

Fences & Frontiers

Registered charity number: 1194720

Fences &
Frontiers

Annual Report & Accounts 2022/23



February 2022 – January 2023

Chair's Introduction

I'm delighted to present the annual report for Fences & Frontiers for the year 2022/23.

Fences & Frontiers aims to make the UK a more welcoming, supportive and inspiring place for refugees and asylum seekers.

We achieve this through running cultural, and nature-based activities that bring people together in the spirit of friendship and solidarity. Our activities offer people the chance to explore beautiful parts of the countryside and cultural spaces. However, more than that, we provide opportunities for people to build friendships and gain a sense of community, practise their language skills, and improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

We are proud to have opened up more spaces on our trips than ever. Over 250 places have been offered on our walks and cultural activities throughout the year. Our community has grown in both size and diversity – with regular participants from El Salvador, Iran, Cameroon, Turkey, Honduras, Sudan, and many more countries.

Partnership working is essential to Fences & Frontiers. We have been particularly successful in forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones over the last year. Our continued work with CPRE London, various museum community teams, and our refugee sector partners has helped us deliver a fascinating range of activities. We've also developed important new relationships with Patagonia, HF Holidays, and All the Elements - partnerships that will help us make an even greater impact in future.

We fully recognise the importance of an active media and social media presence to our growth and profile. Coverage in outlets like the Evening Standard and Readers Digest has been instrumental in reaching new volunteers and supporters.

We have made significant improvements in the planning and delivery of our services. This progress has been facilitated by implementing new systems and processes, including accounting tools, event management tools, and enhanced internal management structures

Our trips are consistently oversubscribed, reflecting the great need for our services. Responding to this, we have plans in place to vastly increase the number of activities we are offering in the coming year. We are also in the process of developing and piloting a number of new projects and partnerships, all aimed at opening our activities to more people and offering a more diverse range of experiences. These include piloting an annual UK walking holiday, running a series of artist/writer-led walks aimed at inspiring participants to engage with their experiences creatively and foster a deeper connection with the places we visit, and developing a new project focused helping participants attend live performances, such as theatre, music, dance, and more.

As we grow we're eager to ensure refugees and asylum seekers are better represented on our board and are more involved in decision making for the organisation. We are delighted to have brought two new trustees onto our board from within our participant

community – Marjan and Arta. Their experience of our projects as users, coupled with their experience as refugees are already playing an important role in helping shape the direction of the organisation.

At present, Fences & Frontiers remains an entirely volunteer-led charity. Our projects only exist thanks to the energy and time given by our volunteers. I therefore want to thank the Fences & Frontiers team for their incredible passion and dedication.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to our funders, including The Network for Social Change, Localgiving, the People's Postcode

Lottery, individual philanthropists, and all who have donated and helped us raise funds. Your support and generosity make all of this possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lewis', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Lewis Garland

Chair and Founder
Fences & Frontiers

Objectives and Activities

Aims

Fences & Frontiers aims to make London a welcoming, supportive and inspiring place for refugees and asylum seekers to live in and settle.

To achieve these aims *Fences & Frontiers* runs cultural, physical, recreational and educational activities for refugees and asylum seekers.

Participants are (non exclusively) given opportunities to:

- build friendships and gain a sense of community
- practice language skills in a natural, relaxed environment
- visit places of natural beauty and of historic and/or cultural significance in and around London

We hereby confirm that the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

Operational activities

We run cultural, physical, recreational and educational activities for refugees, asylum seekers and the wider community -bringing people together in the spirit of friendship and solidarity. Our current projects include:

- Never Walk Alone
- London, Museums, and Me

These benefit the physical and mental health of those who attended, and helped to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into British society more widely.

Our current estimated cost-per-beneficiary (the cost of enabling one person to go on a trip) across both projects is £19.22

Never Walk Alone

Never Walk Alone is our walking project. We've been running these walks since March

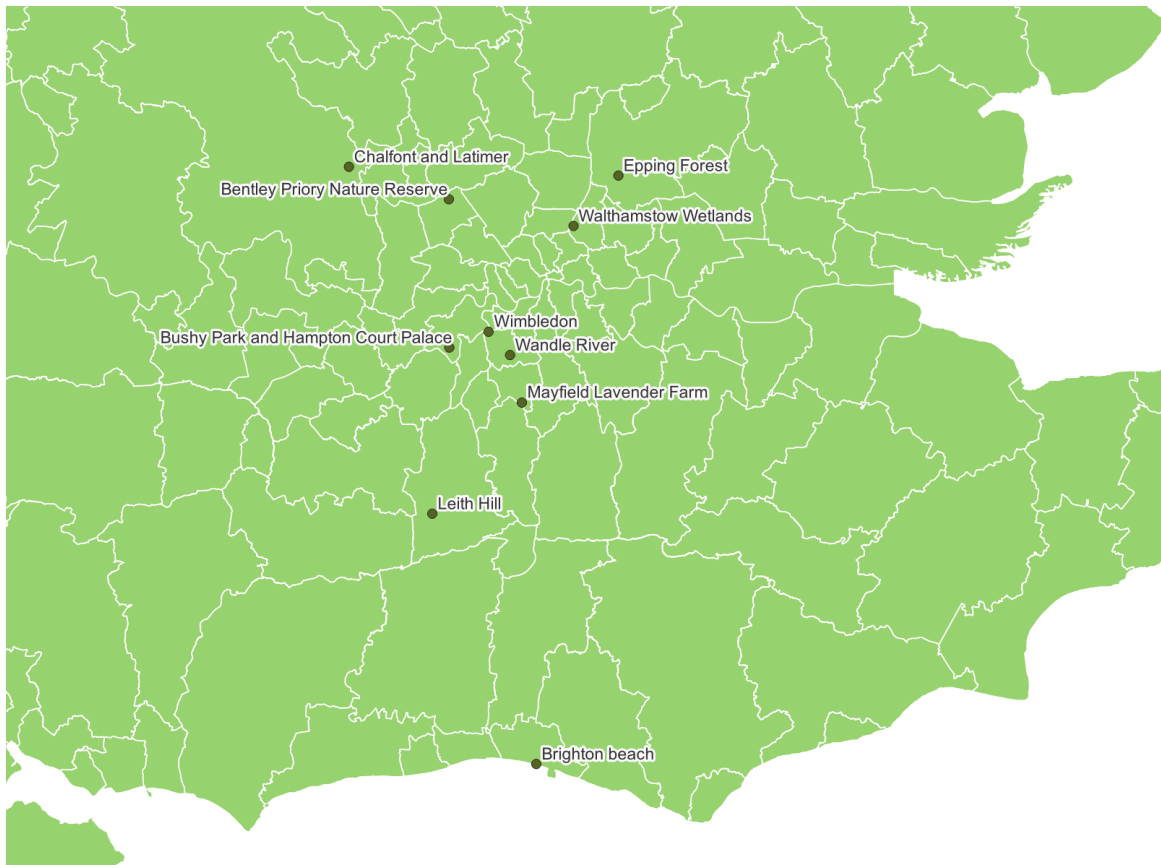
2018 in London and in the surrounding countryside, and made over 400 places available to refugees and asylum seekers over that period.

Our walks include urban and rural trails, giving walkers the opportunity to take in spectacular views and explore places of historical and cultural interest they may never have realised were on their doorstep.

These walks provide an opportunity to get to know people from different areas of London and backgrounds and help to foster lasting friendships that outlive the project. All walkers (from refugee and new community backgrounds) have their transport costs covered. Refreshments are also provided by Fences & Frontiers.

In 2022/3:

- We ran 10 walks in and around London
- 150 refugee and asylum seekers in total attended
- 820 miles were walked collectively by the group

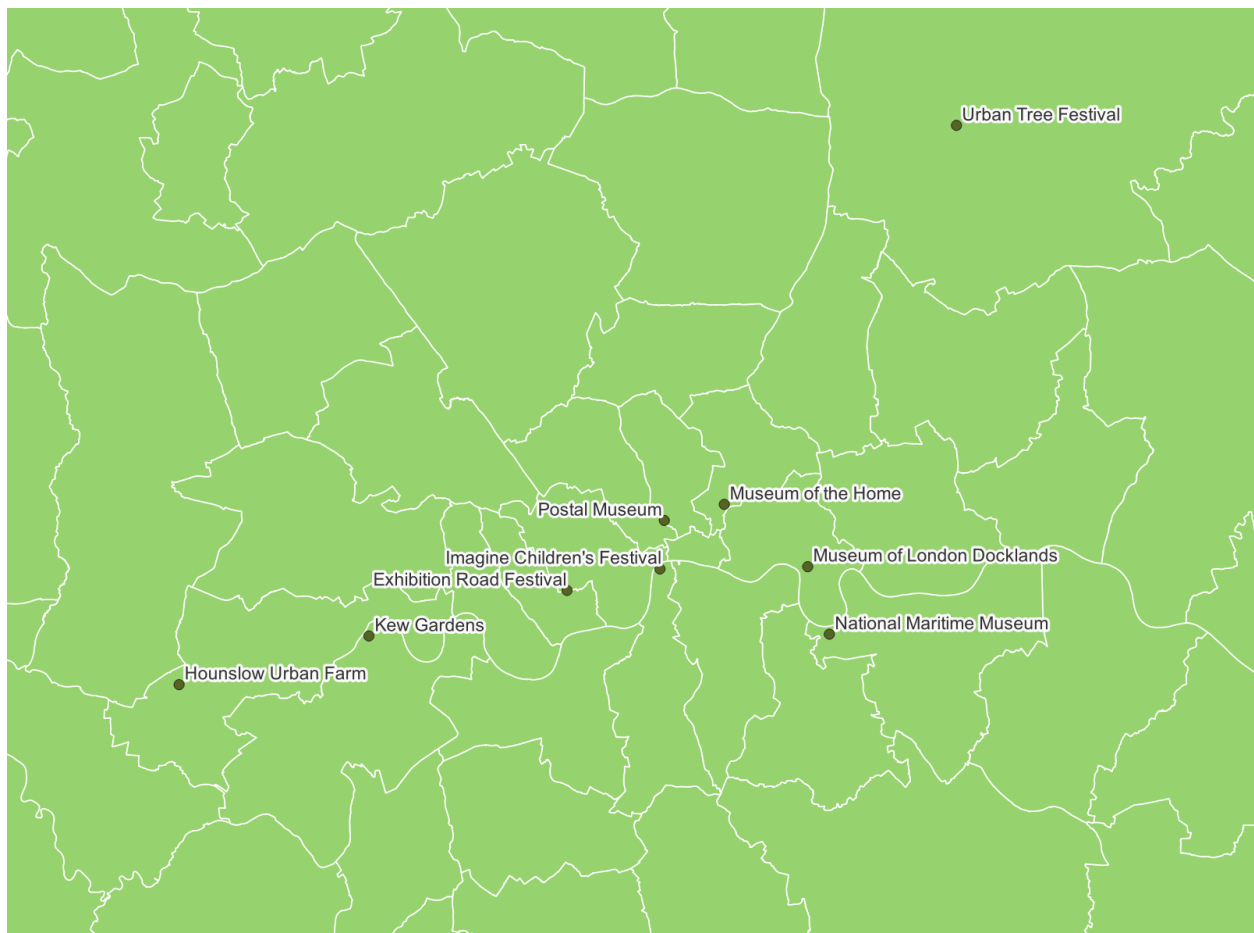


London, Museums & Me

Our trips give children from refugee backgrounds, and their families, the chance to explore London's museums and cultural attractions. We run them on a monthly basis, and cover all transport costs for participants, as well as providing refreshments.

In 2022/3:

- We ran 9 museum trips around London
- Over 100 refugees and asylum seekers in total attended





New activities

We are currently in the process of developing and piloting a number of new projects and partnerships, aimed at opening our activities to more people and offering a more diverse range of experiences. These include:

- A partnership with walking holiday specialist, HF holidays – this will be piloted in August 2023 with a 4 day trip for 12 participants and 2 volunteers to the South Downs. This is with a view to delivering an annual walking holiday for our participants.
- A programme of artist/writer- led walks – starting in summer 2023. These will be part of our Never Walk Alone project. The aim of the project is to inspire our participants to engage with their experiences creatively, helping foster a deeper connection with the places we visit. These walks will also help build our national profile and reach new audiences. This includes activities run by nature/travel-writers Taran Khan, Jini Reddy and the artist Bryony Bengel-Abbott.
- A new focus on providing participants with opportunities to attend and participate in live performances, including theatre, music, dance and other arts. In addition to attending events, this project will encourage attendees to reflect on their experiences and offer opportunities

for artistic cultural exchange. We are aiming to launch this in the third quarter of 2023, after successful pilots in 2022.

- A short film about our work, aimed at engaging supporters, funders and

volunteers in our work. By combining outdoor exploration, artistic expression, and cultural experiences we hope to provide transformative experiences to our participants – as well as reaching new supporters, funders and volunteers.

Partnerships and engagement

We have developed and strengthened partnerships with organisations such as CPRE, London Wildlife Trust, The Science Museum, Kew Gardens, The Winch and Babylon Project – enabling us to offer an even wider range of nature based and cultural activities to our participants.

We have developed a relationship with outdoor clothing company, Patagonia, who are providing us with B-stock for our walkers and are contributing to travel costs for our partnership with HF Holidays.

As aforementioned, we are putting together a programme of walks / trips led by high profile artists and writers interested in supporting refugees. This is aimed at inspiring our participants to engage with their experiences creatively and to help build our national profile.

We are also part of various national campaigns and coalitions in support of the rights and wellbeing of refugees including the Together with refugees alliance and Lift the Ban.

We have also joined the All the Elements network – this provides opportunities and helps strengthen relationships between groups trying to democratise access to nature in the UK.

(both print and online) in the Evening Standard (circ 310,000) and Readers Digest: [What's it really like to arrive in London looking for safety? | Evening Standard](#)

Press coverage

In the last year our work has been covered

levels and continues to put our asylum system under incredible pressure. Staff at Manston have worked tirelessly to ensure people's needs are met and the site's facilities have been improved. It remains well-resourced to cope with future challenges. We are working to speed up the processing of asylum applications, having increased the number of caseworkers by 80 per cent to more than 1,000, as well as digitising the process to make sure decision-making is faster and simpler.'

The UN Refugee Agency defines an asylum seeker as someone who has applied for shelter and protection in another country, while a refugee is a person who has fled conflict or persecution in their own country. The legal rights of refugees are protected by international law. However, it is up to host countries to decide whether an asylum seeker is granted refugee status. In the year to June 2022, the UK received 63,089 asylum applications, the highest number for nearly 20 years. Of these, almost 16,000 people and their dependants were granted some form of protection.

'Yes, there has been a significant increase in people seeking asylum globally, but it's important to keep it in perspective,' says Kama Petruczenko, senior policy analyst at the Refugee Council. 'Germany gets double the amount of claims we're getting and the UK actually has one of the lowest rates of claims in Europe by population size, so this narrative of "invasion" is just not correct. What we need is a national strategy for integration, a minister for refugees sitting in the cabinet and a well thought-out, durable response to this global rise in forced migration.'

According to the Home Office, there are currently more than 37,000 asylum-seekers in UK hotels, costing the taxpayer £5.6m a day. Petruczenko says that the Government could reduce these costs by working with local councils to find more appropriate accommodation, providing more resources to allow claims to be processed more efficiently, and allowing asylum-seekers to work while waiting for confirmation of their status.

'We need to live in reality — people are not going to stop coming here seeking our protection,' she says. 'Instead of penalising them, we need to treat them with humanity and we need to clear the huge backlog in claims by focusing on training and retaining staff so that they can make sound judgements more quickly. Home Office caseworkers are having to make life-or-death decisions within a system that is broken and underfunded.'

Jennine Walker is an immigration and asylum lawyer and head of legal for the charity Safe Passage. She is currently helping unaccompanied children apply to reach family in the UK. 'Before Brexit we were part of the European system for giving minors leave to remain in any country they have family in, but

that's all changed,' she says. 'The Nationality and Borders Bill [passed in April] and the Rwanda policy have been the biggest — and worst — changes we've ever seen and they are absolutely unprecedented.' Walker says that when she started doing this work 14 years ago, cases would typically be decided within two months. Now the average time is at least six months, and cases are more often refused, which means they have to appeal, adding even more time to the process.

'And for all that time there are these vulnerable children, often living alone in shelters, waiting to be with their families,' she says. 'I am working on one case at the moment where parents had to be evacuated from Afghanistan during the chaos of the Taliban takeover, and they are still waiting to be reunited with their two-year-old child.' Walker says that the Government needs more settlement schemes, like the one set up for Ukrainians in March, so that people can apply to come to the

UK safely and legally.

Back in Bushy Park, a few of us stop for selfies in front of a herd of small brown deer. The wind is bitter today and Jimi, 35, is dressed in just a black fleece and a beanie, but he tells me he doesn't mind the cold. Since arriving from El Salvador five months ago with his wife, Brenda, he has been housed in a chain hotel in Feltham, surviving on the £8.24 a week he gets from the Government. He is a trained software engineer, but because he is seeking asylum, he is not able to work. 'We spend most of our time in our room watching TV or going online, sometimes we go to visit a food bank,' he says. 'One day we got the bus to see Big Ben and The London Eye and take some pictures and that was good. But it feels like life is on hold.'

As we walk, Jimi tells me in a soft voice about his life back in El Salvador, where gangs control everything — even the police — and children as young as six are forced to become part of gang life. It's a humbling contrast to the playground full of squealing kids that we walk past. Jimi says he misses the food at home the most, enthusiastically telling me about pupusas, a cornmeal flatbread stuffed with beans, cheese and herbs. 'At our hotel we are given only curry to eat,' he tells me. 'We don't like curry.'

Following an impromptu leaf fight and a heron spotting — 'Is it a fisher king?' asks Haghdooost, mistaking it for a kingfisher — it's time for the group to disperse. Hugs and phone numbers are exchanged. Haghdooost asks Garland when the next walk will be.

After 15 months of waiting, Haghdooost had her claim for asylum approved last year, an experience she describes as 'life-changing'. She is now living in East Acton with her husband and two children. 'Sometimes in London, I feel much scared,' she says, linking her arm through mine. 'Of my neighbour, my landlord, people I pass on the street. When I come on these walks it's the only time I truly feel safe.'



"IT'S ABOUT GIVING PEOPLE A BIT OF ESCAPE, HOPE OR EXCITEMENT ABOUT LIVING IN LONDON"

Financial Review

Income and expenditure

During the period in question (1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023), the charity raised £17,965, spent £5,511, and ended with a final balance of £12,454.

The disparity between income and expenditure in this time was planned for in order to give the financial stability to enable us to make significant project and structural changes in the coming year.

We expect a large increase in expenditure over 2023, as we seek to double the number of trips we run, cover volunteer expenses on trips for the first time, and consider a shift to paid part-time hours for staff.

Reserves

Three months expenditure is expected to soon amount to approximately £4,500, so we aim to hold at least this in reserve. The

end of year unrestricted balance exceeded this goal, at £14,518.

We expect reserves to decrease in line with the target amount as we increase the scale and range of our activities over the course of 2023/24.

Principal sources of funding

The charity's principal source of funding is donations from small donors, though we have continued to increase and diversify our funding over the last year. This has included a mix of grants, Philanthropic support, and fundraising. In particular, this year we received funds from:

- Our Ben Nevis hike fundraiser
- The Network for Social Change
- The Magic Little Grants fund, via Localgiving and the People's Postcode Lottery
- Donations from individual philanthropists
- Small monthly and one-time donations



Structure, Governance and Management

Fences & Frontiers is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and governed by a constitution.

Membership of the board of trustees

Our approach to selecting and appointing members to our board of trustees is as follows:

(1) Apart from the first charity trustees, every

trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

(2) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

As we grow we are putting a particular focus on bringing refugees and asylum seekers onto the board, and involving them in decision making for the organisation. We currently have two trustees who have lived experience as asylum seekers within the UK, both former participants of Fences & Frontiers projects.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Fences & Frontiers
Registered charity number	1194720
Charity's principal address	59A Bunyan Road, London, E17 6EY
Email Address	fencesandfrontiers@gmail.com
Website	www.fencesandfrontiers.org

Charity Trustees

Lewis Garland	Chairman
Mylene	Secretary
Ben Taylor	Treasurer
Arta Shiroka	
Cristel Sainz	
Louise Coady	
Neil McGarrigle	
Bethan Illman	
Kobri Haghdoost	

Accounts (Receipts and Payments Format)

Fences & Frontiers

For the year ended 31 January 2023

Cash Basis

Receipts and Payments account

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	LAST YEAR
Receipts				
Donations	8,011	2,000	10,011	2,960
Grants	-	7,954	7,954	750
Total Receipts	8,011	9,954	17,965	3,710
Payments				
Activities and Ticket Costs	-	509	509	355
Beneficiary Equipment and Supplies	-	-	-	251
Transport	-	3,503	3,503	1,589
Equipment for Trips	-	-	-	12
Food and Other Consumables	-	637	637	227
Health and Safety Costs	-	-	-	40
Insurance	-	127	127	138
Merchandise and Promotional Materials	-	99	99	228
DBS Checks	-	-	-	23
Software and Digital Platform Subscriptions	-	636	636	279
Total Payments	-	5,511	5,511	3,142
Net of receipts/(payments)	8,011	4,443	12,454	568
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	LAST YEAR
End of year				
Retained Earnings	9,100	-	9,100	8,532
Current Year Earnings	8,011	4,443	12,454	568
Cash funds this year end	17,111	4,443	21,554	9,100

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	LAST YEAR
Assets and liabilities				
Monetary Assets				
Cash at Bank and in Hand				
Current Account - Lloyds Business Bank	16,099	4,443	20,542	9,100
Petty Cash - Soldo	1,012	-	1,012	-
Total Cash at Bank and in Hand	17,111	4,443	21,554	9,100
Total Monetary Assets	17,111	4,443	21,554	9,100
Total Assets and liabilities	17,111	4,443	21,554	9,100

Notes to the accounts

1. These accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, with all revenue and expenses shown on a cash basis.
2. The CIO has several funds: an unrestricted General fund and project-specific restricted funds, here collated for simplicity under 'restricted'. The latter goes towards covering the costs of the charity's specific activities, namely a walking group, a museum visits group, and, in previous years, care packages for refugees and asylum seekers.
3. The CIO had no outstanding guarantees to third parties nor any debts secured on the assets of the CIO.
4. No remuneration was paid to any trustee, nor were any personal expenses (e.g. train tickets for volunteers or trustees) covered during this period.