



CIO Registered charity 1211838

## FOWP Annual Report 2026

(Covering the period January 2025 to December 2025)

**Dear Members and Associates,**

We have changed our reporting year from March to February to January to December aligning this with the treasurer report. Following becoming a charity on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 we needed to review our operations, and this led to many changes within our organisation. Our Consultation Document ([Consultation](#)) outlines our Conservation Management Plan, our strategy, identified projects in the park and our organisational structure.

Wimbledon Park is a Grade II\* Heritage Park on Historic England's 'At Risk Register' and this needs to be resolved by the 3 owners and the Community who visit and benefit from this valuable space. The Examination of the Merton Local Plan by Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State commenced in 2022. The result for Wimbledon Park was Chapter 8 ([Merton](#)):

*“WIMBLEDON PARK – POLICY N8.1*

- 1. To address the reasons why the Grade II\* Wimbledon Park is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register and to recognise and support its sporting, recreation, ecological and amenity functions.*
- 2. We will do this by:*
  - a. Supporting, the park's sport, recreation, play and amenity uses and enhancing access to them, ensuring their successful integration with historic and biodiversity designations.*
  - b. Preparing a landscape management plan to help all landowners co-ordinate the long-term management and maintenance of Wimbledon Park.*
  - c. Securing investment in the former golf course to conserve and enhance the historic landscape, biodiversity, sport and recreation and secure public access.*
  - d. Improving public access around the whole lake, alongside biodiversity, sporting, public safety, flood risk, while ensuring compliance for reservoir safety.*
  - e. Addressing the lake's poor condition and seeking restoration of its historic shape and form.*
  - f. Ensuring the lake continues to operate safely and in line with the national requirements for a large raised Reservoir, while managing flood risk.*
  - g. Identifying and protecting historic trees and other trees of significant amenity value and considering a programme for their renewal.*
  - h. Considering the removal of insensitive tree and other non-native planting, particularly on the former golf course and around the athletics track.*
  - i. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity, increasing the ecological interest of the park and its waterbodies.*
  - j. Respect the site's historic setting, enhance historic and new views to and across the lake, and to St Mary's Church, and support greater public access to these views.”*



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Work on the Landscape Management & Maintenance Plan needs to start. It is worth noting that the local community are beneficiaries of this heritage park. It is, however, mainly a pay and play access.

- 1) About 56% of the public park is pay to use.
- 2) Wimbledon Park Golf Club was a member's club and pay and play, and FOWP with the Golf Club organised Capability Brown walks. Since the takeover by AELTC the public are excluded.
- 3) The Wimbledon Club is a member's sporting club which people can pay to join.

Since formation in 2012 The Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP) have made substantial progress in the conservation and enhancement of Wimbledon Park for the benefit of the public. Notable accomplishments include the establishment of a stakeholder forum, the drafting of a Conservation Management Plan for the 61-hectare Heritage Park, and the planting of over 3000 trees since 2016. Additionally, FOWP has organized various community events, such as arts competitions for local secondary schools, bat surveys led by experts, and music and dance performances at The Wimbledon Club. The organization has also successfully negotiated environmental improvements, including fencing around the veteran tree, the deculverting of Wimbledon Park Brook and the installation of free to use recreational facilities such as table tennis tables (donated by Wimbledon Park Community Trust) and pétanque (Wimbledon Park Cllrs) areas. Furthermore, FOWP has actively opposed projects and activities detrimental to the park, such as enlarging Revelstoke Road car park and BBQs, and has initiated the development of meadows and raised beds to enhance the park's landscape and engage with the community.

In 2016, FOWP fixed blue plaques in the 61ha park at each of the five main entrances during a walk celebrating Capability Brown's tercentenary. This followed discussions with the community, owners, leaseholder, LBW, and Historic England. This initiative was part of their ongoing efforts to commemorate the historical significance of the park and enhance its cultural heritage. (see [Blue Plaques](#))

#### **Covenant 1993 between AELTC & LB Merton.**

Briefly this covers:

- 1) Not to use the Property (golf course) otherwise than for leisure or recreational purposes or as an open space.
- 2) No building shall be erected on the Property (golf course) other than a building or buildings the use of which is ancillary to the recreational or open space use.
- 3) Dedication by the Transferee of a public walkway around the Lake

#### **Planning applications**

- 1) FOWP Revelstoke Road entrance improvements. (RR Gateway Project)
  - a. LBW 2021/0432 approved on 11th May 2021 subject to conditions.
  - b. LBM 21/P2657 granted 25th October 2021 subject to conditions.
  - c. The next phase to relocate the prison wire mesh fence above the wing walls is just about ready to go. Funds will need to be raised first.
- 2) LBM Dam Safety planning application
  - a. LBM 21/P1930 granted 14th October 2021 subject to conditions.



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- b. WP Lake Project
  - c. The dam is now safe in line with the relevant regulations.
  - d. Wimbledon Park Brook has been deculverted and the area needs landscaping. This could include expansion of the café, creation of more 'free to use' space and relocation of the volleyball courts and the crazy golf.
- 3) AELTC Wimbledon Park Project.
- a. LBM 21/P2900 approved by LBM Planning Applications Committee by 6-4 votes.
  - b. LBW 2021/3609 refused by LBW Planning Applications Committee by 7-0 votes.
  - c. Updates on this project <https://www.savewimbledonpark.org/>
- 4) Merton Heritage Strategy 2021-25: Development Plan
- a. This development plan has been compiled using information supplied by Merton heritage providers including council departments, historic sites, visitor attractions and community groups. It is intended to be an evolving plan, and we make submissions on a regular basis.
- 5) Waterfall Project
- a. It has taken us two years to investigate and establish an acceptable plan. Progress is being made with LBM assistance, and a planning application should be submitted soon.

### Community notes

**Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV)** continued to look after Horse Close Wood and The Glade, Southern Railway Hedge and Southern Meadow, The Copse, the Veteran tree plot, the Central Railway Hedge, the Hornbeam meadow and the Salvia bed. The new car park bed, part of the Revelstoke Road entrance improvements was planted up.

Dave Dawson led the management of Horse Close Wood, including revising its Management Plan (soon to be consulted upon) and the Dave Lofthouse Glade in it. Also, liaison with the Community Payback Team (CPT) who regularly woodchipped the main path to improve walking conditions.

WPV also worked on Ricardo's Shrubbery, the Cuckoo Flower triangle, keeping paths clear in Horse Close Wood and trimming back brambles, ivy and other woody plants encroaching upon areas of grass. The establishment of vegetation in the new lake outfall and "daylighted" brook was documented.

### Community Activities Group (CAG)

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September, led by Alla Dahbi, we ran the Colour Run this was in the **Wandle Valley Fortnight Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**

### Community Events 2025 Elsewhere

- a. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May manned stall at ECO event Wandsworth Park.
- b. Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August manned stall at Discovery Day at Merton Civic Centre.
- c. Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September manned stall at Southfields Harvest.



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### **Commercial events**

Commercial events continued last year with consequential damage to the grass and soil in the Great Field. Free to use activities as well as some pay to use activities are curtailed for these periods. Wimbledon Fortnight was badly managed, and the shortage of toilets led to urination and defecation in many areas including Horse Close Wood and Ashen Grove Wood on the Dam Promenade. The Community were angry and Ian Shaw established the Wimbledon Championships Community Panel chaired by Fleur Anderson (MP) to investigate and remedy the problems during Wimbledon Fortnight.

### **FOWP Forum**

The rationale for the FOWP Forum is to draw in all the park related expertise and interests in an open and transparent way. This provides the FOWP Executive Group with valuable feedback on their undertakings to improve Heritage Wimbledon Park for public benefit.

Communication is based on legitimate interests so facilitating working together in a transparent manner and furthers networking on a continuous basis. We have many written reports, and we thank Dave Dawson (environmental adviser) and plans drawn by Neil Thompson (Landscape Architect) for their input. These can be found on our website:

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/about/key-documents>

Widening membership so that more in the Community have access to this Forum is an aspiration and invitations are being sent to groups that may wish to participate. Attendance will be as a guest, and they will have the option to join in based on legitimate interests.

Key points:

- There are four London Borough Council wards surrounding the park. To provide further free flow of information the 11 councillors are ex officio members of the FOWP Forum.
- Leonie Cooper, GLA member for Merton and Wandsworth is an ex officio member of the FOWP Forum.
- We are pleased that the Rt Hon Fleur Anderson (MP for Putney), and Paul Kohler (MP for Wimbledon) have agreed to continue to be Honorary Friends of FOWP.
- We continue to liaise with park officers (LBM & idverde) both formally and informally. These interactions will become more important as community involvement in the park increases.
- Wimbledon Park is remarkable for the number of assets it contains, and our job is to ensure that these are not lost or wasted but are enhanced. This requires the owners and community to work together on agreeing and implementing the Landscape Management & Maintenance Plan.

### **Associates**

Associates are individuals in an organisation which joins as a corporate member and, also individuals who have a role in managing the park or other related activities and would like to be part of our organisation.



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### **Membership**

Finally, if you support our volunteer work, we would appreciate it if more in the community became members. We are keeping expenditure controlled but demand on our funds is increasing due to the need for structural improvements in the park. More members also give us a bigger “voice” when dealing with stakeholders and drives more engagement in our work to protect and enhance Heritage Wimbledon Park.

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/join-us>

Nick Steiner

Chair Friends of Wimbledon Park    February 2026