

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION



Annual Report and
Accounts 2022



Queens Promenade
LB Kingston-upon-Thames

Front cover:
Camley Street Natural Park, London Wildlife Trust, Kings Cross, LB Camden
(Picture courtesy of Karolina Leszczynska-Gogol)



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022

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OFFICERS

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Hugh Johnson OBE

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Executive Committee

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Shirley Brihi, Benedict Bull, Marjorie Dowbiggin, Ruth Lin Wong Holmes,
Jodie Jones, Mark Lane LVO, Graeme Maynard, Paula Tomlinson, Peter Waine,
Annabel Ward

Hon Legal Adviser Patricia Robertson KC

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William B Fraser OBE, Marjorie Dowbiggin, Rex Thornborough MStJ RD,
Alistair Gould, Nicholas Evans

THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE of the MPGA is the protection, preservation and enhancing of public gardens, disused burial grounds, churchyards and open spaces or land situated within the Metropolitan Area of Greater London; the provision of seats and the planting of trees within places of public resort and the encouragement of public interest in the cultivation of gardens or similar public areas.

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INTRODUCTION FROM PRESIDENT Hugh Johnson OBE

When a Council like Sheffield can get away with felling thousands of street trees, as it did in 2016, it should make us worry that no amenity, however deep-rooted, should be taken for granted. Not even the trees that shade and shelter us in our streets. I don't know of any destruction like this in London, either recent or imminent, but if it happens, it is always too late to stop it. Sheffield Council eventually apologised, but the damage was done.

We know trees are valuable, but the question of how valuable is not really resolved. Fifty years ago I was a founder member of the newly established Tree Council, and one of its first self-imposed tasks was a cast iron method of Tree Valuation.

We commissioned DR Helliwell to produce a methodology that took into account the site of the tree, its size, health, age, suitability, rarity and other factors for or against it. I don't think the word algorithm was used then, but the system came up with a value high enough to discourage anyone with evil intent. It has been applied by courts, but such an instrument is needed even more now than it was then.

Trees, of course, are only one aspect of what the MPGA stands for, but what natural object is more important to the wellbeing of Londoners? It would be hard to devise a Helliwell system for giving a monetary value to a bed of springtime bulbs, a strategic bench or many of the other amenities the MPGA was founded to provide 140 years ago. It is still harder to value the moral and tactical support we offer to those aiming to furnish such amenities or indeed to prevent unsocial developments.

There are many organisations in London who aim to preserve and enhance wellbeing by bringing nature into the City. Our brief extends beyond the Parks and Gardens of our title to the promotion and protection of the green element in all London's boroughs. We invite any such organisation to be in contact with us about plans, projects or problems related to the greening of our capital, and all individuals who share our goals to join us.

Do look at my garden website:
<http://www.tradsdiary.com>



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022

Rex Thornborough MStJ RD

At the MPGA we are constantly reminded that the necessity for green space for physical and mental health has never been more important and the benefits of the great outdoors, seemingly re-discovered during Covid, continue to improve the lives of all those able to access such spaces.

The recovery from the pandemic has seen a huge increase in grant applications and, as forecast in last year's report, this has put an extra strain on our finances and has, unfortunately, limited the amount of assistance we can offer groups and organisations. We already operate with extremely low overheads but are looking at ways of increasing our meagre coffers in order to be able to continue helping people maintain public gardens in their areas. Having got our social media assets better organised, it is now time to grow our presence via these mediums and see who is out there and would like their name associated with the MPGA, an historic and very worthy organisation.

Our **main highlights** of the past year have been the siting of **the English Heritage Blue Plaque** in Shaftesbury Avenue to commemorate Fanny Rollo Wilkinson, the country's first professional female landscape gardener who worked for the MPGA from 1884 to 1904 and the success of our **Elms for London (E4L)** initiative, which has now received commercial sponsorship. We were also delighted to award the London Spade to **The London Wildlife Trust**

in recognition of their work in refurbishing **Camley Street Natural Park**. Finally, I must mention here our **Bulbs for London** initiative, where this year, with Taylors, we doubled the number of sites supplied with bulbs. Full accounts of these achievements appear elsewhere in this report.

We continue to be concerned about developers persisting in their applications for planning permission for green spaces when there are still so many brownfield sites in the Greater London area which should be developed first. We remain vigilant in monitoring the development of building at the expense of the environment and health of communities. Wildlife and pollinators do not flourish where there is nothing to sustain them in a forest of brick and concrete. We continue to play our part in helping to preserve and maintain London's green spaces and to fight against inappropriate development, thus adhering to the principles of our founders. In our long history we have always lobbied government to support nature and green issues to which we remain firmly committed and this we will continue to do.

Huge thanks go to Taylors of Holbeach for their fantastic support of the Bulbs for London project, to Bulldog Tools for their continued sponsorship of the London Spade Award and to CBRE for their support of E4L.

My personal thanks go to all of the Executive Committee without whose

tireless efforts none of this would be possible. Particular mention should be made of Shirley Brihi, for Bulbs for London amongst other things and Mark Lane for getting the successful Elms for London (E4L) project off the ground. To the Executive Committee we have welcomed Louisa Mansfield onboard as Grants Officer and Mark Bridger as Secretary. My thanks also go to our President, the irrepressible Hugh Johnson and our Vice Presidents for their support and guidance over the past year with particular thanks to Wesley Kerr.

As with all royal occasions we are marking the Coronation of King Charles III by planting a tree. This is reported in our Update section. We are lucky to have in His Majesty King Charles, an outspoken and avid supporter of nature and the benefits of the great outdoors. We very much hope that his influence will improve matters in the green world in the years to come.



Ulmus Glabra 'Pendula' in Warwick Square Gardens, Pimlico, SW1



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Guests were welcomed to Conway Hall by Chairman Rex Thornborough. He thanked the Committee for giving so generously of their time, and also President Hugh Johnson and the Vice Presidents for their support. He thanked the MPGA's sponsors: Taylors Bulbs who supply and distribute the bulbs for Bulbs for London, Bulldog Tools who sponsor the Spade Award, the Worshipful Company of Gardeners as well as Paul Rochford of Joseph Rochford and Sons. He also expressed the MPGA's appreciation to the Conway Hall and their staff.

The Chairman went on to describe how the MPGA has been protecting, preserving and safeguarding open spaces since 1882. A recent example cited was when the MPGA opposed an application from the London Fire Brigade to the London Mayor to ban green walls as a fire risk. Another is the role played by the MPGA in lobbying for an increase in the legal requirement for hours of light per day from two to six where surrounding buildings are casting a long shadow for much of the day. He also spoke about the importance of peace which open space has provided over the past two and a half years, and the fact that the whole environmental infrastructure is key to this. We need growth in the number of green spaces, growth in the number of species, and growth in the number of people using and caring for these spaces.

President Hugh Johnson thanked Rex Thornborough for his work as Chairman, and spoke of the need to recruit more members to raise both funds and the MPGA's profile.



President Hugh Johnson and Chairman Rex Thornborough Conway Hall 11 October 2022

Minutes of the previous AGM, and the 2021 Annual Report and Accounts were approved, as were the appointments of Officers and Committee members.

We were delighted to welcome our Speaker, Heather Barrett-Mold OBE, who addressed the meeting on the subject of "Pollinating London Together", a pan-Livery response to the emergencies of biodiversity and climate change. The global economy and human well-being are dependent on natural resources - now defined as "ecosystem services" - but insects are in decline.

The aims of the project are to redress the decline in pollinators; raise awareness of the human benefits of pollinators; inform and encourage companies, organisations and individuals to take meaningful decisions to make this happen.

Funding has been received to establish a baseline of what pollinators can be found where, and to identify priorities to create corridors along which these insects can travel. Working with ecologists and mapping experts from Reading and Bristol universities, outcomes will be mapped by GiGL, and it is hoped to create a template that can be exported for use in other cities.



Heather Barrett-Mold OBE



l to r: Shirley Brihi, Benedict Bull, Annabel Ward, Nicola Freshwater



*l. Peter Holman, Co-Chairman London in Bloom
r. Nick Evans, MPGA*

THE LONDON SPADE

In 2022 the London Spade was awarded to the London Wildlife Trust, for their excellent redevelopment of the Camley Street Nature Reserve which lies between Kings Cross and St Pancras. Camley Street is a wonderful oasis next to the Regents Canal in a very built up area and as such strongly appealed to us.

The Nature Reserve, which is approximately the size of a football pitch, reopened in September 2021, having been closed for two years while it underwent an extensive refurbishment. This included improved access, a new visitor and learning centre and in-house cafe. The facility, which is a very attractive timber clad eco building, has been fitted with bat and bird boxes. As well as ample learning space, it also provides a sheltered café for local

residents to meet and admire the very special canal and woodland views.

This canal side park contains a mixture of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats with reedbed, pond and marshy areas, providing a rich environment for birds, butterflies, amphibians and plant life. These areas were also refurbished and the pond de-silted, which has enhanced the wildflower meadow.

At the AGM, we were delighted to welcome Leah McNally, Director of Strategic Projects and Engagements at the London Wildlife Trust, and Karolina Leszczynska-Gogol, Manager of the Nature Reserve, who were presented with a substitute Spade, as the engraved spade did not arrive in time. Subsequently our Chairman, Rex Thornborough,



Rex Thornborough presenting the Spade to Leah McNally, Director of Learning Youth and Community, and Senior Manager Karolina Leszczynska-Gogol on behalf of The London Wildlife Trust

accompanied by Shirley Brihi and new MPGA Secretary Mark Bridger, visited Camley Street and enjoyed a tour of the site before presenting the suitably engraved London Spade to Karolina.

Camley Street's rebirth is a powerful example of the importance of an urban haven for wildlife in our busy city and a welcome addition to the lives of local people and school children.



l to r : Mark Bridger, Shirley Brihi, Karolina Leszczynska-Gogol, Rex Thornborough at Camley Street Natural Park, LB Camden



Camley Street Natural Park

GRANTS 2022

COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Oldfield Estate

LB Camden

The Central & Cecil Housing Trust provides sheltered housing for people over 55 at the Oldfield Estate. Its gardening club and volunteers from the local community wanted to improve the communal outside spaces for all the residents, visitors and staff to enjoy. The pandemic had increased levels of isolation and depression among residents and the aim was to alleviate these by bringing people together in a safe environment to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of being out in the fresh air and working with plants.

The group applied for funding for raised beds, topsoil, compost and a range of plants, which the MPGA was pleased to provide. Beds in the garden were replanted, new tiered planters with easy access for the disabled were filled with herbs, and additional colour came from bulbs provided by Bulbs for London.



Oldfield Estate, LB Camden

Bernie Spain Gardens

LB Lambeth

The MPGA granted funds to the Coin Street Centre Trust for four raised beds in their community garden located in Bernie Spain Gardens, next to the Oxo Tower. They were installed by a team of 10 volunteers, who also prepared the site. The team felt a great sense of achievement for getting the beds in place and are really grateful for the funding which allowed it to happen. Beans and tomatoes thrived over summer!



*Bernie Spain Gardens
(Coin Street Centre Trust)*

The Garden Classroom, Newington Green

LB Islington

The Garden Classroom (TGC) is a charity that works across Islington to bring the benefits of nature connection to children in their disadvantaged, nature-deprived urban community. At their base on Newington Green, they have worked to improve the planting and make it more accessible to everyone. TGC asked the MPGA to fund plants and seeds to help with their aims to create a publicly accessible nature garden with a focus on planting that will absorb and reduce the high pollution levels in the area and encourage biodiversity, and which will include natural play trails, insect habitats, a den-building area and story-telling circle. Volunteers helped with the planting, and the new garden area is explored and enjoyed by the many visitors to this park.



The Garden Classroom, LB Islington

Edible Landscapes, Finsbury Park

LB Haringey

This is a not-for-profit community education project which take place at Finsbury Park. With the help of MPGA funding, gardening gloves were purchased for school children who use the site for soil science. At an after school club, the children help with the planting, including lavender, rosemary, curry plant, Shasta daisies, thyme and oregano. Secateurs were also purchased for adult pruning workshops, and the remainder of the grant helped to pay for a wheelchair accessible raised bed.



*Salad bowl produce from Finsbury Park,
LB Haringey*

Wildflower Meadows Muswell Hill

LB Haringey

The successful seeding of three wildflower meadows was ultimately funded by Haringey Council as a pilot project for the borough. MPGA funds, granted to the Friends of Muswell Hill, were used to purchase plug plants of vipers bugloss, yellow rattle and field scabious to fill gaps and prolong the flowering season in the second year. The meadows which have drawn people to view and photograph them, attract a lot of insects and pollinators. Surveys are carried out each month to monitor the environmental impact of the planting and also to see how far the wildflowers spread around the wider area.



Muswell Hill, LB Haringey

Kingsley Hall

LB Barking & Dagenham

Funding was given towards the creation of a new courtyard at this Community Centre. Visible from the busy street, this project has provided an inspiring green space for the whole community as well as creating new habitats for wildlife. The area is used for small community events, gardening clubs and outdoor groups, which have helped people feel more connected and reduced local isolation. The grant was specifically used for purchasing around 25% of the plants within the garden.

Trowbridge Gardens, Hackney Wick

LB Hackney

This grant to Hackney Herbal was spent largely on compost, new plants, shrubs and small trees to improve the Big Garden at Trowbridge Gardens in Hackney Wick. This space is open daily for people to come and visit and also provides outdoor space for the local café and the studio tenants of Trowbridge Gardens, as well as community projects. Some new trees were planted including an amelanchier and a witch hazel. During the spring and summer, regular visitors have noticed a greater variety of wildlife including butterflies, hover flies, bees and beetles. There has also been a new robin family nesting in the garden which has been very exciting!



*Hackney Herbal Garden,
Trowbridge Gardens, LB Hackney*



*The Rose Garden, Kingsley Hall
LB Barking & Dagenham*

New River Studios Arts Centre LB Haringey

New River Studios is an arts centre with meeting spaces for community groups, photography studios, music rehearsal rooms and a performance space all run on a not-for-profit basis. The studios are located within Haringey Warehouse District, an expanding creative community established in north London in the early 2000s. Several interested parties came together and applied to the MPGA for a grant for funding to plant some raised beds with native wildflowers. The group included local residents, certain community groups and several artists using the studios. Their aim was to reconnect the local community visiting the studios to nature and to support wildlife such as bees and butterflies in an area where these species would otherwise struggle due to the large amount of hard landscaping. The MPGA was delighted to support this project.



New River Studios Arts Centre, LB Haringey

Wiltshire Close Housing Estate LB Kensington & Chelsea

The Wiltshire Close Garden Club looks after a kitchen garden area on a well-maintained social housing estate. Raised beds are available for use by residents, and access has been improved with a paved pathway and some taller beds that can be used without bending over. As well as those residents directly involved in the kitchen garden, there is wider engagement across the whole estate through events and education. The Club members asked the MPGA for funding for a hot compost bin and pollinator-friendly planting which we were happy to provide. The Club reports that the new planting has brought joy to the local community as well as birds, butterflies and bees. "We would like to say this is the best gift from MPGA to our community and we will continue to be part of the healthy green space for the London community."



Wiltshire Close Garden Club,
LB Kensington & Chelsea

PARKS

Canons Park LB Harrow

Canons Park in Edgware is a Grade II listed historic park of approximately 49 acres, consisting of open spaces, woodland walks, an adventure playground, green gym, café, walled kitchen garden and an 18th century temple. The park has good access for the disabled, and the Friends group

wanted to install a picnic bench which could accommodate a wheelchair user as there were none available in the park. Funds were requested by the Friends of Canons Park to purchase the bench, which was installed in May 2022. The Friends report that since then it has been in constant use. "It is especially appreciated by our visitors in wheelchairs, who have commented how thoughtful it was to install a table that is accessible to wheelchairs, making them feel included and considered".



Canons Park,
LB Harrow

SCHOOLS

Fircroft Primary School

LB Wandsworth

The school is situated on the corner of a very busy junction in Tooting and is highly visible to people passing - not just children and parents but large numbers of commuters heading to the nearby tube station. The local area is also very densely populated with few areas available for green development. The school approached the MPGA for a grant to install raised planters, which the children would plant and maintain in supervised growing and outdoor learning sessions. This would give them hands-on gardening experience, which otherwise would not be possible for many of them. We were delighted to make this grant, which was a good opportunity to brighten up a drab and unexciting space, which would also greatly enhance the area for children, parents and passers by.



Fircroft Primary School, LB Wandsworth

Pakeman Primary School

LB Islington

The gardening club at Pakeman Primary School were keen to renovate a disused area at the front of the school to serve as an edible garden, and to improve the school's appearance on entry and from the road. They applied for funds to build large wooden planters, as well as a weed-suppressing membrane, bark mulch, compost and seeds. With the MPGA's support they have extended the gardening space, which allows more children to benefit. They are also growing plants on a trellis to soften the effect of the brick walls.



Pakeman Primary School, LB Islington

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

London Square Open Gardens 2022

After the virtual 2021 London Open Gardens event, it was a welcome return to actually visit some of the 100 gardens which were open to the public in 2022 and which attracted over 40,000 visitors. The event, held in early June and organised by London Parks & Gardens, is entirely dependent on volunteers. The MPGA has helped to fund this event for many years as it celebrates the best of London's squares and gardens and attracts visitors from across London and further afield.

The aim of the event is to promote London's private gardens, most of which can only be visited during this special weekend. In some locations plants are sold as well as selection of cakes and other food prepared by Volunteers. The London Gardens Trust have produced a short YouTube film showing the variety of gardens taking part and includes an introduction by Helen Monger, Director.

Gardens which could be visited range from the classical and traditional to the new and experimental, including private gardens, roof gardens, community allotments and historic buildings in surrounding gardens. Self-guided walking routes, which link a number of gardens in a particular area, can be undertaken as well as guided walking and cycling tours. Professor John Newton gave a very interesting talk at the Royal College of Physicians garden which has over 1,100 medicinal plants. This unique garden is skilfully designed and is a wonderful calm space in the centre of London.

Several of London's renowned garden squares were open, including Belgrave, Eaton, Pembridge and Ladbrooke Squares. Other highlights included Southwark Cathedral Garden in its tranquil river

spot and the Inner Temple Garden which has been under cultivation since 1195. Historic Lincoln's Inn was also open – they will be celebrating their 600th anniversary following major development. Rooftop gardens taking part included the contemporary Ismaili Centre in South Kensington and Nomura garden which offers a breathtaking vista of the Thames.

Again we were delighted to be involved with this unique and prestigious event and we particularly appreciate the volunteers who make it such a fun and informative weekend.



Mona's Garden, LB Haringey

A small, new garden open to visitors in Muswell Hill, specialising in interesting exotic plants from all over the world. Voted Best Back Garden by the London Gardens Society as part of this event



Lincoln's Inn, Holborn, LB Camden

London in Bloom

We are pleased to report that again in 2022 the MPGA have supported the London in Bloom competition. It's a very special event which provides opportunities for communities to showcase their particular expertise in making London a greener and more pleasant place to live, work and visit. London in Bloom is part of the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards, which aim to increase the biodiversity of Greater London - particularly important in today's race to fight climate change.

In addition to the boroughs, parks and communities, special awards were made to businesses, community groups and individuals in recognition of their contribution in making London a more attractive city. London in Bloom recognises the work of the volunteers who support and care for many of our parks, squares and green spaces across the capital and help to build sustainable neighbourhoods through community gardening. The friendly competition between the various groups promotes gardening skills at every level and encourages social gatherings.

London in Bloom prizes are awarded in specific categories. One of this year's prize winners was the Core Landscapes Community Roof Garden in Hackney, which is part of Core Arts, an award-winning mental health charity. This wildlife-friendly garden was rated 'Outstanding' and boasts fruit trees, medicinal plants, food growing, a wildlife point and a woodland meadow flowerbed.

Other prizes were awarded to Wimbledon Common which won Common of the Year and the Horniman Museum in Lewisham which won the The Heritage Garden of the Year award. Both winners were awarded Gold for their excellent achievement.



Core Community Roof Garden, LB Hackney

We are delighted to continue our relationship with London in Bloom, which acknowledges the passion Londoners have for improving the Capital and shows how these initiatives can change the look of many, often neglected, green spaces.



Horniman Museum & Gardens, Heritage Park/ Garden of the Year, LB Lewisham



Common of the Year: Wimbledon Common LB Merton

London City Farms

London City Farms Harvest Festival 2022

The London City Farms and Community Gardens Association held their 24th Annual Harvest Festival on 26th September at Lambourne End Centre. The Association is a membership organisation for charitable farms and gardens serving London's communities and residents. The number of participating members grows annually and this year representatives from 13 boroughs took part in various competitive categories. It is a free event and, with sunny Autumn weather on the day, the turnout of visitors exceeded all expectations.

The MPGA sponsors the photography prizes and this year the overall winner was 'Pollinator', a stunning photo of a sunflower with a bee, submitted by Kentish Town City Farm. Pollination is a hot topic amongst gardeners, especially where they are facing climatic changes. The 1st place winner in the 'Community Growing' photographic category was Hammersmith Community Gardens Association (HCGA) for their photograph 'Community Growing' shown below.



1st place winner: Community Growing Hammersmith Community Gardens Association, LB Hammersmith & Fulham

We also sponsor the Horticultural & Home Produce category in which the overall winner was Mudlarks City Farm, a charity which supports adults and children with learning difficulties. The London City Farms' volunteers take great pride in nurturing a generation of urban children who would otherwise miss out on opportunities to work on allotments and reap the benefits of organic vegetable growing. This is often the first chance some children have to see domestic animals in a natural farm environment where they can enjoy all aspects of animal husbandry.



Overall Winner: Mudlarks Horticultural & Home Produce



'Pollinator' Kentish Town City Farm, LB Camden



The Judges (l to r) Jodie Jones, MPGA; Alison Hepworth, WFGA, Mary Bolton, Volunteer; Richard Choksey, Social Farms & Gardens

Chiswick House & Gardens



Our annual garden visit this year took us to Chiswick House where we were welcomed by Trust Director Xanthe Arvanitakis and Head Gardener Rosie Fyles. It was a beautiful Spring day and the visit was much enjoyed by several Committee members as well as our President, Hugh Johnson and Vice President Wesley Kerr. We were also joined by Tony Louki, the Hounslow Councillor, Ed Stannard of Parks for London and Roger Taylor as well as Sue Taylor of Taylors Bulbs.

Our tour started in the Conservatory, which Xanthe explained was one of the projects for which the Trust is currently seeking funding as it poses considerable maintenance issues. This magnificent wooden Conservatory, built in the 19th Century, is listed Grade 1 and the garden surrounding it is home to the oldest collection of camellias in Britain.

The estate comprises approximately 65 acres and is designated Metropolitan Open Land. Much is being done to develop currently under-used spaces

and to bring them into the public domain. The former stable buildings and sheds adjacent to the estate offices are being turned into a learning centre for the local community, schools and specialist groups.

The Moreton Hall estate became part of Chiswick during the 19th century, and incorporates the walled gardens, including the Kitchen Garden, where seasonal organic vegetables are grown and sold in their shop. Next to this is a hidden garden, once used successfully for fruit growing. This had become overgrown and is currently being restored under Rosie's leadership. She pointed out the work they have achieved to date.

The Rosary Garden is another area to which Rosie has been giving her attention recently. She has researched old drawings and plans and is using them to return the garden to its original design, beginning with the area around the base of the Doric column with its Venus sculpture. Her horticultural team have cleared and pruned

many of the trees and shrubs, which has helped to define the original features of the garden. The whole estate is being treated with similar sensitivity to bring about the necessary changes.

To regain Lord Burlington's view of the Classic 18th Century Footbridge from the main lawn has necessitated major felling and pollarding of willows and other tree species. It was cheering to see that the development of all the estate areas, where possible, had been given wildlife opportunities, including the stacking of wood piles in front of the lake for the benefit of invertebrates and small mammals.

A new membership scheme was set up in 2021 and runs parallel with their existing Friends Group. A number of seasonal events are held throughout the year in the kitchen garden, as well as around the year garden walks and Christmas drinks in the main house.

Our guided tour of the gardens was greatly appreciated by all and it was interesting to hear about the ongoing work and future plans of the Trust. This is a beautiful oasis with a fascinating history on the edge of central London. At the end of the afternoon, we had a welcome cup of tea at the stunning RIBA Awarded Café, and thanked our hosts for a very special afternoon.



Chiswick House Kitchen Garden



Members of the MPG A Committee and colleagues

BULBS FOR LONDON

In 2022 we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of Bulbs for London. To mark the occasion Taylors came up trumps with a bumper number of bulbs, which was good news as each year we receive an ever-increasing number of applications.

The bulbs went out to a wide range of sites including parks, community gardens, schools, recreation grounds, squares, commons and churches, as well as memorial gardens and eight London City Farms. These included Dene City Farm in Merton, where they have a wide variety of farm animals including a special pet area. There's also a café, shop and riding school - it's a great place for families and school trips, as of course are the others.

The bulbs also cheered up a number of Health Centres for both patients and visitors. These included the Galleons Reach Health Centre in Greenwich, Lambeth Community Care Centre, the Respite Centre in Ealing and St Charles Mental Health Centre in North Kensington, where the garden is in a prominent position within the hospital grounds and beautifully tended.

We often send bulbs to centres, parks and sites where groups of disadvantaged adults and young people are involved. Amongst these, this year we sent bulbs to Kendor Gardens, Merton. They were delighted to receive them and arranged for them to be planted by a group of mental health volunteers who gained immense satisfaction from planting the bulbs and seeing the results in the Spring.

Many historic houses in London were situated in parks and although some of these houses have been lost over the years, many of the others have

been put to good use by their local councils. This year we gave to three of these gardens, namely Strawberry Hill House in Richmond, Fulham Palace in Hammersmith and Langtons House in Havering, which all have a high footfall. Langtons House is a Grade II Listed 18C house with picturesque landscaped gardens and ornamental lake. It's located in Hornchurch on the very edge of London and perhaps not as well known as some of the other historic houses and gardens, but well worth a visit.

Our 10th Anniversary Year turned out to be our best yet, so huge thanks to Taylors for their continuing generosity and support. This is echoed by all the bulb recipients, Friends Groups, planting volunteers and visitors alike who enjoy the splendid Spring displays. The sites which benefitted were as diverse as ever and in the Spring of 2023 we received a wonderful crop of photographs of the bulbs in all their glory.



Kendor Gardens, LB Merton



Bedfords Park, LB Havering



Paradise Park, LB Islington

ELMS4LONDON

Elms4London Initiative

Elms4London are pleased to report another successful year having distributed 77 disease resistant trees over 51 sites in 21 boroughs. This is in addition to the 33 trees planted in the first year of the campaign making a total of 110 so far. Much has been done over the last few years by land managers and interested parties to return the elm to the urban landscape, but our initiative adds impetus whilst creating collaboration and discussion amongst a wide range of groups. Our trees increase the spread, density and variation across London, and in some cases create 'elm hubs' for wildlife concentration.

To emphasise our campaign, the committee announced another London Elms Week which took place from 12th to 19th February 2023 where a good number of recipients timed their tree planting to coincide with these dates. A number sent photographs of their planting ceremonies which have been loaded onto the website and were tweeted as they arrived. Additionally, many horticultural media outlets were informed of this special period and did feature them in their newsfeeds, all of which promotes not just the Elms4London campaign but the MPGA generally.



Mark Lane and the Golders Hill Park team planting an *Ulmus 'Lutece'* supplied from the community nursery The Tree Musketeers in Hackney.



Sponsorship for ten of the trees was provided by Treeworks Consultancy and their MD, Luke Fay, was in attendance at a number of the planting occasions, photographs from which have been shared with us and posted accordingly. The committee would also like to acknowledge significant sponsorship from the Bartlett Expert Tree Company, who have been supporting us from the beginning. We would also like to thank our nursery suppliers: Langthorns Plantery and Joseph Rochford Gardens Ltd for their diligent and supportive collaboration. Our partnership with the Tree Musketeers, where their community nursery 'grow on' saplings for future, is also working successfully.

Our MPGA Elms4London website provides an informative window on our work, whilst ensuring easy access to our application forms and elm tree stock lists, usually published each October. Our Twitter account has around 500 followers and the posted photographs get a reasonable number of likes. Most importantly, this medium is keeping the story alive and promoting the campaign to a wide range of people.

Through conversations with a wide range of people over the course of the last year, it has been astonishing to discover how many individuals cannot identify an elm tree or still believe that the use of this genus is no longer viable. Education is an important part of our campaigning work, and social media engagement is one of our most powerful tools. So, looking ahead to the coming year, we will continue working to capture the public imagination while raising funds to plant yet more elms for London, its wildlife and its people.



3 fine specimens of *Ulmus 'Lobel'* on N. E. side of Hampton Court Bridge, East Molesey



An *Elms4London Ulmus 'Lutece'* provided by Luke Fay from Teamwork Environmental Practice to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Planted in the Olympic Park.

Committee:

Mark Lane (Chair) (MPGA)

Rex Thornborough (MPGA)

Ruth Holmes (MPGA)

Jodie Jones (MPGA)

Nick Evans (MPGA)

David Shreeve (Conservation International)

Tony Leach (Parks for London)

2023 UPDATE

In the past year, we've been able to resume some of our Committee meetings at Guildhall, while continuing on online for others. However, the Committee is busy working right across London, in all the London Boroughs, as can be seen from the very varied range of grants which we've given again this year.

Website

We continue to have a good response to our new website which was launched in June 2022 and is regularly updated. There are two areas which still need to be addressed: Firstly the question of a 'donate' button, so that donations and subscriptions can quickly and easily be made online. Secondly an MPG A Legacy Form needs to be created. When these two matters have been resolved, it will make donating to the MPG A much easier.

Blog

Marc Owen, our blogger, has now written a total of thirteen blogs for us – all of which can be found on our website. The idea behind the blogs is to encourage people to visit some of the London gardens with which we have been involved and of which they may be unaware. Marc writes in his own interesting and unique way, bringing a fresh vision to these gardens. He is a very loyal volunteer but this year unfortunately, due to his workload, has not been able to blog for us. The good news is that there is a blog from him in the pipeline.

Database

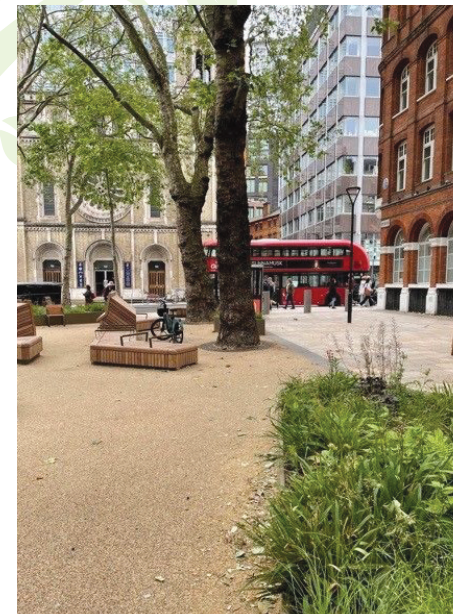
Dr Hazel Russman is another volunteer highly valued by us and an expert in her field. The database is a very time consuming project, but she is making good progress and so far has entered detailed information from around seventy Annual Reports. As we have 139 years to cover, we are about halfway through the project. Tracing the Reports can be very time consuming and once received, they need to be digitalised before sending to Dr Russman. We are very grateful to her for all her input and would certainly not have arrived at this point without her assistance.

Fairchild's Garden

As previously reported, Fairchild's Garden in Hackney is a site which was laid out by Fanny Wilkinson in 1892 and is a project with which we've been involved for many years. The garden, originally known as Hackney Road Recreation Ground, contains the tomb of well known local horticulturalist Thomas Fairchild, who died in 1729. In commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of his birth, in 2017 we were instrumental in the renaming of the site in his honour. The refurbishment project has been delayed many times, initially due to the age of the site and ownership issues. It was then further delayed owing to soil and construction problems. We were therefore delighted to hear recently that Hackney Council has now appointed a contractor to deliver the landscape improvement work, which will be carried out during the Autumn of 2023. Work has now begun on the site.

Blue Plaque – Fanny Wilkinson

As reported last year, English Heritage awarded a Blue Plaque to Fanny Wilkinson, the first female professional Landscape Gardener in England, who worked for the MPG A from 1884 to 1904. The plaque was erected in Bloomsbury at 239/241 Shaftesbury Avenue, where Fanny lived and worked for around ten years. She also designed the triangular area adjacent to the property but unfortunately at the time of the unveiling of the plaque this was undergoing refurbishment. The work has now been completed and we are delighted to report that several of the original trees planted by her have been retained. The refurbished triangle has also acquired a new name - Princes Circus. It contains new seating and some beautifully planted raised beds, which have completely changed the feeling of the area. It's good to see it being enjoyed again by local people and visitors.



Princes Circus, LB Camden

Coronation Of King Charles III



The MPG A has always marked important Royal occasions with the planting of a tree. This is a long standing tradition and one we were keen to continue into the reign of King Charles III. In view of our 'Elms4London' project, it was decided to nominate the Elm as our 'Coronation' tree and one of the disease resistant varieties will be chosen. To date, we've secured funding for several 'Coronation' trees and we are hoping to plant the first of these at Buckingham Palace, where we have over the years planted a variety of trees to commemorate other important Royal occasions. Further sites have yet to be identified. There are several contenders, but if you would like to sponsor a Coronation Elm in your area please let us know.

Twitter

We are in touch regularly with the major gardening organisations and charities in London who keep us up to date with their activities and concerns. However, as a charity with limited resources, we also rely heavily on Twitter to connect with the wider gardening world. It enables us to know what is going on within the London horticultural fraternity and is also a good way to circulate our news. We continue to build our profile and to date have almost 1600 followers.

London's Lost Drinking Fountains

The drinking fountains of London are of special interest to us as we were instrumental in installing over forty fountains of various designs in London around 1900. As reported previously a list of London's lost drinking fountains is being compiled by Sebastian Bulmer (🐦 @sebastianbulmer). Sebastian has put a lot of work into his research and recently made us aware of a film on YouTube made by Suzanne Higgott, curator of the Wallace Collection at Hertford House in Manchester Square. Sir Richard Wallace, the owner of Hertford House, lived in France where he commissioned 100 drinking fountains for the City of Paris. When he returned to live in London in 1871, he settled at Hertford House and in 1903 commissioned four cast iron drinking fountains for London from Val d'Osne, the original French foundry.

With the help of the MPGA, these four fountains were erected in Shoreditch,

with part of the costs being donated by The Hon Dudley Fortescue, an MPGA Committee Member at the time. We were delighted to learn that two of these fountains survive – one is at Albert Gardens in Tower Hamlets and the second was moved to Hertford House in Manchester Square. The story of the fountains and the involvement of the MPGA is told in the YouTube film mentioned above and is available to watch from our website.

Another Victorian benefactor was John Passmore Edwards, who donated several fountains through the MPGA, one of which was placed in Albion Square. The good news is that the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) are refurbishing this fountain to full working order. HOLT have done more than any other organisation in London in financing the restoration of these historic fountains. It's a wonderful project and, if any of our members are interested in contributing, please let us know or get in touch with HOLT at www.heritageoflondon.org/fountains.



Albion Square Gardens Fountain, LB Hackney

GARDENS
AND
GREEN SPACES
UNDER THREAT

GARDENS AND GREEN SPACES UNDER THREAT

All of London's gardening organisations are concerned with the loss of gardens and green spaces which are under threat across London. These organisations include CPRE, Go Parks, Fields in Trust, London Green Belt Council, the London Parks Trust and 'of course' ourselves.

Last year we mentioned in our Report that CPRE had produced an excellent document entitled 'Forever Green? Privatisation, neglect and financial gain: why 50 London parks and green spaces are under threat and how we can save them', which we fully endorsed. This set out the sad position facing us all. One of the things highlighted in the Report is the threat to the **Green Belt**, which is relentless.

We recently heard from Anna Taylor, Director of CPRE, that neglected, rundown areas of the Green Belt are particularly vulnerable to development. They are campaigning to establish

a continuous **ring of woodland around the Capital** – a kind of M25 for nature – which would have a more powerful role in carbon capture and the wellbeing of Londoners. It will also help protect London's countryside and biodiversity.

Our President, Hugh Johnson, tells us in his Report on Page 3 of his concerns regarding the ongoing loss of trees. One example highlighted by CPRE is the protected trees which were butchered on land adjacent to **Cator Park** in Bromley. This precious woodland has been massacred and the case is being followed by CPRE in the hope of returning the site to woodland.

There is some good news to report from Havering, where **Havering Common**, which has been awarded 'Village Green' status, and can therefore be registered as a protected space in perpetuity.

All who are concerned with the loss of green space in the capital can help. If you have concerns about any green space local to you please get in touch. When green space is lost it is gone for ever.



Cator & Alexandra Park, LB Bromley

MPGA FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

31 DECEMBER 2022

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2022

| | Notes | 2022 Income £ | Capital £ | Total 2021 £ | Total 2020 £ |
|--|-------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| INCOMING RESOURCES | | | | | |
| Gross dividends received | | 13,522 | - | 12,471 | 11,708 |
| Deposit account interest and Gift Aid interest | | - | - | 1 | 17 |
| Subscriptions with Gift Aid Recoveries | | - | - | 550 | 513 |
| Donations and subscriptions without Gift Aid | | 6,980 | - | 8,030 | 3,945 |
| Total Incoming resources | | 20,502 | - | 21,052 | 16,183 |
| RESOURCES EXPENDED | | | | | |
| Grants, affiliation fees & London Spade | 1 | 10,738 | - | 11,677 | 5,809 |
| AGM & other MPGA events | 2 | 2,837 | - | 1,936 | - |
| Office expenses | | 1,344 | - | 1,296 | 1,552 |
| Special Projects (ELMS) | 3 | 1,816 | - | - | - |
| | | 16,735 | - | 14,909 | 7,361 |
| Net incoming/(outgoing) | | 3,767 | - | 6,143 | 8,822 |
| Net movement in funds | | 3,767 | - | 6,143 | 8,822 |
| Balances at 01/01/2022 | 4 | 13,607 | - | - | - |
| (cash held at METRO bank) | | | | | |
| (investments: M&G+CCLA) | | - | 327,874 | - | - |
| (CCLA/COIF: cash deposit) | | - | 6,416 | - | - |
| Balances carried forward 31/12/2021 | | 15,608 | 334,290 | - | - |

Balance Sheet

31 December 2022

| Note | 2021 £ | 2022 £ |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| FIXED ASSETS | | |
| Investments at M&G + CCLA | 367,440 | 334,290 |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | |
| Total Current Assets | 11,439 | 15,608 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Creditors | - | - |
| NET CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| | - | 15,608 |
| TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES | £378,879 | £349,898 |

Approved

R M Thornborough
ChairmanMs. T. Healy-Singh
Hon. Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts

31 December 2022

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- (a) Expenditure is dealt with on an accruals basis, which includes making provision at the year end for grants approved which have not yet been paid.
- (b) Dividends, interest and life subscriptions receivable are credited when received.
- (c) Investments are shown at their market value at the year end. Realised and unrealised gains or losses on investments are credited or debited to the Capital account.
- (d) Contributions received as a result of appeals for capital are credited to the Capital Account.
- (e) **Policy on reserves.** The total of grants approved over any given period is chosen to keep income and expenditure broadly in balance and avoid the accumulation of large cash balances. It is therefore not appropriate to specify a precise level of reserves to be maintained.

1. RESOURCES EXPENDED

Grants

| Name | ID# | Amount (£) |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------------------|
| London in Bloom | 2153 | 1000.00 |
| London Gardens Trust | 2201 | 1000.00 |
| Kingsley Hall Community Gardens | 2150 | 1000.00 |
| Finsbury Park (Edible Landscapes) | 2203 | 990.00 |
| Trowbridge Gardens, Hackney Wick | 2211 | 915.40 |
| The Garden Classroom, Newington Green | 2215 | 878.61 |
| Fircroft Primary School, Tooting | 2225 | 800.00 |
| Canons Park | 2151 | 722.08 |
| The Oldfield Estate, LB Camden | 2148 | 600.00 |
| London City Farms | 2214 | 600.00 |
| Wiltshire Close Housing Estate RBKC | 2152 | 572.23 |
| Bernie Spain Gardens | 2207 | 550.00 |
| Pakeman Primary School, Islington | 2202 | 360.50 |
| Muswell Hill Wildflower Meadows | 2218 | 166.00 |
| New River Studios Garden, LB Haringey | 2209 | 110.00 |
| TOTAL | - | £10,264.82 |

Notes to the Accounts

31 December 2022

2. RESOURCES EXPENDED

Events

The cost of catering and venue hire was greater in 2022 than in previous years due to the fact that a special event was held jointly with English Heritage in launching a blue plaque in honour of an early MPGA Garden designer, Fanny Wilkinson.

3. RESOURCES EXPENDED

Elms

The MPGA launched a special funding drive for its Elms4London project. The cost of tree supply and planting was £1,816. A special purpose bank account at Metro Bank for the collection of dedicated funds for this activity was set up during the course of 2022.

4. FIXED ASSETS

| | M&G Equities Investment Fund for Charities | COIF Income Units | COIF Deposit Account | Total |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| As at 1 January 2022 | 145,660 | 215,364 | 6,416 | 367,440 |
| As at 31st December 2022 | 137,547 | 190,327 | 6,416 | 334,290 |
| Holding in Units | 9,360 | 10,486.77 | - | - |

Addendum to Report and Accounts of 2021

A full list of the grants given in 2021 is shown below.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Central Hill Estate, Lambeth | £699.00 |
| All Saints School, Barnet | £600.00 |
| Cator Park & Alexandra Recreation Ground, Bromley | £250.00 |
| Home-Start Wellbeing Garden, Camden & Islington | £293.00 |
| Plum Tree Housing Co-operative, Croydon | £1,200.00 |
| The Redbridge Music Lounge Garden, Redbridge | £685.00 |
| Migrateful Garden & Cookery School, Islington | £1,300.00 |
| East Twickenham Neighbourhood Community Centre (ETNA), Richmond upon Thames | £750.00 |
| Kings Scholars Passage Community Garden, Westminster | £770.00 |
| Myddelton Sq Community Garden, Islington | £387.00 |
| Winsford Gardens, Bromley | £210.00 |
| Poker Childrens Theatre Garden, Merton | £600.00 |
| Baker Centre Community Garden for Roots for Life, Greenwich | £600.00 |
| St Mary's Therapeutic Garden, Lewisham | £282.84 |
| Waterloo Millenium Green, Southwark | £1000.00 |
| Wenlock Street Gardens, Hackney | £800.00 |
| Pinner Village Gardens Park, Harrow | £934.00 |
| Waterlow Park, Camden | £475.94 |
| John Keble Primary School, Brent | £300.00 |
| London City Farms & Community Gardens | £600.00 |
| London Gardens Trust - London Open Gardens | £500.00 |

Affiliations:

London Forum
Fields in Trust
London Spade - engraving

HAPPY 120th BIRTHDAY CORONATION GARDENS, SOUTHFIELDS, WANDSWORTH!



Coronation Gardens, LB Wandsworth

Coronation Gardens was opened by the Mayor of Wandsworth on 4 July 1903 to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII in August 1902. The gardens were designed by Fanny Wilkinson, the MPGA's very own landscape gardener, and in 1903 we presented them with twelve seats. The picture above shows

the unusual granite drinking fountain with Art Nouveau-style bowl, which is still in evidence today. The gardens, which were a personal gift of Ex-Mayor Sir William Lancaster, who gave them to the people of Wandsworth in perpetuity, are still going strong today thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Coronation Gardens.



GET INVOLVED AND JOIN THE METROPOLITAN PUBLIC GARDEN ASSOCIATION

The MPGA is a long established charity founded by Lord Meath in 1882, which has remained true to its principal objective - the protection and improvement of public spaces across the London boroughs.

How the MPGA does this has evolved over the years, but our hard-working Committee, who are all volunteers, remain committed to providing modest grants and expertise to the many dedicated local groups who create, maintain, beautify and improve the Capital's parks and green spaces.

Diminishing government funding and growing development is putting huge pressure on our green spaces, large and small. We endeavour to monitor all public gardens and green sites under threat and support campaigns and petitions where we feel we can make

a difference. This all takes time, effort and of course funding.

If you are as passionate as we are about the environment and protecting London's parks and green spaces for ourselves and future generations, please become a member of the MPGA and make a donation towards our work. Full details are on the form overleaf and our Annual Report will also keep you abreast of our activities.

Our Membership Form can be found overleaf or downloaded from our website www.mpga.org.uk



GET INVOLVED AND JOIN US

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Tel day _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

SUBSCRIPTION RATE - ANNUAL

Adult £25 Student/over 60 £15

LIFE SUBSCRIPTION - single payment

Adult £250 over 60 £150

CORPORATE - single payment

Corporate £500

I want the MPGA to treat all my donations as **Gift Aid**. I am a UK Taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax/Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. *Please tick box.*

DONATION £ Cheque/Banker's Order enclosed £

BANKER'S ORDER FORM/DETAILS FOR BACS

Bank _____

Branch _____

_____ Post Code _____

Sort Code _____ Acc No _____

Acc Name _____

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Please pay MPGA the sum of £ _____ immediately and again on 1 January 20 _____ and on 1 January each subsequent year until further notice.

BANK METRO Sort Code 23 05 80 Acc No 31202116
Acc Name Metropolitan Public Gardens Association

RETURN FORM WITH CHEQUE/BANKER'S ORDER TO:

Hon Treasurer, MPGA, 60 Worlingham Road, East Dulwich SE22 9HD

ALTERNATIVELY, make a BACS payment and email the Treasurer with your details mpga.treasurer@gmail.com



Inner Temple Garden, LB City of London



Vauxhall Park, LB Lambeth (photo courtesy Polly Freeman)



Meath Gardens, LB Tower Hamlets



Canons Park, LB Harrow



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