

Friends of Cassiobury Park

Trustees' Annual Report 2025/2026

Reference and administration details

Charities Details

Charity's name: Friends of Cassiobury Park

Registration Number: 1211170

Address: 39 Leaford Crescent, Watford, WD24 5JQ

Period of report: 6/4/25 to 5/4/26

Trustees

Name	Office	Dates Active
Steve Jakeman	Chair	15th July 2025 - Current
Simonie Jeffree	Treasurer	Full Period
Robert Barnes	Secretary	Full Period
Alec Thomas		Full Period
Rachel Burke		Full Period
Kevin Blake		Full Period
Alistair Crowder		15th July 2025 - Current
Wendy Crowder		15th July 2025 - Current
Peter Jenkins	Former Chair	6th April 25 - 14th July 25
Anna Brooks		6th April 25 - 14th July 25

Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document: Constitution adopted 13th November 2024

Constitution Type: Unincorporated association

Trustee Selection:

Trustees can be appointed mid term with the agreement of the current standing trustees, all trustees must be re-elected at the next AGM after their appointment. The AGM is held in May of each year.

Overview of governance and relationships

The charity is managed on a day to day basis by the trustees with the support of various volunteers. Membership of the charity is open to anyone over the age of 18. Membership of the charity gives voting rights at any formal meeting, and this includes the appointment of trustees at the AGM. Membership is not a requirement to volunteer for the organisation.

As a matter of policy the organisation does not directly work with vulnerable individuals and the procedures and policies are outlined in our safeguarding policy and procedures. In addition there are policies that cover excluding members, equality and diversity, and privacy. Our constitution covers the primary organisation structure and policies, including trustee selection and conflicts of interests.

The organisation undertakes various relatively low risk activities, such as litter picking and conservation work. Risk assessments, both overview and dynamic, are used to help identify any risks, and any risks are further mitigated through the use of first aid trained leaders and operating procedures for equipment.

Given the charities focus on Cassiobury Park and the wider estate in Watford we partner closely with the park management team and Watford Borough council members, as well as Herts and Middlesex Trust and Community Connection Projects CIC who support a number of conservation activities.

Objectives and main activities

Objects of the charity

The charity's objects defined in our constitution are for the public benefit:

1. To secure the preservation, protection and improvement of Cassiobury Park ('The Park') as a place of historic and ecological interest and beauty;
2. to promote the conservation of the natural plant, animal and bird life of the park;
3. to educate the public in the history, natural history and other aspects of the park.

Summary of main activities

The charity has been actively supporting the park and nature reserves throughout the year by providing food for the birds during winter months, running a litter pick and two conservation groups per month, fund raising for new benches, and wetlands area paths and view points. Education of the importance of volunteering and the impact of litter on the park has been through support of DoFE and Cub Group volunteer opportunities. In addition, various walks through the park to identify various elements of the natural environment and talks on the history of the park have been undertaken. The quarterly e-magazine, "Park Life" has had articles on volunteering, nature, the people involved in the park, and its history.

As a fully voluntary organisation, all of our achievements are only possible through the support of our volunteers and members, along with our partner organisations. We are very grateful to everyone for their support, as we would not have been able to do so much this year without them.

Achievements and Performance

A summary of our activities and achievements is outlined below.

Volunteering:

We ran regular and adhoc conservation and maintenance activities in the park including:

Litter picking and conservation groups were attended by 323 people who provided approximately 770 hours of volunteer work. A new wetlands conservation group has grown significantly through the period. Additional volunteers were supplied to replant and maintain new trees within Whippendel Woods.

We supported Duke of Edinburgh and Cub Scout groups to engage in volunteering in the park. These activities encourage young people to get involved in both volunteering and the park.

Volunteers provided content for our park life magazine, and lead a number of walks, such as on butterflies, how to photograph the park, and gave presentations to engage and educate people about the park.

Projects:

We helped fund two wheelchair accessible benches, a number of regular benches for the park and Whippendell woods and engaged a wood sculptor to carve fallen trees into benches.

We have purchased bird feed and feeders to support the local bird life through the winter months and funded the restoration of the bird hide.

Fund Raising

Our membership provides a regular level of support through fees and donations. In addition we also collect funds through the Watford Community Lottery. This year we have applied to a number of funding organisations for the significant amount of funding needed to support the additional benches, but mostly in support of a project to build a screen and board walks for the wetlands viewing platform. This project will hopefully be completed in Autumn 2026. The funds for this project have significantly increased our normal income.

Financial Review

Our reserves as of 5/4/26 was £50,378.50 of which £30,878.50 is directly ring fenced for the wetlands project, we do not have any debts. We do not have regular operational costs and are not liable for buildings or ongoing charges, our expenditure is mostly on expenses related to feeding the birds, helping with funding projects, and the AGM meeting. We only plan projects where we can already cover the costs from existing reserves and funding mostly comes from an ongoing membership and donations. While membership could reduce and we may not win funding bids in the future, given that our expenditure is only approved if existing reserves cover the cost, there is no real risk of unexpected expenditure or a loss of income impacting our financial viability.

Future Plans

We will be funding and helping maintain a significant project to provide a screen and path to the raised wetlands viewing platform. In addition we will be funding and maintaining a new climate friendly garden in the park. We will continue to run litter picking and conservation work and will look to support ongoing projects that improve the park.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees's report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature: R. J. Barnes

Full name: ROBERT JOHN BARNES

Position: SECRETARY

Date: 25/8/26