

Friends of Wanstead Parklands

Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023

The Trustees of Friends of Wanstead Parklands present their Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023. Friends of Wanstead Parklands registered as a CIO on 6th June 2016.

Charity details

Registered charity number: 1167459

Trustees:

The trustees who manage Friends of Wanstead Parklands are as follows:

Trustee	Office	First Appointed	Last Reappointed	Resigned
Simon Skelding	Treasurer	29-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Gill James	Secretary	29-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Peter Brimson	Chair	29-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
John Sharpe		29-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Adrian Russell		10-Jun-21	22-Feb-24	
Lucy Dawes		22-Feb-24		

The charity is governed by a constitution adopted on 6 June 2016.

Trustees are appointed or reappointed annually at the annual general meeting held in February or March.

Objects of the charity:

- To promote the use of Wanstead Park for the benefit of the inhabitants of the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Newham and Waltham Forest, their surrounding areas and the wider public at large;
- To provide or assist in the provision of facilities or opportunities for recreation and other leisure time occupation for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving their conditions of life, in particular but not exclusively by the preservation, promotion, support, assistance and improvement of Wanstead Parklands;
- To promote for the benefit of the general public the conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Wanstead Parklands, especially its features of historic, architectural and wildlife interest;
- To advance public education in the character, archaeology and history of Wanstead Parklands.

Achievements and performance

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects, and the key achievements of the charity, during the year:

Campaigning

During 2023 the Friends of Wanstead Parklands continued to campaign for investment in the restoration and management of Wanstead Parklands, and continues to work constructively both with the City of London Corporation ("CofL"), which manages most of the land that makes up the Wanstead Parklands, and with Epping Forest ("EF").

This activity has met with some frustration during the year, as CofL have scrapped the Wanstead Park Liaison Group, leaving just the Epping Forest Consultation Group (EFCG) which deals with the whole forest and meets just three times a year. This, combined with ongoing staff vacancies at CofL, in respect of Epping Forest, have restricted progress, however the Friends continue to work tirelessly to campaign for investment in the restoration and management of the park.

Our liaison with the Heritage of London Trust (HoLT) resulted in repair work being undertaken on the Grotto Landing stage. The next phase of activity is with the consultants who will work up detailed, costed options on measures to prevent future collapse of the Grotto structure, final appearance of the building façade and site security. The Friends have been involved in working parties on the future of the Grotto and also the Temple.

The Friends of Wanstead Parklands also continues to support to the project for play equipment in Wanstead park, having donated a sum of £2,000 in 2022. The natural play area was constructed during 2022 and 2023, and is now a well loved and used part of the park; the Friends have pledged further financial support in the future.

Events run

The Friends of Wanstead Parklands ran many successful events during the course of a year, including online history talks, park walks and another successful annual quiz event in November 2023, all with the aim of raising awareness of Wanstead Parklands' unique heritage, and offering an opportunity to enjoy the natural aspect of the park.

The Friends continue to hold the very successful litter pick events which began in 2020 and became a monthly event in 2021 and are now supplemented with a regular bookstall. These litter picks have generated significant interest and enabled community participation in the maintenance and improvement of Wanstead Parklands.

All of these events attract a significant number of adults and children into Wanstead Park.

Promotion of the Park

Through a quarterly newsletter, website and social media (with over 5,000 members in a Facebook group and over 2,000 followers on Twitter/X), and a stall held at the annual Wanstead Festival, the Friends provided information to members, and the wider public, on key developments regarding maintenance works in the park, including the signage and grotto projects mentioned above, the new natural play area, repair works to the lakes, and the re-introduction of grazing cattle to Wanstead Park.

Other projects

As well as publicising the re-introduction of grazing cattle to Wanstead Park, the Friends continue to support the project by organising a rota of volunteer cow wardens.

The Friends continues to consult with members on ideas for projects that could be covered by small grants and existing funds. Any such ideas are discussed with the CofL with the aim of making further improvements to the park whilst we campaign for more significant funds for bigger projects.

Financial Review

Reserves:

The charity held cash at bank at December 2023 of £19,100 (31 December 2022: £16,600), of which £14,670 (31 December 2022: £12,200) is unrestricted funds. These funds are held in order to meet any unexpected expenditure that may occur. The charity aims to hold at least £7,000 and no more than £15,000 of reserves at the year end; reserves can be used to fund park projects of value up to £5,000.

Overview of financial performance:

Income for the full year 2023 was £3,836 (2022: £4,250), with 38% (2022: 37%) coming from membership subscriptions, which was slightly down compared with 2022. The remaining income comes from some sponsorship, donations and merchandise sales, and from the quiz night event mentioned above.

The main ongoing costs are insurance costs and the costs of running the website and quarterly newsletter, and there was further investment in merchandise (mainly books) made during the year, intended to be sold in future to generate further funds.

No significant donations were made in 2023, following the donations towards the playground fund and the signage project in 2022.

After these costs, the Friends had a net increase in funds of £2,308 in 2023 (2022: net decrease of £784).

Statement of receipts and payments for the year:

Net assets

Donations

Income Statement

Revenue

	Full Year 2023 GBP	Full Year 2022 GBP	Full Year 2021 GBP	Full Year 2020 GBP
Membership	1,445	1,561	1,740	541
Sponsorship	605	-	-	-
Donations	405	831	328	45
Events / fundraising	965	716	799	-
Merchandise	367	1,130	321	22
Litter picking equipment sales	30	5	206	-
Paypal/Amazon just giving	18	6	44	-
Total	3,836	4,250	3,437	608

Expenses

Purchase of merchandise	-298	-894	-100	-
Subscriptions	-	-52	-52	-52
Events / fundraising costs	-172	-185	-20	-
Newsletter costs	-305	-285	-	-
Miscellaneous Expenses	-34	-	-	-
Printing and postage	-	-75	-112	-
Website expenses	-288	-263	-240	-316
Zoom subscription	-144	-144	-144	-
Litter picking equipment purchases	-	-	-130	-165
Insurance	-141	-141	-141	-141
Bank fees	-87	-95	-19	-17
Total	-1,468	-2,134	-958	-692

Net income before donations

2,368 2,116 2,479 -85

Donations

Donation to playground fund	-2,000
Donation to signage	-900
Other donations	-60

Total net income

2,308 -784 2,479 -85

Statement of assets and liabilities:

31 December 2023 GBP	31 December 2022 GBP	31 December 2021 GBP	31 December 2020 GBP
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Assets

19,656	17,348	22,233	15,653
0	0	-4,100	0
19,656	17,348	18,133	15,654
HSBC current account	14,670	12,183	17,010
Nationwide savings account	4,425	4,425	4,425
Petty cash	74	74	74
Stock	487	667	724

Liabilities

Net assets

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees:

Peter Brimson

Chair

22nd October 2024

Peter Brimson

		Appointed	Reappointed	Resigned
Simon Skelton	Treasurer	24-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Gill James	Secretary	24-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Peter Brimson	Chair	24-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
John Sharpe		24-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Adrian Russell		24-Mar-17	22-Feb-24	
Lucy Davies		22-Feb-24		

The charity is governed by a committee of Trustees.

Trustees are appointed or reappointed at the annual general meeting held in February.

Objects of the charity

- To promote the use of Wandle Park for the benefit of the inhabitants of the London Borough of Merton, including the local community, their surrounding areas and the wider public at large.
- To provide facilities for the enjoyment of the land and opportunities for recreation and other activities in the interests of social welfare and with a view to improving the quality of life, in particular but not exclusively by the local community, through support, assistance and improvement of Wandle Parklands.
- To provide for the benefit of the general public the conservation and improvement of the physical and cultural environment of Wandle Parklands, especially its features of historic and natural interest.
- To secure the efficient and economical management of Wandle Parklands.