



FRIENDS OF VAUXHALL PARK

Chair's report and future park activities

My report covers a review of the Friends of Vauxhall Park (FoVP) events for the year to 31 October 2025 and a summary of future activities for the forthcoming year.

We agreed at the last AGM in June 2025 that we would hold future AGMs in the Spring, rather than the Summer, so that we are better aligned with our gardening year.

The Friends have continued to be very actively engaged in many, diverse aspects of the upkeep, running and development of the park over the year.

Our gardening group continues to maintain the entire Fawcett Garden, the corner ornamental beds, the garden areas around the Parco Café, the rockery garden and the conservation area next to the Montessori school. The Parks' department's main activities are grass cutting, hedge trimming and litter picking. But it should be noted that the FoVP continues to devote a large amount of time to dealing with Lambeth Council in various park related matters, some of which are covered in this report.

The volunteer gardening sessions continue to be run almost weekly with attendance slightly down on last year at around 10 or less, but it has picked up again in early 2026. We continue to get new volunteers from a diverse range of ages, backgrounds and gardening experience. The total number in the WhatsApp group now hovers around 150 (it was 10 in 2020). The post session coffees and chat continue to be very popular and well attended – they are an important and necessary part of our annual expenditure.

A new activity in the summer was a rota of volunteers, some of whom were local residents and not in the volunteer group, who watered the park during dry spells through August. This involved moving the soaker hoses around the Fawcett Garden early in the morning and again in the early evening. The impact was significant: the heat, long hours of sunshine and the watering resulted in a spectacular horticultural display not seen before throughout the Summer and Autumn.

A major event was finally getting access to the new building in August to store our equipment. The wait was certainly worth it as the space gives us room to store our tools in an orderly way, a luxury that we have never had before. Sarah Chambers and Laura scoped the storage racks etc that we will purchase shortly. A former trustee, Faith Boardman, kindly donated £2,000 for the fitout. The Parks' department have asked for our use of the space to be legally formalised but have yet to specify how this will be achieved.

The kiosk tender process was run in October with Polly representing the FoVP. The winning bid was made by a local resident. The date of its opening is unknown to us.

We ran 2 corporate volunteering days with Hyatt Hotels and the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government and have established a relationship with Octavia House schools for the pupils to run weekly litter picks in the park. Both events were very successful, and both groups want to come back to do more work in 2026.

We again funded a social event at the Parco Café in October to thank the volunteers for their hard work. It was generously supported by Ardian and his family.

We ran the fourth lavender harvesting of the new beds in September, and the flowers were used to make lavender oil and, for the first time, muslin lavender bags. The event was a huge success due to its organisation by Laura, Louise and Polly. We continue to sell the oil and bags through the Parco Café.

Vauxhall Park retained its Green Flag and the London in Bloom gold awards. We have reviewed the London in Bloom scoresheet and have noted the judges identifying the need for pruning and other works to be undertaken in the orchard. This is not a skillset that we have – we will need to look for assistance here from Lambeth Parks and volunteers. In addition, Vauxhall Park has been given Green Heritage Site status by the Green Flag Awards body.

A significant event was the partial completion of the Phase II project. To recall, the work was planned to start in June 2024 and to be completed by September 2024. It started in July 2024 and was handed over by the builders in early 2025, a significant overrun. The scope of the building works was unjustifiably altered and together with defects in the build and design, this has resulted in a substantial remediation cost estimate. During 2025, the FoVP met council officials on many occasions to scope and understand the remedial works. We still await information on the scope of the works, the funding and date of the works. This could impact the opening of the kiosk.

We continue to push on repair work. After much discussion, the ‘witch’s hat’ in the playground can now be repaired. One or more of the trampolines have remained out of action since July. The FoVP paid for the ornamental fountain to be cleaned and repainted.

The 2 regular annual events of the Nigerian and Eritrean festivals were held again in 2025. On 7 July, the park was used as the start and finish of the Kidney Research London bridges walk that potentially would have involved 1,750 people with food facilities, entertainment and toilets being erected in the park. The day was wet and turnout was low. As reported at the last AGM, we were not consulted on this event, and our significant concerns were ignored by the council staff. Our local councillors assisted here, which we were very grateful for, and we eventually had some response from the council staff. However, the event was a *fait accompli*. We then put our efforts to secure the PIL funds arising from this and the other events. We were promised £1,200, which we earmarked for plants for the bed in front of the new building. In late 2025, the £1,200 was withdrawn by Lambeth Council as part of their financial remedial processes. In early 2026, this decision was apparently reversed and we were told that we would be given the funds. We still await them.

The tennis courts continue to flood and have areas of moss. In early 2025, one tennis player broke her wrist slipping on the moss. The FoVP have reported this and the risk of more injuries, but there was no power cleaning of the courts in 2025 and there may now be a question of whether the court drainage needs rectification, a point that we made when the courts were first laid.

As we discussed at the last AGM, the Parks’ department have been in discussion with the FoVP over the development of an under 5s’ play area in the unused space between the Montessori school and the new building. While no budget has been proposed, we think it should cost below £100,000, probably closer to £50,000. The FoVP have been asked by the Parks’ department to part fundraise for the project. The committee’s position on this is clear: we do not have the time or skills to fundraise; we fail to see why the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on the new constructions in the park’s vicinity cannot be used to fund the works given the new housing is resulting in more footfall in the park; we want the phase II works completed before starting phase III; we will assist to make the project happen. These conversations continue.

In July, a statue was unveiled in Coronation Gardens, Wandsworth to commemorate Fanny Wilkinson, the designer of Vauxhall Park, one of the first female landscape gardeners in the UK, and the role that she played in helping create 75 public parks in London.

Subject to committee approval, we plan to hold another social event later in 2026, along similar lines to the 2025 event, to thank all the volunteers for their continued hard work.

In December, Faith Boardman stood down as a trustee after nearly 8 years. The board would like to thank Faith for her contribution to the FoVP and her enormous generosity.

John Roome 26 March 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Roome', with a vertical line at the end.

Friends of Vauxhall Park Accounts Year to Oct 2025

<u>Income</u>		<u>Year to 31.10.25</u>		<u>Year to 31.10.24</u>
		£		£
Membership Subscriptions and Donations	£	1,345.00	£	1,227.00
Ring-fenced Donation for Phase II works	£	1,000.00	£	-
Gift Aid	£	558.24	£	184.38
Bank Interest	£	840.48	£	1,001.16
Lavender Sales	£	800.00	£	577.00
Total Income	£	4,543.72	£	2,989.54
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Insurance	£	173.39	£	157.00
Gardening Tools / Hose & reel	£	327.99	£	353.39
Website Hosting and Email Domain	£	69.92	£	268.85
Cleaning supplies	£	15.75		
Friends' equipment storage outfitting (CCTV, key cutting)	£	100.48	£	-
Fountain refurbishment	£	950.00	£	-
Plants	£	-	£	94.99
Refreshments volunteer groups	£	480.05	£	512.50
Social Evening	£	317.90	£	-
25th Anniversary Event Costs*	£	350.00	£	290.00
Card Reader Purchase	£	-	£	46.80
Card Reader Service Charges	£	6.00	£	12.69
Lavender Harvest - Oil Bottles	£	-	£	165.43
Lavender Harvest - Still Donation	£	50.00	£	100.00
Lavender Harvest - Signs	£	338.40	£	-
Total Expenditure	£	3,179.88	£	2,001.65
Excess income over expenditure	£	1,363.84	£	987.89
Balance Brought Forward from last year	£	39,166.97	£	38,155.38
Balance at Year End	£	40,530.81	£	39,143.27
Lloyds Current account at year end	£	9,601.90	£	5,237.02
Lloyds Business Saving account at year end	£	928.91	£	3,929.95
Fixed term deposits (mature 17/4/25)	£	30,000.00	£	30,000.00
Total	£	40,530.81	£	39,166.97
Unrestricted funds	£	38,530.81	£	38,166.97
Restricted funds	£	2,000.00	£	1,000.00
Total funds	£	40,530.81	£	39,166.97