



Trustees' Annual Report for the period:

	Period start date			Period end date			
From	1	December	2022	To	30	November	2023

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			"
8	Fliss Hogg		20.12.22 onwards	
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

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 (e.g. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (e.g. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (e.g. appointed by, elected by)	The appointment of founding trustees was made following an invitation to Midlands Parks Forum subscribers. Potential trustees were interviewed online, and those who fitted the skillset required were appointed.

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.

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

A successful conference was held with representatives from Natural England, University of Leeds, Fields in Trust, Make Space for Girls, Disability Champions and other leading Access and Inclusion Champions. The organisation continued to deliver practical workshops around 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 Policy and Controls, Accounting and Audit.

A Business Continuity Plan has been developed to mitigate any risks associated with the daily management of the organisation, including any data breach. The organisation ensures that online protection and security software is in place.

Commented [AL1]: Should we update this a bit - it sounds like it only refers to the Founding Trustees?

Commented [AB2R1]: Good idea.

Section C Objectives and activities

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

<p>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;</p> <p>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</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>All our trustees have completed a statutory declaration that they are eligible to stand as trustees.</p> <p>Our charity's public benefit is:</p> <p>What:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Charitable Purposes • Education and training • Environment, conservation and heritage • Recreation • Other charitable purposes <p>Who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other charities or voluntary bodies • Other defined groups • The general public/mankind <p>How</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services • Provide advocacy, advice and information • Act as an umbrella or resource body <p>Where</p> <p>Operates in England</p> <p>A range of learning and training activities have taken place to facilitate the enhancement of the environment for the public. A total of 10 online and in person events took place throughout the year which are free for members. In addition, an annual conference encouraged wide participation from the sector with 104 delegates.</p> <p>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.</p>	

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)

Webinars/online

- Naturalising Road Verges with Plantlife
- Naturalising traffic islands with RudgeWood Horticulture
- Filling our streets with trees – Trees for Cities
- British Cycling
- Sustrans Together
- Green Social Prescribing

Learning Visits:

- Developing Strategies and Management Plans at Arrow Valley Country Park, Redditch.
- Biodiversity Net Gain at Ryton Country Park
- Biodiversity Net Gain at Rushcliffe Country Park
- Managing a Heritage Site and Green Flag Heritage Award at Coombe Abbey Country Park
- Developing a Heritage Project, and Heritage Fund Strategy at Great Linford Manor Park
- Managing visitors and habitats, including grazing, at Beacon Hill, Leicestershire.
- Country Park Accreditation with Natural England at Beacon Hill, Leicestershire.
- Developing a Green Heritage Visitor Facility, West Smethwick Park, Sandwell.
- Creating Cycle Routes, Sandwell Valley Country Park, Sandwell.

Conference:

Access, Inclusion and Safety – a path to a greener future.
Partnerships and collaborations with speakers and workshops
November 2023, The Chester House Estate

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 the wide range of access and inclusion challenges facing community's access to green space. Workshops provided practical ways in which organisations can begin to understand and react to local challenges through data assessment, and best practice.

A range of learning topics has been provided to enable members to better manage the land in their locality for nature.

Other webinars focused on sharing the aims of our organisation and how we support green space, with the Landscape Institute and Historic England at their joint webinar which reached a national audience. We ran a comprehensive webinar on health, sport and well-being opportunities in green space, which included presentations from

- Caroline Thomas, Health & Environment Lead Advisor (East Midlands), **Natural England**
- Sarah Paine, Midlands Regional Lead, Thriving Communities – **National Academy for Social Prescribing**

- Amanda Chambers **Nottingham Green Social Prescribing** Programme Manager
- **British Cycling** – Nick Barr, Regional Manager, West Midlands Central and Tommy Morrisroe (Community Programme Manager)
- **Sustrans** – Ruth Cumming, Project Officer on behalf of Ridhi Kalaria, Partnerships Manager – West Midlands
- **The Lawn Tennis Association** – Anna Hart, Parks Investment Delivery Partner, LTA.

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. X and LinkedIn accounts are used to share information, and help raise skills, knowledge and network in green spaces.

Sponsorship

The charity was fortunate to receive sponsorship from three organisations during the year, all of whom support the improvement of green space, through play, data and training.

Donations

A donation was received, which is detailed under financial management.

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 £20,000 of in-kind support.

The investment policy continues, with reserves invested to support delivery of our charity's purpose over time. The investments are under regular review, and the policy guides the charity to ensure there is sufficient daily funds for our regular activities.

Section D Achievements and performance

Section D	Achievements and performance
<p>Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year</p>	<p>The organisation continues to sustain a blended income from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earned income: membership and conference income • Sponsorship • Donations <p>Our success has enabled us to continue to retain some savings/reserves to provide an additional income.</p> <p>We provide a service to all members, including</p> <p>Monthly Newsletters and weekly bulletins Webinars (Average webinar attendance was 24).</p> <p>A Conference with academia, local authorities, sharing best practice – this year the theme was access and inclusion.</p> <p>We also provide a service to the wider green space community, with all presentations and recordings free to access on our web site, which aids learning in the wider sector.</p> <p><u>Evaluating our work</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Our learning events during this period achieved a scoring of 4.3 (with 5 being excellent and 4 being very good).</p> <p>Our annual conference scored an overall satisfaction rate of 3.9 (with 3 being good and 4 being very good).</p>

Commented [AL3]: Was this definitely 4 or should it be 5?

Commented [AB4R3]: Yes 5 is excellent. It dropped this year below a 4 for the first time, I think due to the chilly start

Section E

Financial review

<p>Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves</p>	<p>The charity's reserves policy requires unrestricted funding to cover six months of costs, which the charity holds.</p> <p>The policy allows the board to consider investment opportunities for the reserves.</p>
<p>Details of any funds materially in deficit</p>	
<p>Further financial review details (Optional information)</p>	
<p>You may choose to include additional information, where relevant about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>The principal sources of funding have been through earned income (membership subscriptions, conference fees), donations and sponsorship:</p> <p>A legacy donation was received from West Midlands Parks Forum (WMPF) – the voluntary organisation which ran for over 30 years, and which evolved into the Midlands Parks Forum. Through consultation with members, and the executive committee of WMPF, it was agreed that the donation of £24,896.31 would be ring fenced towards an investment in training; used as match funding for future grants, and a proportion invested to provide future income.</p> <p>Sponsorship was received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sutcliffe Play Natural England Proludic LANTRA Info Point <p>Earned Income derived from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual membership fees Conference Fees Sponsorship of Conference <p>All expenditure during 2022/3 has been targeted towards improving the skills and competencies needed 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Gaining skills and knowledge in these areas enables green space practitioners to replicate learning from peers enabling them to improve parks and green space facilities within their local area.</p> <p>Having a supportive learning network of green space sector practitioners enables costs to be kept at a minimum.</p>

The charity retains banking with 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 reduces 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)

E.S. Stuffs

Full name(s)

LIZ Stuffsins

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Chair

Date

4th May 2023

Commented [AL5]: Should this be 2024?

Commented [AB6R5]: Yes I'll put this years date in when I can upload, I have to do it all in one go when the independent examination is complete.

MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863

ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 30TH NOVEMBER 2023

Independent Examiner's Report

I report on the attached accounts of Midlands Parks Forum for the year ended 30th November 2023.

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

15th May 2024

MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH NOVEMBER 2023

	£ R	£ U	£ TOTAL	£ TOTAL 2022
INCOME				
Donation from West Midland Parks Forum (Dissolved)	-	24,896	24,896	-
Other Grants	-	-	-	6,000
Memberships	-	20,007	20,007	20,517
Training/Conference Income	-	7,863	7,863	7,096
Sponsorship	-	11,868	11,868	772
Bank Interest	-	210	210	-
TOTAL INCOME	-	64,844	64,844	34,385
EXPENDITURE				
Salary Costs	-	25,602	25,602	25,425
Travelling Expenses	-	694	694	490
Insurance	-	295	295	278
Training, Mentoring, Conference Fees	-	3,799	3,799	7,584
Printing, Stationery, Advertising	-	2,226	2,226	426
Telephone and Postage	-	7	7	61
Repairs and Renewals	-	1,296	1,296	-
Evaluation/Research Fees	-	-	-	1,224
Professional Fees	-	390	390	510
Paypal Fees	-	149	149	69
Sundries	-	112	112	29
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	-	34,570	34,570	36,096
Net Surplus/-Deficit for the Year	-	30,274	30,274	-1,711
Balance at 30 th November 2022	-	62,286	62,286	63,997
Balance at 30th November 2023	-	92,560	92,560	62,286

MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AS AT 30TH NOVEMBER 2023

	<u>£</u>	2022 <u>£</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Current Account	12,560	42,286
CAF Deposit Account	-	20,000
Redwood Bank Deposit Account	35,000	-
Redwood Bank Short Term Bond Account	45,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	92,560	62,286
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Represented by :

Income & Expenditure Account:		
Restricted Funds	-	-
Unrestricted Funds	92,560	62,286
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**Approved by the Management Committee on
on their behalf:**

2024 and signed



Name ...

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MIDLANDS PARKS FORUM
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186863
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AS AT 30TH NOVEMBER 2023

	<u>£</u>	2022 <u>£</u>
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Represented by :

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	<hr/>	<hr/>
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**Approved by the Management Committee on
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2024 and signed



Name ...