



New gazebo funded by a generous donation from Philip Taylor

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Registered Charity Number: 1141038

Trustees (who are also committee members)

Pippa Smith (Chair)

Linda Austin (Secretary)

Cliff Robinson (Treasurer)

Clare Bowskill (co-opted from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025)

Melanie Davis

Alison Dean

Annie Mitchell

Helen Snowden

Tony Sharp

Bankers: CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Road, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

**“The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens” was set up in November 2007 to promote, enhance and conserve the wellbeing of St Ann’s Well Gardens and to assist with the planning and delivery of the centenary celebrations in 2008.**

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and accounts for 2025

## 1. Who We Are and What We Do

The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens (FOSAWG) is an entirely volunteer-run group of people from the local community who care about their local green space. Elected Trustees and a range of other volunteers work together to fulfil the organisation's objectives.

The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens had 241 paying members at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. The FOSAWG Trustees work with our members, the wider local community and Brighton and Hove City Council to preserve the heritage and environment of the park and establish priority projects, a programme of events, and issues to work on. Trustees work hard to represent the diverse needs of the local community (including its wildlife and environment). We do this via regular consultation and information sharing, through frequent members' newsletters, local press and community news, and social media. The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens has a lively and growing following on Instagram and Facebook, enabling us to publicise events and to record day to day life in the Park. With more than 4,500 followers local people and groups can contact us directly about concerns or information of what's going on in the area. The 7 Directory has been a big supporter to the Friends over the year carrying our articles about the wildlife and history of the Park. They have featured artists that the Friends have invited to showcase their work in the Garden Cafe and have used photographs of the Park and the artist's work, with some being chosen for their front cover.

FOSAWG often also acts as a first point of contact for members of the public who want to feedback ideas and concerns that they would like FOSAWG to consider, to improve the park environment. This has included issues such as insufficient lighting in the park, anti-social behaviour, and issues with dogs, litter etc. Where necessary, FOSAWG is able to raise these issues with Council representatives or local ward councillors or signpost to appropriate services/lines of communication (e.g. Brighton & Hove CityParks helpline, the police 101 service).

Alongside shaping our objectives and planning our activities for the year, we raise funds through a variety of channels including project-specific trust funding from our local authority, trusts and foundations, donations from the public, ticket sales to events and sponsorship. FOSAWG puts on a range of events each year which not only raise money to carry out its work but also promotes enhanced community-cohesion and reduced isolation.

We are proud to be members of the Brighton and Hove Green Spaces Forum, Brighton & Hove Community Works and the National Council for Voluntary Services (NCVO). We also follow learning and advice from the national and regional organisations The Parks Alliance, the National Federation of Parks, the Royal Horticultural Society (South and South-East in Bloom), The Tree Council and Sussex Wildlife Trust.

## 2. Objects and Activities

### 2.1. Objects

Our objects are:

“To promote the preservation, restoration, and improvement of St Ann's Well Gardens for the education and benefit of the public, by associating the local authority and local community in a common effort to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the object of improving the lives of local inhabitants.”

### 2.2 Public Benefit

In shaping our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have given consideration to the duties set out in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit. In particular, the Trustees have considered how the planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives that they have set.

The Trustees believe that the following paragraphs relate in detail to the benefit that the charity provides to the public.

### 2.3 Statement of Public Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustee Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). In 2025, our income was below the threshold of the Independent Examination requirement.

## 3. Achievements and Performance

The Friends have enjoyed another fulfilling year of activities; alongside our regular wildlife, gardening, and events initiatives we have implemented a programme of exhibitions in the Cafe- giving space to local artists and pleasure to park users. A particularly notable exhibition was 'Days of Wonder' featuring the films of St. Ann's resident and film pioneers George Albert Smith and Laura Bailey. This exhibition with accompanying walks and talks has led to the establishment of a new Heritage Working Group and we look forward to enjoying its activities in the coming year.

### 3.1. Sensory Garden

Our ambition is to make the Sensory Garden truly sensory once again and to provide an area of peace and solace particularly to vulnerable individuals and groups in our community.

#### 3.1.1. Gates and Sound Bench



In March 2025, the mayor officially opened the new gates to the Sensory Garden. Created and installed by Jon Mills and funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, the gate will allow for the garden to be enclosed for events and cater for the needs of people with dementia or neurodiverse conditions.

We also unveiled the new sound bench, with its solar powered audio player. Initially this plays a multi-language welcome message and a meditation, and the plan is to extend the choice of the recordings to include seasonal messages and water sounds.



Invitations to the event were sent to local organisations, including care homes, Sussex Sight Loss Council, and the Grace Eyre Centre.

#### 3.1.2. New Planters with Jasmine

With some of the Sensory Garden project funds, we were able to commission two lovely oak planters, made by Sam Edwards of the CityParks maintenance staff. These were planted with large jasmine plants and training wires fitted. The plants made good progress in 2025 despite the challenging weather conditions.

#### 3.1.3. Garden Volunteers

Our volunteer gardeners, led by Carrie Lambe and trustee Helen Snowdon, have continued to be very active. In addition to the jasmine, four David Austin roses were planted, as well

as additional herbs and drought resistant herbaceous plants. The weather conditions were problematic, with dry weather in spring and then too much rain at other times. To join the Gardening group or find out more about it, email [gardening@fosawg.org](mailto:gardening@fosawg.org).

We would also particularly like to thank the Council's Ranger service and their volunteers for their work in repainting the guide rails for people with sight loss.

## 3.2. Events

### 3.2.1. Events Group

Members have contributed greatly to the development of an events programme through membership of the Events Working Group. This group meets prior to each event to make practical plans and determine who will carry them out. To join this group or find out more about it, email [pippa@fosawg.org](mailto:pippa@fosawg.org)

### 3.2.2. Art in the Park

Our Artists Open House event. Art in the Park, took place over the weekend 24th & 25th May, again offering a range of arts and crafts from pottery and prints to textiles and jewellery.

We are pleased to be building up a relationship with a number of the artists and makers who are now regular participants in Art in the Park and also in our new programme of exhibitions in the Garden Café.



### 3.2.3. Children's Activities



2025 saw a continuation in our events for local children. In addition to the now traditional Egg Hunt at Eastertime and Pumpkin Trail at Autumn Half-Term, and the Bug Hunt in August, our Christmas Crafts event in the Garden Café attracted over 40 children who made cards and decorations, and were thrilled to have a visit from Santa!

We also consulted parents and carers of children about ideas for activities for children and what facilities they would like to see in the Gardens in the future. We will be incorporating these ideas in our future plans, and in our discussions with the Council.

### 3.2.4. Social Evenings

Our three Social Evenings were very successful, attracting members and their guests, and helping to raise our profile in the local community.



Our first, in February was a return visit by local wildlife expert Michael Blencowe, this time with a seasonally appropriate theme of “The Birds and the Bees”.

The Autumn social brought local novelist and scriptwriter Sue Teddern’s tales of writing Annie Stanley All at Sea and her career in radio and TV, with all-time favourites the Archers, Birds of a Feather and other well-known programmes.



The Christmas Social brought a festive theme, with talk about the Prince Regent’s favourite tipples, and other festive drinks. The tried and tested talk, quiz, raffle and meal formula, creates an atmosphere that welcomes and includes new members, and also raises funds for our projects and event running costs.

### 3.3. Heritage

In 2025, we celebrated two occasions of St Ann’s Well Gardens’ rich heritage.



On August 9<sup>th</sup>, a blue plaque commemorating the Gardens as the location of aviation pioneers Short Brothers gas balloon flights was unveiled by the Mayor, with appropriate musical accompaniment. The information stands of Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society and the Short Brothers Aviation Heritage Society were an added attraction to the many visitors interested in early aviation. The afternoon was complemented by a picnic and live music.

In October and November, we collaborated with Hove Museum in a celebration of St Ann's Well Gardens as the location of early film history. A two-month-long exhibition set the scene. A talk about George Albert Smith's film factory with film showings by film historian Frank Gray drew in local residents and film buffs from further afield as did a walk to explore the likely location of George Albert Smith's film studio. Both were so popular they were repeated, with full houses for each. We are now looking at ways to celebrate the life of Laura Bayley Smith, a pioneer not only as an early film actress but also in the film-making creative process.



In view of the interest in the Gardens' heritage, we are creating a Heritage Working Group to take forward further celebration of the rich history of the Gardens.

### 3.4. Exhibitions



Throughout 2025, in partnership with the Garden Café owner, art exhibitions have decorated the wall of the Café, and brought increased interest in our wonderful local artists.

We now have a waiting list of interested artists.

### 3.5. Wildlife

#### 3.5.1. Wildlife Group

Our Wildlife Group is a subset of members with a particular interest in wildlife and conservation. The Group met five times during 2025 and made plans for events and activities. If you want to join this group or find out more about it, please email [alison@fosawg.org](mailto:alison@fosawg.org)

#### 3.5.2. Wildlife Activities

In 2025 we continued our previous range of activities and added new ones. We had a tree walk early in the year and three further ones in June, September, and October so that people could see trees in different seasons of the year. In addition, we ran a tree drawing event in June, which was highly successful.

Our annual Big Garden Birdwatch event in January attracted individual birdwatchers, groups of friends and families, all eager to help the annual citizen science bird count. The results fed into the RSPB's annual figures as well as our records our local birds in winter, which now go back over 15 years.



We organised nine one-hour bird walks across the year, including a couple focussing on bird song in the spring. We also had our traditional early morning Dawn Chorus walk in May, which was very well attended. Our butterfly walks are booked up quickly, so we ran three of these. The same applies to our bat walk which we had in September. The children's MiniBeast Hunt event led by FOSAWG member Lyn Beun was also very popular.

We thank our friends at Sussex Wildlife Trust for continuing to work with us,

#### 3.5.3. Swift Project



In June and July, Dave Boddington of Sussex Ornithological Society installed for us ten nest boxes for swifts in houses that back onto the Gardens and on the top of a nearby block of flats, Wick Hall (pictured). The project is in memory of Ann Tyndale Freeman, a FOSAWG member and keen birdwatcher. We thank Ornithological Society for their support with choosing swift boxes, and finding suitable locations,

#### 3.5.4. Tidy Up

We held a one-hour litter picking session on the first Tuesday every month through the year. We have an active group of more than twenty volunteers, with ten or so attending each session.

Volunteers often go for coffee together afterwards. Members of the public are very pleased to see us at work.



## 4. Volunteers

The contribution of our volunteers, including the Trustees, is the keystone of our organisation. Our volunteer gardeners deserve special mention for their work throughout the year. Our Events volunteers have helped us to increase the number and range of events, as have Brighton University Student volunteers, recruited through the CUPP programme. Colm O'Neill, in his role of Graffiti Ambassador, continues to battle vandalism within the park.

## 5. Partnership Working

### 5.1. Brighton & Hove City Council

For The Friends to work effectively on behalf of our membership, and of park users in general, it is essential that we maintain a good relationship with Officers and Members of Brighton and Hove Council - our landowners.

In the past year we have been delighted to work with all the on site gardeners and with the Head Gardener Jeff Beardsley; with Neil Doyle and his team from the Park Rangers and with Liz Davies, Project Manager, and her colleagues from CityParks,

Towards the end of the year all the people named above moved on and we have been striving to build relationships with their replacements. A particular challenge has been the departure of Liz Davies who worked tirelessly, and in close collaboration, to develop a comprehensive 10 year Development Plan for our park. We are taking on the challenge of ensuring that all this endeavour is not lost, and that we can continue to work with City Parks on the implementation of the Plan - including such essential matters as the refurbishment of the Toilets and the reduction of flooding on our paths, On a positive note we have been delighted to meet Martin Connolly, the new Head Gardener. We truly appreciate his knowledge of landscaping and his enthusiasm to support the work which our own volunteer gardeners are undertaking, both with ideas and with practical help.

Additionally, mention should be made of the support which we have received from all our Ward Councillors. They have become familiar faces in the park and have taken up issues on our behalf with unfailing patience and courtesy.

## 5.2. BARCO

The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens were delighted to again host the BARCO (Black Anti-Racism Community Organisation) Carnival . Featuring live music and sound systems , authentic African and Caribbean foods, spoken word and family activities; this event proved hugely popular attracting a joyful and diverse audience to all its many attractions. However the Holistic Well Being Area in the Sensory Garden , which was much appreciated by those who attended, was arguably overshadowed by activity elsewhere in the park.

Subsequently the Friends raised £1500 from the Postcode Lottery Fund which enabled BARCO to present a separate event later in the summer which focussed exclusively on health, healing and well being. In consequence we have strengthened our relationship with under-represented communities and look forward to an ongoing collaboration,

## 6. Fundraising

As charity partners of the St Ann's Well Gardens Spring Festival (organised by the Garden Café) held on Saturday May, we were given the opportunity to fundraise on the day. Our 20 volunteers gave out programmes and collected bucket and card donations totalling just under £4000. Gift Aid under the the HMRC Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme has added another 25% to this total.

Larger donations from individual donors have enabled us to buy a new gazebo (seen on the front of this report) and bulbs and plants for the Sensory Garden.

## 7. Financial Review

The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens remain incredibly grateful for the continued financial support that was provided by our members, sponsors, and funding partners during 2025. Their continued support provided a firm financial basis to allow us to progress a wide range of activities and initiatives during the year.

The Sensory Garden project expenditure continued, with grant funding being awarded from the Shared Prosperity Fund for the gates, and the cost of the sound bench being met from the existing project funds balance.

We were fortunate to receive a small grant from The Police Commissioners Fund, this support was originally for a gardening project with the residents of the Wardley Hotel but when this failed to materialise owing to lack of interest, the PCF agreed that the money could be used to pay for a replacement pump for the Pond. We can report that this was installed and we are still waiting for the council to arrange the necessary connections.

As in previous years careful control was maintained on all administration costs and in 2024 these were again limited to less than £2000.

We were also able to raise additional funds to support the Friends' charitable activities through arranging an extensive series of small successful events generating a healthy surplus of some £2000.

The overall position at the year-end 2025 shows that undesignated General Fund reserves stand at over £18000.

## 8. Financial Reserves Policy

Trustees consider the level of reserves that is prudent for FOSAWG to hold on an annual basis, in line with the budgeting process. Consideration is given to ongoing running costs and any liabilities the organisation would have, were it to close.

Currently it has been agreed that the level of undesignated General Fund reserves should be maintained at a level sufficient to fund the ongoing core costs of the organisation for a period of 12 months. The level continues to be set for the forthcoming year at a minimum of £2,500.

## 9. Structure, Governance and Management

### 9.1.1. Commencement of Activities Governing Document

The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens was established by constitution dated 12th January 2011 (and amended on 21st March 2011).

### 9.1.2. Method and Appointment of Trustees

New Trustees attend working groups and sub-committees and meet with other board members on an individual basis so they can fully understand the background and activities of the charity. All trustees are offered ongoing training in governance from trusted providers including NCVO and Brighton & Hove Community Works.

### 9.1.3. Governance and Decision-making

The management of the Board of Trustees is the responsibility of the Trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of its constitution.

The Trustees met 6 times in 2025- an agenda and pack of papers is circulated at least a week in advance of the meeting. Detailed notes and a list of actions are maintained. Trustees discuss and debate issues which are then voted on. We have one Sub-Committee, Finance, Governance & Risk, which meets in line with the Board's meetings, working on

finance oversight, a suite of policies and procedures and a Risk Register. We also have 3 working groups – Events, Gardening and Wildlife who meet as needed. A Heritage working group is planned to start in April. All sub-committees/groups report to the Board of Trustees at each meeting.

## 10. Future Plans

We look forward to an exciting year in 2026, including: -

- Continuing to bring improvement to the Sensory Garden, by other signage including Navilens signage for those with sight impairment, and additional planting to make greater sensory impact.
- Continuing to feed into with Brighton & Hove City Council CityParks Development Plan for St Ann's Well Gardens.
- Respond to the results of our Playground Survey by increasing activities for children during holiday periods.
- Enhance the public's understanding of the Garden's extraordinary heritage through the formation of a Heritage Working Group.
- Liaising with other local parks in order that we can mutually support each other in achieving the very best for Green Spaces in the City.
- Putting on a programme of events (and working with outside events providers such as Brighton Festival, the St Ann's Spring Festival and BARCO) to enhance the lives of local residents and to raise funds for FOSAWG.
- Delivering a programme of wildlife events so that members of the public understand, enjoy and protect the rich fauna and flora of the Gardens.
- Developing our ability/capacity to recruit volunteers for our projects and activities and to create rewarding and supported volunteering opportunities.
- Continuing to work with our volunteer gardeners, tidy up and wildlife conservation teams and with our community to develop a broad, exciting and educational range of park-based activities.
- Continue to monitor committee membership to ensure that it reflects the diversity of park users.

# The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens

## Annual Accounts 2025

### Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 2025

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income Receipts</b>				
<b>Events</b>				
Open House	2,165		2,165	1,705
Easter Egg Event	167		167	219
Wildlife Events	317		317	109
Friends' Suppers	1,158		1,158	1,020
Friends' Xmas Events	578		578	480
Other Events	224		224	161
	4,609		4,609	3,694
<b>Grants</b>				
Sussex PCC				4,200
Brighton & Hove City Council				19,896
Other Events				1,500
				25,596
Donations	894		894	100
Fundraising	4,651		4,651	1,862
Gift Aid	217		217	1,578
Membership	827		827	672
Sales - Books & Pictures	317		317	274
Art Commission	393		393	
Bank Interest	306		306	492
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>12,214</b>		<b>12,214</b>	<b>34,267</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
<b>Direct costs</b>				
<b>Sensory Garden</b>				
Sensory Garden Projects	2,508		2,508	3,496
Gates		12,852	12,852	7,000
Gardening Works				109
	2,508	12,852	15,359	10,605
<b>Other Projects</b>				
Pond Pump		2,489	2,489	
Gazebo	1,033		1,033	
Swift Boxes	720		720	
<b>Events</b>				
Open House	1,098		1,098	928
Wildlife Events	168		168	95
Friends' Suppers	640		640	1,112
Friends' Xmas Event	510		510	34
Summer Picnic	265		265	
Other Events	174		174	158
Sponsored Event - Barco Wellness		1,500	1,500	
	2,854	1,500	4,354	2,326
Other Direct Costs	273		273	417
<b>Central administration costs</b>				
Website	245		245	562
Printing & stationery	147		147	
Insurance	158		158	158
Bookkeeping/Accountancy Fees	498		498	
Marketing	5		5	67
AGM	150		150	165
Subscriptions	59		59	55
Bank charges	152		152	106
Volunteers & Trustees Expenses	352		352	19
General Admin	30		30	90
	1,797		1,797	1,222
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>9,185</b>	<b>16,841</b>	<b>26,026</b>	<b>14,569</b>
<b>Net receipts (payments) for the year</b>	<b>3,029</b>	<b>-16,841</b>	<b>-13,812</b>	<b>19,698</b>
Balance of Funds Brought Forward	13,982	18,596	32,578	12,880
Transfers Between Funds	44	-44		
<b>Balance of Funds at 31st December 2025</b>	<b>17,055</b>	<b>1,711</b>	<b>18,766</b>	<b>32,578</b>

# The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens Annual Accounts 2025

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31st December 2025

	2025	Note	2025	2024
	£		£	£
<b>Assets</b>				
CAF Gold account			16,792	30,663
CAF Current account			1,910	1,866
PayPal Account			64	49
			<b>18,766</b>	<b>32,578</b>
<b>Non- Monetary Assets</b>				
Debtors: amounts receivable within one year		1	303	214
<b>Total Current Assets</b>			<b>19,068</b>	<b>32,792</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		2	-1,413	-1,023
<b>Net Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>			<b>17,656</b>	<b>31,769</b>
<b>Funds</b>				
General Funds		3	1,711	13,982
Restricted Funds		3	17,055	18,596
			<b>18,766</b>	<b>32,578</b>

Approved by the Trustees on 25/3/26 and signed on behalf of the Trustees by

*Philip Smith (Chair)*

# The Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens Annual Accounts 2025

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2025

## 1. Debtors - amounts receivable within 1 year

A Gift Aid claim has been submitted to HMRC in January 2025 for the Tax Year to 5th April 2025 in the sum of £158. Additionally income receivable from a number of Xmas events was not received and banked until January 2026. This totals a further £145.

## 2. Creditors - amounts falling due within 1 year

A creditor has been included in the 2025 accounts relating to outstanding invoices from our caterers in respect of recent events held by the Friends. Additionally provision has been included in respect of expenses claims from trustees and volunteers relating to costs incurred in December 2025.

## 3. Movement in Funds

	Balance 1st January 2025	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance as at 31st December 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
BHCC - Sensory Garden Gates	12,896		12,852	-44	0
Sussex PCC - Project	4,200		2,489		1,711
Postcode Lottery	1,500		1,500		0
	18,596	0	16,841	-44	1,711
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>					
Designated - Sensory Garden	3,264		2,508	44	801
Designated - Swift Boxes	750		720		30
Designated - Gazebo	0	500	1,033	533	0
Undesignated	9,968	11,714	4,925	-533	16,224
	32,578	12,214	26,026	0	18,766

### Brighton & Hove City Council - Sensory Garden Gates

The Friends successfully bid to the Council's Shared Prosperity Fund for a significant grant to install a set of commemorative gates at the entrance to the Sensory Grant. The work to fabricate and install the gates has been commissioned for a local metalwork artist, Jon Mills.

### Sussex PCC Community Safety Fund

The Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner originally agreed to provide a grant to the Friends specifically to run an innovative gardening project working with the Wardley Hostel to facilitate engagement with the local community. It was not however possible to progress this project and it was agreed by the funder that the monies could be redirected to support the Friends' work more generally. In 2025 part of these funds was used to restore the pond pump in the Gardens.

### People's Postcode Lottery

A grant was received from the People's Postcode Lottery to enable the Friends to work collaboratively with a partner organisation (Barco) to put on an event in 2025 in order to attract a more diverse audience to visit the park.