



The Friends of South Park Gardens

Annual Report and Accounts
1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK GARDENS

Address

c/o The Garden Pavilion, South Park Gardens, Wimbledon, London SW19 8PN

Trustees

Helen Day (Chair)

Sylvia Lucas (Secretary)

Susan Hook

Carra Kane (resigned 10 October 2023)

Peter Kenning (resigned 10 October 2023)

Helen Rogers

Sarah Willis

Caroline Threadgold

Katie Gibson

Tony Medawar (appointed 10 October 2023)

Nicholas Evans (appointed 10 October 2023)

Treasurer

Lynn Dyson

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
Chichester Branch
PO Box 1000
BX1 1LT

CCLA Investment Management Ltd
COIF Charity Funds
80 Cheapside
London
EC4V 6DZ

Friends of South Park Gardens Charity registration number 1162459

THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK GARDENS

ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

The Friends of South Park Gardens is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission under number 1162459. The CIO is a direct replacement of the unincorporated charity with the same name. The CIO was entered on the Charities register of the Charities Commission on the 26 June 2015.

Charitable Objects

The object of the charity is, in summary, to promote, support and assist in the maintenance, improvement and enhancement of South Park Gardens in Wimbledon, London, SW19, as a recreational area to be used and enjoyed by the whole community, including identifying and implementing security measures.

Trustees and staff

The first trustees were all local residents and were elected at the annual general meeting. All trustees are volunteers and there are no paid employees of the Friends of South Park Gardens.

Background

The Friends began in 2002 as a campaigning body with the purpose of restoring the Gardens to their original Victorian pleasure garden plan. In 2009, this was achieved through a combination of community activity and funding, a grant obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and council improvements and investment. In 2014 planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the dilapidated gardeners' compound and toilets. The building was funded using remaining HLF Funds and Council funding and was completed in 2015. This building is now a vibrant and essential part of the Gardens. The Pavilion building provides a community resource, disabled lavatory, and improved Gardeners Compound and work area. In addition a kiosk serving refreshments opened under a lease arrangement with Merton Council. The kiosk is now leased by the Council and is a welcome addition to the Gardens enjoyed by many.

Merton Council

The trustees have regular meetings and are in regular communication with both Merton Council's head of Parks Services and the Council contractor responsible for the maintenance of the Gardens - idverde. The idverde gardening team have worked in the Gardens for many years and our appreciation of their work is recorded here.

South Park Gardens was awarded the prestigious international Green Flag Award again in 2023.

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ACTIVITIES IN 2023

Gardening Club

The Friends has an active gardening club who assist with maintenance of the flower beds in the Gardens and who have established a nursery area in the raised beds behind the Garden Pavilion. This area is used for the cultivation and growing of plants for replenishing stock in the Gardens.

The Gardening Club continued to meet every Sunday morning, maintained the Heritage Lottery Beds, created, planted thousands of bulbs, built winter borders along the Kings Road edge of the Gardens and attracted regular new volunteers. The trustees funded a small budget for the Gardening Club volunteers to obtain refreshments from the kiosk during their time on Sundays.

The volunteers meet regularly to develop seasonal planting plans to reflect the changes in soil and climate to ensure plantings are more drought resistant and require less watering during the summer months. The new plantings have produced beautiful displays throughout the year.

We held plant sales in May and June 2023. Many of the club volunteers grew plants from seed at home and cuttings were taken from plants in the Gardens and those raised in the nursery beds were available for sale. All proceeds were reinvested in the Gardens.

The trustees are very grateful to the gardening club for their tireless efforts come rain or shine, and for the contribution of all volunteers for the time they have given to South Park Gardens during the year. Whilst volunteer hours are not recorded, the number of volunteer hours for this activity is in the region of 1100 hours over the course of the year.

Garden Pavilion

Our community space, the Garden Pavilion, is regularly used for both community and commercial activities. Receipts from lettings are put towards maintenance and running costs including cleaning and replacement of furniture and equipment.

Bookings for the Garden Pavilion continue to increase. It is a popular location used for a broad range of community style activities including art and crafts, chess, mahjong, baking, folk music, yoga, dance classes. Whilst volunteer hours are not recorded, the number of volunteer hours for this activity is in the region of 400 hours

The Trustees would like to record our gratitude to our volunteer room manager who has looked after or supported the considerable administration needed for the Garden Pavilion for a number of years.

Membership

Our membership system is now fully automated using a recommended third-party provider for small membership organisations – MemberMojo. This has resulted in a simplified system for members and a considerable workload taken away from our membership secretary volunteer. The membership fee is set at £10 per household and £5 per individual member and represents a small investment in a hugely valued local community resource. The introduction of a donation button during the renewal process has been helpful in generating funds. Whilst volunteer hours are not recorded, the number of volunteer hours for this activity is in the region of 200 hours

Events

Our events programme continued in 2023.

The popular Easter Egg Hunt in April 2023 was well attended and tickets for the event sold out. A team of volunteers who helped on the day fulfilled roles such as the Easter Bunny, taking payments, organising and handing out prizes and running the raffle.

Our Summer Celebration was held in June 2023. The Melodians Steel Orchestra performed again for the community during the afternoon, the plant stall, bar and cake stall were a sell out and appetites were sated by food provided by Bliss in the Park.

We were pleased to hold two of our Over-60s Cream Teas. These are for individuals from the community largely based in residential and care homes. They were well attended and gave the attendees a chance to meet others and hear more about South Park Gardens from the trustees.

The income/expenditure from our events is listed in our Accounts, attached to this report.

Benches

In the Autumn of 2021, the programme of refurbishment of the benches in the Gardens commenced. In total 35 benches were refurbished. Enquiries for dedication of benches continued to grow in 2023 and these dedications are a valuable source of fundraising income for the Friends. At the end of 2023 seven benches remained for dedication

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

During the year the friends resumed and assisted a number of local residents with regular volunteering opportunities in South Park Gardens as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award programme. Activities undertaken include litter picking, gardening and event support.

ADMINISTRATION

The trustees continued to meet during 2023. The Trustees' communication with the membership has been maintained with PDF copies of newsletters sent by email. There have also been regular updates on the Friends' social media pages.

The Park is an invaluable community resource, but the level of use has posed some issues regarding littering and multiple parties at the weekend. The Friends regularly remind all park users to be mindful of each other whilst using the Gardens and also to take rubbish home.

Recurring administration expenses included insurance, Mailchimp, the domain name and ICO registration. These sums were met from reserves. Expenditure by the Gardening Club was planned use of reserves and was less than the amount contained in the reserves policy.

Debt management for the Garden Pavilion has improved considerably during the year. This has been achieved through the introduction of an automated payment and booking system for all hirers. The debtors list and length of credit is now minimal.

A small amount of income was written off by trustees as the hirer had moved from the area and ceased the business .

2023 Full Year Accounts

The Accounts are attached to this Trustee Report.

Sponsorship

We were delighted that Ellison continued their valuable sponsorship in 2023. They have been involved with South Park Gardens for many years now. This sponsorship helps us fund elements of our events programme.

TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

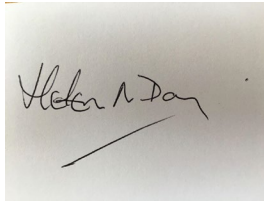
Friends of South Park Gardens is a charity and is run and managed entirely by volunteers. All volunteers give their time and expertise which enables us to do what we do safely and to the best of our ability and resources.

The trustees would like to record their appreciation for all those who give their time to Friends of South Park Gardens. The Chair would also like to record her thanks to all trustees for their contribution and commitment to the running of the Friends.

CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

APPROVED by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by Helen Day

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature appears to read 'Helen Day' and is followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line.

Date 12th September 2024

Friends of South Park Gardens Charity registration number 1162459

THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK
GARDENS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
RECEIPTS			
Income from subscriptions/donations	2	1,982	4,964
Gross income from events		3,787	3,336
Sponsorship		1,000	1,000
Garden Room Rent and Takings		8,122	5,010
Bench Plaque donations		2,307	1,958
Interest	3	3,164	693
Sundry- plant sales		448	286
		<hr/> 20,810	<hr/> 17,247
PAYMENTS			
Expenses of events	4	2,404	1,762
Garden room outgoings		1,249	648
Insurance		274	371
Website and newsletter		209	892
Sundry- training		500	134
General Administrative Overheads		962	1,221
Plants purchased and wild garden		6,711	3,841
Defibrillator		-	2,000
		<hr/> 12,309	<hr/> 10,871
SURPLUS			
		<hr/> 8,501	<hr/> 6,376
Balance brought forward		84,977	91,784
Net increase in funds		8,501	6,376
Bench Renovation Project		-	(13,183)
Balance carried forward		<hr/> 93,478	<hr/> 84,977

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cash at banks - current account	16,258	11,252
- deposit account	74,936	71,772
-paypal account	2,204	1,671
Trade debtors	80	282
Total assets	<u>93,478</u>	<u>84,977</u>
Represented by:		
Unrestricted funds	93,478	84,977

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NOTES

1. Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the receipts and payments basis of accounting as permitted by the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting by Charities' issued by the Charity Commission for smaller charities. Thus income includes amounts reimbursed by the London Borough of Merton relating to previous years and expenses include items where the relevant income has been recognised in earlier years.

2. Income from subscriptions/donations

The income from subscriptions for 2022 also includes subscriptions from 2021

3. Interest

Interest represents higher interest rates earned on the CCLA deposit account

4. Income and expenditure of events

	2023			2022		
	Sponsorship & Income	Expenses	Profit	Sponsorship & Income	Expenses	Profit
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Easter Egg Hunt	1,709	(619)	1,090	1,620	(401)	1,219
Summer Picnic	3,078	(1,735)	1,343	2,716	(1,300)	1,416
Over 60's cream tea	-	(50)	(50)	-	(61)	(61)
	<u>4,787</u>	<u>(2,404)</u>	<u>2,383</u>	<u>4,336</u>	<u>(1,742)</u>	<u>2,574</u>