



# FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK

## **Chair's report and future park activities**

My report covers events for the 12 months since the last AGM in June 2023.

The Friends have continued to be actively engaged in many aspects of the upkeep and running of the park over the last 12 months with significant input from our volunteer gardening group that had 71 members in June 2023 and now stands at 110. We had less than 10 in early 2020.

Volunteer gardening sessions have been running almost weekly with attendance regularly between 10 and 20 volunteers, up on last year. This has been a significant time commitment for me, Tessa, Polly and Sarah Macdonald. The group is becoming more diverse including the addition of several young people who are on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The social activity after each session is an important part of the enjoyment of our work. We funded a social event at the Parco Café in October to thank the volunteers for their hard work, which was very well attended, and we were thrilled to see our local councillors, Isla Wrathmell, Martin Bailey and Tom Swaine Jameson and the local MP, Florence Eshalomi, join us to show their support and appreciation for the work that we put into the maintaining the park.

Our group worked throughout the winter clearing leaves and continues to maintain the entire Fawcett Garden, the ornamental beds, the garden areas around the Parco Café and the conservation area next to the Montessori school. Jill Gregson has again been carrying out the endless task of ad hoc weeding in the lavender beds. So far this year, we have not had to carry out any watering duties due to the constant rainfall. The gardening input from the Lambeth Parks' department gardener at two days a week continues to be minimal and insufficient with no signs of changing. The Parks' department main activities are grass cutting, hedge trimming and litter picking, although we would like it to be much more.

The natural fence has now been completed in the conservation area by the Montessori school. The bog pond there was relined by us, a huge task, but sadly it does not seem to be effective in retaining sufficient water. We will see whether the water supply from the Montessori roof can be increased. The area is being temporarily used as a storage point for the plants that were removed from the front of the green building in anticipation of the start of the phase II works so any longer-term planting in the conservation area has been put on hold.

We organised the second lavender harvesting of the new beds in September. Unfortunately, we were unable to arrange for the flowers to be used to make lavender oil this year, but it did mean that the beds were pruned back in just one weekend and did not have to reply on our volunteer group having to complete the work over subsequent weeks as happened last year.

We have also assisted the tennis court users in dealing with the flooding of the courts that made them unusable in October 2023. Thanks to continued pressure by us to find a solution,

a 2-day power wash of the courts cleared the problem in late November. It seems that this will need to be at least an annual process to help the water drain from the courts.

The FoVP agreed to fund and plant the addition of 300 lavender plants to fill in the gaps in the lavender beds at a cost of around £3,000 using the parks' department purchase discount. Despite making the request in early April, the order was not placed at mid-June – we cancelled the order as it was too late in the season to plant them out.

Tom Anstey has joined us as a trustee and treasurer and has brought new ideas to attract more funds, members and volunteers. QR codes have been added to the notice boards to assist in making these easier.

We do not yet know whether we have retained the park's green flag award (judge to assess the park in late June) and the London in Bloom gold award (assessment later in 2024). We also do not know whether the park has been successful in obtaining a Green Heritage Award as part of a group submission.

The trustees have had to put in considerable time and effort to work with the Parks' department to help maintain the park. While we recognise that their funding and staffing have been reduced, we have struggled to have effective bilateral communication, which makes our efforts more time consuming and inefficient. We have been frustrated in our efforts throughout the year to be kept informed on Phase II of the park's works and have not been consulted on key decisions such as the removal of the under 5s' play area from the planning proposal. We reported last year that several new trees were planted in places that were inconsistent with the existing planting scheme or will not allow the trees to grow. These were moved, but then more tree planting occurred in early 2024 without consultation.

We continued to push for the key items from phase I of the park renovation to be resolved. We were successful in getting the vandalised equipment near the Ashmole entrance replaced, the witch's hat was repaired (now broken again) and the surfaces under the table tennis tables made permanent. This now completes the main items from Phase I.

#### Future activities

We intend to hold the lavender harvesting managed by Louise over the weekend of 7 and 8 September with a distillation of the oil to follow. This could generate £2,000 to £3,000 for the FoVP. Subject to committee approval, we plan to hold another social event to thank all the volunteers for their continued hard work later in 2024.

We planned to hold a Late Summer Fair in September 2023, but as the process working with Lambeth Council on getting licences, approvals etc has become so complicated and risky to the FoVP, the FoVP have decided to postpone the event until a time when it becomes easier to work with the council.

Phase II of the park renovation works (the replacement of the green building and the development of the area behind it) looks likely to start in 2024, possibly imminently. We are still waiting to be updated with no real news since our last meeting with Lambeth council staff on 11 April. With 11 days' notice, we were informed of a start date of 17 June, but we objected on the basis that no storage for our equipment had been provided. Our objection was noted, and we now understand that work will commence on 24 June. We are working on a storage solution.

**John Roome 18.06.24**

**Friends of Vauxhall Park**  
**Income and Expenditure Account**  
**Year to 31 October 2023**

<b><u>Income</u></b>	<b><u>Year to 31.10.23</u></b>	<b><u>Year to 31.10.22</u></b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Membership Subscriptions	206.00	184.00
Membership Donations	635.00	506.00
Ring-fenced Donation for Phase II works	1,000.00	0.00
Gift Aid	551.78	0.00
Bank Interest	106.85	5.63
Hall Hire returned deposit	0.00	80.00
Lavender Sales	2,745.00	0.00
Amazon Smile donations	23.70	18.06
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>5,268.33</b>	<b>793.69</b>
 <b><u>Expenditure</u></b>		
Insurance	157.00	157.00
Gardening Tools / Hose & reel	0.00	238.13
Website Go Daddy	60.32	28.66
Printing Costs	0.00	31.73
Gift Martin Gardener	0.00	50.00
Plants	0.00	103.82
Refreshments volunteer groups	251.70	182.10
Social Evening	550.40	0.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,019.42</b>	<b>791.44</b>
 <b>Excess income over expenditure</b>	 <b>4,248.91</b>	 <b>2.25</b>

Balance Brought Forward from last year	<u>33,930.17</u>	<u>33,927.92</u>
<b>Balance at Year End</b>	<b><u>38,179.08</u></b>	<b><u>33,930.17</u></b>

Lloyds Current account at year end	5,830.56	4,688.50
Lloyds Business Saving account at year end	3,037.29	29,241.67
Fix term deposit	<u>29,311.23</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>38,179.08</u></b>	<b><u>33,930.17</u></b>

<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>37,179.08</b>	<b>33,930.17</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b><u>1,000.00</u></b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b><u>38,179.08</u></b>	<b><u>33,930.17</u></b>

**Lyn Woodcraft 10.11.23**

**N.B. £443.28 interest due on fixed deposit maturity 02.11.23**