

Friends of Vauxhall Park
Income and Expenditure Account

<u>Income</u>	<u>Year to 31.10.22</u>	<u>Year to 31.10.21</u>
	£	£
Membership Subscriptions	184.00	316.00
Membership Donations	506.00	963.00
Donations	0.00	20.00
Gift Aid	0.00	196.20
Bank Interest	5.63	2.94
Hall Hire returned deposit	80.00	0.00
Bank Gratuities	0.00	152.00
Amazon Smile donations	18.06	7.16
Total Income	793.69	1,657.30
 <u>Expenditure</u>		
Hall Hire	0.00	40.00
Insurance	157.00	279.75
Netting & ties	0.00	29.06
Gardening Tools / Hose & reel	238.13	47.93
Grand reopening	0.00	4,645.17
Bog Pond Excavation and build	0.00	391.80
Website Go Daddy	28.66	28.78
Printing Costs	31.73	0.00
Gift Martin Little (gardener)	50.00	0.00
Plants	103.82	118.63
Refreshments volunteer groups	182.10	0.00
Total Expenditure	791.44	5,581.12
Excess income over/expenditure	2.25	3,923.82
 Balance Brought Forward from last year	<u>33,927.92</u>	<u>37,851.74</u>
Balance at Year End	<u>33,930.17</u>	<u>33,927.92</u>
 Lloyds Current account at year end	4,688.50	4,691.88
Lloyds Business Saving account at year end	<u>29,241.67</u>	<u>29,236.04</u>
Total	<u>33,930.17</u>	<u>33,927.92</u>

Lyn Woodcraft 03.11.2022



FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK

Chair's report and future park activities

My report covers events for the 13 months since the last AGM in June 2022.

The main positive item of note over the past year has been the continued massive effort by our group of volunteers to keep the park looking fantastic. When we met last June, we were faced with a prolonged dry spell without gardening support from our gardener, Martin Little, who was on sick leave. As a result of the discussions at the AGM, several members volunteered to carry out watering duties on a regular basis that ensured that the plants and new trees survived the hot spell. Without their help the outcome would have been very different.

Our WhatsApp volunteer gardening group currently has seventy-one members. At a session in March, we had our largest gardening group with twenty-one volunteers. I have lost track of how many volunteering gardening sessions that we have had over the last twelve months – it is probably around twenty. The number of volunteers at each session is higher than last year with the work focused on gardening with very little leaf clearing that dominated a lot of the sessions previously. Again, there have been ad hoc gardening sessions involving Tessa and Charles King-Farlow, and Jill Gregson has worked tirelessly on weeding the lavender beds on a regular basis.

At the last AGM we were concerned with the impending park award season having lost Martin at a critical time. As a result, the volunteers stepped in to do a huge amount of work in a very short period and we were successful in retaining our gold medal in the London in Bloom award in the 'park of the year' category (won by Victoria Embankment Gardens, Westminster). Matthew Gwyther led an initiative for the park to enter the Green Heritage Award scheme, part of the Green Flag scheme, for the first time in 2023 as an additional award to London in Bloom and Green Flag. We were subsequently informed by the Parks' department that our entry had been deferred to 2024 as a result of a group decision across several Lambeth parks.

On the conservation front, we have started work again this Spring in the area by the Montessori school following the installation of the bike racks that seem to have stopped football damage in the bed. A local Duke of Edinburgh scheme student, Charlie Scardino, has been constructing a wild fence along the area that is taking shape. We plan to plant wildflower seeds there once we are sure that plant damage is less likely. Polly Freeman has been running sessions in the conservation area for children from St Stephen's school to introduce them to nature and to extend the insect hotel.

We organised the first lavender harvesting of the new beds in September. Approximately one hundred people came along, over two days, to harvest the lavender. The flowers were taken down to Carshalton and the resulting oil sold to benefit the park. Ruth Morgan, who for many years, has overseen the distillation has now stepped down from that role and we would like to thank her for all her hard work.

We continue to encourage corporate groups to come to the park. A group of ten, from Atkins

Global Engineering, spent a couple of hours weeding the lavender beds as part of a Corporate Volunteering Day. They gave us twelve pairs of secateurs which will come in very handy for gardening groups and the next lavender harvest.

A corporate volunteer group from TFL, made up of people working at the Oval Village development, visited the park in autumn 2022 and helped with various tasks.

You may have noticed the recent addition of four crab apple trees in random points around the park. The FOVP was not involved in this and have pointed out that three are in locations that are inconsistent with the existing planting scheme or will not allow the trees to grow. We have agreed with the Parks' department that these will be moved with FOVP advice to new locations over the winter when the growing season has ended.

However, it is not all good news. We knew that one day we would be losing full time gardening support in the park. We were informed in March that Martin was going down to two days a week in our park from the beginning of June. While some of his daily duties such as a litter picking will be covered by a separate team within the Parks' department, we do not yet know how this new arrangement will work across all gardening related activities.

A particular concern is watering as Martin carried this out throughout every day that he was working with the Friends carrying on the duties over the weekends. We have suggested that a potential solution could be to use refugees who are housed locally under Parks' department supervision to do this work (one refugee is in our volunteer group and regularly helps with gardening work). While the refugees cannot be paid, this work could offer them an opportunity to enjoy time out of their hotel rooms and give them a social outlet.

We continue to push for the key items from phase I of the park renovation to be resolved, the replacement of the vandalised equipment in the playground. This is now scheduled for 8 August.

While we understand the current economic climate and its impact on local funding, the FOVP continue to raise our concerns on the impact of losing full time support with Lambeth Council. The renovated park and increasing population in the area means a significant increase in gardening work that cannot be covered by the FOVP. Also, anti-social behaviour has increased, examples of which we saw last summer and are sadly already occurring again this year.

In terms of other parts of the park, the tennis courts are the most booked in the borough, another indication of how valuable the park is to the local community. The Parco Café continues to be successful and is helped by Laura Jaeger through her work on the pots and the beds.

Moving on to future activities.

Planning permission for the new building in Phase II of the park renovation project was awaited. Some objections were lodged because of the inclusion of a kiosk and toilets in the scheme. The consultation has been reopened, for unexplained reasons, but will close shortly. The application will then go before the planning committee in June and, if approved, work could start in September.

We plan to harvest the new lavender beds again over a weekend in September. Details will follow nearer the time.

There were two events in the park this summer: A Nigerian Festival on 17 June and an Eritrean Martyrs Remembrance Day on 20 June. A late Summer Fair in September, with Laura Jaeger as the organiser, was under consideration.

I would like to end by thanking Ian Ross and Kevin Wallace from the Parks' department for their time to find solutions for the changes arising from the withdrawal of full-time gardening support. Also, to the counsellors, Isla Wrathmell and Martin Bailey for their help and support, and to Claire Holland for her recent, very rapid intervention to help us when we needed help. And of course, the volunteers who have given up their free time to keep the park looking great!

John Roome

Chairman

June 2023