

# Friends of St. Giles Hill Park

Winchester



## Annual Report

May 2024

## **1. Overview**

The Friends of St. Giles Hill Park was registered as a charity on 24th April 2023. The objects are:-

“For the benefit of visitors to and the inhabitants of Winchester and the surrounding area (‘the area of benefit’), to provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants of the area of benefit, in particular but not exclusively by the preservation, promotion, support, assistance and improvement of St. Giles Hill Park.”

In the first year of existence the Trustees have focused on establishing the charity and commencing its primary activity of assisting in the maintenance of the St. Giles Hill Park in accordance with a new 5-year Management Plan agreed by the Town Forum in March 2023.

The charity is an independent organisation which works in close collaboration with WCC, local community associations and third parties with similar or over-lapping interests.

Priorities have been the promotion of the charity, recruitment of Friends and volunteers and putting in place the necessary governance procedures to begin working in the Park.

Initial funds were provide by donations from the Trustees and subsequent start-up funds by grants from Winchester City Council (WCC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC).

## **2. Governance**

The Friends of St. Giles Hill Park is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) registered with the Charity Commission (CC) and has adopted a standard CC constitution for a foundation CIO with the Trustees as the voting members. The Trustees accepted advice and guidance from the CC in regards to its foundation and governance and confirmed this in a letter to the CC on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

A Governance plan was approved by the trustees and sub-committees are progressing the necessary work to put in place appropriate governance practices as recommended by the CC. Priorities have been data protection, safeguarding, financial and internal risk management and the risk assessment and method statement for working parties of volunteers. A web site and bank account were established and insurance cover purchased in accordance.

A Trustee Manual is in the course of preparation.

## **3. Membership**

Presentations to local community associations, a web site, free and paid-for guided walks and local press coverage were used to launch the charity and 136 Friends had been recruited by the end of our first year. Our first event was a litter pick on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May as part of the Coronation Big Help Out. This was organised under standard WCC guidelines.

During the summer our Chairman, Dr. Harry Mycock led a number of walks around the park to give Friends the opportunity to learn more about the history of the site, landscape design and heritage, the Management Plan and the main issues and an opportunity to discuss these. Two historical walks of the area by local guide Patrick Craze were ticketed and made a useful contribution to our start-up funds.

Our web site is hosted on Wix which provides a secure data environment for information collected from Friends and supporters. This supports our mailings of newsletters and the promotion of our events. We also have a Facebook page.

#### **4. Working Parties**

The start of working parties to assist in the maintenance of the park was our first goal. Our Risk Assessment and Method Statement were approved by WCC in August and the first working party was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. An immediate impact was made on the appearance of the park around the principle viewpoint and good progress has been made since. This has been very well received by park users.

In December our volunteers assisted WCC in the planting of 100 new trees which included a diverse range of native species which will contribute to the biodiversity within the park and provide blossom displays and valuable wildlife food resources.

Some 254 hours of time has been spent in practical gardening work by 46 volunteers during the year, but when the litter picks and administrative time invested in setting up and promoting the charity is included a total volunteer contribution of in excess of 2000 hours is estimated.

#### **5. Finance**

An account with the Charities Aid Foundation Bank was opened in June. We registered with HMRC in July and our Insurance cover with Zurich began in August. Initial funds were provided by donations from each of the Trustees. Subsequently small grant applications were made to the local councils and grants of £1,000 from WCC and £500 from HCC were received. These funded the purchase of tools, safety items and disposables and a secure tool shed for storage.

The historic walks by Patrick Craze in the summer of 2023 raised £168. In early 2024 we began to ask Friends to become supporters and by year end £179 had been donated. A summary financial statement is in Appendix 1.

#### **6. Other Activities**

The charity is developing a network of third party organisations and individuals to further our objectives and access more specialist knowledge and advice. Our intention is to work in partnership with nature and other organisations. During the year we collaborated with the Hampshire Gardens Trust on researching the history of the park and have supported CPRE in a grant application for their Bar End Wild Ways project on neighbouring sites from which we hope to learn valuable lessons.

**APPENDIX 1****Summary Financial Statement****Period 01/06/23 to 05/04/24**

	<b>£ In</b>	<b>£ Out</b>	<b>£ Balances</b>
<b>CAF balance as at 01/06/23</b>			<b>0</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Trustees donation	670		
Other donations via CAF	179		
WCC & HCC Grants	1500		
Profit from Historic walks	168		
Interest	1.44		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2519</b>		
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Volunteers equipment		1107	
Web license & hosting (to 03/25 )		240	
Bank fees		45	
Insurance (renews Aug 24 )		157	
Office charges		39	
<b>Expenditure Total</b>		<b>1590</b>	
<b>CAF Balance as at 05/04/24</b>			<b>929</b>