing and bird nesting. Scrubland and soil are being improved, with concern to ensure the SSSI status is maintained. The Woodland Gardens have been defined a little more with maturing shrubs and more mature trees, which are able to cope with climate issues, installed to succeed those which have died; and over forty thousand bulbs have been planted. The tree canopy has reached a point where much of the canopy has grown to the same height, so it is now being layered to encourage younger growth and more natural difference in heights. Grass cutting is now done in strips with areas of long grass left to grow seed, which improves habitat for invertebrates and costs less to maintain. Leaf clearing is now being done differently, mulching leaves and leaving it on the ground to encourage worm and invertebrate action which is good for the soil. Broom Clumps, the area alongside the roadway to the Pheasantry car park, has been cleared of undergrowth allowing new planting and more deadwood habitat for those species which rely on it. The Brewhouse area and the Water Gardens and Longford cascade bridge are being refurbished. You should have spotted the green roofs on the litter bins in the Woodland Gardens, and the area newly landscaped next to Crocodile gate, projects proposed and implemented by TRP's Apprentices working in the park.

Some of Bushy Park's infrastructure is being given attention. The roof surrounding the Pheasantry café is to be repaired as it leaks, and the toilets by the Playground are also to be substantially restored to modern capabilities - the pipework is very old cast iron and often has blockages. The

wooden planters on Chestnut Avenue, which were temporarily installed when it was designated a No Through Road, are to be replaced by carriageway half-gates, to improve sightline safety.

Home Park has been subject to less obvious works, although behind the scenes much planning is being done, including finding ways to improve wildlife habitats, and to ensure sufficient people resources by recruiting more volunteers to work in the park. It is encouraging that HRP continues to recover from the income losses which it suffered during Covid, which means the park and gardens will benefit alongside the rest of that charity's estate.

I should record here our deep sorrow at the untimely death in early January 2025 of Dr Terry Gough MVO, the recently retired Head of Gardens and Estates at Historic Royal Palaces. Terry was a strong supporter of the Friends and appreciated our role as a stakeholder in Home Park and the gardens at Hampton Court Palace. The restorations at Hampton Court of the Privy Garden, the kitchen garden, Queen Mary's Exotics Garden, and two of the Lime tree avenues are all his legacy. It was our great privilege to have known him.

For the Friends, 2024 has been a year of several successes. We succeeded in organising several significant events. These included a revived, albeit small-scale, Chestnut Sunday; a photographic exhibition of members' amazing pictures of wildlife in the parks; a weekend commemorative exhibition of Camp Griffiss for the 80th anniversary of D-Day; and an art competition held in partnership with the Landmark Centre, which attracted over 100 entrants of all ages, who produced exceptional works in celebration of the two parks. Many members and other visitors congratulated the Friends on these events, and we have been asked to repeat them. They are very time and energy consuming to organise, so we are drawing breath before making firm commitments. In addition to those one-off events our programme of walks and talks has also proved very successful and been strongly attended. We are massively grateful for the volunteer walk leaders, the expert speakers, the volunteers who support the talks with technical expertise and handle logistics and catering, and Rebecca Harvey our trustee who manages the programme.

Alongside the above activities, whose substantial costs were covered under the Friends' educational budget, during the past year the Friends also funded (a) five new pergola shelters outside the Pheasantry café kiosk, (b) an improved pedestrian/mobility access gate at Home Park's Kingston Gate, (c) DNA research into Black Poplar trees in Home Park, and (d) four new lockable information notice boards in Bushy Park.

Somewhat frustrating this year for the Friends has been the wait for an electric buggy which is to carry visitors between the Diana car park and the Pheasantry car park. This will mitigate difficulties faced by people with limited personal mobility who cannot now be driven by car along the no-through-road of Chestnut Avenue. Our trial use of a buggy in 2023 proved the need and we have persuaded TRP to supply a new one which we will operate with volunteer drivers. However, changes in personnel at TRP headquarters have contributed delays and despite our requests for action, the year has passed by without a delivery. We remain on the case and hope the coming year will see a successful outcome.

Also frustrating for us were demands from the park manager at short notice regarding Chestnut Sunday arrangements which consequently reduced the scope of the event we had planned. Further frustration has been caused by the length of time taken to deal with the refurbishment of the toilets at the Playground, although that is a frustration about TRP's works priorities borne equally by the park manager and the Friends. We haven't managed to achieve all of our aspirations in the plan for 2024, but what was achieved took enormous amounts of energy and attention to detail.

Looking ahead with optimism, we have been encouraged by TRP's Chief Executive's enthusiastic agreement to find ways in which the Brewhouse might be brought into occasional use. We proposed it as a site for "pop-up" exhibitions at intervals, which FBHP would organise in partnership with TRP, with our volunteers as stewards. The building appears to have a population of bats which means how it is used may be constrained. Nevertheless, we continue to plan for ways in which this important, historic, listed building can serve a greater purpose than simply being a deteriorating asset.

The Visitor Centre has continued to be a source of information, education and advice to visitors in Bushy Park and for potential visitors to Home Park. Our exceptional volunteers have delivered almost 1600 hours duty at the venue. Meanwhile the volunteer walk leaders have led visitors in both Bushy and Home Parks with almost 137 hours of their time. Our volunteers are not a "free resource", they are priceless!

Our membership stands currently around the 1560 mark. I must once again thank members for your generous donations to the Friends, which we use to fund projects that the two parks might not otherwise afford or be able to prioritise. Our website, Facebook page and Newsletter all reach their audiences effectively and ensure we keep everyone in touch with what the parks' teams are doing and what we are doing with them.

The Trustees and other officers of FBHP have worked hard during the past year on behalf of the membership and in support of both parks. Barry Purdon, who has been our Vice Chair for the past 8 years is standing down. He has also been our Appeals coordinator, our Safeguarding officer and our representative on the Safer Parks policing panel, and a frequent volunteer at the Visitor Centre. I have been grateful for his wise counsel and advice to me over the years.

In conclusion, we continue to enjoy these two parks as they face climate change and increased numbers of visitors. We work alongside the volunteer Rangers, and with the management teams in both parks. We are grateful for all their hard work. I engage closely with Phil Edwards the Bushy Park manager and with Nicholas Garbutt from Historic Royal Palaces and to me, their stewardship of these wonderful spaces is abundantly apparent.

I want to record my thanks to my fellow trustees, officers of the committee, volunteers, other helpers, and especially you the members for your continuing interest and support. We must continue to ensure the protection and conservation of these parks for generations to enjoy.

Colin Muid Chair, The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks.

February 2025.

The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks (Reg. Charity 1137203)
Income & expenditure year ending 31 December 2024

	31 December 2024		31 December 2023	
General Fund Receipts	£	£	£	£
General Subscriptions	8,827.00		6,909.00	
Gift Aid received on prior year	1,337.24		2,345.86	
Bank Interest	643.59		525.38	
		10,807.83		9,780.24
Payments from General Fund				
Printing and Publicity	(1,400.00)		(958.00)	
Stationery, Stamps and Postage	(522.45)		(877.91)	
Insurance	(696.46)		(651.28)	
IT (hardware, software, licences)	(679.35)		(1,243.85)	
Membermojo	(300.00)		(250.00)	
Miscellaneous Items	(933.02)		(2,266.47)	
		(4,531.28)		(6,247.51)
Surplus of receipts over expenditure		6,276.55		3,532.73
Education				
Donations received	100.00		60.00	
Income from sale of refreshments at talks	407.50			
Events, AGM and Walks and Talks	(1,712.71)		(2,348.21)	
Art Competition (net cost)	(97.77)			
Leaflets	(246.05)		(441.00)	
Sundry	(87.07)		(738.86)	
Deficit of Education expenditure over receipts		(1,636.10)		(3,468.07)
Surplus of General Fund (incl Education) in year		4,640.45		64.66
Donations				
Member Donations	2,715.59		3,576.45	
Other donations (incl buckets)	4,326.17		2,710.38	
Gift Aid (50%) received on prior year	1,337.24		345.86	
		8,379.00		6,632.69
Merchandise				
Merchandise sales	19,119.66		19,194.83	
Merchandise purchases	(9,587.44)		(10,216.65)	
VC expenses	0.00		(228.96)	
Postage	0.00		(46.49)	
Stripe commission	(563.68)		(465.62)	
		8,968.54		8,237.11
Chestnut Sunday		(7,548.82)		
WW2 Event		(849.03)		
Projects				
Project payments: Kingston Gate (HRP)	(10,000.00)		0.00	
Pergola shelters at the Pheasantry kiosk	(9,650.00)		0.00	
Black Poplars	(2,000.00)			
		(21,650.00)		0.00
Ann Sayer Legacy		(112.36)		(10,000.00)
Total excess of income over (expenditure) for year		(8,172.22)		4,934.46
Opening funds		61,095.85		49,741.34
Funds at 31 December 2024		52,923.63		54,675.80
Balances	£	£		
Current	7,433.37		14,724.49	
Business 1	0.00		0.00	
Business 2	43,776.94		45,133.35	
Total cash in hand	51,210.31		59,857.84	
iZettle receipts not credited to bank at 31 Dec 2024	964.06		303.92	
Stripe receipts not credited to bank at 31 Dec 2024	607.61		610.07	
Cheques not credited to bank at 31 December 2024			104.00	
Cash taken in 2024 but not banked until 2025	141.65		220.02	
	52,923.63		61,095.85	
Gross income	40,070.99		35,667.76	
Gross expenditure	(48,243.21)		(30,733.30)	
(Deficit)/surplus	(8,172.22)		4,934.46	

The Friends of Bushy and Home Parks (Reg. Charity 1137203)

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2024

	2024 £	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £
General fund 1 January 2024 b/fwd		15,078.29			15,013.63	
Net (deficit)/surplus		(3,757.40)			64.66	
General fund c/fwd 31 December 2024			11,320.89			15,078.29
Projects fund b/fwd		44,012.85			29,143.05	
Income from general donations	8,379.00			6,632.69		
Net income from merchandise trading	<u>8,968.54</u>			<u>8,237.11</u>		
		17,347.54			14,869.80	
<u>Expenditure in 2024</u>						
Kingston Gate	(10,000.00)			0.00		
Pergola shelters at the Pheasantry kiosk	(9,650.00)			<u>0.00</u>		
Black Poplars	<u>(2,000.00)</u>					
		(21,650.00)			0.00	
Projects fund c/fwd at 31 December 2024			39,710.39			44,012.85
Ann Sayer legacy			1,892.35			2,004.71
Cash in hand at 31 December 2024			<u>52,923.63</u>			<u>61,095.85</u>

Independent examiner's report

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

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024, 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

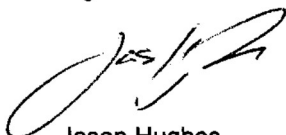
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual 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: 21 February 2025

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Basis of independent examiner's report

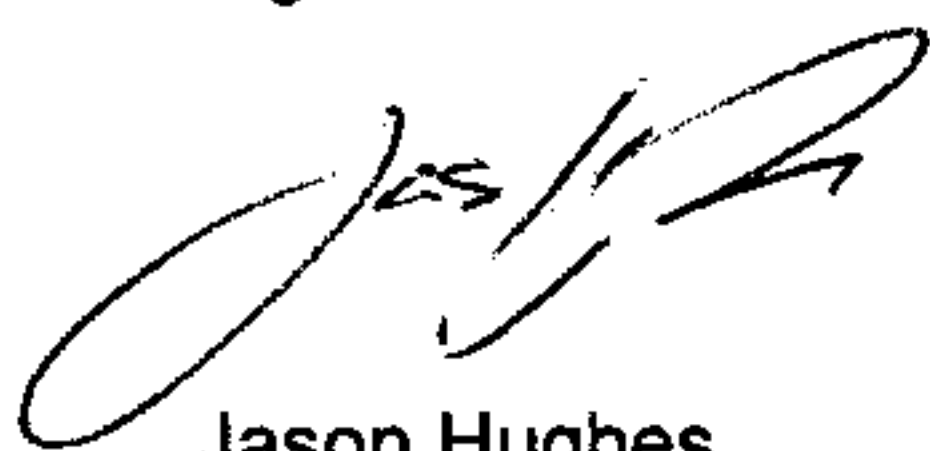
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Jason Hughes

9 Claremont Rd, Teddington, TW11 8DH

Date: 21 February 2025