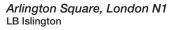
METROPOLITAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION



Annual Report and Accounts 2021





Front cover: Red Lion Square, LB Camden designed by Fanny Wilkinson



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021

CONTENTS

- 02 OFFICERS
- 03 INTRODUCTION FROM PRESIDENT
- 04 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- 06 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- 08 THE LONDON SPADE
- 09 GRANTS 2021
- 17 ADDITIONAL AWARDS
 London City Farms
 London Open Gardens
 London in Bloom
- 20 FANNY WILKINSON BLUE PLAQUE
- 22 ELMS4LONDON
- 23 BULBS FOR LONDON
- 24 2022 UPDATE
- 26 GARDENS & GREEN SPACES UNDER THREAT
- 29 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
- 34 JOIN THE MPGA

METROPOLITAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

President

Hugh Johnson OBE

Vice Presidents

The Marchioness of Salisbury Sir David Howard Bt The Master, The Worshipful Company of Gardeners Rosie Atkins FL Jovce Bellamy MBE Alistair Gould Wesley Kerr OBE Christopher Woodward

Chairman Rex Thornborough MStJ RD Vice Chairman Nicholas Evans Hon Treasurer Tara Healy-Singh Hon Secretary and Grants Officer Mandy Kidd Hon Minutes Secretary Nicola Freshwater

Executive Committee

The Officers as above

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 QC Hon Independent Examiner John Clark FCA

Trustees

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.

Edited by Annabel Ward

Website www.mpga.org.uk Email secretary@mpga.org.uk

MPGA@MPGA London Registered Charity Number 303330



INTRODUCTION FROM PRESIDENT **Hugh Johnson OBE**

Our parks and gardens are not made for tropical temperatures. In London we had two days in early July of nearly 40°C (we used to get excited about 100° Fahrenheit, which is 38°C). A mere day was enough to scorch leaves and shrivel flowers. The grass in our parks turned brown - and weeks later with no rain has not yet recovered, except in places where it is shaded by tall trees.

Shade makes all the difference. On a day when walking on the sunny side of a street is overwhelming, the shady side gives relief. In the USA, street trees are defined as 'shade trees' and there is a regular Shade Tree Conference. Her Majesty the Queen has given her blessing to mass tree planting to celebrate her Jubilee (and sanctioned a bizarre tree of trees in front of Buckingham Palace). Granted this country has one of the lowest percentages of tree cover in Europe, there is no reason why our streets and cities should not benefit from green shade.

The people's choice is too often a 'flowering' tree, a cherry or crab-apple or pear that produces an annual show of blossom. It is not the blossom, though, that functions to cool and shade us. We need a volume of leaves over our heads. The London plane is one of the best choices, but so are elms, limes, oaks, hornbeams, our big native cherries. robinias and sophoras (now, sadly, to be known as styphnolobium; botany is not famous for euphony). The ginkgo looks exotic but grows well here and turns a lovely yellow in autumn. We need city

trees that grow to thirty feet or more to give us the shade we need.

The Elms4London initiative launched last year by the MPGA is already making an impact around the capital. Its website records lots of new plantings, as well as surviving older trees that now have iconic value; the signs are that public interest and confidence is growing and our city has started to regain what has historically been one of its most important ornaments.

Our Association meanwhile, is now much better represented on the internet by our new website (www.mpga.org.uk). The image that greets you is the Queen's House in Greenwich Park against a background of the City's new towers, a reminder that a leafy city is not easy to ensure among taller and taller buildings.

Our parks and green corners, the raison d'etre of this association, become more important with each new development. I took the Northern Line to Nine Elms recently. Emerging from the station was a shock. Far from there being a single elm, or single tree, I was surrounded by tower blocks that could (and should) have been in Kowloon. Indeed they were built with Chinese money. Last year saw the success of an initiative to ensure adequate light to buildings in the vicinity of tower blocks, but it will take every effort we can all make to keep London leafy. The MPGA always needs new members. Please encourage your friends to join you in supporting us.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2021 Rex Thornborough RD FCSI

Another year and COVID is still with us. Efforts to return to some semblance of normality during 2021 continue with social restrictions and rampant inflation, a cost of living crisis and extremes of weather across the world. However, outdoor pursuits have seen an upsurge in people's recreational activities amongst which gardening has proved a popular occupation, balancing the difficulties of everyday life with the the renewal of horticultural hobbies.

Whilst the Association is in reasonable financial health, the volatility, fragility and uncertainty in financial markets over the last year has seen the income that we derive from our small investments fall again and we may have to consider how best to support the various projects that come to us for grants by cutting expense elsewhere. Although applications for grants are still not back to pre-pandemic levels they are showing slow signs of increase and we need to make sure we can do as much as possible with the limited funds available to us.

With national excitement growing to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the MPGA has also been remembering the life of Fanny Rollo Wilkinson, the country's first professional female landscape gardener and former employee of the MPGA. After delays in processing our application for a Blue Plaque in Fanny's honour, acknowledging her contribution to landscaping around 75 public gardens in London, English

Heritage finally agreed that a plaque should be erected where she had lived and worked at 239/241 Shaftesbury Avenue. It has been an interesting time gathering information from our many supporters and horticulturalists in general, including many female gardeners over a time of limited face-to-face meetings.

My thanks are due to English Heritage for agreeing to commemorate this pioneering Englishwoman with the installation of one of their famous Blue Plaques, but also to Shirley Brihi without whose tireless research and lobbying, this commemoration would not have been possible.

The success of the work of the Association is due in no small part to the support that we receive from Taylors of Holbeach for their sponsorship of the highly successful Bulbs for London project, and from Bulldog Tools for their sponsorship of the London Spade award.

It is a pleasure to record my thanks to all our sponsors as well as my colleagues on the Executive Committee who give so unstintingly of their time and particularly Mandy Kidd who steps down as Grants Officer and Secretary. We wish her well in the next chapter of her life.

Our new website at www.mpga.org.uk is now up and running and will become more useful over time both as a means of communicating our work but also as a means of extending our membership

numbers and by increasing the stability of our financial base.

We will continue to follow the good works begun by our forefathers in opposing planning applications which pay scant regard to the preservation of London's Green Space and to lobby ministers, whoever they may be in our ever-changing democracy, to reconsider a planning policy which currently only requires that land receives 2 hours of sunlight measured at midday on the 21st of March. Setting a new standard of a minimum of 6 hours would thereby, hopefully, curb any future tower block developments, or sky scrapers as they used to be called.

The Elms4London project got off to a good start in the Spring planting season and will recommence this Autumn. An update on progress is detailed elsewhere in this report, following the presentation that Mark Lane gave us at last year's AGM.

The whole country eventually seems to have woken up to the fact that green spaces are essential for physical and mental health and that increasing biodiversity is good for everything from insects, wildlife and people to rainwater conservation and flood control. We will continue to play our part in helping people in the London Metropolitan area to improve their green spaces for the benefit of all.



St Mary's Therapeutic Garden, Lewisham

4 MPGA ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021 5

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

Chairman Rex Thornborough was delighted to welcome guests in person to the Garden Museum. He thanked the Committee for their hard work during a challenging period, and also the President, Vice Presidents and sponsors Taylors Bulbs, Bulldog Tools, the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, and Joseph Rochford Gardens. He expressed the MPGA's gratitude to Christopher Woodward and the staff of the Garden Museum for hosting the AGM.

He described how the MPGA continues to protect, preserve and safeguard open spaces and the volunteers who care for them, fighting development proposals where they threaten to blight these spaces which are so important for peace and moral wellbeing. Developing horticultural skills and an appreciation for nature are vital for the future, as is reconnecting those who have lost their connection with the natural world.

Minutes of the previous AGM, and the 2020 Annual Report and Accounts were approved, as were the appointments of Officers and Committee members.

The London Spade was presented to David Shreeve of the Conservation Foundation for his outstanding contribution to UK-wide conservation. David is currently involved in encouraging more church space to be used for therapeutic gardening, which harks back to the early days of the MPGA when they sought to transform disused burial grounds into public open spaces. At one time David was part of a project planting disease-

resistant elm trees, and he expressed his pleasure that the Elms4London initiative will bring even more elms to the capital.

The Chairman mentioned that the MPGA's support for the Garden Museum's opposition to a planned development of 30-storey tower blocks next to the Museum and Lambeth Palace brought to light the requirement that the only legal requirement for light is 2 hours per day on each of the equinoxes. A petition has gone to the London Mayor requesting an increase to 6 hours.



Wesley Kerr OBE, Vice President of MPGA

The meeting was then addressed by Wesley Kerr OBE, a Vice President of the MPGA. Wesley pointed out that London is a very green city with many parks and public and private gardens, but the experience of residents can depend on where they live.

He described the responsibilities of the Royal Parks, and his sense of the privilege of being associated with the world's largest collection of accessible public open spaces. However, the issue of maintenance is a challenging one that must not be ignored. Brompton Cemetery provides an example of a careful and well thought-out project where long-term maintenance plans were considered alongside the protection of heritage assets, and is a model of what can be achieved.

Mark Lane introduced the meeting to the Elms4London project which aims to increase the number of elms planted throughout the capital by means of partnerships with commercial and community nurseries, work with other organisations, and forging links with potential recipients of trees.



Mark Lane, LVO

















6

THE LONDON SPADE

We were delighted to award the 2021 Spade to David Shreeve of The Conservation Foundation for his outstanding contribution to conservation throughout the UK.

David is known for his creativity and his list of initiatives ranges from public awareness campaigns to special interest group events, publications, award schemes and broadcasting. His early career involved creating environmental schemes leading him to co-found The Conservation Foundation in 1982. The Foundation was one of the first to create links between the business community and the environment, helping to develop positive links throughout the UK and internationally.

An environmental entrepreneur from the outset, the Foundation has been creating original ideas and opportunities for corporate and individual sponsors, government departments, media organisations and trusts for 40 years. As an ideas consultant and as part of his diverse portfolio, David is also the Environmental Adviser to the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.

The MPGA is delighted to support his wide-ranging interests in development projects throughout London's boroughs.



Chairman Rex Thornborough, left, presenting the Spade to David Shreeve of The Conservation Foundation



COMMUNITY GARDENS

East Twickenham Neighbourhood Association (ETNA)

LB Richmond upon Thames

This grant funded the planting of a sensory garden at the ETNA Community Centre which is based in a wonderful Victorian building in the heart of Twickenham.

The local community are now using this space to connect as it can be used as a break-out space for informal meetings rather than just being indoors and also helps to avoid social isolation. Some of the younger children who visit have been helping the gardening volunteers. Ten volunteers were involved in the planting of the garden and it is expected that the maintenance will be carried out with the help of up to four regular volunteers.



ETNA Community Centre, LB Richmond upon Thames

King's Scholars' Passage **Community Garden** City of Westminster

The Passage has been the caretaker of the homeless community in London for over 40 years, aiming to end the cycle of homelessness by inspiring clients to transform their lives. The King's Scholars' Passage Community Garden is a joint, voluntary initiative between residents of the Westminster Cathedral area and The Passage. It provides much needed greenery, inclusive involvement for the residents of The Passage accommodation projects, and creates an inviting space in a part of the neighbourhood which has traditionally suffered from anti-social behaviour and neglect. The MPGA were delighted to support this grassroots initiative by providing funds for trellis, compost and

gardening tools to help with the care of the plants, pots and planters that are donated by local residents and corporate partners.



King's Scholars' Passage Community Garden Project, City of Westminster

Myddleton Square Community Garden

LB Islington

Myddelton Square is a Georgian square containing public gardens which are now looked after by the local residents. They applied for funding to extend the planting in central flowerbeds, particularly a large bed that had been neglected for many

years. Plants were chosen to give a mixture of colour throughout the year, and include evergreens and plants that are particularly attractive to pollinators. The church forms a dark background to the site so planting for winter colour was particularly important. Pyracantha and Japanese guinces were chosen to disguise an electrical box. Roses, agapanthus, lavender, geraniums and spring bulbs are now among the plants brightening up the square.



Myddleton Square, LB Islington

Winsford Gardens

LB Bromley

Penge Green Gym Community Group and the Friends of Winsford Gardens received funding to plant up a range of woodland and other bulbs in the shadier areas of Winsford Gardens, in south east London. The Friends Group which cares for this small but charming public park has significantly improved the space

over the last decade and this project was conceived as part of their 10th anniversary celebrations. Groups of up to 15 volunteers met over successive weekends last October and November to plant an early flowering selection including crocus, woodland anemones, cyclamen, lily of the valley, chionodoxa and narcissus, chosen to brighten the darkest months, and by March this year the success of their latest project was clear for all to see.

Polka Children's Theatre, Wimbledon

LB Merton

The **Polka Theatre** is redeveloping its community garden space as part of a £6.5m redevelopment of its Wimbledon venue. Our grant went towards replanting the entire space, including sensory planting to contribute to an extensive Access Programme which encourages children with disabilities and learning needs to have fun and learn.

Two successful planting days took place, with new volunteers who will join a gardening club to maintain the garden. One of the volunteers commented, 'I've never really been into gardening but am always happy to help my local theatre, especially for the re-opening! I learned that gardening can be therapeutic and calming, and this experience helped me come out of my shell.'



Polka Children's Theatre, Wimbledon, LB Merton

The Baker Centre, Greenwich LB Greenwich

The Baker Centre approached us for seed funding in the first year of Roots for Life, an ambitious project to provide access to a healthier, greener life for disadvantaged local residents through a community kitchen garden offering volunteering opportunities and the chance to learn new skills. As the organisers reported, 'the seed funding from the MPGA helped with a successful harvest which has been enjoyed by over 1,000 visitors including school groups, a summer holiday programme for children on free school meals as well as the public, and enabled us to share fresh organic produce with local community food banks which struggle to access fresh vegetables for their service users.'



Volunteers, Roots 4 Life at The Baker Centre, LB Greenwich and their produce



St Mary's Therapeutic Garden LB Lewisham

St Mary's Therapeutic Garden, Lewisham is a collaboration between the church of St Mary's and the Ladywell Unit, a secure NHS mental health facility which adjoins the church grounds. Patients come to the garden for regular horticultural therapy and many local residents also enjoy the space on a daily basis. Until 2017, the garden was neglected and prone to antisocial behaviour, but has since been transformed with perennial beds, wildflower meadows and a small orchard. The MPGA was pleased to fund the purchase of a collection of spring flowering bulbs to enhance the ornamental impact of this much-loved garden in the earliest months of the year.



St Mary's Therapeutic Garden, LB Lewisham

MPGA ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021 13

Waterloo Millennium Green LB Southwark/Lambeth

This grant enabled Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) to plant a backdrop to their newly installed nature play trail at **Waterloo Millennium Green (SE1)**. All plants were purchased from The Beth Chatto Gardens in order to suit the dry conditions of the site. Planting was undertaken by six community gardening

volunteers on 12th May 2021. Great feedback has been received from visitors about the play trail which this new planting enhances. During the planting day, three members of the public came to tell the group what a great job they were doing and left the following feedback: 'It's lovely seeing what you're doing here. Every time I come, there is something new to see. Plants for every season. Thank you.'



Waterloo Millennium Green, LB Southwark



Waterloo Millennium Green, LB Southwark Dragonfly Sculpture

Wenlock Street Gardens

LB Hackney

The Residents Association of **Wenlock Street Gardens** applied for help with
a publicly accessible courtyard garden
situated between two blocks housing a
mixture of social tenants and leaseholders.
The Association maintains the garden
through regular community gardening days,
ensuring it continues to be a pleasant place
for residents to enjoy and has a positive
impact on the wider neighbourhood by
showing that the site is well cared for. The
Association requested help from the MPGA
to improve the soil in the garden, and put
in some drought-resistant plants. With

the funds supplied, in October 2021 the residents got together to clear litter, pull up weeds, prune overgrown shrubs, spread the new topsoil, and then put in new plants and bulbs, finishing with a bark mulch. Those who helped out commented on how

good this project was for bringing neighbours together, particularly after the strain and isolation of the pandemic.



Wenlock Street Gardens, LB Hackney

PARKS

Pinner Village Gardens Park LB Harrow

This Friends group created a new raised bed in an undeveloped patch of land within the park near the Rayners Gate entrance. The bed was planted with roses, bulbs and perennials to provide year round colour and interest. The planting has created a new focal point for the park and adds much needed colour and seasonal interest with pieces of sculpture featuring in several areas. The bed was built and planted by ten volunteers, with additional help from local High School students on the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.



Pinner Village Gardens Park, LB Harrow

Waterlow Park

LB Camden

The Friends of **Waterlow Park** applied for funding to improve the surroundings of Lauderdale House, a historic house within the park that is now used as a cultural centre for Highgate. Raised beds were built under the shade of a large sycamore tree, and the MPGA provided funds for the soil and planting: a combination of semi-mature shrubs, shade-tolerant herbaceous perennials and bulbs to provide interest for all seasons. Planting was carried out in early 2021 by a class of trainee gardeners from Capel Manor,

giving them practical experience in plant combination and care. Maintained by volunteers, the new beds are enjoyed by all users of the park, but particularly those using the nearby café and classroom, and those hiring the House for social events.



Volunteers planting bulbs at Waterlow Park,

I B Camden

SCHOOLS

John Keble CE Primary School LB Brent

This grant went towards starting a gardening project at this school. Parents and children have come up with ideas of what to grow and have planted and looked after the plants to ensure a good crop of edible food.

Parents and children also come in during the holidays to water the plants and

carry out other maintenance. This is beneficial in a number of ways as the parent community get to know each other and helping to build relationships, creating a parent community working together with the school. Wild flowers have been planted to encourage bees and butterflies, as well as snowdrops, crocus, daffodil and tulip bulbs for the Spring term. Tools such as spades, gloves and watering cans have also been purchased to assist in the maintenance of this new garden which is used as their outside classroom.



John Keble CE Primary School's Outside Classroom, LB Brent

ADDITIONAL AWARDS

London City Farms

London City Farms Harvest Festival

The MPGA has supported the London City Farms Harvest Festival for a number of years and it is always a joyful occasion. Last September, after Covid restrictions forced the 2020 event online, the hopeful competitors gathered at the 52-acre Lambourne End Centre, on the Redbridge/Essex borders to demonstrate their skill in categories as diverse as animal handling,

compost making and egg production.
MPGA committee member, Jodie Jones,
was one of four judges of the Horticultural
Show and went on to present MPGA-funded
prizes to Mudlarks Community Gardens, the
overall winners of the Horticultural Show and
Kentish Town City Farm for their winning
entries in the photography competition.
Phoenix Farm, part of the Hammersmith
Community Gardens Association, was a
winner in the Horticultural Seasonal Display
section. In between events, participants
were able to try their hand at rock climbing,
archery and caving or take a tour of this
lovingly cared-for city farm.



London Harvest 2021 Horticultural Display of Seasonal Produce. Winner: Phoenix Farm, White City LB Hammersmith& Fulham



Congratulations to Mel & Claire both from KTCity Farm: grand prize winners for their vegetable/ sculpture photography, £100 gifted to the Farm on their behalf, donated by MPGA



The Judges: (I to r)
Richard Choksey,
Social Farms & Gardens;
Mark Patterson,
API: Cultural; Jodie Jones,
MPGA; David Bolton,
Worshipful Company of Farmers

16

London Open Gardens

London Open Gardens 2021 was a new, virtual event to replace Open Garden Squares Weekend during the Covid-19 pandemic. OGSW's objective is to celebrate the best of London's historic landscapes, grow Londoners' love of the outdoors, and protect these vital spaces for the benefit of everyone. For this venture, the London Parks & Gardens Trust sought professional filming of 15 gardens with footage that showed the breadth and variety of the different horticultural styles of garden on offer. The show was professionally compèred by BBC presenter Sarah Greene (a keen

horticulturalist) and included interviews led by Coutts Executive Head Chef, Peter Fiori and Major Fundraiser for Perennial, David Lewis. The Trust distributed over 1,850 tickets to ticket buyers, members and supporting partners, including a number of the volunteers who support the work of the participating gardens. In particular, 194 donor tickets were purchased which enabled the Trust to give free tickets to all the Royal Parks Horticultural Apprentices, Perennial, Thrive, Planet Patrol, and AgeUK. Tickets were also sold at a reduced price through July to enable people to watch the show on demand.

London in Bloom

For many years MPGA has provided modest grants to those who share a desire to improve the environment and thereby the quality of life for the local community. In this vein we support London in Bloom and are pleased to award prizes to the winners of Common of the Year and we also sponsor Heritage Park of the Year.

London in Bloom aims to increase community involvement, care for our environment and maintaining our vital green spaces which are seen as priorities for local authorities and community gardening. Our growing anxiety with regard to climate change and its effect on our environment gives new meaning to sustainability and the importance of looking after our wildlife.

Following last year's lockdowns and social restrictions, the appreciation of green space and nature has become an essential element for us all - particularly within the 32 boroughs of London.

Public parks and gardens have been important places for Londoners from all walks of life, giving people areas for sport and children's play, for dog walkers, gardening and just special quiet spots for relaxing.

In 2020 London in Bloom was unable to run their competition in its usual form because of the Covid pandemic. However 2021 saw an increase in entries for all categories. From Small Villages to Cemeteries, Large Villages to Parks, Walled Gardens to Business Landscapes - something for everyone to cherish. Volunteers are encouraged to engage with community groups and London in Bloom awards are given in recognition of the work that is involved, especially giving local people and residents the opportunity to be included in the management and development of green spaces. There was a considerable loss of income during 2020 because of the withdrawal of some sponsors and the lack of entry fees. Despite these drawbacks the MPGA were pleased to participate, encouraging horticultural excellence in a variety of locations.



There were several Gold Winners of the Common of the Year including Barnes, Clapham, Streatham and Wandsworth Commons, with Wimbledon Common the ultimate Gold Winner. The Heritage Park

category granted several Gold Awards including Down House, the home of Charles Darwin, with the overall winner being Her Majesty's Tower of London (Ground Control).



Wimbledon Common, LB Merton

FANNY WIIKINSON **BLUE PLAQUE**

As previously reported, in 2018 we applied to English Heritage for a Blue Plaque to be erected in Bloomsbury to Fanny Wilkinson, who was the first female professional Landscape Gardener in England and who worked for the MPGA from 1884 to 1904.

Fanny was the first woman to train at the Crystal Palace School of Landscape Gardening, after which she took up a position with the Kyrle Society, where her most notable work was at Vauxhall Park in Lambeth. In 1884 she became Honorary Landscape Gardener to the MPGA, the leading gardening charity of the time. She obviously knew her worth and within two years had persuaded the Association to put her employment onto a more formal basis with a proper salary. Over the next 20 years Fanny created more than 75 public gardens throughout London for the MPGA. These ranged from large parks to small churchyards, where she often supervised sizeable groups of previously unemployed men. Her biggest project was Myatt's Fields in Camberwell, followed by Meath Gardens in Tower Hamlets.

During this time, Fanny became a founder member of the Women's Agricultural & Horticultural International Union in 1899 and was certainly at the cutting edge of the Women's Rights Movement and the campaign for women to work in a man's world. She was also a Suffragist and helped to secure the vote for women, working closely with Millicent Fawcett, her neighbour and relation by marriage. She was an outstanding individual, certainly ahead of her time, and a well deserved contender for the prestigious blue plague.

Due to Covid and other delays, it was only earlier this year (2022) that English Heritage confirmed her award and advised that the plaque would be erected on Fanny's first Bloomsbury home and place of work at 239/241 Shaftesbury

Avenue, London WC2H 8EH, The launch of the plague took place on 7 June and to celebrate the occasion the MPGA .together with English Heritage, organised a reception at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church opposite the site.

It was a perfect summer's afternoon and a landmark occasion. We were very lucky to have Rachel de Thame, the well known writer, gardener and television presenter, to do the honours. Rebecca Preston of English Heritage also gave a very interesting talk, followed by Jeanie Northover, Fanny's great great niece, who we tracked down through the online 'Ancestry' site. Jeanie gave a fascinating presentation from the Wilkinson family's perspective, fuelled by their memories and reminiscences. This wonderful line up of star speakers were introduced by our inimitable Vice President Wesley Kerr OBE, Trustee of the Royal Parks, broadcaster and writer, who brought his charm and professionalism to the occasion. Our Chairman Rex Thornborough then said a few words and extended our thanks to the speakers and quests.

We had a very good turn out of around eighty people, including the Mayor of Camden, and were particularly delighted to have with us several representatives of the gardens created by Fanny, ie Myatts Fields, Meath Gardens, Vauxhall Park and the Museum of the Home. A Victorian afternoon tea was served, along with a glass of Pimms, which gave everyone a good opportunity to catch up and network. The event was organised by Shirley Brihi, ably assisted by Annabel Ward and Jodie Jones, and attended by the President, Vice Presidents, Chairman and Committee, as well as MPGA members and other guests. It was a very special afternoon and super to meet so many of London's professional lady gardeners. There were many more than we realised, but it was our very own Fanny Wilkinson who paved the way for them, and women everywhere, to enter the wonderful world of gardening.



MPGA Vice President, Wesley Kerr, introducing Rachel de Thame



MPGA Vice President, Wesley Kerr



Cllr Nasim Ali OBE Mayor of Camden, William Fraser OBE



Tunde Morakinyo, Shirley Brihi, Jeannie Northover, Joanna Milewska



Rebecca Preston, English Heritage, Rachel de Thame with Wesley Kerr VP

20

ELMS4LONDON

Elms4London Initiative

This report comes at the end of the MPGA's first planting season of the 'Elms4London' initiative. After a successful launch at last vear's AGM, a committee of seven was set up to develop a workable business plan to provide as wide a distribution of disease resistant elms as possible. Publicity ensured good pan-London coverage and word of mouth, together with assistance from our friends at the London in Bloom campaign, produced an encouraging response from potential recipients from all corners of London.

Since it was essential that we provided only the highest quality of trees, much effort was put into developing successful partnerships with four tree nurseries, namely Hillier Nursery, Langthorns Plantery, Joseph Rochford Gardens Ltd and FP Matthews. All four of these respected nurseries have now fully signed up to the campaign, and provided us with excellent trees, a great level of service and efficient delivery in sometimes tricky circumstances.

With our focus firmly on proven, disease resistant clones, this year we elected to supply the cultivars *Ulmus* 'Nanguen', *U*. 'New Horizon', U. 'Vada' and U. 'Wingham'. A total of 33 trees were distributed across

17 London boroughs, including the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in the London Borough of Hackney, and it is envisaged that number will be surpassed during the next planting season.

Our Twitter account has publicised the planting photographs as we received them, and also catalogues existing elm trees spotted around the city. On average there has been one post per week, helping to keep the story alive and the Twitter account currently has over 100 followers. The website continues to get traffic and is certainly proving to be a successful front face of the campaign. This campaign adds weight to the work already being carried out by other tree planting organisations and brings this tree group very much into the fore of people's thinking.

Plans for the 2022/23 planting season are underway and regular progress updates will continue to be posted on the Elms4London website www.elms4london.org.uk

Applications for trees are being received now (October 2022) and an increased variety of cultivars have been secured for the year of this critical project. The MPGA continues to seek sponsorship and donations, so please refer to the website if you are interested or would like to offer vour support.

Committee:

Mark Lane (Chair) (MPGA) Rex Thornborough (MPGA) Ruth Holmes (MPGA) Jodie Jones (MPGA) Nick Evans (MPGA) David Shreeve (Conservation Foundation) Tony Leach (Parks For London)



Mature Weeping Elm, Surbiton, RB Kingston upon Thames

BULBS FOR LONDON 2021

We are delighted to report that 2021 was a bumper year for Bulbs for London, our joint initiative with Taylors Bulbs. This year we distributed bulbs to 150 green sites across the London boroughs. During the pandemic, parks were a lifeline for so many of us. This seems to have precipitated a renewed interest in improving parks, gardens and green spaces. As a result we had an overwhelming demand for bulbs.

Taylors rose to the occasion and, due to their amazing generosity, we supplied bulbs to a wide range of sites including parks, community gardens, schools, allotments, libraries, nature reserves, streetscapes, city farms, churches, hospitals, squares and stations. Of these, bulbs went to around 40 parks including Caledonian Park in Islington and Cator Park in Bromley, as well as 15 schools including Allenby Primary in Ealing, Winsor Primary in Newham and the Tree House School for Autistic Children in Haringey. This year we also gave to a number of streetscapes



Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, LB Richmond upon Thames



Clitterhouse Farm, NW2, LB Barnet

and stations, as with the return to normal activities and travel, we felt that these sites had a high footfall and were very worthy. These included Orpington High Street in Bromley and Forest Hill in Lewisham. Perhaps the most original request came from Hackney Parklets. This is a scheme backed by Hackney Council, where raised beds are placed in parking bays at various locations around the borough. They are looked after by volunteer parklet coordinators, who tell us that these small oases are greatly appreciated.

Many of the requests we receive come from volunteers and Friends Groups, who do a wonderful job of co-ordinating the applications, and subsequently organising their volunteers to do the planting. The pictures here, together with those on page 36, show some of the results.

This year, as always, we received numerous emails of thanks and appreciation from recipients. We join them in thanking Taylors for their continuing support, for the part they play in brightening up so many corners of London and for the untold pleasure this gives to residents and visitors alike.



Hackney Parklets, LB Hackney

2022 UPDATE

In most respects we are back on track and operating normally after the Covid upheaval of the last two years. Our AGM was held at the Garden Museum while our quarterly committee meetings continued on line. This will change in the autumn of 2022, when we will again meet face to face.

Website

We are delighted to report that our new website was launched at the beginning of June. It's been brought up to date, with new photographs and text and some new sections have been introduced. It better reflects the MPGA in 2022 and shows us to be a vibrant. modern charity while still upholding our Founder's values. We've had a very good response to our 'new look' website and take this opportunity to thank Shirley Brihi for all the hard work she has put into it and also our webmaster, Justin Swabey of Realistic Designs, whose help has been invaluable.

Archives

Most of our archives are held at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) in Clerkenwell. Some time ago they agreed to accept a further batch of our more recent material. This was delayed and could not be sent to them as they were closed due to Covid. However, we are pleased to report that the files were finally deposited with them in November 2021. We would like to record our thanks to our Ex Chairman, William Fraser, who had been kindly storing these records for several years.

As previously reported, a few of the Annual Reports are still missing but now that things are back to normal and institutions have reopened, we intend to resume our search.

Blog

With things getting better our very own blogger, Marc Owen, has been out and about looking at gardens on which to blog for us. In June he visited the Museum of the Home in Tower Hamlets, where he was shown around by Head Gardener, Heather Stevens, and her staff. The garden was originally designed by Fanny Wilkinson in 1900 and we have given many grants to them over the years. Marc was much taken with the garden and has written a very interesting blog, which can be found on our website.

Marc has promised to write another blog for us in the autumn, which will be his fourteenth. They are all quite different and give readers the inspiration to visit some of London's lesser known gardens, which is very much the aim of the blog.

Database

Dr Hazel Russman has continued to work on our database this year and made very good progress. Again we thank Hazel for her time, technical advice and expertise which we have found invaluable.

Blue Plaque Application

Earlier this year we heard from English Heritage that a Blue Plague had been officially awarded to Fanny Wilkinson, the first female professional Landscape Gardener in England, who was employed by the MPGA from 1884 to 1904. A full report of the event can be found on page 19.

Fairchild's Garden

It seems that the work at Fairchild's Garden. which was due to go ahead in September 2021. did not happen. Unfortunately the project is currently on hold due to an increase in costs associated with the ground contamination/ mitigation requirements which have recently come to light following relevant tests. There have also been increases in the construction costs. Hackney Council will provide us with an update when these issues have been resolved.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee has created an enormous amount of interest across the country. To honour the Monarch's 70 year reign, the scheme known as the Queens's Green Canopy has seen thousands of trees planted as well as ancient woodland and forests protected. The MPGA has in the past always donated trees to the Queen on the special anniversaries of her reign - the Platinum Jubilee being no exception. An elm. Ulmus 'Columella'. a Dutch elm cultivar with very upright growth, was planted in a shrubbery facing the north side of Buckingham Palace in February. It is an extremely disease resistant cultivar and should achieve 10 metres in about 25 years. This ties in with our Elms4London initiative, launched last year.

Twitter

Twitter is the best way for us to keep in touch with the numerous parks and gardens across London. We now have over 1500 followers and are often alerted to problems via Twitter. It's also a fantastic medium for parks to advertise events or to inform park users of any changes. We endeavour to retweet anything of interest.

We would encourage all green sites, parks and gardens to join Twitter, especially if they want to report any loss of green space or trees in their park or area.

London's Lost Drinking Fountains

This summer has seen soaring temperatures across Europe but London was probably the most adversely affected, where temperatures reached 40° in July.

There were once about a thousand drinking fountains, most of them Victorian, scattered across the capital. To provide fresh water for the public, the MPGA was instrumental in obtaining donations for over 50 fountains from Victorian philanthropists towards the design, production and installation costs. One of these generous donors, John Passmore Edwards, funded several of these and March 2023 is the 200th Anniversary of his birth.

We have been asked by the Passmore Edwards Society to play a part in their celebrations and this is currently under discussion.

Drinking fountains are just as vital today as climate crises prompt warnings of frequent heatwaves and people are urged to drink more water, but to avoid using disposable bottles to reduce plastic pollution. However, barely twenty per cent of the Victorian fountains survive, of which only a few are functioning. Thankfully, the Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) have taken up the baton and are helping to fund the restoration of several of London's fountains. Unfortunately they also report that some Councils are refurbishing drinking fountains without the water function to save money.

There are one or two happy stories, for example the London Borough of Southwark has reinstated their 1885 Jabez West Memorial Drinking Fountain in Southwark Park; Hounslow Council their 1889 drinking fountain in St Paul's Recreation Ground (Brentford) and Merton their 1904 drinking fountain in South Park Gardens. We applaud them for their efforts in getting these fountains up and running, which at the same time reflects well on the environmental problems facing them and councils everywhere.

Last year we reported that Sebastian Bulmer was researching the lost drinking fountains of London and compiling a list (@sebastianbulmer). If you know of an historic drinking fountain in your area, or anywhere in London, do let us know.

Jennifer Moss Obituary

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Jennifer Moss earlier this year. For many years Jennifer was our Hon Treasurer, as was her husband before her. They both worked tirelessly for the MPGA and gave us many years of excellent support. Jennifer always took a close interest in our activities and members will remember seeing her at our AGMs on a regular basis.

GARDENS AND **GREEN SPACES UNDER THREAT**

GARDENS AND GREEN SPACES **UNDER THREAT**

Each year in our Annual Report we raise the subject of gardens and green spaces in London that are under threat. These are usually sites which have come to our attention directly or through Twitter. Several other organisations in London also monitor these threats, such as CPRE, Fields in Trust, London Green Belt Council and the London Parks Trust, and we often join forces with them where urgent action is needed to present a stronger case.

In March 2022, CPRE produced an excellent report entitled 'For Ever 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 endorse. The Report highlights more than 50 green sites across London which are currently threatened by development. It makes depressing reading and can be accessed on their website.

Many of the precious green sites mentioned have protected Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land Status and include parks, recreation grounds, open fields, housing estates, sports fields, allotments and nature reserves. One of the problems is that when we read that a site has protected status, we tend to think it must be safe from development. This could not be further from the truth, as in many cases these sites are under threat despite their protected status. Sadly, in addition, threats exist even where brownfield sites are available where more than 350,000 new homes across. London could be built.

The London Green Belt Council have recently published their latest research into threats to the London Green Belt. In the last year the amount of Green Belt land offered up for development has increased by 21% since the previous year and a massive 127% since 2016. Hertfordshire, Essex and Surrey are the main culprits. The Boroughs of Hounslow, Croydon and Barking are all proposing to release huge stretches of Green Belt, even though there are many brownfield sites in their boroughs which could be developed.

Areas designated as Metropolitan Open Land are also among the many sites where councils have disregarded and overridden all concerns and allowed precious green spaces, including parks and nature reserves, to be developed. They are often on land previously designated as public parkland and in areas which are lacking good park facilities, with ten public parks currently affected.

We see this happening at Whitewebbs Park in Enfield, where it seems that Enfield Council intend to support a bid from Tottenham Hotspur to build a training facility on Whitewebbs Park Golf Course. This would result in the loss of public access to a large section of the park, as well as the loss of important habitat. A similar situation has arisen at Wimbledon Park, where the All England Lawn Tennis Club are hoping to expand onto this Grade II Listed Park (Metropolitan Open Land) to build a new 8,000 seater stadium and 38 tennis courts. There is also the building of a new stadium being proposed at Greendale for Dulwich Hamlet Football Club, again on Metropolitan Open Land, Southwark Council have given permission for this huge facility, which will mean the loss of a large part of the park. Friends of Greendale are resisting the development and considering taking their case to Judicial Review.

As reported last year, there has been a long ongoing campaign to save Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster, the unique Grade II listed Public Park, south of the Houses of Parliament and running along the Thames. This proposed Holocaust Museum development attracted enormous publicity and the appeal was strongly supported by the MPGA and the London Parks Trust, together with the Thorney Island Society, the Save Victoria Tower Gardens Campaign and local Westminster Councillors. These groups have always supported the principle of having a Memorial and Learning Centre in London, but believe that Victoria Tower Gardens is the wrong place for a memorial of this size. There is also an embargo in place against new monuments being built in this unique area.

We will continue to support local people who want to retain Victoria Tower Gardens as treasured open space for recreation and

GREEN SPACES UNDER THREAT

relaxation, while lobbying Government to find a more appropriate location for this much needed and long overdue memorial. In spite of a Public Enquiry, the Government gave the go ahead to the scheme. On 8 April 2022 a Judicial Review was held and the High Court quashed the planning permission. However, the Government has requested leave to appeal.

We thought the days of playing fields being lost to development were behind us after many of them were sold off. However, CPRE have highlighted six playing fields/sports pitches which are currently under threat. These include Oakfields Sports Ground in Redbridge, Belvedere Road Playing Fields in Bexley as well as Imperial Fields in Merton. It seems very short-sighted when considering the benefits that these facilities bring to local communities in terms of their health, well-being and the community spirit engendered. CPRE have also highlighted the importance of nature reserves, especially in a city like London where they are vital. These are magical areas for us all to enjoy, especially children where they can learn about habitats, biodiversity and the natural world. Those under threat range from **Beddington Farm Lands** in Sutton to **Grove** Park in Lewisham and there are several others. Of particular concern is Waldon Woods in Bromley which the 2016 local plan secured as Public Open Space and where the council is now proposing to build a school; this means that a guarter of the space will be lost.

CPRE have also highlighted the importance of nature reserves, especially in a city like London where they are vital. These are magical areas for us all to enjoy, but especially children where they can learn about habitats, biodiversity and the natural world. Those under threat range from **Beddington Farm Lands** in Sutton to **Grove Park** in Lewisham and there are several others. Of particular concern is **Waldon**Woods in Bromley which the 2016 local plan secured as Public Open Space and where the council is now proposing to build a school; this means that a quarter of the space will be lost.

Finally a word about the infilling of green spaces on housing estates, which has become more prevalent in recent years. CPRE have highlighted many estates across London where infill schemes are proposed.

If these developments are implemented, they will lead to a loss of community garden space and play areas, as well the felling of mature trees. Several of these estates are in Southwark where very strong campaigns have been mounted, which have been picked up by the local press and Twitter and we hope many of the schemes will be stopped as a result. Southwark is not the only council to be pushing ahead with these infill projects - we have heard of eight other others with similar ideas, amongst them Barnet, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Wandsworth.

What can we do? It's obvious that improved legislation needs to be in place to better protect our precious open green spaces. The planning system no longer provides adequate protection, especially since the national reforms of 2012 have opened it up to greater challenge. In addition, Councils often lack sufficient knowledge of the powers and duties available to them, as well as the necessary resources to mount a challenge. They need to give proper consideration to the consequences of their decisions and the effect their actions will have in the future for our open spaces. Finally, local communities lack the resources, knowledge and funding to challenge threats which would enable them to pursue legal action. When local groups join together and exert pressure on their council, they can often achieve considerable results.

Communities need to be vigilant and ready to spring into action when a threat arises. A considerable number of the parks we have today only exist because of hard fought campaigns, many of which were historically supported by the MPGA. There are several organisations in London which help in setting up Friends Groups, including London Friends of Green Spaces Network, Parks Community, Go Parks London, CPRE etc. Further information can be found on their websites.

Threats to our green spaces are mounting daily. We must halt the loss of green space in all London boroughs - once lost, it is gone for ever. If you have concerns about any green space local to you, please get in touch and we will do whatever we can to help.



		2021		Total	Tota
	Notes	Income	Capital	2020	2019
		£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Gross dividends received		12,471	-	11,708	13,098
Deposit account interest and Gift Aid interest		1	-	17	73
Subscriptions with Gift Aid Recoveries		550	-	513	775
Donations and subscriptions without Gift Aid	1	8,030	-	3,945	4,070
Total Incoming resources		21,052	-	16,183	18,016
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Grants, affiliation fees & London Spade	2	11,677	-	5,809	20,670
Annual General Meeting		1,936	-	-	2,210
Office expenses – incl. postage, printing, website maintenance and sundries		1,296	-	1,552	1,561
		14,909	-	7,361	24,441
Net incoming/(outgoing)		6,143	-	8,822	(6,425)
Gains/(Losses) on investments		-	43,982	(15,614)	48,775
Net movement in funds		6,143	43,982	(6,792)	42,350
Balances at 01/01/2021 (cash held at bank)	TSB/ Metro	13,607	-	-	-
(investments: M&G+CCLA)	Metro	_	317,353	344,270	301,920
(CCLA/COIF: cash deposit)		_	6,416	344,270	301,320
(OOLAVOOII : Casii deposii)		_	0,410	-	_
Balances carried forward 31/12/2021		18,651	367,751	337,478	344,270

The notes on pages 4 to 5 form part of these accounts

Balance Sheet 31 December 2021

FIXED ASSETS	
Investments at M&G + CCLA	
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash at bank and in hand	
Total Current Assets	
CURRENT LIABILITIES Creditors NET CURRENT ASSETS	
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	
REPRESENTED BY: Capital Fund	
Accumulated Income Fund	
TOTAL FUNDS	
Approved	

	2020	2021
Note	£	£
3	317,453	367,751
	-	18,651
	20,025	18,651
4	20,025	2,000 16,651
	£337,478	384,402
	317,453 20,025	367,751 16,651
	£337,478	384,402

R M Thornborough Chairman

Ms. T. Healy-Singh Hon. Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts 31 December 2021

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- (a) Expenditure is dealt with on an accruals basis, which includes making provision at the yearend 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. INCOMING RESOURCES

Special Projects - Elms4London

In 2021 the MPGA launched a special stand-alone project, namely Elms4London which is an elm tree replanting project. This project received £4,730 in special donations to the (now closed) TSB account, as a second account for special projects will be opened at Metro Bank.

2. RESOURCES EXPENDED

Grants

There were twenty-one recipients of grants in 2021. The largest grant awarded was for £1,300 to Migrateful. The average grant awarded was for £550.

Office Expenses

The largest item was £810 for printing the annual report.

Notes to the Accounts 31 December 2021

3. FIXED ASSETS

	M&G Equities Investment Fund for Charities	COIF Income Units	COIF Deposit Account	Total	
	£	£	£	£	
As at 1 January 2021	128,472	188,881	6,416	-	-
Realised and unrealised gains & losses	17,188	26,794	-	43,982	-
As at 31st December 2021	145,660	215,675	6,416	-	£367,751
Holding in Units	9,360	10,486.77	-	-	

4. CREDITOR

Due to a duplicate payment of £2000 made in error to TSB by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners which was to be returned in 2022.



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 team of volunteers still 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 passionate, as we are, about the environment and protecting London's parks and green spaces for ourselves and future generations, do make a donation towards our work and become a member of the MPGA. 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 DONATION £	[] 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.			
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 $\mathfrak L$ 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				

RETURN FORM WITH CHEQUE/BANKER'S ORDER TO:

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

34

BULBS FOR LONDON 2021

A further selection of photographs of bulbs supplied and planted in 2021. These show how Taylors bulbs cheer up the parks and green sites across the London boroughs and reach all corners of the capital.



Chingford Memorial Park Pond, LB Waltham Forest



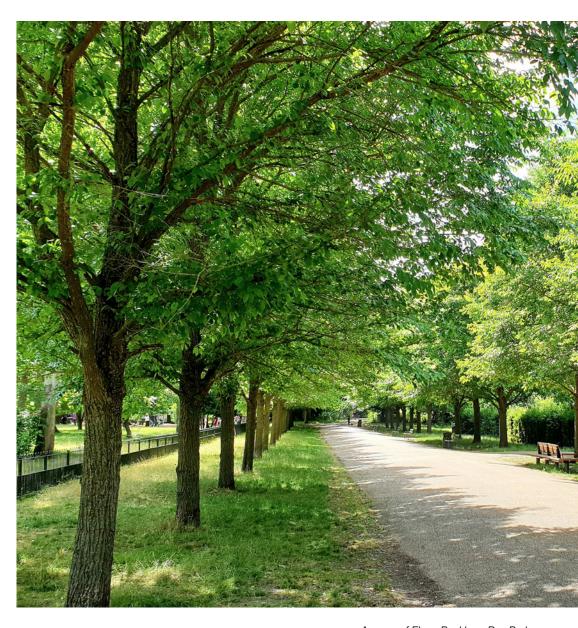
Cody Dock, LB Newham



Thornton Heath Community Garden, LB Croydon

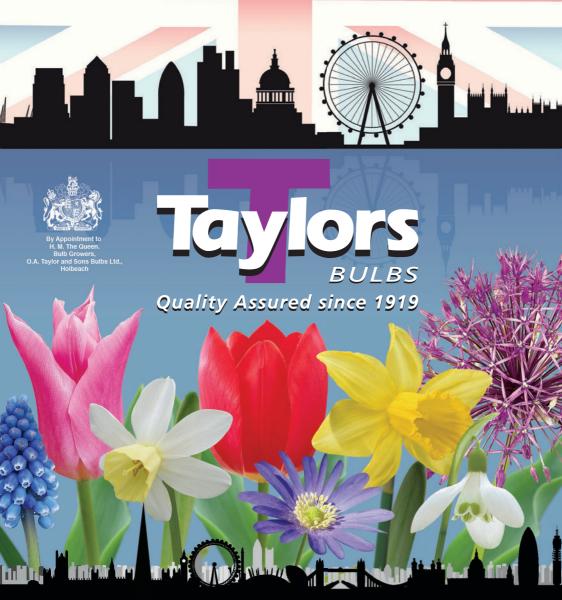


Barnes Green, LB Richmond upon Thames



Avenue of Elms, Peckham Rye Park, LB Southwark

BULBS FOR LONDON



Proud to Support London's Green Spaces