

The American Garden in Peckham
Charity No 1186914

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

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Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees:

Ms Nancy Coleman-Frank, Chair
Ms Birgitta Pernille Ahlström, Secretary
Ms Matilda Dallas
Dr Derek Summerfield
Ms Sally Williams

Expert Advisory Panel:

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
Retired 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 2024.

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 concentrated on maintaining the Garden.

February brought the alarming news a number of our shrubs, including most of the hydrangeas, some clethra, roses and other plants had been cut down to the ground. The cut branches had not been removed, but left lying on the ground. It appeared good quality secateurs had been used as the cuts were all clean, but done by someone who had no idea of proper pruning. This was especially concerning as our variety of hydrangea are not to be pruned. Inquiries were made with Park staff and others, to no avail. This kind of 'pruning' then appeared in other parts of the Park in early March. In the end, it appeared this could have been done by Park staff. The Park has agreed to pay for replacement plants.

Bulbs planted in the grass in previous years began to bloom in late March and April... Lily of the Valley, Muscari, Fritillaria. The Amalanchier trees bloomed profusely. This was followed by blooms on the Yellow Bird Magnolia.

By May most of the trees had leafed out, the deciduous azaleas and Cornus florida were in full bloom. Mid May brought rhododendrons in bloom, showing off their white, lilac and purple flowers. The Sassafras tree, replaced last year, is doing well and displayed its bright yellow blooms as May continued.

By the end of September, autumn had begun. Obedient flowers were in bloom, the Cornus trees were covered in red leaves and the New York asters were in full lilac bloom.

The Green Mountain Maple, also replaced last year, was especially prominent in October showing off its spectacular red, orange and yellow leaves.

The larger Hamamelis trees began their winter bloom of 'bad hair day' flowers in November, a bit earlier than expected. The other Hamamelis followed suit in December.

The fencing of the individual beds has helped to keep people and especially dogs out of the Garden beds.

All around the Garden is looking good, although we have lost not only the 'cut-down' plants but also some of the rhododendrons. Some of the rhododendrons which have died, probably due to lack of regular watering, will be replaced.

It was decided to have regular monthly 'Volunteer' Days, the second Wednesday of each month, beginning in October. Supporters were emailed with this information, and will be reminded each month.

It was with great sadness the Charity reported the death of one of its founding Trustees and Treasurer in June. A memorial tree will be planted in the Garden, in his honour, in January 2025. Additionally, another of its valuable Trustees resigned, as he had been transferred to Zimbabwe for a three year work contract. He intends to re-apply for trusteeship when he returns.

There was no official fundraising this year.

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 2022 year. Both were extremely supportive and are sorely missed. These vacant positions were not filled quickly. Our Chair met with the new Park Manager, Andrew Williams, in January 2024 and the new Head Gardener, Mark Enright, in March 2024. Relationships with and support from these people have been more difficult to establish than those with the previous staff.

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. Lack of support from the Park staff during the beginning of the year did not help. Care, watering and weeding by Trustees and volunteers helped with this. We are grateful to the new Head Gardener for his help with watering in late summer/autumn.

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

Plans for the Future

The Charity will continue planning the third phase of the project, education and outreach. The installation of information panels will begin this phase. Research into the best ways to reach out to the community will continue. Fundraising will be especially important to support phase three.

The very preliminary website set up will need to be expanded. Its aim is 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.


Trustees will review the constitution in the beginning of 2025 and make any needed updates and changes

Trustees realise it is important to increase the number of trustees on the board. This will be a continuing priority for 2025.

At their Annual AGM held in December 2024, the Trustees created goals for the 2025 year, which are as follows:

- Review the Constitution for possible changes and add a section on data protection.
- Continue to 'train' Park helpers, especially the new Head Gardener. Build up relations with new Park staff Edita and Steve, and with idverde.
- Continue our ongoing positive relationship with Andrea Pita, assistant Park Manager.
- Create a plan for planting under the Cedrus tree in Bed 2.
- Continue to put an emphasis on irrigation for the Garden.
- Seek out more volunteers for our regular 2nd Wednesday of the month slot. Consider adding a Sunday slot occasionally to provide for those volunteers who can only help on weekends.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Coleman-Frank". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Coleman-Frank
Chairperson

29 March 2025

Financial Review

Funds brought forward from the 2023 financial year were £10,489.

Financial income for 2024 totalled £2,281: all generated through donations.

Expenditures for this period amounted to £5,497.

Funds available at the end of the financial year 2024 were £7,273.

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 2025 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 2024 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').

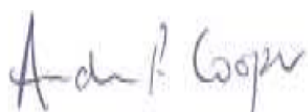
I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 post 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

01 April 2025

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ending 31 December 2024
Receipts and Payments**

The American Garden in Peckham - Financial Report for the year ending 31 Dec 2024			
	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total funds (£)
Receipts			
Donations	281	2,000	2,281
Total receipts	281	2,000	2,281
Payments			
Fenlands-Information panels add'l deposit	3,000		3,000
Bury Hill-soil	150		150
RR Services-borders		1,560	1,560
Joseph Robbins-Garden work		175	175
Millais Nurseries-fertiliser		60	60
Elixir-Sulphur chips		60	60
Quick Print-new brochures	120		120
SquareSpace-email + website	216		216
Zoom-yearly fee		156	156
Total payments	3,486	2,011	5,497
Net of receipts/(payments)	-3,205	-11	-3, 216
Balance brought forward from 01 Jan 2023			10,489
Cash funds this year	-3,205	-11	-3,216
Total cash funds year end			7,273
Notes:			
-One upcoming bill of £175 to Tim Dean for work on 18Dec2024			
-At least one Fenlands deposit will be reimbursed to us when Southwark pays for Information Panels			

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 a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nancy Coleman-Frank
Chairperson

29 March 2025