

The Friends of Richmond Park

Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018

Trustees' report

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" and the Charities Act 2011.

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the objects and activities of the Friends and in planning its future activities. In particular, the Trustees have considered how planned activities will contribute to the objects and activities they have set.

Structure, governance and management

The Friends was registered as a charity (No. 1133201) on 9 December 2009 under a Constitution dated 12 November 2009 which sets out its objects and powers.

New Trustees are recruited and appointed from within the membership, principally those who are engaged in volunteer activities. As part of their induction they receive a copy of the Constitution and Rules, the latest annual report and financial statements, the Charity Commission guidance "The Essential Trustee" and all other relevant management papers. Trustee meetings are held every two months.

The Trustees, all of whom served throughout the year, are set out below:

Nick Coleman
Ron Crompton – Chairman
Mary Davies
Teresa Grafton
Richard Gray
PJ Greeves
Chris Mason
David McLaughlin - Honorary Treasurer
Richard Polson – Honorary Secretary
Dr Vivienne Press
Steve Sandham

The principal address of the Friends is 42 Rivermeads Avenue, Twickenham, TW2 5JQ.

Objects and activities

The objects of the Friends in summary are to:

- promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural and physical environment of the Park and its peace and natural beauty for the benefit of the public and future generations; and
- advance the education of the public in relation to the Park's status as a National Nature Reserve, Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation.

To achieve these objectives, the Friends volunteers undertake practical conservation work and litter-picking, monitor events in the Park, staff the Visitor Centre, organise public walks and courses, and run an education programme for young families. The Friends also funds conservation projects, campaigns on issues affecting the Park, and communicates with the

Registered number: 1133201

Trustees' report (continued)

public and its 2500 members through a website, Facebook page, a printed newsletter three times a year and a monthly e-bulletin. The Friends is run on a voluntary basis and has no paid members of staff.

Achievements and performance during the year

The Friends had another excellent year, raising money for a large conservation project to restore elm trees in the Park, funding four other conservation projects, continuing to grow its volunteer litter-picking group, helping in the adoption of Volunteer Community Rangers in the Park and developing a new website. However, we continue to struggle to protect the Park against the rapidly increasing number of visitors who are encouraged by social and mainstream media. Deer harassment is widespread and indeed many people come just to see, and get close to, the deer. We continue to educate people about how to treat the Park through our film and our *Tread Lightly* message, but it is an uphill battle. We hope that the new Volunteer Rangers will help to tackle the worst aspects of visitor behaviour.

Elm Walk

The Friends worked with The Royal Parks ("TRP") to create a new Elm Walk of 48 trees along the path leading from Petersham Gate. The project is intended to re-establish elms in Richmond Park using a hybrid resistant to Dutch Elm disease and provide a habitat for the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly. TRP designed the walk and managed the tree planting, while the Friends marketed them to potential sponsors and ran four "planting" days when donors were able to hold small ceremonies. We successfully found sponsors for all 47 trees and raised over £80,000 to fund the project, with the surplus going to other conservation projects in the Park. The first tree in the Walk is in the name of our patron Sir David Attenborough. The trustees are very grateful to all the sponsors and to the volunteers who organised the appeal.

Conservation Projects

The Friends funded four conservation projects in the Park during the year, often jointly with the Visitor Centre and sometimes with TRP also. They included:

- the permanent fencing of Ham Gate Pond which, after its restoration and the removal of invasive weeds, has become a haven for dragon/damselflies;
- fencing to protect the Pen Ponds shore line and its wildfowl from deer and dogs;
- fencing and planting in Pen Ponds Plantation to create a new deer-proof area along its land border where a native hedge has been planted, creating a new habitat for birds and insects; and
- permanent fencing around the gorse enclosures near Holly Lodge which have become a very successful bird habitat since they were created ten years ago.

Unfortunately, the second stage of the Beverley Brook restoration was delayed into 2019, to avoid harming the skylark areas.

Volunteer Community Rangers

Over the last three years the Friends has worked on the idea of Park Rangers to help deal with the impact on the Park of rapidly increasing visitor numbers, particularly as police numbers have declined so drastically; this included researching similar places such as the Peak District and Dartmoor National Parks. Discussion with TRP settled on a plan for Volunteer Community Rangers to educate the public and tackle inappropriate behaviour. TRP have now implemented that plan and recruited and trained volunteers, including some Friends' members, for a trial this Easter and a larger scheme in the summer. We think the Rangers could have an enormous impact on problems such deer harassment.

Trustees' report (continued)

Visitor Centre

Some 60 volunteers staff and organise the Park's Visitor Centre (the "VC"), which provides information about the Park and items for sale, with the surplus funding Park conservation projects. The VC is open 364 days, from 10am to 4 pm in summer and 11 am to 3 pm in winter. In 2018 the VC had 55,000 visitors and £66,000 in sales. Park-related products developed by the Friends – calendar, Christmas and greeting cards, DVD, books and merchandise – contribute about half of the VC's surplus. We introduced collapsible re-usable coffee cups for sale to reduce plastic usage in the Park. Sadly, Mary Davies and Liz Hunt, who have been responsible for leading and developing the VC for the last nine years, stepped down at the end of the year: they will be sorely missed. The VC is a key to the Friends objective to educate the public about the special nature of the Park and to help visitors to appreciate its ecology, wildlife and heritage.

Litter-picking

We now have a well-established and substantial team of over 50 litter-picking volunteers working in the Adopt-an-Area scheme. People adopt one of 29 areas, covering the whole of the Park, and pick litter at least once a week when they are walking there. In addition, there are roaming litter-pickers and some who concentrate on particular areas such as roadsides. Individuals, couples, friends, in one case a whole young family have adopted and identify with their area and there is a waiting list for areas! It's a tribute to the team and especially to Steve Sandham, who set up the scheme, that it is now being copied in other parks, including Wimbledon Common.

Practical conservation work

This team of 20-30 volunteers, does hands-on conservation and continues to work every Saturday in the autumn and winter months removing rhododendron ponticum in Pen Ponds Plantation. During the year, it completed clearing the deer accessible areas and, after the new deer-proof fencing was installed (see conservation projects above) helped to plant the new hedge along the border of the Plantation. It has also been involved in coppicing the gorse in the newly fenced gorse enclosures. A small sub-group of volunteers – the Beverley Brook Volunteer Group - has regularly cleared Beverley Brook of rubbish and been involved in various surveys, notably of ant hills and nocturnal small mammals. The practical conservation group always attracts new recruits eager to work in the open air and contribute to the Park and has now adopted the Green Gym name to reflect its physical work.

New website

The Friends now has a new website. The previous one (and our first website) was over twelve years old and, while it still looked good and many people liked it, it was difficult for us to operate and websites have moved on considerably both technically and in what people want from them. The new site has much greater use of high-quality photos and should be easier both for visitors and us; it also works much better on phones and tablets. There is a new facility for people to apply and pay for Friends membership online and to apply to be a volunteer. The Trustees are very grateful to Steve Sandham and his team for their hard work and to the web developer, Blueflamingo in Twickenham.

Trustees' report (continued)

Volunteering

We now have about 230 volunteer posts. This includes staffing the Visitor Centre, practical conservation work, the Discoverers education programme, litter-picking, walks and courses, Park monitoring and of course, the 25-30 volunteers involved in organising the Friends itself. Volunteer teams are largely self-managing and we keep the central direction "light touch" with minimum bureaucracy, while still meeting statutory requirements such as H&S and GDPR. The Trustees estimate that volunteers contribute 14,000 hours a year, worth nearly £150,000 based on the London Living Wage, to conservation and public education in the Park. Once again, the Trustees would like to thank the many volunteers who have contributed so much during the year.

Campaigning

The Friends regularly campaigns on issues affecting the Park, using a variety of approaches, from behind-the-scenes lobbying to public campaigns. As we mention above, our work over the last two to three years on Park Rangers bore fruit in 2018. Two Trustees, Vivienne Press and Nick Coleman, undertook research on signage, including an inventory of signs in the Park (we counted over 1200 of which 300 are environmental) and signage best practice in National Parks in the US, and elsewhere, and this has helped to prompt TRP's current signage review. Our successful public campaign in 2017/18 for increased protection of the view from King Henry's Mound to St Paul's had its first practical impact in the autumn when the Olympicopolis development at Stratford announced a reduction in the height of its two towers and more developments followed suit. In contrast we unsuccessfully objected to two residential developments just outside Roehampton Gate that will add significantly to light pollution in the Park.

Other areas

The Friends film "Richmond Park – National Nature Reserve", narrated by Sir David Attenborough, has now been viewed over 100,000 times on YouTube and another 400,000 times on the TV channel London Live which broadcast it three times over the 2018 Christmas period. We have also shown it at thirty schools in the surrounding three boroughs.

We now have three sponsors - Russell-Cooke, Thames Water and The Property Partnership. They have their logo on all our communications, as well as other FRP publicity about what they do. Sponsorship provides us with a steady annual income of £7,500 that means we can plan ahead for funding conservation projects. We are very grateful to the three organisations for their support.

During 2018, we also offered over 20 public walks and courses (a talk and a walk) for adults, i.e. nearly two a month, with large numbers turning out for the Boxing Day walk and some courses. We are extending this to include more talks without the walk and tours of areas of the Park. We will keep the public walks free as a key part of achieving the Friends charitable objectives.

Discoverers, our education programme for young families, held activities such as Bat Watch and Fungi Art Workshop, but had to postpone some events because of poor weather. Two of the Discoverers families became involved as Butterfly Surveyors and we would like to encourage young families to become more involved with the Park in this way.

Trustees' report (continued)

We made changes to our data protection to meet the new GDPR rules. The rules seem to have been designed for large organisations and there was no relevant practical government guidance. It caused us (and other small charities) a lot of work for little benefit since we already had tight data protection. Our basic principles remain that we never share our membership and volunteer data with outside bodies, we have tight internal rules on who can see what data and we quickly unsubscribe people if they ask us.

The Friends' membership showed a small (3%) increase to 1780 memberships or 2600 members (counting one member for an individual subscription and two for a household subscription). Our turnover of members is very low at about 8%, implying our members stay with us for an average of 12 years.

Plans for the future

The Friends plans to maintain its activities broadly along the present lines. Our priorities in 2019 include developing a three-year plan for our funding of conservation projects, bringing in new people to help run the Friends, finalising the improvements in our volunteering process and helping TRP where necessary to implement the Rangers and signage improvements. We will also campaign strongly to protect Richmond Park against threats to its peace, natural beauty and wildlife, of which the latest in 2019 is likely to be Heathrow and its flights paths.

Financial review

The financial position continued to improve with a small surplus of £1,995 on unrestricted activities and a surplus of £24,268 on restricted funds. The latter reflected the successful Elm Walk appeal as well as the funding of other conservation projects.

At £26,814 unrestricted income was higher than the prior year by £2,802, attributable to further increases in total subscription income and related Gift Aid. General donations were also higher. General operational costs were slightly higher than the prior year at £11,601 – compared with £10,771, an increase of £830. This is primarily attributable to inflation and the timing of some costs. There were some residual costs, of £618, in respect of the Friends' film and there were donations of £600, of which £500 was for the Swan Sanctuary. In addition, the cost of the redesign and redeployment of the Friends' website amounted to £12,000.

Restricted income was high at £104,969 of which £84,750 related to the Elm Walk appeal. There were a number of generous donations from other sources during the year, amounting to £2,809, and income from sponsors was much higher at £6,450, reflecting the development of this programme. Sales of merchandise and publications were lower, but the overall surplus was higher by £960 at £7,551.

Conservation and other grants payable of £77,292 comprised:

- £48,367 for the Elm Walk project (with further expenditure to follow);
- £6,750 for plantation fencing at Pen Ponds;
- £7,750 for permanent fencing at Ham Gate Pond;
- £2,675 in respect of scientific surveys;
- £10,000 for gorse enclosures; and
- £1,750 to fund the elm tree planted in the name of Sir David Attenborough.

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves and reserving policy

At the year end, unrestricted funds stood at £45,540, up by £1,995 as set out above. Total restricted funds were higher by £24,268 at £87,517, reflecting a (temporary) net surplus on the Elm Walk appeal of £36,383 offset by expenditure on some projects that had been delayed from 2017. Further payments will be made to The Royal Parks over the next few years to fund the maintenance of the Elm Walk trees, with any residual balance allocated to other conservation projects in the park – assuming that no substantial cost of replanting arises.

Within the unrestricted funds is a designated amount of £25,000 set aside to cover potential urgent campaign expenses, which leaves a balance of £20,540 which represents about 22 months (2017: 20 months) of general expenditure. The policy of the Trustees is to maintain reserves at more than six months and less than twelve months of general expenditure, and the Trustees will ensure that funds are deployed to conservation and other projects as soon as is practicable.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Friends' financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the Trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departure disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Friends will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Friends and which enable them to ascertain its financial position and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations and the provisions of the constitution of the Friends. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Friends and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Independent Examiners

The Independent Examiners, Feltons, will be proposed for reappointment.

Approval

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Ron Crompton
Chairman

22 February 2019

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Members of The Friends of Richmond Park

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2018 which are set out on pages 8 to 12.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustees as a body, for my work or for this report.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the "2011 Act") and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Richard Rhodes
Chartered Accountant
Feltons, Independent Examiners
1 The Green, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1PL

22 February 2019

Registered number: 1133201

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2018

		2018		2017
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total last
	Note	funds	income	year
		£	£	year
				£
Incoming resources				
Subscriptions	2	20,861	-	19,078
General donations		1,099	2,809	741
Gift Aid	3	4,240	-	3,975
Interest		246	-	219
Recoveries and sponsorship		368	6,450	1,893
Merchandise and publication sales		-	10,960	15,950
Appeals, grants and legacies		-	84,750	50,190
Total incoming resources		26,814	104,969	92,046
Resources expended				
Regular newsletters and leaflets		(5,272)	-	(5,190)
Administration and governance		(3,351)	-	(3,361)
Booklets and publications		(352)	-	(406)
Walks, courses and volunteers		(813)	-	(487)
Discoverers		(398)	-	(437)
Adopt an Area		(860)	-	-
Other volunteering and events		(555)	-	(890)
		(11,601)	-	(10,771)
Merchandise and publication costs		-	(3,409)	(8,205)
Film production and launch		(618)	-	(14,524)
Website development		(12,000)	-	-
Conservation and other grants payable		(600)	(77,292)	(11,607)
Total resources expended	5	(24,819)	(80,701)	(45,107)
Net incoming resources		1,995	24,268	46,939
Total funds brought forward		43,545	63,249	59,855
Total funds carried forward		45,540	87,517	106,794

The notes on pages 10 to 12 form part of these financial statements.

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2018

<u>Current assets</u>	Note	2018	2017
		£	£
Stock	6	1,321	1,755
Debtors and prepayments			
Debtors for donations		-	5,800
Other debtors		2,575	4,216
Gift Aid repayment claim		4,240	3,752
Other prepayments	7	3,560	3,369
		10,375	17,137
Bank			
Cash at bank and in hand		86,334	77,718
Deposit accounts		45,000	30,000
		131,334	107,718
Total current assets		143,030	126,610
<u>Current liabilities</u>			
Creditors falling due within one year			
Deferred income		(9,700)	(8,209)
Accrued expenditure		(273)	-
Conservation grants payable		-	(11,607)
Total current liabilities		(9,973)	(19,816)
Net assets		133,057	106,794
Funds of the charity			
	8		
Unrestricted funds		45,540	43,545
Restricted income fund		19,113	21,604
Restricted merchandise funds		16,718	26,342
Ponds & Streams		15,303	15,303
Elm Walk appeal fund		36,383	-
		87,517	63,249
Total funds		133,057	106,794

The financial statements on pages 8 to 12, including the notes, were approved by the Trustees on 22 February 2019 and were signed on their behalf by:

David McLaughlin
Honorary Treasurer

Registered number: 1133201

Notes to the financial statements

1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011. The Friends of Richmond Park meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

2. Incoming resources

Incoming resources from regular subscriptions and annual sponsorship are recognised in the period to which they relate, with amounts received in advance recorded as deferred income.

Incoming resources from general donations, appeals and legacies are recorded in the statement of financial activities on receipt.

Major grants which are related to expenditure incurred are recognised in the same period as the related expenditure and are disclosed in debtors at the end of the financial year where payment has not been made, provided there is evidence of entitlement, receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Grants which have related expenditure are reported gross in the statement of financial activity.

3. Gift Aid

Tax credits receivable from Gift Aid donations are recognised in the same period as the gift to which the claim relates.

4. Donated services and volunteer help

The value of donated services and volunteer help is not included in the financial statements but is described in the Trustees' report.

5. Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis, including royalties payable in respect of the Guide to Richmond Park and Family Trails sales.

Conservation grants payable are recognised in the financial statements when a commitment has been made and there are no conditions to be met relating to the disbursement of that grant which remain in the control of the charity.

No Trustee received any remuneration during the reporting period. The Trustees were able to recover reasonable expenses incurred by them, wholly, necessarily and exclusively for the Friends: these included the purchase of postage stamps, stationery and related items. The total cost reimbursed to trustees in respect of such expenditure during the year amounted to £5,264 of which more than half related to the purchase of postage stamps. There were no related party transactions.

The independent examination was conducted on a pro-bono basis by Feltons and all other services were provided on a voluntary basis by Trustees and volunteers.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)**6. Valuation of publications, leaflets and booklets**

Publications, comprising books and DVDs, for sale are valued at the lower of the cost of production and net realisable value. The cost of publications (including DVDs) sold is charged to the statement of financial activities, together with any royalties paid or payable on sales, for all copies sold or provided on a complimentary basis.

The costs of leaflets and booklets for free distribution are expensed in full in the statement of financial activities as incurred.

7. Other prepayments

Other prepayments comprise the remaining stock of postage stamps purchased in advance of the increase in rates and prepayments for website hosting and maintenance paid in advance.

8. Total funds

The analysis of total funds as at 31 December is shown below.

	Unrestricted funds		2018	Total	2017
	Designated	Other	Restricted funds	funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Total current assets	25,000	30,513	87,517	143,030	126,610
Creditors falling due within one year	-	(9,973)	-	(9,973)	(19,816)
Total funds	25,000	20,540	87,517	133,057	106,794

Unrestricted funds are represented by general funds which are expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the Friends. These arise from the net surplus generated on ordinary activities during a financial year. Within unrestricted funds, there is a designated balance of £25,000 set aside for immediate access to provide funding for any campaign in respect of which the Charity could be required to provide support.

The restricted funds represent amounts received, granted, donated or bequeathed to the Friends for specific purposes, primarily for conservation projects.

The income fund represents specific small, or general, donations and sponsorship funding received in respect of, or to be applied to, conservation projects.

The restricted merchandise fund represents the net surplus realised by the Friends on the sales to the Visitor Centre and other third parties of the range of merchandise specially designed, or produced, for the Friends as well as the net profit generated by the sales of The Guide to Richmond Park and Family Trails.

An appeal fund has been created for further conservation and enhancement work in respect of ponds and streams.

During the year the Friends operated an appeal for the Elm Walk in Richmond Park.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)**8. Total funds (continued)**

The movements in the restricted funds for the year ended 31 December 2018 are shown below.

	Opening balance	Additions	Payments	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted income fund	21,604	9,259	(11,750)	-	19,113
Restricted merchandise fund	26,342	10,960	(20,584)	-	16,718
Ponds & Streams appeal fund	15,303	-	-	-	15,303
Elm Walk appeal fund	-	84,750	(48,367)	-	36,383
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	63,249	104,969	(80,701)	-	87,517
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

The comparative movements in the restricted funds for the year ended 31 December 2017 are shown below.

	Opening balance	Additions	Payments	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted income fund	4,070	17,534	-	-	21,604
Restricted publications fund	15,027	-	-	(15,027)	-
Restricted merchandise fund	4,430	21,697	(14,812)	15,027	26,342
Film production and launch	-	8,500	(8,500)	-	-
Ponds & Streams appeal fund	-	20,303	(5,000)	-	15,303
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total funds	23,527	68,034	(28,312)	-	63,249
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