

**The American Garden in Peckham
Charity No 1186914**

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

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Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees:

Ms Nancy Coleman-Frank, Chair
Ms Birgitta Pernille Ahlström, Secretary
Mr Derek Charles Kinrade, Treasurer
Dr Lloyd Anderson
Ms Matilda Dallas
Dr Derek Summerfield
Ms Sally Williams
Mr David Yelding

Expert Advisory Panel:

Ms Elizabeth P McLean
Ms Cherrill Sands
Ms Liz Brough

Address:

33 Highshore Road
London SE15 5AF

Charity Registration Number: 1186914

Bank:

Lloyds Bank
25 Gresham Street
London EC2V 7HN

Independent Examiner:

Andrew Cooper
Deputy Director, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and
People Experience, People Group
UK Health Security Agency

Trustee Report

The Trustees of the Charity present their report with financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Structure, Governance and Management

The American Garden in Peckham is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission and governed by its constitution. The Charity was established on 19 December 2019. The affairs of the Charity are managed by the Trustees who exercise all the powers of the CIO.

The Charity continues to work in partnership with Southwark Council, through a Memorandum of Understanding, to achieve its charitable objectives because Peckham Rye Park, in which the American Garden is located, is owned and managed by the Council.

Partnership

A Memorandum of Understanding anchors the relationship with Southwark Council, which began in 2017 when the group, not yet a charity, secured funding of £20,000 from the Council in the form of a Cleaner, Greener, Safer (CGS) grant. Following Southwark's policies, these funds were kept in a separate account by the Council. When the CGS funds were exhausted, the Charity transferred funds to the Southwark account for agreed expenses, consistent with the Charity's objectives. The Southwark Council separate account was terminated by agreement of both parties in June of 2022. The Charity continues to be responsible for raising all funds for the Project. The Council continues to carry out some work, such as mowing the lawn around the planting beds, on behalf of the Charity.

Appointment and Training of Trustees

In accordance with the terms of the constitution, there must be at least three Trustees. Apart from the founding Charity Trustees, every Trustee must be appointed for a term of three years. Trustees will consider suitable candidates from recommendations and personal knowledge based on the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment needed for the effective administration of the CIO. Incoming Trustees are advised of the responsibilities, commitments and legal obligations of being a Trustee and are given a current copy of the constitution and a copy of the Charity's Annual Report and Financial Statement.

The Trustees of the CIO have no personal responsibility for settling debts and liabilities in the event of winding up.

Meetings by Electronic Means

In accordance with its constitution (15.4. - Participation in meetings by electronic means), all Trustee meetings this year were held through Zoom, and complied with the rules for all meetings, including protocols for chairing and the taking of minutes.

Review of Policies

At their July 2023 meeting, Trustees reviewed and updated their policy for Safeguarding and created a new policy for Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing). This was in line with new Charity Commission regulations. These policies are now part of the Charity's Constitution.

Objectives

The Charity was established to create a new garden by re-designing, enhancing, protecting, promoting and maintaining for the public benefit the American Garden in Peckham Rye Park.

Its objectives are:

1. To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the American Garden in Peckham Rye Park for the benefit of the local community and visitors.
2. To promote for the benefit of the public the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of those using the garden.
3. To advance education for the public benefit particularly by providing opportunities for learning about horticulture in and around the American Garden. Equally, the Charity wishes to honour the international stature of Peter Collinson, the 18th century botanist, and to commemorate the exchange of seeds and plants he had with John Bartram of Philadelphia for more than forty years. This will be accomplished by populating the Garden with specific plants found in his Peckham garden.

Activities

Activities this year continued with planting of the Garden.

Additional deciduous azaleas and rhododendrons were planted in March. These were species which had been unavailable previously. April saw the replacement of the Sassafras and Acer (Green Mountain Maple) trees, by Street Tree Care, which had previously died. In November, two new *Hamamelis virginiana* were planted, one replacing one which had died, and an additional one which had not been originally planted.

The three *Cornus florida* trees bloomed profusely in May along with the rhododendrons and azaleas. Dittany (*Dictamnus albus*) bloomed for the first time in June. Also during May the *Kalmias* (*Kalmia latifolia*) produced an exceptional bloom as did the roses.

There have been continual problems, almost from the beginning, with people and especially dogs running through the plant beds. This has caused stems and branches of plants to be broken off and protective bark mulch to be removed from around the plants. Dog urine and faeces add significant amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus, upsetting the environmental biodiversity of the area and consequently being very harmful to the plants. Hoping to alert dog owners to this, signs were placed in the beds in March, explaining the detriments of dog excrement and asking dog owners to keep their dogs out of the beds. Unfortunately, these signs did little good so in July the beds were individually fenced. The fencing is considered temporary, needing to be in place for 4 - 5 years, allowing the plants to become well established.

Soil analysis of individual beds, through RHS, took place in August. As some of the plants, especially rhododendrons, were not thriving, it was hoped this analysis would provide guidance with additional supplements needed for the Garden soil.

Knowing how important it is to make the public aware of the history of the Garden and the Charity's part in its development, specific plans were made for the installation of two information panels in the Garden. A signage company, Fenlands, was engaged. Work progressed with the information and photos to be included on the panels. Installation of these panels is planned for late 2024.

Based on new requirements from the Charity Commission, policies were reviewed. The Charity's Safeguarding Policy was updated and a Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy was created.

The resignation of the Park Manager and the appointment of a new Head Gardener produced additional concerns about the Garden and its upkeep.

It was with great sadness the Charity reported the death of one of its Expert Advisory Group, Joel Fry, Curator of Bartram's Garden in Philadelphia, on its Instagram page.

It was also with great sadness the Charity reports one of its founding Trustees, David Yelding, resigned when his term of office was up. David's skills, especially in fundraising, will be sorely missed.

Throughout the year, the Charity continued to fundraise, preparing and submitting applications to various organisations. None of these were successful.

The Instagram page (@americangardenpeckham) was continued.

Impact of Climate Change

New planting always needs to be watered for at least the first year. Odd weather conditions resulted in a lack of needed rain. Even with Trustees and volunteers watering, a number of plants were lost.

Impact of Changes to Park Management

Both Will Walpole, Park Manager, and Tom Edwards, Head Gardener, left their positions at Peckham Rye Park during the year. Both were extremely supportive and will be sorely missed. It was expected these positions would be filled quickly. However, it was not until the end of the year a new Park Manager and new Head Gardener were appointed. Relationships with these people had not been established at the end of the year.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Achievements and Performance

The largest achievement this year involved keeping the plants in the Garden growing and thriving. Odd weather conditions caused by climate change meant a lack of rain when desperately needed. Care, watering and weeding, by Trustees and volunteers helped with this.

We were pleased Southwark would carry the additional cost of the larger sizes of the two replaced trees. Street Tree Care replacement insurance covered only a small size. Street Tree Care will maintain the new trees for a period of three years.

Three new Trustees joined the Charity this year. Two of them bring experience with gardens and gardening and will be a real asset to the Charity.

The Charity continues to receive many favourable comments from visitors to the Garden.

Plans for the Future

Having missed this year's Fête, the Charity will take part in the FoPRP Annual Fête, held in September 2024, to share information about the Garden and recruit potential supporters. Trustees will continue to collect letters of support as part of their fundraising strategy.

A preliminary website will be set up to provide news and information about the Garden's history and its progress. This will be especially valuable to those who are not able to visit the Garden.

Changes in leadership at the Park will mean garnering new support for the Garden. It will be important to have a clear definition of our ongoing partnership and understanding.

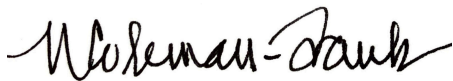
Trustees realise it is important to increase the number of trustees on the board, especially in gaining those with the specialised skills of fundraising and finance. This will be a continuing priority for 2024.

Fundraising will continue to be of importance.

Knowing the value of current research regarding climate change and how it affects people, plants and wildlife, Trustees will continue to monitor research of this nature.

Trustees will continue to monitor the Garden and the health of its plants, replacing plants as necessary in Autumn, as that is the best time to ensure their proper establishment.

The above Trustees Report is approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Coleman-Frank', written in a cursive style.

Nancy Coleman-Frank
Chairperson

30 July 2024

Financial Review

Funds brought forward from the 2022 financial year were £20,092.

Financial income for 2023 totalled £142: £100 in donations, £28 generated through Smile Amazon shopping, and a refund of £14.

Expenditures for this period amounted to £9,744.

Funds available at the end of the financial year 2023 were £10,489.

The Trustees are of the opinion the Charity is in a secure financial position and has enough funds to meet its obligations for continued planting in the Garden. Fundraising will continue in order to meet the financial needs of Education and Outreach.

Fund Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis which summarises the movement of cash in and out of the organisation. This format is available to non company charities with a gross annual income of £250,000 or less.

Funds Structure

The Charity maintains both restricted and unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds may be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds provided to the Charity may only be used for particular restricted purposes, as specified by the donor, within the objectives of the Charity.

Risk Management

The Trustees confirm they have considered major risks which may arise and, in their opinion, no significant risks are seen at the date of this report.

Reserves Policy

Although there is no formal policy in place, the Charity reviews the level of funds available on a regular basis. Discussions will continue in 2024 regarding the possibility of a specific reserves fund.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The American Garden in Peckham, Charity No 1186914:

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 9 and 10.

Responsibilities and Basis of Report

As the Trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

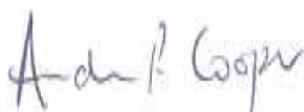
I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that, in any material respect :

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Andrew P Cooper

Chartered Fellow Institute of Personal Development

28 Watford Close
Battersea
London SW11 4QT

06 August 2024

Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2023
Receipts and Payments

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total funds (£)
Receipts			
Donations	100		100
Amazon Core	28		28
Refund (Bridgewater Garden)	13		13
Total receipts	141		141
Payments			
Fenlands-Information panels deposit	2,253		2,253
RHS-Soil analysis	198		198
Paramount Plants-Hamamelis virginiana		765	765
Bridgewater Garden-plants		139	139
RR Services-Fencing-21 Jul	3,380		3,380
RR Services-Fencing-07 Jun	2,120		2,120
Tim Dean-Garden work		350	350
The Plantman-compost, labour		348	348
Millais Nurseries-plants		60	60
Quick Print-signs	40		40
Zoom-yearly fee		91	91
Total payments	7,991	1,753	9,744
Net of receipts/(payments)	-7,850	-1,753	-9,603
Balance brought forward from 01 Jan 2023			20,092
Cash funds this year			-9,603
Total cash funds year end			10,489

The above Financial Statement is approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Coleman-Frank". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" being more prominent.

Nancy Coleman-Frank
Chairperson

30 July 2024