



# Trustees' Annual Report for the period:

<b>From</b>	Period start date			<b>To</b>	Period end date		
	1	Decemb er	2021		30	November	2022

## Section A Reference and administration details

**Charity name**

Midlands Parks Forum

**Other names charity is known by**

**Registered charity number (if any)**

1186863

**Charity's principal address**

186 Alcester Road South

Kings Heath

Birmingham

**Postcode**

B14 6DE

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Liz Stuffins	Chairperson		Existing Trustees
2	James Dymond	Vice Chairperson		"
3	Sam Village			"
4	Ishrat Karimi Fini			"
5	Angela Lewis			"
6	Richard Hunt	Treasurer		"
7	James Cairncross		Appointed 28.10.22	"
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

**Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)**

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

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### Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address
Independent examination	Graham Jones Dudley CVS	7 Albion St, Dudley DY5 3EE

### Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Alison Bate, Partnership Manager

## Section B Structure, governance and management

### Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	The appointment of founding trustees was made following an open meeting of all Midlands Parks Forum subscribers. The trustees were all nominated and seconded at the inaugural meeting. The appointment of additional trustees was made following open advertisements via our newsletters, expression of interest were submitted and interview followed.

### Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- ☐ the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- ☐ relationship with any related parties;
- ☐ trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Two new Trustees were appointed as part of succession planning, following a recruitment process in Autumn 2021. The two new trustees undertook online training and had an induction with the Partnership Manager. Two trustees ended their terms of office in October 2022.

The organisation continues to develop partnerships with green space organisations and value the support of non-voting volunteers from the green space sector.

A successful conference was held with representatives from Natural England, University of Sheffield, Leeds and Birmingham City Councils and The Historic Coventry Trust. An online seminar with Natural England and APSE was also held on Biodiversity Net Gain.

The trustees have continued to undertake an annual Risk Management Assessment, to ensure that risks are minimised and mitigated or closed where possible. The risks include:

- ☐ Financial Management, Payroll, Income Policy, Budgeting

A Business Continuity Plan is being developed to mitigate any risks associated with the daily management of the organisation.

## Section C

## Objectives and activities

### Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

### Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

1. To provide and enhance, and / or assist in the provision and enhancement of, the physical and natural environment for the use and enjoyment of the public in the area of benefit (including, but without limitation, the provision and maintenance of facilities and equipment, and the promotion of biodiversity) and shall include but is not limited to public parks, gardens, landscaped areas, woodland, playing fields, playgrounds, nature reserves and recreational spaces;
2. To advance the education of the public in the area of benefit including (but without limitation) with regards to the horticulture, arboriculture, ecology, geology, archaeology, sustainability, heritage and local history; and
3. To provide or assist in the provision of facilities, for recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare, with the object of improving the conditions of life of the public by the improvement of parks and green open spaces in the area of benefit. In furtherance of these, the charity will provide an umbrella group for other interested organisations. In these objects, the area of benefit means the local authority areas within the East and West Midlands.

All our trustees have completed a statutory declaration that they are eligible to stand as trustees.

Our charity's public benefit is:

What:

- ☐ General Charitable Purposes
- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Environment, conservation and heritage
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Other charitable purposes

Who

- ☐ Other charities or voluntary bodies
- ☐ Other defined groups
- ☐ The general public/mankind

How

- ☐ Provide services
- ☐ Provide advocacy, advice and information
- ☐ Act as an umbrella or resource body

Where

Operate in England

A range of learning and training activities have taken place to

enhance the environment for the public. A total of 10 online and in person events took place throughout the year which are free for subscribers. In addition, an annual conference encouraged wide participation from the sector with 104 delegates.

A new skills and competencies framework was commissioned which identified over 60 skills and competencies required to manage green space. the organisation focuses on delivering learning opportunities within the framework, to ensure the best outcomes for parks and green spaces. These have included:

#### **Webinars/online**

- Mental Health Awareness Training – LANTRA
- Allotment State of the Market Survey – APSE
- The Southwark Allotment Guarantee – Southwark Borough Council
- Rugby Borough Council Allotment Case Study
- Role of Allotment Site Representatives: The National Allotment Society
- Equality in Play – Make Space for Girls
- Community Green Grants – West Midlands Greener Together
- West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit
- Play Inclusivity and Accessibility – Play England
- Technician qualifications/apprenticeship – the Landscape Institute
- The role of parks in nature’s recovery – Ian Jelley, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- DICE Training – Diversity Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality -Directory for Social Change
- Seminar on Biodiversity Net Gain with Natural England and APSE

#### **Learning Visits:**

- State of UK Parks 2021
- Worcester Natural Networks – improving biodiversity in rivers, waysides, verges and meadows – Worcester City Council
- Green Social Prescribing – Natural England
- Natural Flood Management – Forestry Commission
- Urban Buzz Project – Grassland Strategy – Leicester City Council
- Saving the Saffron Brook – Leicester City Council
- Saltwells National Nature Reserve, Past Present and Future, Dudley Council.
- Community Green Space Management – Training Day at St Ann’s Allotments, Nottingham
- Trees and Woodland Day with The Tree Council at Bradgate Park, Leics.
- Parks for People and Green Heritage Visit to Victoria Park Stafford, Stafford Borough Council
- Management and organisation of commercial, environmental and social aspects of Nene Park, Peterborough – the Nene Park Trust

#### **Conference:**

The Secret of Successful Parks Partnerships  
Partnerships and collaborations with speakers and workshops in  
November 2022, Midlands Arts Centre

The information gained from these learning opportunities has enabled participants to transfer the knowledge, skills and learning from the topics covered into their parks and green spaces.

It has enabled members to understand and react promptly to implement management techniques related to the management of parks POST-Covid, and to understand the complex processes related to The Environment Act and Biodiversity Net Gain which will be embedded in legislation in 2023.

A range of learning topics has been provided to enable members to better manage the land in their locality for nature, including carbon reduction, and opportunities to increase biodiversity, such as creating naturalistic planting, green corridors for nature, and sharing information on how members have created natural flood management, slowing the flow for people and wildlife.

Other webinars and training focused on community green space management, including allotments and community gardens.

All the presentations and recordings from the above are freely available to download from the web site, which received over 32,000 visits during the 12 months.

The organisation issued 12 newsletters and frequent bulletins to our members which included funding information, policy, guidance, best practice and green space vacancies. Twitter and LinkedIn accounts are used to share information, and help raise skills, knowledge and network in green spaces.

Successful funding applications were made to

British Tourism, Arnold Clark, Postcode Lottery, The Blakemore Foundation, Cobb Charitable Trust and The Co-operative Bank.

Sponsorship was also received from T H White.

### **Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)**

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- ☐ policy on grantmaking;
- ☐ policy programme related investment;
- ☐ contribution made by volunteers.

The contribution made by volunteers during the year has been a vital part of our third year as a charity, through sharing expertise, hosting learning events, and contributing towards the learning of peers.

Volunteering from Trustees and non-trustees totalled over 658 hours which generated around £57,400 of in-kind support.

## Section D

## Achievements and performance

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## Achievements and performance

### Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

The organisation continues to sustain a blended income from the following:

- Earned income: membership and conference income
- Sponsorship
- External funding: funding bodies, such as national lottery, grants and foundations.

Our success has enabled us to place a modest sum into savings reserves.

We provide a service to all members, including

Monthly Newsletters and bulletins

Webinars with a range of partners including Green Flag, National Allotment Association, Association of Play Industries, Natural England, The Tree Council, and a wide range of other organisations to share best practice. (Average webinar attendance was 24).

Free training on Mental Health resilience and Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality.

A Conference with academia, local authorities, sharing best practice on partnerships and collaborations.

We also provide a service to the wider green space community, with all presentations and recordings are free to access on our web site, which aids learning in the wider sector.

### Evaluating our work

All of our in person learning events, webinars and conferences are evaluated to enable us to continually tailor learning to meet the needs of our members.

Our learning events achieved during this period achieved a scoring of 4.2 (with 5 being excellent and 4 being very good). Over 305 green space practitioners attended learning events during this period.

Our annual conference scored an overall satisfaction of 4.55 (with 5 being excellent and 4 being very good).

## Section E

## Financial review

**Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves**

The charity's reserves policy requires unrestricted funding to cover six months of costs, which the charity holds.

**Details of any funds materially in deficit**

**Further financial review details (Optional information)**

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant about:

- ☐ the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- ☐ how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- ☐ investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

The principal sources of funding have been

- ☐ British Tourism £2400
- ☐ Arnold Clark £1000
- ☐ Postcode Lottery £500
- ☐ The Blakemore Foundation £100
- ☐ The Cobb Charitable Trust 1000
- ☐ The Co-operative Bank £1000

Total £6000

Earned Income

- ☐ Annual membership fees
- ☐ Conference Fees
- ☐ Training Activities
- ☐ Sponsorship of Conference
- ☐ Sponsorship of Learning Visit

All expenditure during 2021/22 has been targeted towards improving the skills and competencies required by members, to enable them to better manage and develop their green spaces for public benefit, and towards the green space sector as a whole - with biodiversity and green heritage a key focus.

The key priorities of learning identified are heritage, biodiversity/climate change, community and volunteering and identifying sources of income/commercial opportunities. In addition, sharing information on inequality of provision, and campaigning for increased resources for parks.

Gaining skills and knowledge in these areas enable green space practitioners to replicate learning from peers enabling them to improve parks and green space facilities within their local area.

Having a supportive network of learning from green space sector practitioners enables costs to be kept at a minimum.

The charity has selected an ethical banking organisation, which supports community activities.

The charity directly employs a part time member of staff and a small amount of additional administration to manage annual membership processes. The employee is home-working which eliminates all overheads.

**Section F**

**Other optional information**



Section G

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees

Signature(s)	<div>E.S.Stuffins</div>	
Full name(s)	LIZ Stuffins	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	
Date	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	

**MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863**

**ACCOUNTS**

**YEAR ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

I report on the attached accounts of Midlands Parks Forum for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act, 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 or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and 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 and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave 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.



G. M. JONES  
ACCOUNTANT  
DUDLEY CVS  
7 ALBION STREET  
BRIERLEY HILL  
DY5 3EE

27<sup>th</sup> April 2023



**MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM**  
**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

	£	£	£	£
	R	U	TOTAL	TOTAL 2021
<b>INCOME</b>				
NLRH Grant	-	-	-	9,760
National Lottery – Community Green Spaces	-	-	-	10,000
William A Cadbury Grant	-	-	-	10,000
Other Grants	-	6,000	6,000	4,500
Memberships	-	20,517	20,517	18,384
Training/Conference Income	-	7,096	7,096	13,926
Sponsorship	-	772	772	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>34,385</b>	<b>34,385</b>	<b>66,570</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Salary Costs	6,450	18,975	25,425	23,010
Travelling Expenses	41	449	490	74
Insurance	-	278	278	532
Training, Mentoring, Conference Fees	1,759	5,825	7,584	9,318
Printing, Stationery, Advertising	-	426	426	361
Telephone and Postage	-	61	61	30
Repairs and Renewals	-	-	-	221
Evaluation/Research Fees	-	1,224	1,224	8,584
Professional Fees	-	510	510	770
Paypal Fees	-	69	69	-
Sundries	-	29	29	350
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8,250</b>	<b>27,846</b>	<b>36,096</b>	<b>43,250</b>
<b>Net Surplus/-Deficit for the Year</b>	<b>-8,250</b>	<b>6,539</b>	<b>-1,711</b>	<b>23,320</b>
<b>Balance at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>	<b>8,250</b>	<b>55,747</b>	<b>63,997</b>	<b>40,677</b>
<b>Reserves at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62,286</b>	<b>62,286</b>	<b>63,997</b>

**MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM**  
**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863**  
**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**AS AT 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

	<u>£</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>£</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Bank Current Account	42,286	63,997
CAF Deposit Account	20,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>62,286</b>	<b>63,997</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Represented by :</b>		
Income & Expenditure Account:		
Restricted Funds	-	8,250
Unrestricted Funds	62,286	55,747
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b>62,286</b>	<b>63,997</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>

**NB: Restricted Funds above are all in respect of the National Lottery Community Green Spaces Grant.**

**Approved by the Management Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and signed on their behalf:**

*E.S. Hughes*

**Name .....**

**MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM**

**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863**

**ACCOUNTS**

**YEAR ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**



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27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

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<b>Reserves at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62,286</b>	<b>62,286</b>	<b>63,997</b>



**MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM**  
**REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863**  
**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**AS AT 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

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**NB: Restricted Funds above are all in respect of the National Lottery Community Green Spaces Grant.**

**Approved by the Management Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and signed on their behalf:**

*E.S. Hughes*

**Name .....**