



The Friends of Windmill Gardens charity was formed in 2003 with the objectives of restoring Brixton Windmill, improving Windmill Gardens and establishing an education centre.

It is a volunteer-led membership organisation funded by a mixture of trading income and project grants and employs a modest amount of staff to manage key operations in running the Windmill Centre, our activities and the organisation.

We run a busy programme of educational, recreational and cultural activities for our local community as well as visitors from much further afield. We serve key needs for the local area, recognised as having high deprivation rates affecting children and older people, high housing costs for families, and poor access to green space. We provide a safe place for children to learn and take part in a variety of activities, affordable events and recreation for adults and families, and a very popular community club for older people.

Volunteering is key to maintaining such a wide and diverse offer. Our volunteers directly reflect the local community, helping to ensure that we are inclusive and reflect its diversity, and that our volunteers and visitors alike feel that this place is for them. In a time when people often find the wider socio-political trends and polarising nature of the electronic media information space wanting, we provide a place of in-person encounter for people of varied backgrounds where we make a tangible positive impact on the area and our lives.

30 years ago, the Grade II* listed windmill was derelict, sitting next to a burnt-out support building in the corner of a scruffy park. Following the establishment of our community events and improving the park, key milestones of the charity were the joint Lottery funded restoration project with Lambeth in 2010, flour milling resuming in 2014 and the construction of the education centre in 2019. The Centre now hosts weekly school visits, wellbeing classes (Tai Chi, Yoga and Pilates), sound and music therapy workshops (Joy of Sound, Sound Bath), Windmill Community Choir and the 60+ Community Wellbeing Club. Regular periodic workshops include cooking, milling and baking experiences. Alongside this is our volunteer-resourced public programme of open days and seasonal special events that draw thousands of people to Windmill Gardens each year.



This is our second 3-year business plan and evaluation of priorities since the Centre opened after the Covid pandemic. We have seen a sustained growth in activities and have new challenges. With 15 years now having elapsed since the restoration of the windmill, and Lambeth facing a difficult financial situation, the windmill is once again in need of extensive repairs. Alongside this major concern, we are keen to develop the appreciation of the heritage, increase the biodiversity of the park, develop our education offer, embed environmental sustainability more strongly in our operations and enhance the experience for visitors and volunteers.

How we earn

Our income is divided by grant awards for projects and activities (restricted funds) and trading income (unrestricted) The breakdown between the two varies each year depending on specific timing of grant receipts, but is roughly 50/50. Due to the unpredictability of grant income, we always aim to increase the proportion of income from trading. The actual figures are presented in our financial report and accounts while this provides a high-level overview of how they break down.

Our top trading / unrestricted income streams during 2025-26 were:

1. Venue hire (38%)
2. Cafe sales (13%)
3. Shop sales (12%)
4. General donations (10%)
5. Education workshops (8%)
6. Open day tours (3%)
7. Flour sales (3%)

About 36% of the income is gained from the combination of cafe, shop and trading across our open days and special events, highlighting the important part that the outreach, volunteers and community's participation plays.

How we spend

Spending is attributable to the restricted grant funded activities and general costs of operating the Windmill Centre, paying for staff. Some grants include an amount for some staffing and hire cost for the relevant activities.

The top expenditure items across restricted and unrestricted income during the same period were:

1. Staff and freelance sessional tutors (38%)
2. Cost of sales connected with the trading income streams (28%)
3. Administrative expenses – cost of running the organisation (14%)
4. Administrative costs – cost of running the Centre (8%)
5. Costs of staging events and open days (7%)

The business plan sets out future goals based on this past performance, with an overall strategy for increasing trading and unrestricted income sources, whilst taking the opportunity to apply for grant funding when appropriate opportunities arise to offer as many activities as possible free of cost or at accessible rates to our community. Our strategic action plan sets out how to underpin this through an emphasis on Heritage, Learning, Community, Environment and Inclusion.