



The Friends of Richmond Park

Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

Charity number: 1133201

Trustees' Report**Introduction**

The Trustees of the Friends of Richmond Park present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023. The Trustees confirm that the Trustees' report and financial statements of the Charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Trustees have paid due regard to 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 Charity carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.

Structure, governance and management

The Friends of Richmond Park is an unincorporated association governed under a Constitution dated 12 November 2009, which sets out its objects and powers, and under Rules made by the Trustees on 13 May 2010 pursuant to paragraph 29 of the Friends' Constitution.

The Charity is managed by its trustees who are (re-)elected annually in a general meeting of the Charity. Between annual general meetings, the Trustees may also appoint any person who is willing to act as a Trustee. New Trustees are recruited and appointed from within the membership. 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 entitled "The Essential Trustee" and relevant management papers. Trustee meetings are held every two months.

Reference and administrative details

The Charity is registered and known as The Friends of Richmond Park (Registration number: 1133201). The principal and registered address of the Friends is 21 Ormonde Road, East Sheen, London SW14 7BE.

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

Peter Allnutt	From 23 June 2023
Janet Bostock	
Nick Coleman	
Dr Hugh Deighton	Treasurer
Helene Feger	
Roger Hillyer	Chairman
Chris Mason	
Judith Pearson	Secretary
Dr Vivienne Press	
Dr Monique Sarkany	
Nigel Sherwin	
Lucy Tarleton	

Patrons

We are grateful for the continued support of our patrons: Sir David Attenborough, Clare Balding CBE and Baroness Susan Kramer.

Trustees' Report (continued)

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, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation.

To achieve these objects, the Friends carries out the following activities:

- volunteering including practical conservation work and litter picking, monitoring events in the Park, staffing the Visitor Centre and organising walks
- campaigning to protect the natural and physical environment of the Park, including its wildlife
- education, including producing information and interpretation materials for both adults and children, and running an activity programme for young families
- fund raising through membership fees and through sales from the Visitor Centre, other local outlets and our online shop; and
- awarding grants for projects that support our objects.

The Friends communicates with the public and its members through a website, a magazine published twice a year, a monthly electronic bulletin, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Threads, YouTube and speaking and displays at public events.

The Friends is run on a voluntary basis and has no paid members of staff.

Achievements and performance

Richmond Park – developments

In 2023 The Royal Parks implemented a number of prominent changes to Richmond Park.

The temporary barriers and cones used during the traffic trial were replaced with posts and fencing as the traffic trial had ended in 2022 and its changes made permanent.

New courtesy crossings and traffic management measures were introduced, designed to improve safety and accessibility. We welcome work intended to make the Park safer and more accessible for pedestrians and will keep this under review.

A significant amount of path work was undertaken. The Friends understands the issues caused by increased visitor numbers over a long period of time, climate change and the desire to restore areas to natural habitat creating the need for repair works on paths. However, we expressed our concerns to Park management about the extent of some of these changes and their impact on the essential character of the park.

The toilets at Kingston Gate and Ham Gate were refurbished to incorporate grab'n'go catering facilities. The Friends welcomed the reopening of the WC facilities at Ham Gate, although we are concerned by the potential litter from the new facilities.

Replacement catering kiosks were installed at the Pen Ponds and Broomfield Hill car parks. The Friends welcomed the environmental improvements included in the kiosk design such as generators fuelled by hydro-vegetable oils and solar panels.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Improvements were made to existing skylark protection zones, including enlarging the areas and installing fencing gates to better protect this declining species from walkers and dogs. We have been working with The Royal Parks for several years to improve skylark protection and are pleased with the new measures.

The Royal Parks started to roll out new signage in Richmond Park which we welcomed. The Friends had contributed a foundation for this over the last few years, including: carrying out an audit of existing signage in the Park; researching best practice in signage; and organising and carrying out a signage survey to test the impact of different styles of signage.

The Royal Parks brought in-house the jobs of 26 gardening and maintenance staff who work at Richmond Park and were previously employed by contractors. The Friends strongly opposed the outsourcing in the early 1990s so we welcomed this change. It will strengthen TRP's maintenance and gardening expertise and ability to operate.

The Platinum Jubilee Woodland

The Royal Parks created a new woodland enclosure near Ham Cross, The Platinum Jubilee Woodland. The woodland was planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to celebrate the 70 years of service of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

In March, Friends of Richmond Park patrons Sir David Attenborough and Clare Balding opened the new woodland. The opening event, which was organised by the Friends, included children from the Friends Discoverers programme and from The Queen's Green Canopy Junior Foresters.

The Friends contributed over £29,000 in 2022 to fund the 70 climate-resilient native trees for the new woodland.

New flight paths planned - a threat to the peace and tranquillity of Richmond Park

During the year Heathrow Airport Limited published a shortlist of flight paths being considered as part of its response to the national Airspace Modernisation. Richmond Park is currently largely free of aircraft and their noise, with no arrivals flying over the Park (the westerly arrival path is half a mile north of the Park) and only a small proportion of departures flying across the Park's southern tip.

In Heathrow's shortlist, 17 of the 43 (40%) westerly arrival flight path options impact Richmond Park. If the same proportion of options are eventually chosen it could mean up to 60,000 arrival flights a year overflying the Park, whereas now there are none. Many of these would pass over Richmond Park at low level with intensive bursts of noise.

Throughout the year, the Friends was heavily engaged with Heathrow and other stakeholders, emphasising Richmond Park's special status. We were pleased to see that Richmond Park has been identified as a specific area that should be avoided wherever possible - but are disappointed that by the end of the year this had not led to any options being dropped. We were pleased that The London Assembly unanimously passed a motion highlighting concern that Heathrow had included numerous flight path options impacting Richmond Park.

Publications

Our members' magazine, Park Life, continued to evolve and develop. It has become a twice a year 24 A5 page magazine - issued in May and November - rather than its previous three times a year 16 A5 pages. Members have the same number of pages to read each year, but with

Trustees' Report (continued)

reduced postage and printing costs. Members continue to receive our monthly and special email bulletins.

The Friends published a new, beautifully illustrated 16-page guide, *Walks in Pembroke Lodge Gardens*, offering three distinct walks within the grounds of Pembroke Lodge. The guide includes 40 features, and the walks are all wheelchair accessible and mainly flat.

To encourage membership, we designed and produced A1 posters for A boards, A4 posters for the Park noticeboards, and A5 flyers. We also produced A1 posters and A5 flyers to advertise our Christmas goods and the Visitor Centre. For the 11th year running, we produced the Richmond Park Calendar, this year with a new design, as well as Christmas cards, individual greetings cards and post cards.

Events

We attended the Richmond May Fair and the Duathlon in Richmond Park to publicise our work.

After three years of virtual AGMs because of Covid, we were pleased that our AGM returned to being an in-person event. It included a presentation by Mike Hildesley of Barnes Common and Harry Gray of the South East Rivers Trust on the Beverley Brook.

We again held a popular online Q & A session with the Park Manager, Paul Richards.

We participated with various stalls at the Richmond Park Open Day at Holly Lodge and were pleased to see the return of this event after an extended absence because of Covid.

We launched "Walks in Pembroke Lodge Gardens" with an event in the gardens, with talks and walks.

Discoverers

Discoverers is our activities programme for families with school age children that now has over 200 families on its mailing list. Events take place on a number of weekends throughout the year and during school holidays. In 2023, we held 11 major events, six of which were open to the general public and five were smaller in size and organised for registered Discoverers' families only (registration on the mailing list is free). Our 2023 activities included monthly nature walks on the first Sunday of the month, bat evenings, an owl evening, butterfly and fungi walks and a fish event, as well as Arts and Crafts events and a 'Maths with Trees' event which were held at Pembroke Lodge.

As part of the Platinum Jubilee Woodland celebrations a Discoverers' event was held during the planting session, with 100 children making a little clay tree; and at the launch event a few Discoverers' children were delighted to meet Sir David Attenborough and plant a tree with him.

Litter picking

Our Adopt-an-Area litter-picking programme continues to thrive and has nearly 200 volunteers, including young people volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This is the largest number of volunteers of any of our activities. Some volunteers adopt one of 29 areas and others are roaming litter-pickers. Together they make a significant difference to the appearance of the Park.

Our Beverley Brook Litter Clearance team regularly wade through the Brook clearing out rubbish and debris. In 2023 they collected about 60 bags of rubbish including about 1,000 bottles and cans.

Conservation volunteering

Our conservation volunteers continue to provide valuable and effective support for conservation within the park with about 15 people attending our Saturday morning sessions.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Tasks have included clearing bramble and thinning birch along the path through Sidmouth Wood followed by planting of native shrubs, clearing bramble from ant hills and taking part in the hedgerow planting around Platinum Jubilee Woodland. A team continue to manage the small meadow/orchard at Holly Lodge creating a floristically diverse area.

The Visitor Centre - information and sales, and the online shop

We continued to operate the Visitor Centre at Pembroke Lodge. More than 60 volunteers ensure it is open every day except Christmas Day. Sales increased over 2022.

This was the fourth year of our online shop. While this is focused on the pre-Christmas period, this year we kept it open all year for sale of the Royal Oak print and our two sets of Walks with Remarkable Trees leaflets. Sales increased compared to 2022.

Grants

In 2023 we contributed grants to The Royal Parks to fund a further 30 new trees and their protective crates in various locations around the Park and to fund a Kingfisher bank.

Members and volunteers

At the end of the year, we had about 3,600 members (based on two members for a joint membership). This includes about 300 volunteers who together work about 15,000 hours, which is worth about £200,000 to the Park (valued at the London Living Wage).

We thank all our volunteers for their hard work, which contributed so much during the year.

For more detailed information about the Friends and our activities, please see our website: www.frp.org.uk.

Plans for the future

The Friends plans to maintain its activities broadly along the present lines.

The Friends will continue to campaign strongly to protect Richmond Park against threats to its peace, natural beauty and wildlife, in particular from new flight paths and developments, in or on the periphery of the Park, that could have an adverse impact on the Park.

Financial review

Membership income continues to be the largest source of income, with sales of Friends of Richmond Park branded items at the Visitor Centre and online also very important.

Our publications and merchandise sales through the Visitor Centre and online continued throughout the year and our sales were boosted for the Christmas period through our offerings of cards and calendars. Both our 2024 Calendar and our Christmas cards provided significant contributions to our income.

We made grants of £15,874 to The Royal Parks for conservation projects in the Park.

The financial position of the Friends continues to be healthy and current balances stand at £166,957. The restricted fund balance has continued at zero as there were no project-specific fundraising campaigns during 2023.

Our balances at the end of the year were higher than required by our reserves policy so the Charity is well placed to continue to fund projects which further our objects.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Reserves policy

Within the unrestricted funds is a designated amount of £25,000 that has been set aside to cover potential urgent campaign expenses (which could support the Charity's activities, without recourse to campaign funding and the delays which might result). In addition, the policy of the Trustees is to maintain other reserves at more than six months and less than twelve months of general expenditure, which corresponds to £28,000 for 2023 (ie 9 months of general expenditure).

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:

Roger Hillyer
Chairman

Date: 18 January 2024

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

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Friends of Richmond Park (the "Charity") for the year ended 31 December 2023 which are set out on pages 8 to 13.

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. 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.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report 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

Date: 7th March 2024

Financial Statements for the calendar year 2023

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total £	2022 £
Incoming Resources					
Subscriptions	2	28,604	-	28,604	30,859
Donations		4,801	-	4,801	10,796
Gift Aid	3	5,673	-	5,673	7,172
Interest		1,010	-	1,010	238
Sponsorship		5,000	-	5,000	5,000
Publications & VC Sales		16,083	-	16,083	15,382
Merchandise (Online)		5,101	-	5,101	4,479
Total incoming resources		66,272	-	66,272	73,926
Resources expended on charitable activities					
Magazine & Newsletters		(7,112)	-	(7,112)	(7,179)
Governance & administration		(3,023)	-	(3,023)	(2,879)
Discoverers		(1,548)	-	(1,548)	(180)
Adopt An Area		(893)	-	(893)	(300)
Walks, talks & films		(457)	-	(457)	(2,600)
Other volunteering		(1,607)	-	(1,607)	(1,453)
Website hosting and maintenance		(4,819)	-	(4,819)	(2,875)
Heathrow campaign		(4,851)	-	(4,851)	(443)
Merchandise & publications		(12,631)	-	(12,631)	(12,583)
Grants		(15,874)	-	(15,874)	(58,458)
Total resources expended	5	(52,815)	-	(52,815)	(88,950)
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources		13,457	-	13,457	(15,024)
Total funds brought forward		153,500	-	153,500	168,524
Total funds carried forward		166,957	-	166,957	153,500

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

Financial Statements for the calendar year 2023 (continued)

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2023

	Note	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
		£	£
Fixed assets	6	7,500	7,500
Total fixed assets		<u>7,500</u>	<u>7,500</u>
Current Assets			
Stock	7	2,631	1,488
Debtors	8	5,700	6,000
Cash at bank and in hand	9	151,126	138,512
Total current assets		<u>159,457</u>	<u>146,000</u>
Current liabilities	10	-	-
Total Current Liabilities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net assets/(liabilities)		<u>166,957</u>	<u>153,500</u>
Funds of the Charity	11		
		£	£
Unrestricted funds			
Brought forward		153,500	126,131
Current year		13,457	27,369
Total Unrestricted funds		<u>166,957</u>	<u>153,500</u>
Total Restricted funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total charity funds		<u>166,957</u>	<u>153,500</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 18 January 2024 and were signed on their behalf by:

Dr Hugh Deighton
Honorary Treasurer

The notes on pages 10 to 13 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

(* indicates a general note whose number is not included in the Financial Statements above)

1* General information and basis of preparation

The Friends of Richmond Park is a UK registered charity, number 1133201, and governed by its constitution dated 12 November 2009.

The address of the principal office of the Charity is given on page 1 of this report.

The nature of the Charity's operations and principal activities are detailed in the Trustees' Report above.

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)" - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and in accordance with 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).

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity, and are rounded to the nearest £1.

2 Incoming resources - subscriptions

Incoming resources from regular subscriptions are considered as gifts and therefore recognised on receipt.

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 above (in the section on "Members and volunteers").

Other income is recognised in the period in which it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided.

5 Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

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 equipment to support volunteering activities as well as stationery and software supplies for magazines and membership activities. The total cost reimbursed to trustees in respect of such expenditure during the year amounted to £4,619 paid to nine trustees (2022: £3,661 paid to nine trustees). There were no related party transactions.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

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.

6 Fixed asset investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless fair value cannot be measured reliably, in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and shown in the heading "Gains/(losses) on investments" in the Statement of financial activities, if applicable.

Fixed asset investments currently comprise only the original artwork of the Royal Oak drawn by Mark Frith. The Trustees reviewed the valuation of the artwork at the year end and believe that there has been no change in the fair value since it was acquired.

7 Valuation of stock

Publications, comprising books and prints for sale, are valued at the lower of the cost of production and net realizable value. The cost of publications 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.

300 copies of the small Royal Oak print by Mark Frith were bought in 2021 in the expectation that they would sell over several years. 1,000 copies of the new "Walks in Pembroke Lodge Gardens" booklet were printed during 2023. The cost price of unsold copies of both items is included in the unsold stock amount.

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

8 Debtors

The only debtor is the repayment of tax due for the year from HMRC in Gift Aid, which has been accrued.

9 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

10 Liabilities and Creditors

The Charity's policy is to pay creditors in a timely manner and there are no outstanding creditors or other liabilities at the year end.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

11 The analysis of total funds as at 31 December 2023 is shown below:

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	Designated	Other		
	£	£	£	£
Total fixed assets	-	7,500	-	7,500
Total current assets	25,000	134,457	-	146,000
Creditors falling due within one year	-	-	-	-
Total Funds	25,000	141,957	-	153,500

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, without recourse to campaign funding.

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

The restricted funds were all reduced to zero at the end of 2022. There were no movements in the restricted funds for the year ended 31 December 2023, which all remained at zero throughout the year since there were no project-specific fundraising events in 2023.

The movements in the restricted funds for the year ended 31 December 2022 are shown below for reference.

	Opening Balance	Additions	Payments	Closing Balance
	£	£	£	£
Restricted general income fund	35,367	1,300	(36,667)	-
Restricted merchandise fund	5,817	-	(5,817)	-
Year of the Tree fund	1,209	-	(1,209)	-
Total Funds	42,393	1,300	(43,693)	-

[The restricted general income fund represented specific small or general donations and other income received in respect of, or to be applied to, specific conservation projects.]

The restricted merchandise fund represented 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 for specific projects.]

The Year of the Tree fund, which was concluded in 2022, was recorded separately.]

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

12* Financial instruments

Except for fixed asset investments, the Charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments, which are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

End of Notes to the Financial Statements.