



Friends of London Fields Annual Report 2023-24

Friends of London Fields (FoLF)

Registration number: 1202952

Address: London Fields Primary School, Westgate Street, Hackney, London, E8 4RA

Trustee names: Maya Gur, Mariachiara Faliva, Christian Demonte, Matilda Sklair

This report outlines Friends of London Fields' objectives for the year 2023/2024, the community and fundraising activities carried out during the year and the targets achieved up to 28 March 2024.

Charity's Structure

The Charity Friends of London Fields was formally founded on 28 March 2023.

FoLF operates with a structure designed to facilitate effective collaboration, fundraising, and support for London Fields Primary School. The structure comprises the following key elements:

1. Trustees:

- FoLF, comprising four trustees, ensures effective oversight and management of its activities. Two co-chairs provide leadership and coordination across all initiatives, while a treasurer oversees financial matters, ensuring responsible management of funds. Additionally, a secretary ensures compliance and governance adherence, maintaining the integrity of FoLF's operations. Together, these trustees work cohesively to uphold FoLF's mission and ensure its continued impact.

2. Members:

- At present, FoLF comprises eight school parent members, representing diverse year groups and cultural backgrounds. These individuals form the core of FoLF, actively participating in decision-making processes crucial for the charity's direction. They are the heart of FoLF and play a pivotal role in shaping FoLF's key annual objectives, allocating funds, crafting grant applications, organising and managing our community and fundraising events. Their diverse perspectives and collective input enrich the charity's endeavours and ensure alignment with the needs and values of the school community.

3. Core Volunteers:

- FoLF's central volunteer group comprises 80 parents from the school community who generously devote their time and energy to a wide array of activities. These dedicated individuals play pivotal roles in organising our community and charity events, contributing significantly to the success and vibrancy of our initiatives.

Charity Mission, Values and Objectives

The Charity mission is to "Harness the talents of our families to create access and opportunities for all children and foster a school environment where everyone belongs".

Our shared values are:

- Inclusivity
- Supportiveness
- Impact
- Creativity
- Fun

The Charity overall objectives are:

- Raise money, apply for grants and support the school in making a difference for the children and community by enhancing their learning environment over and above what is provided.
- Foster extended relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the School.

- Engage in activities, which will support and improve the School and advance the education of the pupils attending it.

2023 / 2024 Objectives

1. Increase the school's sports provision:
Option 1- Collaboration with "HireAPitch" to build a multi-use game area (MUGA)
Option 2- Explore alternatives to full size MUGA such as using the park/ downsize pitch/ Parkour
2. Playground improvement:
Keeping in mind the need for diverse types of play and shade
3. Climate Improvement: we're committed to cooling our environment and slashing our carbon footprint.
 - Our top goal: forge tree partnerships for 30% canopy coverage, recommended by the UN, for a naturally cooler and more stunning school.
 - Ditching single use plastic at FoLF events
 - Offering a free uniform exchange
 - Engaging kids with nature and amplifying climate emergency awareness – a whole school objective for this year.
4. Special Creative Program (Bonus)
Extra arts/music programs enhancing pupils' exposure beyond the curriculum

Activities and objectives carried out during the year

1. Playground project

The initial intent of the school was to build a sports pitch on the roof. The school has a flat roof of approximately 1000 square metres, which is currently unused. A 3 m tall parapet runs around the roof perimeter. According to the initial plan, play and garden areas would have been fitted next to the sports pitch, respectively on the east and west wings of the roof. Particular emphasis was given to the sustainability aspects of the project via the installation of solar panels and a green roof and the inclusion of sustainability and climate emergency topics in the school curriculum.

In September 2022, FoLF (not a charity yet at that time) reached out to any parents who are architects to develop a concept scheme for the redevelopment of the roof. A group of approximately 10 architects started discussing options.

In early 2023, FoLF applied for a grant at the Hackney Community Energy Fund. The Fund (Stream A) would have financed a feasibility study to implement the roof project's four objectives: Energy conservation, Support to local biodiversity, Increase after school hours offer, Carbon savings. In May 2023 FoLF was awarded £15,000 to carry out the feasibility studies, which included structural investigations and structural analysis, a whole-building sustainability assessment, and the instruction of an architect to produce architectural drawings for the planning application. The final report to include the results of the feasibility study was submitted in January 2024.

After several design workshops, meetings with the school headteacher, and the initial results from the feasibility studies, the project of the sports pitch and play / garden areas on the roof was deemed unfeasible because of the high construction costs (approximately £500K) and the possibility that planning permission would have been denied. In addition, structural, health and safety and accessibility concerns were raised.

The architects then proposed the option of re-organising and improving the existing playground at ground level. The playground was a large space with unidentified and non-specialised play areas. FoLF discussed priorities with the School and these were identified as:

- a. Containing balls during ball games to avoid impacting other children not wanting to play ball games.
- b. Creating a quiet area with seating provision for children to talk and play quiet games.
- c. A play area with playing equipment to offer active playing provisions.

The initial option to create a partnership with a company called Hire-a-pitch, who would have built a professional sports pitch (MUGA) at no cost to the school and held the right to hire it for 10 years, was deemed not viable by the school landlord, the Council.

An alternative approach was then proposed: to build a non-professional sport pitch that could have been funded by the resources available to the school. This approach was deemed feasible and achievable by FoLF and the School.

During 2023 FoLF organised several fundraising events and campaigns to raise enough money for the project. A Summer Fair and a Winter Fair, were organised respectively in July and December 2023. In November 2023, the school participated in a fundraising Fun Run, called Run Kids Run, in which kids were sponsored by family and friends via a Just Giving page. In addition, approximately £33,000 were donated by UBS. More details about the funds raised in the single events are included further in this report.

In autumn 2023, six specialised contractors were engaged and provided with a brief containing the above priorities (a to c) and a budget not to exceed £75,000, based on the funds available. Two of the contractors declined the invite to submit their tender, the other four submitted their proposals by the end of January 2024.

On 23 January 2024, a group of FoLF members met with the School to analyse the bids based on their compliance to the priorities, optimal use of space, costs, maintenance of the equipment, and delivery. A score was assigned to each bidder for each of the criteria. The winner was Pentagon to which was awarded the contract.

The construction started on 4 April 2024 and was completed on 19 April 2024. The refurbished area includes:

- a. A fenced ball games area with goals and basketball hoops.
- b. An area with low benches under the trees in the south west corner of the playground.
- c. New timber playing equipment, including monkey bars, climbing poles and netting, low and high bars. This area was also resurfaced with new low impact artificial grass.

In addition, four fabric sails were installed around the play area to provide much-needed shade.

2. Solar Panels

While the initial plans to place the sports pitch, play area and garden on the roof were abandoned, FoLF proposed to the School to still install the solar panels and possibly a green roof. The School accepted the proposal and FoLF applied for the Stream B of the Hackney Community Energy Fund. The fund would cover up to two thirds of the capital costs of the measures proposed based on the results of the Feasibility Study (Stream A).

FoLF discussed different options with solar panels suppliers and installers, to define the amount of energy producible, optimal system characteristics and arrangement. The final plans were submitted for planning permission, which was granted. Concurrently, FoLF was awarded £42,000 as part of the Stream B Hackney Community Energy Fund. FoLF received a donation from a family in the school that enabled this project to proceed..

FoLF is currently (October 2024) having the solar panels installed.

3. Trees Planting

In March 2023, we launched the "Mini Forest" project aimed at providing essential shade for our early years concrete playground, addressing concerns raised by numerous parents regarding summer exposure. Our initial objective was to plant 16 trees in this area to ensure adequate shade coverage. During Phase 1 of the project, we conducted a fundraising campaign that successfully raised £8,287. This funding enabled us to plant 8 semi-mature trees, marking a significant step toward achieving our goal.

4. Rambert Dance Project

In July 2023 London Fields Primary School took part in a whole school dance project facilitated by world renowned company Ballet Rambert. The performance, London Fields: It's Your Move, was held at the Hackney Empire Theatre. FoLF covered the cost of this programme and it was an unforgettable experience for the children and everyone who came to watch.

Financial Accounts for the year ending in March 2024

INCOME & SPENDING FOR FOLF REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1202952 FOR THE PERIOD APR 2022 - MAR 2024				
ACCOUNTS				
FUNDING	<i>Category</i>	<i>Name</i>	2022/23	2023/24
	ONLINE	GENERAL FUNDRAISING	£ 1,186.97	
		CHILD RUNNING EVENT		£ 7,354.49
		REUSABLE PARTY KIT	£ 360.00	£ 10.00
		PLAQUES	£ 1,400.00	£ 650.00
		EASYFUNDRAISING	£ 54.62	£ 206.69
	ONLINE Total		£ 3,001.59	£ 8,221.18
	EVENT	WINTER FAIR	£ 7,959.68	£ 9,020.96
		SUMMER FAIR		£ 5,474.30
		RUN KIDS RUN		£ 6,098.59
		COMMUNITY EVENTS	£ 1,109.53	£ 1,437.51
	EVENT Total		£ 9,069.21	£ 22,031.36
	ROOF PROJECT	INDEPENDENT	£ 464.15	
		PLANNING COSTS		£ 1,700.00
		HCEF (GRANT)		£ 15,000.00
		ROOFTOP SOLAR FUNDRAISE		
	ROOF PROJECT Total		£ 464.15	£ 16,700.00
	NON FOLF EVENTS	LEAVING	£ 160.00	
		APPEALS	£ 443.95	£ 620.00
		BALLET RAMBERT		£ -
	NON FOLF EVENTS Total		£ 603.95	£ 620.00
	Tree Project	GREEN DAY		£ 189.95
		TREE FUNDRAISE		£ 3,843.54
		TREE PROJECT COSTS		£ -
	Tree Project Total			4,033.49
	CORPORATE	CORPORATE		797.05
	CORPORATE Total			797.05
	PLAYGROUND	PLAYGROUND PHASE 1A		0.00
	PLAYGROUND Total			0.00
	OPERATIONAL	OPERATIONAL		0.00
	OPERATIONAL Total			0.00
	OTHER	OTHER		

	OTHER Total			
			13138.9	52,403.08

SPENDING				
	<i>Category</i>	<i>Name</i>	2022/23	2023/24
	ONLINE	GENERAL FUNDRAISING	0	
		CHILD RUNNING EVENT		0.00
		REUSABLE PARTY KIT	0.00	0.00
		PLAQUES	0.00	0.00
		EASYFUNDRAISING	0	0.00
	ONLINE Total		0	0.00
	EVENT	WINTER FAIR	-1,553.59	-957.81
		SUMMER FAIR		-810.42
		RUN KIDS RUN		0.00
		COMMUNITY EVENTS	0	-911.57
	EVENT Total		-1553.59	-2,679.80
	ROOF PROJECT	INDEPENDENT	0.00	
		PLANNING COSTS		-16,874.00
		HCEF (GRANT)		0.00
		ROOFTOP SOLAR FUNDRAISE		
	ROOF PROJECT Total		0.00	-16,874.00
	NON FOLF EVENTS	LEAVING	-1,085.00	
		APPEALS	-1,190.00	0.00
		BALLET RAMBERT		-13,000.00
	NON FOLF EVENTS Total		-2,275.00	-13,000.00
	Tree Project	GREEN DAY		0.00
		TREE FUNDRAISE		0.00
		TREE PROJECT COSTS		-2,440.99
	Tree Project Total			-2,440.99
	CORPORATE	CORPORATE		0.00
	CORPORATE Total			0.00
	PLAYGROUND	PLAYGROUND PHASE 1A		-40,669.00
	PLAYGROUND Total			-40,669.00
	OPERATIONAL	OPERATIONAL		-140.00
	OPERATIONAL Total			-140.00
	OTHER	OTHER		
	OTHER Total			
			-3,828.59	-75,803.79

Financial Review for April 2023 – March 2024

Overview

The financial period from April 2023 to March 2024 has seen significant fundraising and expenditure activities, reflecting our ongoing commitment to school community engagement and development projects.

Key Financial Events

1. Funds Raised:

- **RunKidsRun & Child Sponsorship:** Approximately £13,000 was raised through this event, demonstrating strong community involvement.
- **Summer and Winter Fairs:** Combined, these events, along with other community initiatives, raised around £15,000 (net of costs), showcasing our effective event planning and execution.
- **Grant for Rooftop Solar Project:** A grant of £15,000 was secured for the feasibility study of the rooftop solar project, which positions us well for future sustainability efforts.
- **Tree Project:** Fundraising efforts yielded approximately £4,000 for the Tree Project, highlighting our focus on environmental initiatives.

2. Costs Incurred:

- **Ballet Rambert Event:** Total expenditures for this event amounted to £13,000, indicating a substantial investment in the school's cultural programming.
- **Rooftop Solar Project:** The grant received was fully allocated to the feasibility study, essential for the project's advancement.
- **Playground Project:** The initial phase incurred costs of £40,700, reflecting our commitment to enhancing school facilities.
- **Tree Project Expenditures:** Approximately £2,400 was spent on this initiative, with remaining costs to be incurred in the 2024/25 financial year.

Financial Position

During the financial year 2023/24, total expenditures exceeded total income by £23,400. This deficit was manageable due to an opening balance of £26,180 at the start of the period. As of March 31st, 2024, our closing balance stood at £2,779, indicating that we maintained sufficient funds to support our initiatives.

Conclusion

This financial year demonstrated our capacity to engage the school's community and fund significant projects. The funds raised have been strategically invested in projects that enhance our school's cultural, sports, movements and environmental landscape.

The 2024/25 financial report will include further details on the completion of the first phase of the trees project, the solar rooftop project, as well as the next phase of the playground project.