

Fences & Frontiers

Registered charity number: 1194720

Fences &
Frontiers

Annual Report 2023/24



February 2023 – January 2024

CEO's Introduction

I'm pleased to present the annual report for Fences & Frontiers for the year 2023/24.

2023 has been an exciting year for Fences & Frontiers. We have built and delivered new projects, forged new partnerships, and strengthened our organisational structure and governance.

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 has always been key to Fences & Frontiers – enabling us to reach new communities and host more enriching activities and events.

Our new partnership with HF Holidays has been particularly fruitful. Working alongside HF Holidays, we are now able to provide annual holidays to beautiful parts of the UK countryside for our participants. After the huge success of our pilot holiday in the South Downs, we are now working on two further holidays in 2024.

We have also partnered with a number of artists and writers to deliver a series of creative walks. These give our walkers new ways to relate to their surroundings and to each other, and the tools to express themselves artistically – through poetry or painting.

On top of this, we have continued to build and nurture relationships with museums and other cultural attractions, as well as refugee

and community sector partners across London and beyond. This has enabled us to deliver a fascinating range of activities from film screenings to seed planting, guided walks to exhibitions.

Over the last year we have also begun a process of professionalisation, responding and preparing for the new challenges we are facing as a result of our growth as an organisation.

We have made significant changes to our governance and organisational structure. This has included making a clearer separation between board and operations roles, ensuring we have sizable lived experience representation on our board, and creating new roles in our core team for onboarding and managing volunteers and participants.

As part of these changes, we are delighted that Arta Shiroka has taken on the role of Chair of the board. Arta's experience as a long-term participant of our London, Museums and Me project, coupled with her personal experience of the asylum system will be a huge benefit to us – helping us better shape our projects around the needs and interests of our participants.

We have also improved our internal systems and processes, embedding new accounting and event management tools. While fully aware that our processes and structures will need to continue evolving, we're confident we're now in a strong position for our next chapter as an organisation.

We fully recognise the importance of an active media and social media presence to our growth and profile. Coverage in the Evening Standard, Reader's Digest, and on the Runnymede Trust blog have helped us reach new volunteers and supporters this year.

In September we were shortlisted for the Head Outside Change Maker Award– an award that celebrates organisations that create meaningful change to the way we support people with their mental health through outside activities. For a volunteer-led charity, being recognised in this way was a huge achievement. Our projects simply would not exist without the energy, ideas, knowledge and dedication of our incredible volunteers and I want to take this opportunity to thank them all.

I also want to express my huge gratitude to our funders, including The Network for Social Change, Localgiving, TFL, Mayor of London, the People's Postcode Lottery, Patagonia, and individual philanthropists, and all who have donated and helped us raise the funds we need to keep going and keep innovating.

In what has been a year of real progress for us as an organisation, we have

simultaneously seen a ratcheting up of anti-migrant rhetoric and policy. As we approach the General Election, we know this “debate” is likely to take centre stage and that this will pose fresh challenges. While working in a hostile operating environment may have challenges for Fences & Frontiers as an organisation, we are particularly concerned about the impact this will have on the health and wellbeing of our participants.

This said, there is a huge amount to look forward to in the new year: We have trips to the Science Museum, Discover Childrens' Story Centre, London Zoo and Kew already in the calendar; plans for holidays in the South Downs and the Lake District are well underway; and we're launching a new TFL funded walking group!

Together, we can make the UK a more welcoming, supportive and inspiring place for refugees and asylum seekers.

Lewis Garland

**CEO and Founder
Fences & Frontiers**

Mission statement

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

We do this by 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 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 / Stepping Forward
- London, Museums, and Me
- HF Holidays (Partnership)

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

Both Never Walk Alone and London, Museums and Me - have gone from strength to strength. We doubled the walks we put on in summer 2023, have introduced a series of practitioner led walks including artists, writers and more.

Our estimated cost-per-beneficiary (the cost of enabling one person to go on a trip) across both projects was £23 in 2023/24 - a 20% increase on the previous year.

Never Walk Alone

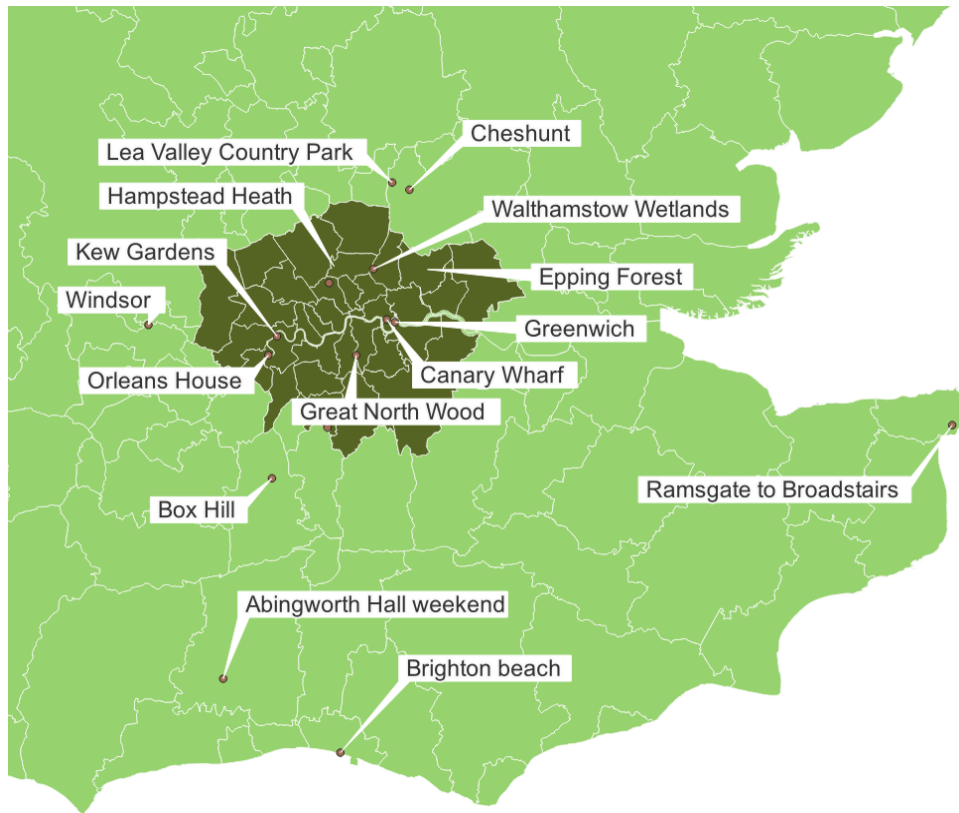
Never Walk Alone is our walking project. We've been running these walks since March 2018 in London and the surrounding countryside.

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.

In 2023/4:

- **We ran 15 walks** in and around London and the South East of England, including one three-day trip in partnership with HF Holidays - a 50% on the previous year
- **236 places were filled** by refugees and asylum seekers over the year
- **Over 1,400 miles were walked** collectively by the group over the course of the year

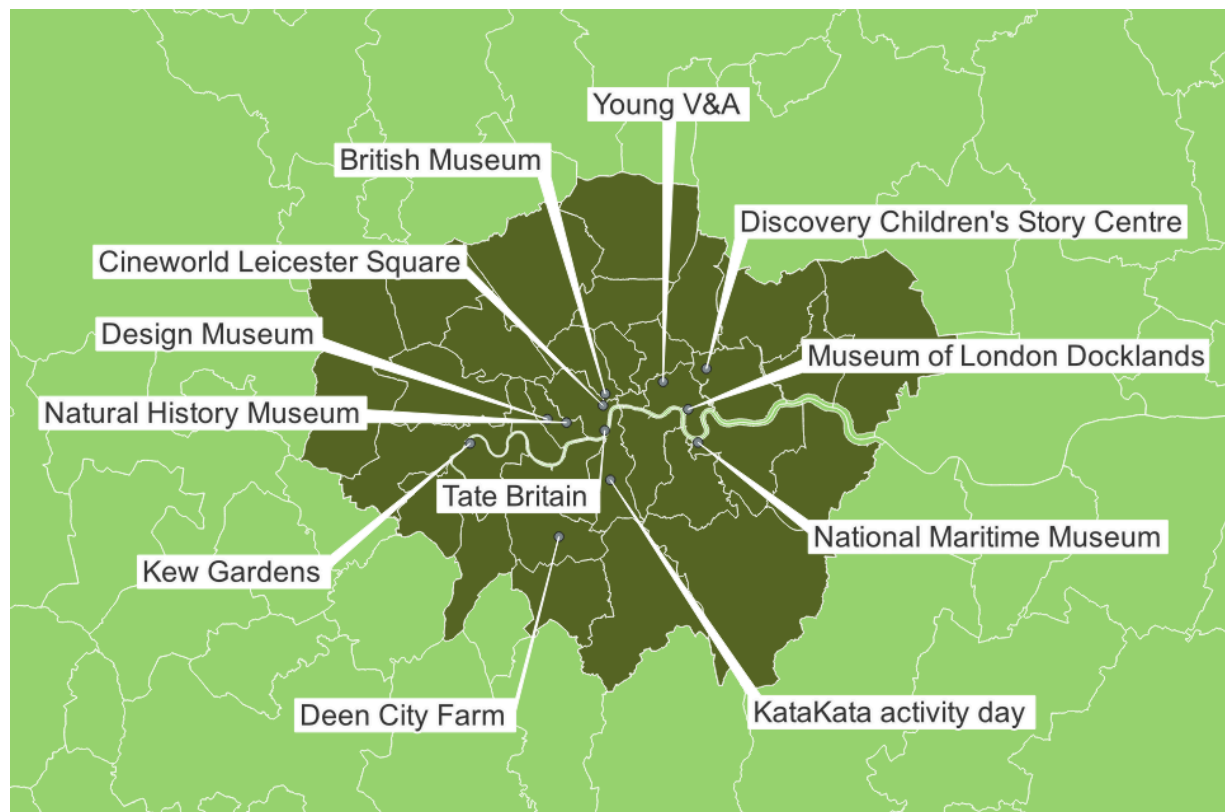


London, Museums & Me

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 13 museum trips around London** - a 44% increase on the previous year
- **Over 150 places were filled** by refugees and asylum seekers over the year



New activities

Over the last year we developed and piloted a number of new projects and partnerships, aimed at opening our activities to more people and offering a more diverse range of experiences. These included:

- A partnership with walking holiday specialist, HF Holidays.

In August 2023 we ran a four-day trip for 12 participants and 2 volunteers to the South Downs. After the huge success of this pilot we are now developing annual holidays with HF Holidays for both of our core groups.

- A programme of artist/writer- led walks – starting in summer 2023.

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.

Our season of artist-led walks included activities run by nature/travel-writers Taran Khan, Jini Reddy and multi-disciplinary artist Bryony Benghe-Abbott.

- In the coming year (2024/25) we will be launching a sub-walking project “Stepping Forward” funded by TFL/ Groundworks. This project will help improve the mental and physical wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers through a series of walks in Greater London.



Partnerships and engagement

Partnership working has always been key to Fences & Frontiers – helping us reach new communities and host more activities. The in-kind support we receive through partnerships is worth easily as much as the amount we receive in grant money.

Our partnership with HF Holidays has been particularly fruitful. Working alongside HF Holidays has enabled us to provide annual holidays to beautiful parts of the UK countryside for our participants. After the success of our pilot holiday in the South Downs last year, we are now organising two more trips – one for our adult group and one for our families.



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

Our relationship with Patagonia has provided us with B-stock for our walkers and contributed to travel costs for our partnership with HF Holidays.

We have also partnered with a number of artists and writers (Such as Taran Khan and Bryony-Abbot) to deliver a series of creative walks. These give our walkers new ways to relate to their surroundings and to each other, and the tools to express themselves artistically.

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.

Our relationships with the *All the Elements network* – provides opportunities and helps strengthen relationships between groups trying to democratise access to nature in the UK.

Press and Media

In the last year our work has been covered (both print and online) in the Evening Standard (circ 310,000):

[‘I just dreamt of a better life in a big country’ | Evening Standard](#)

As well as having a piece on the Runnymede Trust: [Putting down roots | The Runnymede Trust](#)

Head Outside Award

In September 2023 we were shortlisted for the Head Outside Change Maker Award– an award that celebrates organisations that create meaningful change to the way we support people with their mental health through outside activities.

Social Media and Communication

Our social accounts continue to get a strong engagement. We have (1,800 followers on X, and 755 on Instagram. However, the latter) is now our most active channel.

Our quarterly newsletter remains powerful for fundraising asks and communicating with our more engaged supporters.



Financial Review

Income and expenditure

During the period in question (1 February 2022 to 31 January 2023), the charity raised £17,095, spent £9,055, and ended with a final balance of £29,594.

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 2024, as we seek to double the number of trips we run, cover volunteer expenses on trips, and 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 £21,036.

We expect reserves to decrease rapidly in line with the target amount as we increase the scale and range of our activities over the

course of 2023/24 and shift towards employing a part-time staff member for the first time.

Principal sources of funding

The charity's principal source of funding in 2023/24 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 Camino de Santiago fundraiser
- Patagonia
- The Campaign for Rural England, London
- The Magic Little Grants fund, via Localgiving and the People's Postcode Lottery
- The South London Botanical Institute
- Donations from individual philanthropists
- Small monthly and one-time donations

In November 2023 we brought in the biggest single funding pot to date through TFL – which is £9,000 over three years for our internal London walks under the sub-project “Stepping Forward”.

Structure, Governance and Management

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

We have made significant changes to our governance and organisational structure over the last year. This has included making a clearer separation between board and operations roles, ensuring we have sizable lived experience representation on our board, and creating new roles in our core team for onboarding and managing volunteers and participants.

As part of these changes, Arta Shiroka has been voted as our new Chair. Arta's experience as a long-term participant of our London, Museums and Me project, coupled with her personal experience of the asylum system will be a huge benefit to us – helping us better shape our projects around the needs and interests of our participants.

We've made huge strides in terms of professionalising, responding and preparing for the new challenges as we've grown.

On top of our governance changes, we've improved our internal systems and processes, embedding new accounting and event management tools – these are making a huge difference to the running of our activities and staying on top of accounts day to day.

We are currently building a participant feedback form. This will help us both provide data and testimonials to funders and make necessary changes to improve our own services.

We are exploring a 0.2 FTE CEO role for 2024/5 to address our capacity gap and enhance organisational sustainability.

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.



Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Fences & Frontiers
Registered charity number	1194720
Charity's principal address	62B Hackford Road London SW9 0RG
Email Address	fencesandfrontiers@gmail.com
Website	www.fencesandfrontiers.org

Charity Trustees

Arta Shiroka	Chair
Cristel Sainz	Secretary
Ben Taylor	Treasurer
Louise Coady	
Neil McGarrigle	
Bethan Illman	
Kobri Haghdoost	

Accounts (Receipts and Payments Format)

Fences & Frontiers

For the year ended 31 January 2024

Cash Basis

Receipts and Payments account

	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	LAST YEAR
Receipts				
Donations	6,515	4,000	10,515	10,011
Grants	-	6,580	6,580	7,954
Total Receipts	6,515	10,580	17,095	17,965
Payments				
Activities and Ticket Costs	200	143	343	509
Beneficiary Equipment and Supplies	429	-	429	-
Transport	1,506	4,361	5,868	3,503
Food and Other Consumables	337	831	1,169	637
Insurance	-	148	148	127
Merchandise and Promotional Materials	-	-	-	99
Software and Digital Platform Subscriptions	118	980	1,098	636
Total Payments	2,590	6,465	9,055	5,511
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,925	4,115	8,040	12,454
	UNRESTRICTED	RESTRICTED	TOTAL	LAST YEAR
End of year				
Retained Earnings	17,111	4,443	21,554	9,100
Current Year Earnings	3,925	4,115	8,040	12,454
Cash funds this year end	21,036	8,558	29,594	21,554

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	20,185	8,558	28,743	20,542
Petty Cash - Soldo	851	-	851	1,012
Total Cash at Bank and in Hand	21,036	8,558	29,594	21,554
Total Monetary Assets	21,036	8,558	29,594	21,554
Total Assets and liabilities	21,036	8,558	29,594	21,554

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 projects-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.