

2022 has been a great year for the Friends of Windmill Gardens. Our first year out of the lockdown has seen us strengthen our leadership team, membership, volunteers and staff as well as run a series of engagement events to inform our priorities and business plan and return to a full programme of events and open days for the first time since 2019 increasing our audience overall.

This year the board of trustees has focussed on learning the lessons from the last two years of the pandemic to start to review a more financially sustainable model for our organisation, strengthening our governance and our capacity to deliver on our core values and priorities whilst recognising that we are operating in an uncertain financial environment, and increased challenges from global rise in energy costs and shortage in grain supply. We have recruited 3 new staff including a new centre manager, a new engagement officer and a new bookkeeper alongside 2 new trustees.

We ask our voting members attending our AGM to endorse our new leadership team.

In addition to the draft annual report, we have published our annual account which includes Profit and Loss account for the first 2 quarters of 22/23 Financial Year and shows a net positive position of just over £3,000. However, it's worth highlighting the months of July and August which were particularly challenging with loss of income of -£9,000 and -£9,522 respectively, reflecting an increase in payroll and operating costs for the Brixton Windmill Education Centre. This is offset by an increase in our trading income of just over £26,000 and despite a challenging national and global financial outlook, we have been successful in raising £20,885 in grants and received £5,435 in donations. Overall, we have achieved 99% of our net operating income based on the budget agreed by the Board of Trustees in Spring.

SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Membership:** increased from 80 to 115 paid memberships
- **Grants:** secured over £20,000 in grants
- **Donations:** raised over £5,000 in donations
- **Business Plan:** series of events with in Spring and Summer to inform priorities and draft business plan
- **Financial policy:** Increased our reserve by £15,000
- **Volunteers:** welcomed new volunteers and updated our Volunteers' Policy
- **Brixton Windmill Education Centre:** reviewed charging structure and growing our bookings and income
- **Events & Activities:** increased audience including over 3000 visitors to B&B Festival this Spring and 1000 visitors attended our Harvest Festival in September. Increased social value and engagement with local families with Easter Family Day and Art in the

Park and our older residents through our Tai Chi and Wellbeing Community Club. Our annual lecture continues to attract a growing audience.

- **Shop:** we have designed and launched a new range of products in the summer
- **Communication:** newsletters going out 3-4 times month, updates on social media and positive coverage in Brixton Bugle

SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES

- **Financial:** like the rest of the charity sector we are particularly vulnerable in this economic downturn. Our ability to attract funding through grants and donations is reduced at this time. We need to review our expenditure and make savings where possible. Our 3-year business plan review is underway alongside income generation.

- **Milling:** our millers continue to meet current requirements despite resources, supply and delivery challenges. Our priority to mitigate this includes meeting with the milling subgroup volunteers, recruiting a new trustee, working with our suppliers and retailers, reviewing our capacity and prices.
- **Resources:** volunteers are the backbone of our charity, we need to increase volunteers to respond to our priorities as well as engage with young BAME in particular to support their training and employability through volunteering. We need to provide more opportunities to highlight volunteers' work and say thank you. We have secured funding to purchase a new IT system (CRM) to help us manage our volunteers better. We're continuing to identify opportunity for training particularly in health and safety and have organised 1 away day for volunteers at Kew Gardens in the summer. We are looking to make better use of our volunteer of the month feature on the website.
- **Governance:** We have 3 vacancies on our board. We have recruited 2 new trustees to support income generation, administration and IT.
- **Maintenance:** ongoing challenge to keep up with requirements for the Windmill (particularly damp ingress) and Education Centre requirements. Meeting with council officers to discuss maintenance plan has not been possible so far and is a priority. In the meantime, maintenance subgroup has agreed monthly maintenance sessions for the centre and together with the new centre manager are helping to respond to reactive maintenance requirements including boiler failure, cladding

material failure and improving cleaning.

- **Park improvements:** The works to improve the playground are due to start in October, however we also need to discuss wider improvements with council officers to support better access, lighting and wayfinding.

DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

BRIXTON WINDMILL

Building: The Friends continue to monitor the significant water ingress into the brick tower and the wooden cap and report these problems to Lambeth Council who own the Grade II* Windmill. The next step is for the Council to produce a feasibility study and seek external funding. The building is checked bi-monthly by Lambeth's millwright contractor. The millwright did some minor repairs on the sails following strong winds earlier this year.

Brixton Flour: Throughout the year our volunteer millers have produced wholemeal Brixton Flour at the windmill using the set of stones installed in 1902 that are now powered by electricity. Despite challenges this year to supply and resources, our millers have milled regularly providing flour for sale at the BWC shop, our pop-up café and by local shops and cafés. We have changed suppliers this year and continue to supply flour to the Old Post Office Bakery which is one of the oldest organic flour bakery in London.

VISITORS

Visitor numbers have increased significantly this year as the country came out of the pandemic. We kicked off our events programme with the successful Easter Family day which proved popular as a result of which we ran out of Easter Eggs! But thanks to volunteers quick thinking no child went home in tears. We have seen large audience with a successful Beer & Bread Festival (c. 3500) and Harvest Festival (just over 1000). We have increased the number of open days and have held our popular 1.5 mile Brixton Hill Heritage

Walk and our Annual Windmill Talk in person at the Centre. We also held National Mills Weekend in May and Art in the Park in August to increased attendance.

BRIXTON WINDMILL EDUCATION CENTRE

2022 marks the first year we have been able to operate the centre fully, following works completion at the beginning of the pandemic. We have reviewed our hire charges in line with increased costs and continue to offer a reduced rate for community hires.

Bookings: As of September, our income from booking hires for the period from April to December stood at £18,294. On average we receive 20 to 25 hire enquiries each week. A significant proportion of which are for weekend hire and parties. We have updated the venue hire rates to include clearer hourly rates for all hires. Maintaining our policy of a minimum 4 hour hire for parties. The cancellation policy has also been updated so that anyone cancelling with less than 4 weeks' notice loses their hire payment in order to reduce last minute cancellations and ensures we don't lose the hire fee paid.

Invoicing for venue hires is using QuickBooks. Invoices go out immediately on the booking - to confirm booking with the hirer. Payment terms have been reduced to 14 days.

Day time hires over the past few months include bookings from Lambeth culture dep., Lambeth Food Partnership, Iconic Steps, Lambeth Carers and Eat Club. However, there is capacity to increase these and we are targeting corporate and private tours to fill availability. Regular hires include Los Domingos who continue to hire monthly on Sunday afternoons for rehearsals. Joy of Sound will be hiring on Friday afternoons from 4 November to deliver their Lambeth Wellbeing Funded music/movement sessions for people with learning difficulties and dementia. We are also working with CEFL following their summer booking to start supporting their activities again through the centre.

As was the case last year, the centre was also used again by Lambeth Council this May as a polling station for Brixton Acre Lane Ward.

Promotion: We are receiving around 40 enquiries for wedding hire via Hitched website each month. We have also listed the centre on Hire Space and looking to list on Counter Talk - a site promoting venues with catering kitchens. We're also reviewing our search engine optimisation with our website provider to increase visibility.

Barriers: The lack of lighting in the park is a barrier to regular evening hires e.g. for yoga classes etc. It's also unhelpful regarding party hire over the winter months. We are also reviewing licences for weddings and for sale of alcohol as well an extension to the centre's opening hours.

EDUCATION

As schools have returned from the pandemic we have seen a low take up of summer term bookings with just 2 school visits from Streatham Well and Greenwich Steiner.

This is an area for improvement and is a priority focus for the centre manager. Current review includes developing our education offer; proactively engaging teachers in the review, resources to support school' visits (incl. funding) and promotion including a new digital flyer and targeting schools in Lambeth and Southwark.

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteer community continues to grow and we wouldn't be able to achieve anything without them. They role model our values, promote our activities, support our income generation and fuel our organisation's growth. Every single priority area subgroup and trustees are supported by volunteers. We have an ongoing responsibility to support our volunteers whilst continuing to recruit new volunteers.

Ongoing work is underway to find more practical involvement and networking opportunities as evening meetings are not suitable for most volunteers.

We're starting formal consultation this autumn to discuss Investing in Volunteers accreditation.

We're working from Excellence Model plan established December 21, based on group priorities. We have updated our volunteer's policy and are reviewing the introduction of a Customer Relations Management system to support this area. We are continuing to spotlight volunteers through our volunteer of the month feature on the website and have offered First Aid training. We also offered a day visit to Kew Gardens earlier this summer to say thank you but we can do more.

We also held Events subgroup with our volunteers GoodGym volunteers this year to input into our events support their delivery.

STAFF

This year we have welcomed a new Centre Manager Catherine (28 hours a week), a new engagement officer Abel (2 days a week) and a new bookkeeper Sarah to the team. The centre manager costs are paid from the hiring income with a small portion covered under the HLF grant, whilst the engagement officer costs are recovered from the HLF grant.

TRUSTEES

This year we are looking to welcome two new trustees: Emma and Edgar, to our board, subject to AGM vote. Emma if successful will take on the role of IT and Admin on the board, whilst Edgar will take on the role of Income Generation (including fundraising).

We are also saying goodbye to Chris who has been a trustee for the last two years and who is standing down to focus on designing our merchandise and shop as well as growing our Instagram following.

We have two trustees who have completed a 3-year term and are therefore standing down and standing again at this AGM: Sonam who is our Treasurer and Ann who looks after volunteers.

FUNDRAISING

Our fundraising subgroup has been successful in securing a 3 year HLF grant (c.£100,000) to support engagement with those with learning disability and autism in partnership with Share, young people in partnership with CEFL, pay for engagement officer for 3 years and support volunteer engagement.

We have also received Lambeth Wellbeing Funding (c.£20,000) this year to support our new wellbeing club for over 50s and meets every Thursday, £10,000 from Awards for All for events programme and wellbeing. Ikea A Place Called Home (c.£5,000) for introduction to Tai Chi for over 50s.

Recently, Catherine, our centre manager has also secured £2,000 from Active Lambeth for weekly Tai Chi sessions for over 50s.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

We are continuing to work on our long term ambition to obtain Museum Heritage Accreditation. Our volunteers attended Lambeth Local History Fair alongside local heritage societies. We are also continuing to review our history and interpretation information and making this accessible to wider audience.

MEMBERSHIP

Memberships provide regular and reliable income as well as help to grow our decision making capacity.

This year so far, we have increased our membership from 80 to 115. This includes 35 lifetime members, 61 annual membership and 18 family membership.



We are hoping to achieve 150 membership by the end of the year and engaging with those whose memberships have lapsed to ensure they are renewed.

COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

This year we are looking to set a targets for website visitors and engagement including through social media to ensure effective communications of activities at the Windmill and the centre across all channels.

Communications activities are at the highest levels for two years with newsletters going out 3-4 times a month and frequent updates on all three social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter).

Coverage in the Brixton Bugle is frequent and positive; the Windmill gets at least three shout-outs in most issues. This needs to be extended to other south London publications with the help of a volunteer.

We have also increased engagement with local and London-wide organisations (eg Brixton BID) in order to increase the quantity and yield of centre bookings and are reviewing a target for this also.

We have attended the BGRMO AGM earlier this year to promote the new Events Programme. We are now a frequent attendee at Brixton Business Improvement District

destination meetings. This has resulted in increased visits to the centre by local businesses (eg Market Row Distillery), cementing of current relations (eg Brixton Brewery and the BID itself) and not so local ones (eg a delegation from Harlem in New York as a result of the twinning festival with Brixton).

We have had corporate volunteers from Goldman Sachs in the park helping with regular park maintenance including our planting beds, clearing drains and overgrown grass as well as picking litter and leaves.

THANK YOU

On behalf of the board of Trustees, I want to say thank you to our volunteers, our members, our staff, our keyholders and our local partners including Lambeth Council, Brixton BID, Brixton Brewery, the Old Post Office Bakery, the local shops who sell our flour and merchandise.

We have also received donations this year totalling over £5,000. The Hand in Hand Pub on New Park Road donated £2,000 and I want to thank them and others who have generously donated towards a new memorial for our fellow Trustee Jeff. Following a memorial service held at the windmill this year, we are discussing the installation of a new bench in his name as well as starting a new photography competition.