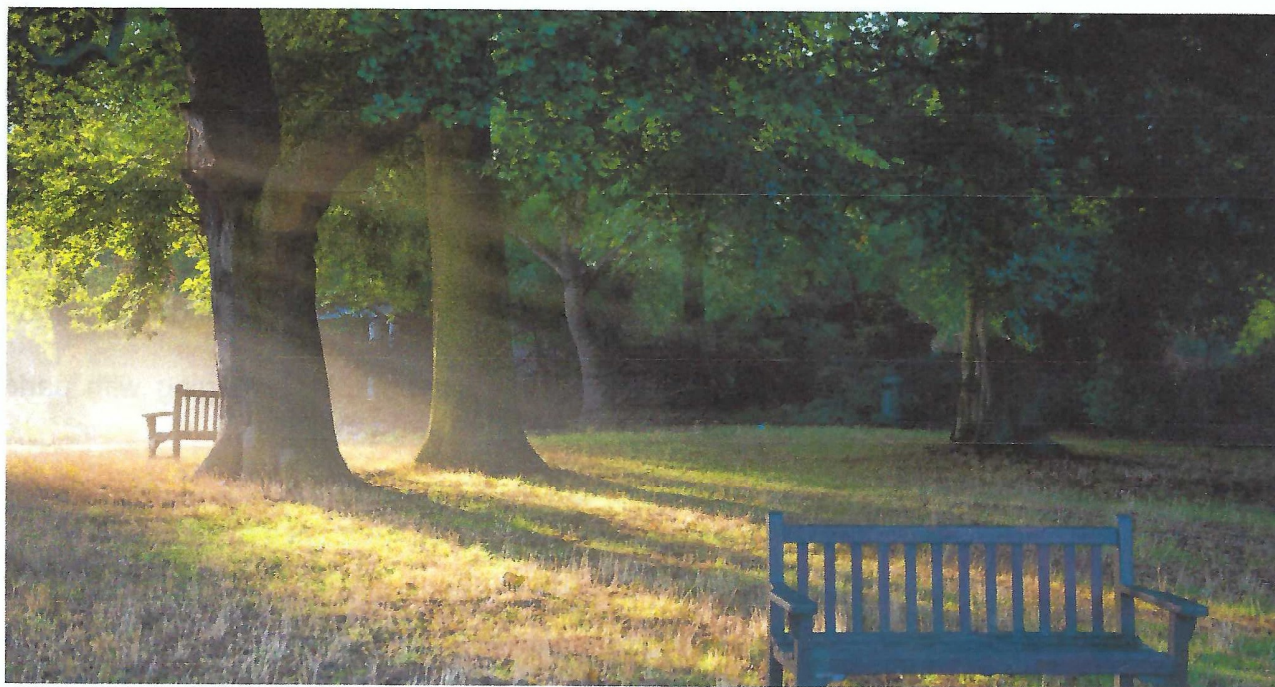




The Friends of Cannizaro Park Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Registered Charity No. 1160982

Address: % Willow House, 35 High Street, Wimbledon, London SW19 5BY



Introduction

The Friends of Cannizaro Park ("FoCP") is pleased to report another productive year in 2022-23. Thanks to hard work from an expanding team of volunteers, we achieved almost all the objectives on our annual strategic plan, resulting in a number of improvements in the park landscape, together with enhanced engagement with park visitors.

Following a summary of our Constitution, information about these Achievements is outlined below, together with an update on Finances and People. A brief outline of 2023-24 Plans closes the Report.

Constitution

The trustees present their Report and the Financial Statements of The Friends of Cannizaro Park for the year ended 31st March 2023, which comply with the FoCP's Constitution and with applicable law and accounting requirements. In accordance with the FoCP's Rules, the Financial Statements have been examined by a person who is not a trustee nor otherwise involved in the charity's administration.

The purposes and administration of the FoCP, which is an unincorporated association, are regulated by its Constitution filed with the Charity Commission; the current version was

adopted in 2021. It is managed by trustees, with a minimum of three and a maximum of 11. Trustees are appointed based on their interest in the FoCP's activities and their specific skills and ability to contribute.

Founded in 1997, the formal objects of the FoCP set out in the Constitution are twofold:
(a) to conserve and improve Cannizaro Park located in Wimbledon, London SW19 ('the Park') as a place of historic and ecological interest and beauty for the benefit of the community of the London Borough of Merton and the broader community of London and other interested parties;
(b) to do all such things as shall be conducive to the attainment of the above object including: promoting, supporting and assisting in the (i) continuation of the Park's status as a Grade II* listed garden; (ii) enhancement, maintenance and upkeep of the Park by the London Borough of Merton.

To focus our work, the FoCP has translated this formal statement into two practical objectives:

1. The FoCP supports park-owner Merton Council with the maintenance and renewal of the park landscape
2. The FoCP enhances appreciation and enjoyment of the park, by engaging with park visitors and our local community through communications and events.

Merton Council supports most hard landscaping requirements in the park and, through its contractor idverde, provides one full-time gardener to maintain the park's thirty five acres.

2022/23 Achievements in the Park Landscape

The FoCP completed two of its three intended park landscape renewal projects within the year. In May 2022, the new Rose Garden was triumphantly completed. The project was evidence of our strong partnerships. Landform UK provided a thoughtful and environmentally enhanced design for the area, Merton Council provided funding of £15,000 for new accessible pathways and removal of old topsoil, while across 2021-23 the FoCP funded plants, new topsoil and accessories such as plant supports and a noticeboard (£7,151 in this year, for a total FoCP project funding of £17,841). The project was delayed due to Covid logistics, but with new benches in place, the Rose Garden was popular with park visitors over the summer. The FoCP's gardening volunteers were critical to achieving this transformation; from moving over 50 tonnes of topsoil, through to planting out and hand watering throughout the summer drought, the project would not have been possible without their support.

The delay in implementation of the Rose Garden project led us to simplify our autumn programme. It was decided to retain the creation of the Jubilee Walk, but to defer the Aviary Winter Border project to another year. Created as a commemoration of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, the Jubilee Walk comprises an extension of the existing Cherry Walk towards the Diana statue; a range of new cherry trees have been underplanted with a variety of bulbs, to provide colour and wildlife interest throughout the spring. Project costs were covered by the FoCP and by tree donations.

Significant maintenance work was carried out elsewhere in Cannizaro Park during the year. FoCP gardening volunteers maintained planting in the Front Entrance and in the Herb Garden, and there was further activity in the Bog Garden, whose planting and structure

continue to evolve. Aside from these specific areas which are largely maintained by the FoCP, gardening volunteers also carried out considerable work across the park: bramble bashing, removal of bamboo, extensive weeding, watering of new trees. Volunteer work also included clearance of drains and installation of post-and-rope protection for grass and trees, as well as mechanical removal of duckweed from the pond.

Turning to the hard infrastructure of the park, the FoCP made a successful application for Community Infrastructure Levy funds, to enable the 2023/24 renovation of the Valley Path. The new pathway will ensure key attractions such as the pond are accessible for all visitors, including those in wheelchairs, pushchairs, and those less steady on their feet. The newly-created Hard Landscape sub-committee commissioned drainage consultancy services, to assist in future planning for a major renovation of the central spine of the park.

Elsewhere, after many years of repairs, the Aviary structure was finally deemed to be an unsafe habitat for birds. The wooden original had been originally intended as a relatively temporary installation, and has degraded beyond repair. The live birds were safely re-housed and a decision was taken that any future building would not contain live creatures, due to the challenges of providing appropriate care. Following an extensive survey and a public meeting, it was agreed that the FoCP would begin the process of developing of a new “Aviary” structure in 2024, with the purpose and design of the new structure being part of a second public consultation. In the interim, the FoCP is organising a range of short-term exhibits in the present building, featuring nature artwork from local schools.

Finally, FoCP volunteers worked intensively with Merton Greenspaces colleagues to develop a ten year Cannizaro Park management plan, as a prelude to a Green Flag application. The Green Flag Award scheme recognises well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark for management of recreational outdoor spaces across the UK. Judging is set to take place in June 2023.

2022/23 Achievements in Enhancing Visitor Appreciation & Enjoyment

In 2022/23 and in the light of wider travel plans post-Covid, the FoCP chose to downweight and re-focus our events programme, to ensure appropriate organisational resources against our core objective of maintaining and renewing the landscape. Six walks were well-attended, and covered a variety of topics from bats to herbal medicine, and trees to the history of the park. The popular fund-raising bridge drive was a big success.

This year marked a significant step forward in our communications with visitors, through the creation of a new website. The new website features wonderful images from a professional photographer, while the structure and information of the website was extended and ordered better to address visitors' enquiries. The website now provides a excellent source of information about the park, whether for casual visitors or nature enthusiasts.

Alongside development of the new website, the Friends continued with the popular monthly newsletters (circulation: 690 households), and with a strong Instagram presence (2,600 followers, up +13% versus a year ago).

Finances & Funding

FoCP funds increased by £17,540 during the year, to a total of £53,860. This increase was due to three factors: an unexpected and generous donation of £15,000 to fund drainage consultancy work; a one-off rebate from Merton Council; and the delay to the Aviary Winter Border project which reduced spending. During the year, £7,151 was spent on the Rose Garden (bringing total project costs to £17,841), and £4,518 on the Jubilee Walk. Events made a surplus of £2,576, while donations (excluding the single donation above) comprised £14,481.

Under its reserves policy, the FoCP continues to aim for an ongoing sum of £10,000-£15,000 to be held as reserves, ensuring that there would be sufficient funds to cover expected (a) ongoing annual expenditure in case of a significant reduction in income and (b) upfront costs for major projects before any specific fundraising takes place. As part of our annual review of reserves, the trustees re-committed to reduce the level to the target range over the next two to three years, consistent with increased but judicious spending on park renewal projects.

Our longer-term funding model indicates all planned-for activity from 2023-2025 is feasible.

Structure & People

Trustees: There were no changes to the Trustee team in 2022/23.

At the end of the financial year, the following trustees remained in place:

Chair	Catherine Nelson	Secretary	Elizabeth ("Pit") Rink
Treasurer	Simon Ingall	Horticulture	Jane Watkins
Volunteers	Anne Peacock	Membership	Jeremy Lumbers
Legal	Caroline Newsholme	Fundraising	Anna Watkin
Marketing	Cathy Townsend	Events	Liza Llewellyn

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in exercising their powers or duties. The trustees are required to manage the FoCP in accordance with its Constitution and to maintain appropriate books and records in order to comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are responsible for safeguarding the FoCP's assets and therefore for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and irregularities. They are also responsible for the preparation of an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and accounting requirements.

Membership: Despite changes in the economy, membership remained stable at 426, down less than 1% from 429 at 31st March 2022. This was encouraging given that there were no membership campaigns during the year.

Volunteers: Everything the FoCP accomplishes is driven by its talented and hard-working team of volunteers. Despite the resumption of normal life after Covid, the gardening volunteer teams retained its strength and vigour, with an average weekly attendance of 20 people adding the equivalent of 1.5 additional full-time gardeners to the park. Again, the broad expertise of this team means a large number of activities can be tackled, from tree planting to drainage maintenance and general pruning and weeding.

Events and Marketing work is also kindly supported by 9 talented professionals who volunteer their time. In 2022/23, we were also very grateful for the assistance of Bright Pink Agency, who undertook the creation of our new website, and expressed our deep thanks to the Cow-Shed Agency, who stepped back after providing extensive communications support over many years.

Partnerships: The FoCP continues to be grateful for the advice and support of the Merton Council Greenspaces team. We also work closely with staff at idverde, Merton Council's parks contractor, who provided assistance for park projects.

The scope of FoCP activity is expanded and improved by the support of FoCP corporate partners. Hotel du Vin Cannizaro House support areas of planting and the operation and cleaning of the public toilet block, while landscape designers Landform UK provide project designs and horticultural assistance. In 2023/24, they will be joined by Robert Holmes estate agents, whose support will provide core funding for park renewal projects.

During the year, WSM Private Client generously sponsored ICANN, our health and wellness festival in the Park, and we thank Maddie Cannon for initiating and leading this wonderful festival for several years. We are grateful to our walk guides Greg Packman (Tree Guide) and Elliot Newton (Bat Guide) who continue to generously share their expertise.

In 2022/23, we are also grateful to:

- Richard True for his detailed work providing information and website copy for the tree collection, as well as creative ideas for helping visitors navigate tree data
- Katie Preston for extensive graphic design assistance, including a style guide and development of an FoCP "house style" in marketing materials
- Francesca McKenna for her photography work across 2022, developing an extensive image library for the park
- Tanya Serova for taking on the role of 'official park photographer' in a voluntary capacity from March 2022
- Local Residents' Associations and Clive Hilton for helping us share news and updates to the local community.

Plans for 2023/24

Our focus in 2023/24 remains the renewal and enhancement of the landscape of Cannizaro Park. Key projects to this end are as follows:

- Project Leonardo: creation of plans for the renovation of the central spine of the park, from the Keir Garden to the Italian Garden and its surrounds; this will include sustainable drainage systems, improved landscaping and provision of adequate hard landscaping and facilities
- Hotel du Vin bed: re-design and re-planting of this key bed below the Hotel du Vin terrace
- Improved Sustainability: work with parks contractor idverde to optimise lawn mowing regimes, to reduce fuel usage and benefit wildlife
- Optimised management of general and dog waste, and dog control
- Upgrade of hard structures: working with Merton Council, provision of new noticeboards and estate fencing, as well as the implementation of the Valley Path renovation

- Rhododendron project: expert advice on identification of plants, and management of shrubs which survived the 2022 drought.

The FoCP will also broaden its engagement with the wider Merton community, through new relationships with schools, youth and older adult groups, as well as through a park user survey.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Catherine Nelson". The script is cursive and fluid.

Catherine Nelson, Chair

Date of Signature: 14th May 2023



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

2022 £		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023 £
	Income			
4,100.00	Members' subscriptions	3,825.00		3,825.00
14,767.91	Donations (Note 3)	14,480.71	15,000.00	29,480.71
2,020.99	Gift Aid claims	3,081.38		3,081.38
15,642.47	Activities (Note 2)	6,221.28		6,221.28
122.90	Other	200.31		200.31
36,654.27	Total	27,808.68	15,000.00	42,808.68
	Expenditure			
(17,662.62)	Planting and maintenance (Note 3)	(15,728.29)		(15,728.29)
(403.14)	Permanent items for visitors	(1,822.35)		(1,822.35)
(3,050.49)	Aviary	(94.58)		(94.58)
(8,021.71)	Activities (Note 2)	(3,644.93)		(3,644.93)
(845.00)	IT	(1,882.37)		(1,882.37)
(918.56)	Communications	(1,006.62)		(1,006.62)
(794.94)	Other	(1,089.72)		(1,089.72)
(31,696.46)	Total	(25,268.86)	0.00	(25,268.86)
4,957.81	Movement in funds	2,539.82	15,000	17,539.82
31,362.18	Funds brought forward	36,319.99		36,319.99
36,319.99	Funds carried forward	38,859.81	15,000	53,859.81

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2023

2022 £		2023 £
	Net current assets	
3,144.15	Cash at bank - current account	3,409.74
37,521.97	- deposit account	51,114.66
94.54	PayPal account	134.51
553.12	Debtors	701.00
(4,993.79)	Creditors	(1,500.00)
36,319.99		53,859.91
	Funds	
36,319.99	Unrestricted	38,859.81
	Restricted (Note 3)	15,000.00
36,319.99		53,859.81

Notes to the Financial Statements

1 Basis of preparation and accounting policies

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with Statement of Recommended Practice SORP (FRS 102) under the Charities Act 2011 and therefore on an accruals basis, except for subscriptions, donations and Gift Aid claims which are recognised as income when received.

2 Results of Activities

2022					2023
Total		Bridge	Guided walks	ICANN	Total
£					£
15,642.47	Income	2,188.79	1,172.37	2,860.12	6,221.28
(8,021.71)	Expenditure	(118.79)	(626.48)	(2,899.66)	(3,644.93)
<u>7,620.76</u>	Net result	<u>2,070.00</u>	<u>545.89</u>	<u>(39.54)</u>	<u>2,576.35</u>

3 Expenditure and donations

Planting and maintenance for the year ended 31st March 2023 includes £7,151 for the park's rose garden project (2022: £10,690) and £4,518 for the Jubilee walk project. Donations for the year ended 31st March 2023 include £6,000 as a result of the waiving during the year by Merton Council of the cost of sunken garden bedding for 2021 and 2022. Restricted funds are in respect of a donation received for future expenditure on infrastructure, drainage and planting improvement projects.

Approved by the trustees

1st May 2023



Catherine Nelson, Chair



Simon Ingall, Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE FRIENDS OF CANNIZARO PARK

I have examined the Financial Statements of The Friends of Cannizaro Park for the year ended 31st March 2023 and confirm that they have been correctly prepared and are in accordance with the books and records.

Signed



Colin Price

1st May 2023