

Friends of Rowntree Park

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2024

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CHARITY INFORMATION

For the year ending 30 September 2024

Charity Overview

Registered Charity Name:	Friends of Rowntree Park
Charity Number:	1183948
Principal Office Address:	16 Norfolk Street York YO23 1JY
Trustees:	Lucy Katherine Brown Agnes Reka Szechy Edward George Woollard (Chair from October 2024) Polly Louisa Bennett Jane Elen Mackay Matthew David Segar (resigned April 2024) Rebecca Blues Anthony Chester Dr Catherine Jane Mortimer (Chair until October 2024)

TRUSTEES' REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2024

Introduction

The trustees hereby present the annual report for Friends of Rowntree Park, a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (registered number 1183948). Friends of Rowntree Park is a charity focused on maintaining and improving Rowntree Park in York.

The Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the year were as follows:

- Lucy Katherine Brown
- Agnes Reka Szechy
- Edward George Woollard (Chair from October 2024)
- Polly Louisa Bennett
- Jane Elen Mackay
- Matthew David Segar (resigned April 2024)
- Rebecca Blues
- Anthony Chester
- Dr Catherine Jane Mortimer (Chair until October 2024)

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Trust Deed. Trustees meet quarterly, and all decisions are reached by agreement. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Background

The Friends of Rowntree Park are a registered charity. From 1993-2019, the Friends of Rowntree Park ran as a not-for-profit organisation with a committee leading the day-to-day management of our volunteer activities.

The Friends of Rowntree Park became a charity in June 2019 and trustees were appointed at this time. All trustees and committee members are volunteers.

Our volunteers love Rowntree Park in York and help care for it. Our volunteers do activities such as garden, litter pick, help with wildlife, run community events and projects, as well as focusing on education and mental health and wellbeing.

Objectives and Activities

Our vision is for The Friends to be a well-resourced and sustainable group of volunteers and staff focused on enhancing the value of the park as a cherished, thriving, green space at the heart of our local community.

We aim to the quality of life for residents and visitors through use of the park and its facilities, enabling and delivering a range of activities that engage all sectors of the community.

Our aims are:

- Conserve, protect and improve the physical space and environment of the park
- Offer educational opportunities related to history, biodiversity and other aspects of good environmental practices
- Provide opportunities for education, recreation and other leisure interests
- Promote civic responsibility, volunteering, health and wellbeing

Over the 2023-24 financial year, the Friends have contributed to these aims through a huge and varied range of activities, including but not limited to:

- Regular children's events, including a weekly Forest School and Wild Ones nature youth group for teenage girls, and monthly Very Young Friend and Family Forest Schools.

- Other children's / family events, such as the Easter Trail, Children's Christmas Crafts, Autumn Art, Make Space for Girls (a five week programme of free events), the Scarecrow Trail and Halloween Event
- Adult events, including Wreath Making, Christmas Crafts, Willow-weaving, history walks and talks and the Tropica DJ picnic event
- Other projects, such as Art in the Park, the Remembrance Display and the Trailblazers project (a range of history workshops and walks, boards, online survey, a children's book and also a tansy beetle sculpture – part of the city-wide trail).

We have also organised a range of outside providers to run events including woodworking sessions, nature writing, nature gatherings / wellbeing circle, sound baths, theatre and group social meet ups / gatherings and children's birthday parties.

We run a membership scheme where anyone can join the Friends of Rowntree Park. This money helps fund the work we do.

We have a small group of around 50 dedicated volunteers that want to make Rowntree Park the best it can be. Volunteer gardening sessions are held four mornings a week and occasionally on a Saturday. The volunteers work on Rosemary's Sensory Garden, the Long Borders, Rose Garden, Friends' Garden, Pollinator Beds, Rockery and Wildlife areas. They also partake in other key volunteering activities like bird feeding, litter-picking and helping at events.

We run a range of events for all ages. Many of these tend to focus on natural and 'eco' themes.

Objectives and Activities

Key achievements for during the 2023-24 financial year include:

Make Space for Girls in Rowntree Park project

In May funds raised for the Making Space for Girls initiative were used to install new equipment into an area co-designed with the teenage girls who have attended the five-week free programme of events and activities. Around 400 girls have been involved with the project, which also involved leading sessions for York International Women's Week, at the Mansion House for International Women's Day and at York Theatre Royal for the Women of the World Show.

The project won the 'Best of the Best' award from Green Flag Awards for the 'Best Initiative to increase use of parks by women and girls' in November 2023.

Gardening

Despite the park being under water for 3 months, the volunteers adapted, and the park looked great again. New welcome and history boards were also installed.

Community Link

We continue to work with the council to report issues and suggest improvements. This year, key themes have been flooding and communication between teams linked to flooding and also who does what in the park and when.

Social Media

In the past year we have made significant strides in expanding our social media presence, which is vital for engaging with our community and promoting our activities. Since November 2023 we have increased our followers by 1.1k. The growth reflects our ongoing efforts to connect with our audience and share the positive impact of our initiatives. Our following on Instagram has also now reached 12.3k. This impressive reach demonstrates the effectiveness of our social media in engaging a wider audience and raising awareness about the Friends of Rowntree Park. These numbers not only highlight our growing influence but also provide an opportunity to further engage with our community. By continuing to enhance our social media presence, we can attract more volunteers, participants and members.

Future Plans

Lodge Project

The Lodge Project Team continues to meet regularly and are currently looking at grant-making organisations for a large bid to support this project, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. Submission for a grant is likely to be made in early 2025. Work is also ongoing on our negotiations with the council on the lease and the Heads of Terms are currently being agreed.

Green Park Award

Rowntree Park was not entered for the Green Flag Award in 2024, but the aim is to enter in 2025.

Structure, Governance and Management

Our Trustees and Committee work closely together. In fact, some trustees were originally committee members and still have active roles on the committee too.

Our trustees oversee the strategic planning of the charity. They make sure the Friends plans are in line with the charity's aims and that the charity's funds are handled responsibly.

Earlier this year, Cath Mortimer stepped down as the Chair of the Board of Trustees and recruitment is now underway for a new Chair. As an interim measure the current Trustees have agreed to take on the role of Chair on a six-month rolling basis. Edward Wollard will be in the position of Chair until the end of March 2025.

Our committee members are involved in the day-to-day running of the charity. They plan and run events and activities in line with the charity's aims and objectives. The committee has open/public meetings four times a year in January, April, June and October (AGM). Subgroups also meet throughout the year.

The charity has a paid charity manager, Abigail Gaines, who works part-time, looking after the volunteers and members, as well as coordinating our wide-ranging activities and all the design and advertising. Those leading the Forest School and Gardening strands receive payment towards their work and we pay for a few hours of admin/finance help as well as an accountant for our end of year accounts.

Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold reserves of no less than three months of ongoing expenditure.

Political Donations

The Friends has no party-political affiliations and does not make political donations.

Financial Accounts

The accounts for the year ending 30 September 2024 have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Articles of Association and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities – Statement of Recommended Practice, applicable to all charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standards.

The financial year has ended with a net deficit (total income less total expenditure) of £13,169, made up of a net deficit on unrestricted funds of £3,294, and a net deficit on restricted funds of £9,875.

Total charitable income in 2023/24 was £63,914, compared to £78,268 in 2022/23, a decrease of £14,354.

Total expenditure on charitable activities in 2023/24 was £77,083, compared to £52,117 in 2022/23 an increase of £24,966.

The balance on unrestricted funds will reduce the charity reserves, however the release of restricted funds during the year means that there remains £22,889 in unrestricted funds to be carried forward. The balance on restricted funds will be carried forward to next financial year, in accordance with restricted grant funding requirements.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

In preparing these accounts, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- So far as each trustee is aware, there is no relevant information of which the independent reviewer is unaware, and
- Each trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant financial information that may have a material impact on the financial reports and to establish that the organisation's independent reviewer is aware of that information.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:



.....
Edward George Woollard
Chair of Trustees

Approved by the board on

Date: 03/02/2025
.....

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

For the year ending 30 September 2024

I report on the accounts of Friends of Rowntree Park for the year ending 30 September 2024, which are set out on pages 9-13.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view", and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

Have not been met, or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....
Nicola Ainscough FCA BSc
Chartered Accountant
Equilibrium Accountants Ltd
48 Goodramgate, York, YO1 7LF

22 November 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ending 30 September 2024

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
INCOME					
Incoming and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	36,562	2,021	38,583	49,606
Charitable activities	3	-	22,756	22,756	23,538
Other trading activities	4	-	2,575	2,575	5,124
Investments		-	-	-	-
Other income		-	-	-	-
Total incoming resources		36,562	27,352	63,914	78,268
EXPENDITURE					
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	5	-	1,334	1,334	2,143
Charitable activities	6	46,437	25,894	72,331	47,209
Other	7	-	3,418	3,418	2,765
Total resources expended		46,437	30,646	77,083	52,117
Net income / (expenditure) for the period		(9,875)	(3,294)	(13,169)	26,151
Transfer of funds	8	(1,638)	1,638	-	-
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward as at 1 Oct 23		39,130	24,545	63,675	37,524
Total funds carried forward as at 30 Sep 24	9	27,617	22,889	50,506	63,675

The notes on pages 11-13 form a part of these financial statements

A Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses is not required as all gains and losses are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

There is no difference between the net income / (expenditure) for the period above and the historical cost equivalent. All activities are continuing.

BALANCE SHEET

For the year ending 30 September 2024

	Notes	£	As at 30 Sep 2024 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets			-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks		-	
Prepayments		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		50,506	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year			-
Net Current Assets / (Liabilities)			50,506
Total Assets less Current Liabilities			50,506
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year			-
Net Assets			50,506
FUNDS	5		
Unrestricted funds			22,803
Restricted funds			27,703
Total Funds			50,506

The notes on pages 11-13 form a part of these financial statements

Trustee benefits: advances, credit and guarantees

During the year no benefits, in the form of advances, credit and guarantees, were conferred upon trustees of the charity.

Guarantees and other financial commitments

During the year no guarantees or other financial commitments were made.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The financial statements on pages 9-13 were approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Edward George Woollard
Chair of Trustees

Date:

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ending 30 September 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Statutory Information

Friends of Rowntree Park is a registered charity in the UK with the Charities Commission, registration number 1183948.

b) Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and on the receipts and payment basis.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity.

The principal accounting policies, which have been applied consistently in the period, are set out below.

c) Compliance with accounting standards

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the Accounting and Reporting by Charities for Smaller Entities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Effective January 2015) – (Charities 'SORP' FRS 102)): the provisions of FRS 102 Section 1A – Small Entities and other applicable accounting standards in the United Kingdom.

d) Funds structure

Earmarked funds, as shown in the notes to the accounts, represent funds set aside by the trustees for use on specific projects. Amounts shown as Restricted Funds, on the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet, represent funds donated for specific projects in accordance with the Charities Act definition.

e) Income recognition

Revenue is recognised in respect of non-government, non-exchange transactions, donations and funds received for goods and services supplied during the financial period on receipt.

f) Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year the trustees did not receive any remuneration or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, as none were incurred.

2. DONATION AND LEGACIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
General	-	2,021	2,021	2,440
Grants				
Benenden	3,153	-	3,153	1,956
Crime Commissioner	-	-	-	10,528
Community Ownership Fund	9,764	-	9,764	8,140
CYC	-	-	-	8,140
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	15,000	-	15,000	-
MIND	1,270	-	1,270	1,458
National Lottery Fund	3,635	-	3,635	-
Sweaty Betty	-	-	-	5,000
Tesco	1,000	-	1,000	-
Trailblazers	2,740	-	2,740	-
Two Ridings	-	-	-	1,584
Whitwam Family	-	-	-	5,000
Yorkshire Water	-	-	-	13,500
	36,562	2,021	38,583	49,606

3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
Membership	-	7,976	7,976	6,215
External Event Booking Income	-	1,209	1,209	1,181
Events Income	-	13,571	13,571	16,142
	-	22,756	22,756	23,538

4. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES INCOME

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
FRP Merchandise	-	2,049	2,049	3,198
Duck Food	-	526	526	1,926
	-	2,575	2,575	5,124

5. RAISING FUNDS

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
Duck Food	-	74	74	-
Bird Food / Feeds	-	-	-	20
Merchandise Expenses	-	924	924	579
Cards – Merchandise	-	-	-	751
Advertising Expenses	-	336	336	793
	-	1,334	1,334	2,143

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
Projects	-	11,806	11,806	13,048
Volunteer Retention	-	184	184	383
Forest School	-	2,815	2,815	3,656
Charity Management	-	11,089	11,089	12,320
Grant Expenses	46,437	-	46,437	17,802
	46,437	25,954	72,331	47,209

7. OTHER

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £	Year to 30 Sep 2023 Total £
General Expenses	-	282	282	292
Insurance	-	548	548	514
Fees	-	886	886	927
Website/IT	-	1,702	1,702	1,032
	-	3,418	3,418	2,765

8. TRANSFER OF FUNDS

The board of trustees have approved the following reallocation of funds between the restricted and unrestricted fund accounts:

Fund	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
DS Smith	(1,500)	1,500	-
Gardening	(273)	273	-
MSFG – Activities	150	(150)	-
MSFG – Lottery	(15)	15	-
	(1,638)	1,638	-

9. RESTRICTED FUNDS RECONCILIATION

	Restricted Fund 30 Sep 2023 £	Restricted Fund movement £	Year to 30 Sep 2024 Total £
Restricted Funds**			
Belfry	1,017	(624)	393
Benenden	1,061	(943)	118
Charities Trust	250	-	250
COF Enabling Fund – Lodge	(1,950)	1,950	-
Crime Commissioner	10,188	(2,591)	7,597
CYC – Lodge	1,000	(1,000)	-
DS Smith	1,500	(1,500)	-
Gardening – Propagation Project	273	(273)	-
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	-	11,976	11,976
MIND	-	86	86
MSFG – Activities	-	-	-
MSFG - Equipment	15,000	(14,358)	642
MSFG – Benenden	-	-	-
MSFG – Lottery	-	-	-
Trailblazers	-	1,011	1,011
Yorkshire Water	10,791	(5,161)	5,630
	39,130	(11,427)	27,703

** First Transpennine confirmed during the 2022-23 financial year that the grant issued in the previous financial period was released for all restriction and could be treated as a designated general donation. The balance on this fund is 817 (2023: £2,473)