



The Friends of Cannizaro Park Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Registered Charity No. 1160982

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

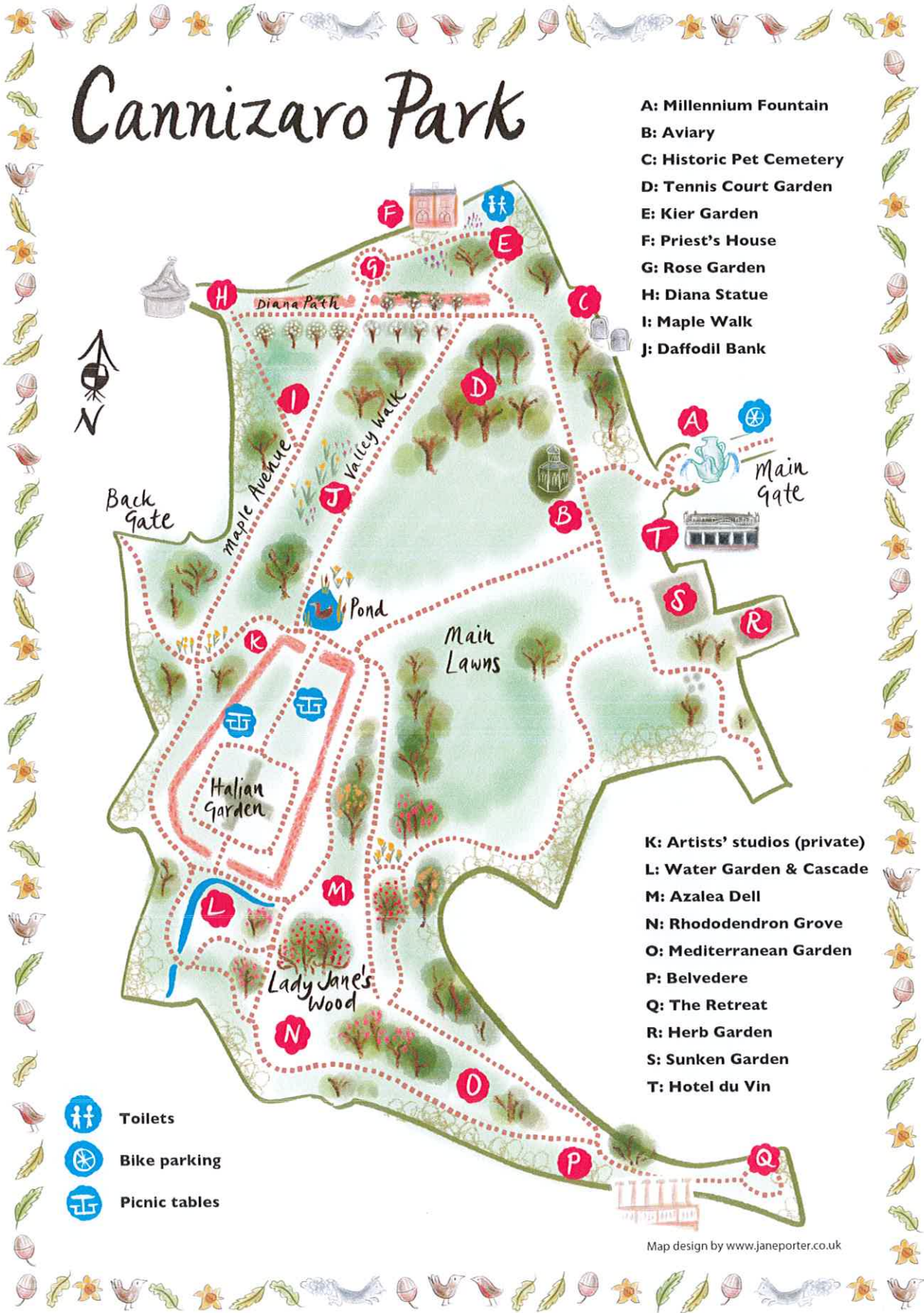


Trustees' Report Table of Contents

	Page
Map of Cannizaro Park	2
Letter from the Chair	3
Constitution	4
2023-24 Achievements and Performance	5
- Park Landscape	
- Enhancing Visitor Appreciation and Engagement	
Finances and Funding	8
Structure and People	9
Plans for 2024-25	11
Financial Statements	13

Photo credit: Francesca Snelling

Cannizaro Park



- A:** Millennium Fountain
- B:** Aviary
- C:** Historic Pet Cemetery
- D:** Tennis Court Garden
- E:** Kier Garden
- F:** Priest's House
- G:** Rose Garden
- H:** Diana Statue
- I:** Maple Walk
- J:** Daffodil Bank

- K:** Artists' studios (private)
- L:** Water Garden & Cascade
- M:** Azalea Dell
- N:** Rhododendron Grove
- O:** Mediterranean Garden
- P:** Belvedere
- Q:** The Retreat
- R:** Herb Garden
- S:** Sunken Garden
- T:** Hotel du Vin

-  Toilets
-  Bike parking
-  Picnic tables

Map design by www.janeporter.co.uk

Letter from the Chair

I am delighted to report a year of outstanding achievement from The Friends of Cannizaro Park ("FoCP").

A keynote was winning Cannizaro Park's first Green Flag, a prestigious national award which recognises good management and practice in parks and green spaces. Underpinning this award is a long term plan for works and funding for Cannizaro Park, co-created by the FoCP and park owners the London Borough of Merton ("LBM"). The FoCP welcomes the focus and closer partnership enabled by the Green Flag process.

Alongside the Green Flag, the expertise and leadership of our trustee team has allowed the FoCP to begin addressing important and larger scale issues in the park landscape. The combination of climate crisis weather changes and failing infrastructure has resulted in significant drainage problems through the central spine of Cannizaro Park. In 2023-24, the FoCP achieved major breakthroughs in two of the four drainage areas identified as critical; more detail is provided below. These breakthroughs are a result of the charity's internal strategic decision in 2022-23, to focus our limited organisational resource on delivering improvements to park landscape rather than provision of an extensive events programme.

In 2023-24, the FoCP was proud that the quality of its work was further recognised in a number of ways. Three external grant applications were successful, bringing record funding of £152k to Cannizaro Park. Additionally, in our 2024 Visitor Survey, those visiting the park strongly rated recent improvements, such as 2022 Rose Garden regeneration and the 2020 Front Entrance renovation.

All that which the FoCP achieves is rooted in the hard work and passion of our wider team. Whether it's gardening in the park, communications activity, landscape projects or trustee business, all activity is driven by volunteers who love the nature and beauty of Cannizaro Park, and wish to make a difference for each and every visitor. It's this commitment which underpins our recent success. With continued community support, the FoCP looks forward to delivering more positive change through our five year Renovation Masterplan, in the run up to Cannizaro Park's 80th Anniversary in 2029.

Catherine Nelson

Chair, The Friends of Cannizaro Park



Constitution

The trustees present their Report and the Financial Statements of The Friends of Cannizaro Park for the year ended 31st March 2024, 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. The FoCP 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 and one part-time gardener to maintain the park's thirty five acres.



2023-24 Achievements and Performance

Park Landscape

The FoCP has seen huge benefits this year from the strategic re-focussing of the charity's organisational resources onto core maintenance and renewal projects. This re-focussing, combined with careful planning of project areas across our organisation, allowed the FoCP to deliver on the number and the scale of achievements in 2023-24.

A key priority in 2023-24 was tackling flooding and drainage issues across the central spine of the park. Thanks to a generous donor, a specialist drainage consultancy report was commissioned during 2023-24, with the report highlighting four main areas where remedial drainage works are urgently required: the Valley Path; the Pond area; the Italian Garden; and the Italian Garden Envelope (the area bordering the Italian Garden, from the rear park entrance to the cascade below the Italian Garden, and enclosed by the park's boundary with the Royal Wimbledon Golf Course).

The drainage report has driven significant action to address flooding. The report's findings were used to enhance previously-won funding for the Valley Path, by creating an optimal design for the processing of water flows down this key central channel of the park. The Valley Path re-surfacing and drainage works started in winter 2023-24, and will be complete in late spring 2024; as well as addressing drainage, the new path will improve access for all groups to the much-loved Pond area.

The drainage report also underpinned two successful grant applications, whose projects will tackle water management in the Pond area - the second of the four priority drainage areas. Funding of £30k from Merton Council's Civic Pride initiative will allow provision of a new pipe linking the Pond to the Cascade; this piece of infrastructure is crucial in regulating Pond outflows, and is currently badly degraded. A further substantial £120k award from the Environment Agency's Natural Flood Management programme will tackle other key issues in the Pond area, allowing intense water flows to better held in the Pond, thus reducing downstream flood risk, improving the Pond's water quality, and enhancing the local biodiversity.

Away from drainage work, two major initiatives improved the soft landscaping of Cannizaro Park: the re-design of the Hotel Bed, and the planting of a new native hedge on the park's rear boundary. The Hotel Bed, a prominent and extensive bed in front of the Hotel du Vin's Orangery, was cleared and re-planted by FoCP gardening volunteers to a new design featuring bulbs and perennials. An exceptional effort from gardening volunteers during winter 2023-24 saw the planting of 900 hedge whips, which will over time form a native hedge. In addition to providing an attractive natural border between the park and the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club, the hedge will provide much support for wildlife through its mix of species. The funding for these hedge materials was won by the FoCP through a grant application to The Tree Council.

Following major renovation works in previous years, the FoCP gardening volunteers continued to maintain important areas of Cannizaro Park, such as the Rose Garden, the Jubilee Cherry Walk and the Front Entrance. Given the scale of projects now completed, this maintenance now comprises a significant portion of gardening work, and ranges from top-up planting and pruning to mulching, weeding and (in early stages) watering. A number of new specimen trees were planted and cared for by volunteers, following their donation by members of the local community. Rhododendron killed by the 2022 drought were removed

during the winter, and some initial re-planting was undertaken. Visits from RHS Rhododendron and Camellia experts helped the FoCP to increase its understanding of surviving plants - an area which is highlighted for further attention in future years.

Summer 2023 saw a major initiative to upgrade waste management in Cannizaro Park. Working with the LBM Greenspaces team, ugly and impractical old bins were replaced with smart new bins, which have a greater waste capacity and which are also much more resistant to intrusion from wild animals. An awareness event in the park, together with a waste display in the Aviary, resulted in high levels of support from park visitors, and a 90% reduction in subsequent waste collection by volunteers.

Finally, the first year of Green Flag support resulted in improvements to key structures in the park - noticeboards and park fencing - as well as a more sustainable mowing regime for lawns and grassy spaces. LBM Greenspaces provided two new noticeboards for the front and rear entrances; together with brand new maps of the park, these information resources have dramatically improved communication with park visitors. Elsewhere, an important area of veteran rhododendron below the Aviary has been protected by new metal estate fencing, in a collaboration between the FoCP and LBM Greenspaces. This smart new fencing, which replaced temporary chestnut paling, also enhanced the appearance of this key access path in the park. Lastly, and as part of ongoing plans to improve the sustainability of horticulture within Cannizaro Park, a new mowing regime was agreed with council contractor idverde, to allow significant spaces of wildlife-friendly longer grass and a fuel-saving reduction in mowing.



Enhancing Visitor Appreciation and Engagement

During 2023-24, the FoCP continued its strategy of running a small and focussed programme of events, mixing well-received guided walks with a new “Art in the Aviary” installation. The FoCP’s own six guided walks were designed to increase visitor awareness and enjoyment of the nature in Cannizaro, with tree and bat walks and forest bathing activities being appreciated by park visitors. In a new venture, the FoCP created partnerships with local schools and community groups in the “Art in the Aviary” installations. This initiative resulted in four local organisations (two schools, one art group, and the Brownies) creating exhibits which largely featured responses to the nature in Cannizaro Park.

Working more widely, the FoCP liaised with external organisations to support a repeat “Art in the Park” event and to promote the local Walk & Talk group. The second Art in the Park was as successful as the first event in 2021, with over 2000 people visiting Cannizaro Park to see artist displays and a sculpture trail, as well as to participate in art classes and activities. Collaborating with the Wimbledon Village Walk & Talk Group, the FoCP led three walks in Cannizaro Park, sharing different aspects of the park and the FoCP’s work.

In visitor communications, the FoCP’s objective in 2023-24 was to deliver regular and high quality park messages which were interesting and helpful to park visitors. Park e-newsletters continue to be well-received, and are circulated to 753 subscribers, while the FoCP’s Instagram presence remained strong (2886 followers, up +11% vs a year ago). The biannual Visitor Survey was conducted from December 2023-January 2024, with 237 respondents both online and in-person. As well as information on visitor locations and travel to the park, helpful answers on visitor priorities showed strong support for projects in the FoCP future plans (improving drainage, renovating the Italian Garden and re-designing the Aviary).

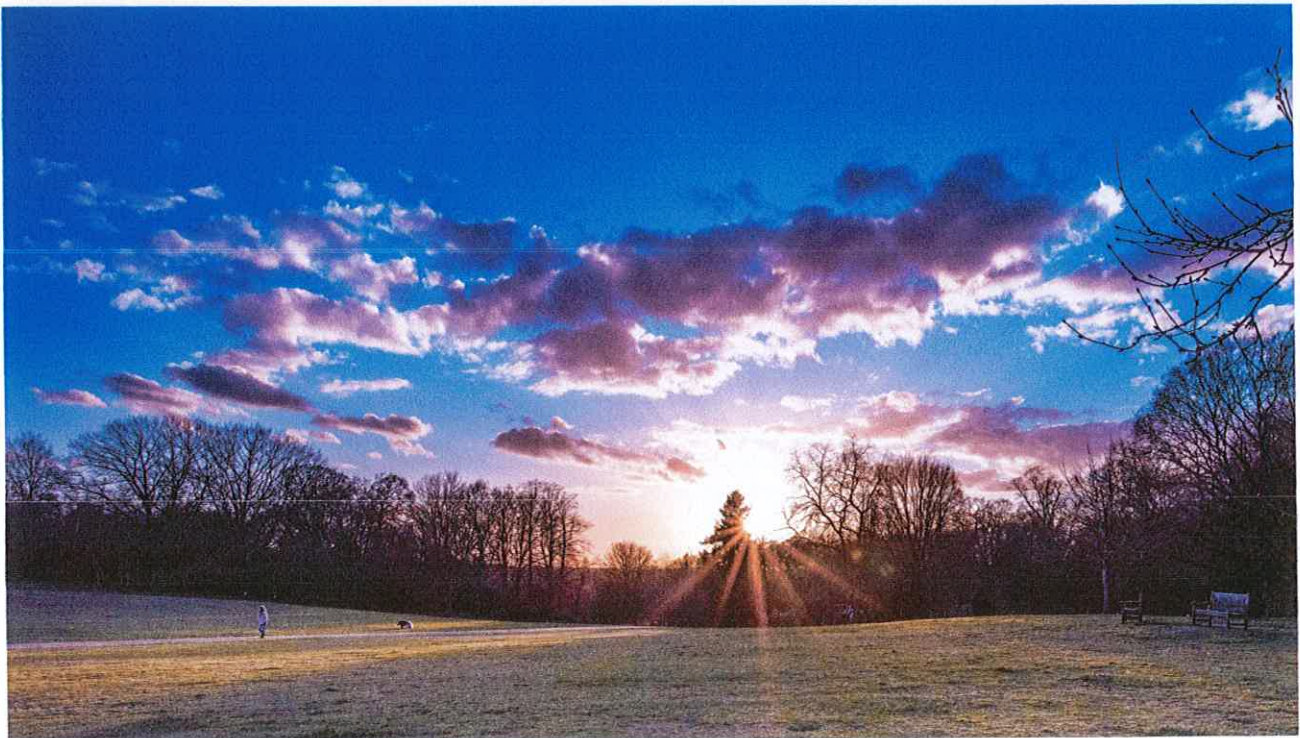


Finances and Funding

FoCP funds decreased by £14,627 during the year, to a total of £39,233. £14,220 was spent on drainage consultancy work and £18,522 on planting and maintenance (including £6,432 on fencing and £3,427 on the hotel bed project). There were donations of £14,705 and events made a surplus of £2,672.

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 2024-2026 is feasible.



Structure and People

Trustees: During 2023-24, there was one change to the Trustee team. Jeremy Lumbers retired as Membership Trustee, and Sam Pedder was welcomed to the role, being co-opted on 11 March 2024. The FoCP expressed its gratitude to Jeremy for his long service to the charity, most notably in its move to charitable status and in the implementation of the WebCollect membership system.

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

Chair	Catherine Nelson	Secretary	Elizabeth ("Pit") Rink
Treasurer	Simon Ingall	Horticulture	Jane Watkins
Volunteers	Anne Peacock	Membership	Sam Pedder
Legal	Caroline Newsholme	Development	Anna Watkin
Communications	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: Membership remained stable at 428, compared with 426 at 31 March 2023.

Volunteers: The FoCP continued to benefit in 2023-24 from the energies, enthusiasm and skills of a fantastic range of volunteers. Our gardening team comprises over 38 people, with weekly attendance averaging 20 people. This means that on an annual basis, the FoCP provides c. 2880 hours of gardening to Cannizaro Park, the equivalent of 1.5 additional full-time gardeners.

Organisational volunteers were also a huge support to the park, in several ways. Communications work was enabled by a team of five, while the hard landscaping project team was assisted by two engineering professionals.

FoCP Park Partners: The FoCP's work was greatly helped by its three park partners. Hotel du Vin Cannizaro House, our amenity partner, supported areas of planting and the operation and cleaning of the public toilet block. Landscape designers Landform UK provide horticultural assistance and advice. Estate agents Robert Holmes & Company support the FoCP as our community partner, providing core funding for park renewal projects.

As always, the FoCP continued to be grateful for the advice and support of the LBM Greenspaces team. We also worked closely with staff at idverde, Merton Council's parks contractor, who provided assistance for park projects.

Additional Thanks: In 2023/24, the FoCP was particularly grateful to:

- The Bright Pink Agency, for their support for Cannizaro Park's website
- The Tree Council and the Environment Agency, for their generous grants which enabled regenerative activity in the park

- An anonymous major donor, for funding drainage consultancy work that has provided the basis for grant applications and external investment
- Walk guides Elliot Newton, Greg Packman and Susanne Meis for the passion and knowledge they bring to their walks
- Katie Preston, Katherine Rowe and the Commonworks Gallery, for the fabulous activity that is Art in the Park
- The Royal Wimbledon Golf Club, for planting additional whips on our shared boundary
- The organisations who created such interesting and colourful exhibits in the 2023-24 Art in the Aviary programme: The Study School; Bishop Gilpin Primary School; Workshop 305; and the Girl Guides
- Den Anderson for leading yet another successful bridge fundraising afternoon.



Plans for 2024/25

In 2024/25, the FoCP remains focussed on the renewal and enhancement of the landscape of Cannizaro Park, with an ambitious programme of activity.

Key areas of focus are as follows:

- Improving soft landscaping
 - Implement a new attractive and more sustainable planting design for the Sunken Garden, working with Landform UK, LBM & idverde
 - Work with LBM Greenspaces to ensure reinstatement of areas damaged by 2023 Merton Council Festive Light Trail
 - Re-plant areas of Herb Garden and selected rhododendron beds
- Continuing to build climate resilience through projects to tackle drainage & flooding
 - Develop detailed plan for execution of Pond Area project, together with project partner LBM Greenspaces
 - Develop detailed plan and then implementation of Pond-Cascade pipe project, alongside LBM Greenspaces
- Improving hard landscaping through upgrade of key structures
 - Develop costed design and secure public and planning support for a new “Aviary” building, to include a display space and nature/tree engagement
 - Secure funding for replacement of dilapidated rear entrance gates
- Continuing to enhance visitors’ experience of Cannizaro Park
 - Promote dog-walking protocols and well-behaved (vs out-of-control) dogs
 - Secure funding for interpretative signs, to share key aspects of Cannizaro Park’s nature and history
- Engage with local community on future development plans for Cannizaro Park
 - Share Cannizaro @ 80 5 Year Renovation Masterplan with key local groups and community leaders, for wider circulation, input and support
- Explore change in FoCP governance and funding structures, to enable the FoCP to manage anticipated future project and financing needs
 - Evaluate move to a charitable incorporated organisation structure, and the potential of a Friends-donor model.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Catherine Nelson, Chair

Date: 15 April 2024

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2024

2023		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds (Note 5)	2024
£				Total £
Income				
3,825.00	Subscriptions	3,600.00		3,600.00
29,480.71	Donations (Note 3)	12,835.22	1,869.94	14,705.16
3,081.38	Gift Aid claims	1,768.04		1,768.04
6,221.28	Activities (Note 2)	3,488.46		3,488.46
200.31	Other	769.30		769.30
42,808.68	Total	22,461.02	1,869.94	24,330.96
Expenditure				
(15,728.29)	Planting and maintenance (Note 3)	(15,872.14)	(2,649.94)	(18,522.08)
	Drainage survey		(14,220.00)	(14,220.00)
(1,822.35)	Permanent items for visitors	(395.60)		(395.60)
(94.58)	Aviary	(43.20)		(43.20)
(3,644.93)	Activities (Note 2)	(816.66)		(816.66)
(1,882.27)	IT	(60.00)		(60.00)
(1,006.62)	Communications	(2,377.47)		(2,377.47)
(1,089.72)	Other	(2,522.63)		(2,522.63)
(25,268.76)	Total	(22,087.70)	(16,869.94)	(38,957.64)
17,539.92	Movement in funds	373.32	(15,000.00)	(14,626.68)
36,319.99	Funds brought forward	38,859.91	15,000.00	53,859.91
53,859.91	Funds carried forward	39,233.23	-	39,233.23

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2024

2023			2024
£			£
Net current assets			
3,409.74	Cash at bank - current account		2,878.94
51,114.66	- deposit account		19,895.84
	- notice account		20,488.11
134.51	PayPal account		97.96
701.00	Debtors		372.38
(1,500.00)	Creditors (Note 4)		(4,500.00)
53,859.91			39,233.23
Funds			
38,859.91	Unrestricted		39,233.23
15,000.00	Restricted (Note 5)		-
53,859.91			39,233.23

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

2023		Bridge	Walks	2024
£		£	£	Total
6,221.28	Income	2,248.32	1,240.14	3,488.46
(3,644.93)	Expenditure	(137.32)	(679.34)	(816.66)
<u>2,576.35</u>	Net result	<u>2,111.00</u>	<u>(560.80)</u>	<u>2,671.80</u>

3 Expenditure and donations

Planning and maintenance for the year ended 31st March 2024 includes £6,432 for fencing and £3,427 for the hotel bed project (2023: £7,151 for the rose garden project and £4,518 for the Jubilee walk project).

4 Creditors

Creditors at 31st March 2024 comprise the amount due to Merton Council for the sunken garden bedding in 2023 and a prepayment from the Hotel du Vin for planting in May 2024.

5 Restricted funds

Restricted funds were in respect of £15,000 received for expenditure on infrastructure, drainage and planting, and a grant of £1,870 received for hedging, and were fully utilised in the year ended 31st March 2024.

Approved by the trustees

15th April 2024

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 2024 and confirm that they have been correctly prepared and are in accordance with the books and records.

Signed

Colin Price

15th April 2024