

The Friends of Queen's Park Gardens (FQPG) Annual Report 2024



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Annual Report 2024

The 2024 Friends of Queen's Park Gardens Annual Report is a record both of the group's gardening activities and of our thanks to partner organisations for their tremendous support over the past 12 months.

During the year, we sowed seeds and planted bulbs; we watered and weeded, pruned and deadheaded; we spread mulch and wood chip, raked leaves and gathered up litter.

We are grateful to Westminster City Council Parks Division, Continental, QPCC and HCGA for providing plants, bulbs, tools and equipment, together with expert advice and encouragement.

1. Background: why we exist and what we aim to do

Queen's Park Gardens is a green oasis at the heart of the Queen's Park ward in North Westminster, with consistently the best scores for air quality tests in our area. The park is much used and appreciated by a diverse and multicultural range of local residents, including families with children, young people for sports, dog walkers, school groups, and people of all ages who come to exercise, walk through or just enjoy some quiet time surrounded by nature.

The Friends of Queen's Park Gardens (FQPG) has existed in its current form since 2012 (a group had existed previously in 2005/06). It was formed in response to complaints by several local residents about the state of the Wildlife Area (created in 2007/08) and a request by Westminster City ward councillor Paul Dimoldenberg for volunteers to come forward and help restore and maintain it.

The objectives of FQPG activities in Queen's Park Gardens (QPG) are to:

- Provide a peaceful outdoor space for the local community to enjoy.
- Encourage an appreciation of nature in the local community through the provision of an attractive, safe and sustainable area.
- Provide and maintain a habitat for native species in the Wildlife Area.
- Encourage community involvement in the use, development and maintenance of Queen's Park Gardens.

2. Who we are: our people

1. Friends of Queen's Park Gardens volunteers

The gardeners of Friends of Queen's Park Gardens (FQPG) are local residents who come together as a group of unpaid volunteers to share the pleasure of gardening and with the hope of giving pleasure to others who use and visit the park.

We are for the most part amateurs and our gardening work complements that undertaken in the park by Continental Landscapes (contracted by Westminster City Council) and Healthy Community Gardens Association (also known as Hammersmith Community Gardens Association or HCGA, contracted by Queen's Park Community Council). At present, we have a core group of around seven regular gardening volunteers, joined at times by other volunteers. It has been a pleasure this year to welcome a new regular gardener, Tash Watt, who has enabled us to carry out much more work.

We are always delighted to have new volunteers, whether or not they have gardening experience and whether they would like to garden with us regularly or just once in a while.

2. Friends of Queen's Park Gardens committee

Our committee is designed to ensure the FQPG objectives are met, by providing co-ordination and support to gardening volunteers. The committee members are all local residents and FQPG gardeners, who give their time free of charge and without any remuneration. In conjunction with the other gardening volunteers, they run the gardening sessions, select and order plants and tools, liaise with partner organisations and manage the administration for the group.

In 2024, the committee comprised Ray Lancashire as chair, Simon Walton as treasurer and recorder of the gardening work undertaken, and Alison Low Madigan.

3. Our volunteer gardening sessions

Weather (and other circumstances) permitting, we aim to run weekly gardening sessions, working mostly in the Wildlife Area and a number of other flower beds around the park.

Our main sessions are held on Saturday mornings between 10am and 12 noon.

Additional gardening sessions with a smaller number of FQPG gardening volunteers often take place on Wednesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon.

3. Activities and highlights in 2024

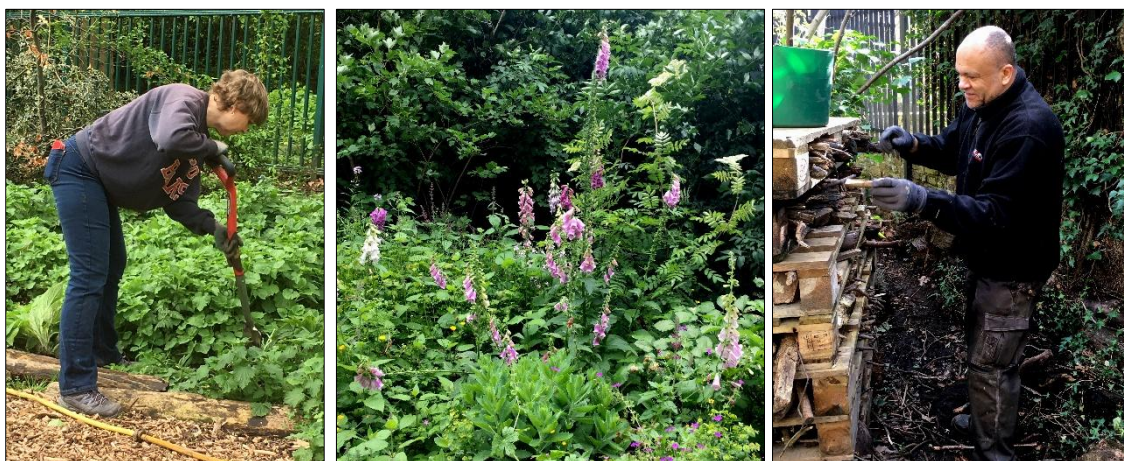
1. Wildlife Area

The Wildlife Area was the first section of the park to come within the remit of FQPG. It remains at the heart of our gardening work, with a focus on providing a natural environment with areas of tamed woodland and wildflowers that attract pollinators, insects and birds.

During 2024, we continued to work on revitalising the wildflower meadow, sowing seeds and transplanting and recycling plants from other parts of the garden where they were unwanted 'weeds' – an example of our consciously holistic approach to gardening, which is both environmentally responsible and minimises costs.

Thanks also to gifts of additional plants by our most knowledgeable gardening volunteer, Charlotte Chesney, there is an increasing diversity of plants in the wildflower meadow – including campion, knapweed, mallow, cranesbill, clover, teasels, dandelions, dock, ragged robin, deadnettle and a variety of grasses – all of which contribute to the health of the garden. Other new plantings by Charlotte during the year include cowslips and evening primrose in the wildflower meadow, along with small white allium bulbs, feverfew and sweet rocket in the woodland areas. A mix of marguerite and other umbellifer seeds were also sown in the autumn for flowering, we hope, in 2025.

The meadow was deliberately left uncut until the autumn, when it was mowed once by the Continental gardeners, a process which helps spread the seeds as natural propagation and takes pressure off the plants to rest during the fallow winter season.



As an enclosed area within the park, the Wildlife Area is regularly used by local nursery schools and families with young children. Maintaining the safety of the area is therefore especially important. In 2024, our work included clearing leaves and laying woodchip to make the paths less slippery, as well as highlighting to Westminster Parks Division the need to replace rotten planks in the boardwalk paths.

We also cut back thorny brambles and stinging nettles where they grew over paths and were most likely to hurt children, while leaving them to grow more naturally in the woodland areas, as an integral element of an English wildlife environment.

We continued to add branches, bamboo canes and rotting wood to the bug hotel, which is at the rear of the woodland section in the Wildlife Area. The structure, which was started in 2022 using recycled wooden pallets, has been successfully adopted as a natural habitat by a range of beetles, insects and grubs, including centipedes, spiders, earwigs and woodlice.

However, there have still been no sightings of the elusive species of bee known as solitary bees, which we would particularly like to attract.

2. Triangular Rose bed by Fourth Avenue entrance

This is the most mature of the formal flower beds gardened by the FQPG volunteers. Rose bushes fill most of the bed, with a border of spring-flowering bulbs, followed by lavender and other low-level bedding plants and perennials.

A notable addition this year was a prolific growth of self-seeded forget-me-nots, with a profusion of small blue flowers in the spring and dense low-level foliage throughout the year, providing attractive ground cover and a deterrent to other weeds.

Activities during the summer included regular watering, deadheading and pruning of the roses, successfully prolonging their flowering season from spring to November. In the autumn, we planted 100 Alison Bradley tulip bulbs, generously procured for us by HCGA, for flowering in spring 2025. These tulips are dark red, chosen to complement similarly-coloured bulbs planted in previous years to provide a homogenous planting scheme.

Noxious bindweed was for many years a major bugbear of this bed. This is a weed that spreads very easily and can smother other plants, causing them to wilt and die. There was some recurrence of it this year, but speedy action was taken by the volunteer gardeners to remove it, including carefully digging out the long roots that extended beneath the earth.



3. Circular flowerbed by the Third Avenue entrance

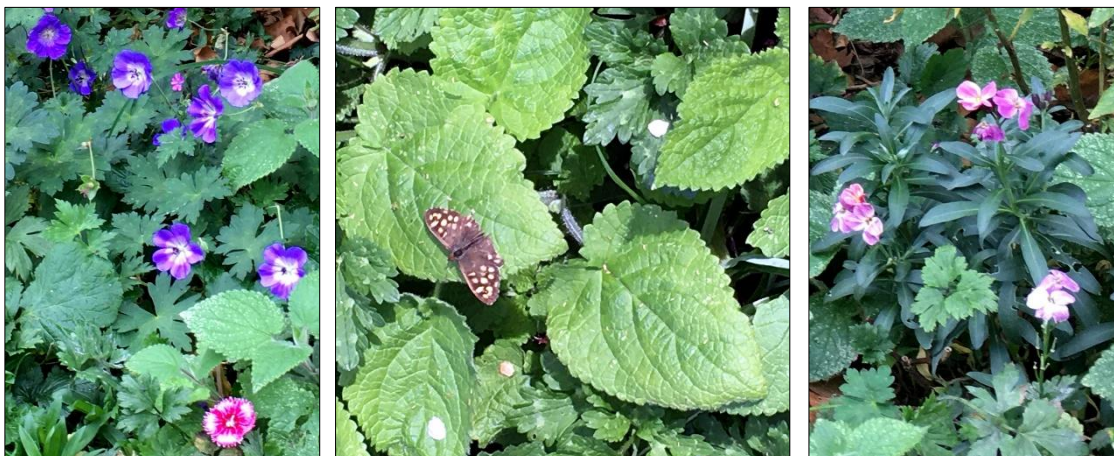
This bed is in a very visible location, especially for people arriving from Third Avenue. It was first adopted by FQPG volunteers in 2019, after several years of neglect during which it had become overgrown with weeds.

In line with our principle of maintaining low costs wherever possible, the planting in this bed has focused on sustainability, with a mix of perennials and other plants that self-seed, along with spring bulbs that should flower year after year.

In 2024, we were able to add to this bed, thanks to donations of plants by Westminster Council Parks Division. The most successful of these were some lovely blue Rozanne geraniums, which we planted in early July and which continued blooming into November, mingling with late-flowering nasturtiums and dianthus donated by one of the volunteer gardeners.

The seeds from the nasturtiums have been harvested for sowing next spring and flowering next summer.

We are grateful also to HCGA, which provided daffodil and tulip bulbs, which we planted in the autumn, together with wallflowers generously gifted by one of the volunteer gardeners, Nigel Snuggs.



4. Railings bed along the play area close to the Fourth Avenue entrance

This bed is in a prominent position, especially for people arriving in the garden from Fourth Avenue and the many families and children who use the play area next to it. It is a narrow, shallow bed, which makes it hard to grow many plants, with the added challenge of squirrels and foxes, which seem to enjoy digging up everything that is planted there, and young children who pick the flowers.

We are very grateful to Claire Hickey, who created the bed in 2020 and whose continuing efforts have transformed it.

In 2024, we continued to develop the bed, in particular with seeds collected in previous years and gifts of plants from volunteer gardeners, Claire Hickey and Charlotte Chesney, and from Westminster City Council/Continental.

After a wonderful display of spring bulbs, the weather conditions during the summer meant that the most profuse flowering was in September-November, later than we would normally have expected.

In the autumn, thanks to HCGA, we planted spring bulbs, including tulips, daffodils and crocuses, for flowering in spring 2025, adding to bulbs planted in previous years.



5. Benches bed along the main path between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue

This is a highly-visible bed, which for several years was an eyesore with only a few straggly shrubs and a lot of weeds. Due to the overhang of some large London plane trees, it is a very shady bed, which makes it unsuitable for many plants.

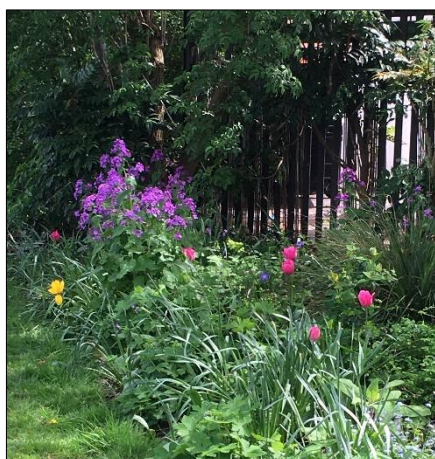
Another particular challenge for this bed is the poor quality of the soil, which includes remnants of broken bricks and rubble left over following the demolition of the former Farrant Street and houses

on the south side of Ilbert Street, which occupied the site prior to the park.

In 2020, the gardening volunteers, led by Nigel Snuggs, decided to revitalise the bed by planting spring bulbs, and a range of plants, including ferns, hellebores and cranesbill geraniums, which have now mostly settled in very well, providing beautiful variations of green foliage throughout the year, together with seasonal flowering.

In 2024, the bed was at its most colourful in the spring, with a burst of daffodils followed by tulips, and in the early summer, with drifts of Dusky Cranesbill geraniums.

A big thank you to Charlotte Chesney for her many generous contributions of plants, including foxgloves, periwinkle, Japanese anemones, ferns, hellebore seedlings, trachystemon and a Philadelphus 'Aurea' shrub. In the autumn, we also planted tulip and daffodil bulbs provided by HCGA.



6. Other gardening activities

As well as the gardening they carry out in the Wildlife Area and the flower beds, the volunteer gardeners often give general gardening and maintenance support in other parts of the garden, including leaf sweeping and litter picking.

4. Key partnerships and support

The Friends of Queen's Park Gardens do not receive any direct funding and we greatly appreciate the support we receive from the following organisations to be able to carry out the work we do.

1. Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) and local residents

We are grateful to Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) for supporting FQPG in many ways, including funding via Healthy Community Gardens Association (HCGA – see below).

This funding is provided through the stipend QPCC receives from Westminster City Council, which is paid by Queen's Park residents as part of their local Council Tax. We are always mindful that this money comes from our local community and we aim to spend it carefully and wisely, to be cost effective and give best value for the benefit of our neighbours.

2. Westminster City Council and Continental Landscapes parks management

Close working with Westminster City Council and their parks-management contractors Continental is invaluable, as they have overall responsibility for the maintenance of Queen's Park Gardens.

During the year, we have greatly appreciated their support, including visits to the park by David Sear, Relationships Officer from Westminster Council Parks Division, and Chris Merlin from Continental Landscapes.

These were opportunities to express our thanks, demonstrate the work we had been doing and discuss our plans and aspirations for the park, including our wish list for plants, equipment and other amenities around the park.

As a follow-up to these conversations, Westminster City Council and Continental:

- Provided a range of plants at different times during the year.
- Replaced damaged planks in the boardwalk path in the Wildlife Area.
- Provided woodchip for use on the paths in the Wildlife Area.
- Installed a water butt in the yard in the autumn that will collect rainwater through a pipe from the guttering on the roof of the shed, which we will use for watering plants during the dry months; this is an environmentally responsible solution, which will reduce our dependence on mains water at times when there is the highest risk of drought and hosepipe bans.
- Provided three new rakes for us to use in clearing up leaves from the flower beds and lawns during the autumn, replacing older rakes that had fallen apart.
- Replaced and repaired the wheels on the wheelbarrows.
- Strimmed the wildflower meadow in the autumn at the end of the growing season to help scatter the seeds for next year's flowering season.

We very much appreciate all these contributions, which facilitated our work and enhanced the gardens.

3. Healthy Community Gardens Association (HCGA)

Healthy Community Gardens Association (also known as Hammersmith Community Gardens Association or HCGA) is contracted and funded by QPCC to organise and run gardening-related activities in the area, including volunteer gardening sessions, events and plant sales.

We are indebted to HCGA for their funding and procurement support and would like to give special thanks to Cathy Maund for procuring a mixture of spring bulbs and other plants on our behalf during 2024 and to Megan Felton, the HCGA gardener who works in the Rose Garden in Queen's Park Gardens.

We are grateful to HCGA for providing a pair of new clippers, which have been a valuable addition to our tools. In addition, for our autumn 2024 planting, HCGA provided the following bulbs, which we divided between beds across the gardens and which will flower in spring 2025:

- 100 crocus bulbs
- 100 Alison Bradley tulip bulbs
- 100 Aveyron tulip bulbs
- 50 Praestans paradox dwarf tulip bulbs
- 50 miniature daffodil bulbs
- 5kg mixed daffodil bulbs
- 50 leucojum aestivum bulbs

The work led by HCGA on the compost heaps in the Wildlife Area has been another particular bonus, both installing an open-mesh roof to protect the heaps from unwanted dumpings of waste material and arranging for the heaps to be turned, yielding wonderful compost for enriching the flower beds.

4. Other networks/organisations

In 2024, FQPG chair Ray Lancashire and treasurer Simon Walton attended QPCC meetings on behalf of FQPG. FQPG continued to support Grow-Wild Website (run by Kew Gardens to encourage people to visit and volunteer at green spaces near them) and was proud to support London as a National Park City.

5. Special Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) events

FQPG volunteers took part in the following events and activities organised by Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC) in the park over the year.

1. Queen's Park Summer Festival

The Queen's Park Summer Festival, held in Queen's Park Gardens and organised by Queen's Park Community Council (QPCC), is one of the highlights of the neighbourhood calendar, with a mix of

stalls, activities and live entertainment for local residents and visitors of all ages.

In 2024, it was held on 3 August, which was a glorious day of sunshine, unlike the downpour of rain that had drenched the 2023 festival.

As in previous years, FQPG volunteers hosted a Friends of Queen’s Park Gardens stall at the festival in the Wildlife Area, giving out information about our activities. But, unfortunately, we were unable to run the nature treasure hunt we usually also organise. This involves children and their parents searching for hazelnut shells and the seedheads of sycamores and plane trees scattered across the Wildlife Area, which are normally plentiful, but were extremely scarce this year. This might have been a consequence of particular weather conditions earlier in the year, or, more concerningly, it could have been a symptom of the destructive environmental impact of climate change.

We will monitor this next year.



2. QPCC garden clean-up sessions

FQPG chair Ray Lancashire led a number of QPCC-organised community clean-up sessions during the year, which include the park and surrounding streets.

6. Community awards for FQPG volunteers

The achievements of several FQPG gardening volunteers were celebrated with community awards in 2024.

At the summer festival, our treasurer Simon Walton (pictured below, centre) was recognised with a special award, presented by Westminster councillor former mayor Hamza Taouzzale (left) and QPCC chair Eartha Pond (right), as a celebration of his outstanding contribution to the local community, both as a longstanding volunteer gardener with FQPG and as an active member on a wide range of other committees.



Three of the FQPG gardening volunteers received recognition in the annual Queen's Park Community Council volunteer awards: our chair Ray Lancashire, treasurer Simon Walton and volunteer gardener Charlotte Chesney; a number of other FQPG volunteers were also nominated for awards.

7. Challenges of 2024

FQPG volunteers take great pleasure in gardening in Queen's Park Gardens – enjoying the opportunity to grow plants, spend time working together in a beautiful garden. There are, nonetheless, some definite challenges involved in working in a public park, and anti-social behaviour continued to be a concern in 2024.

1. Littering

Littering was the most common problem, despite the provision of recycling and general-rubbish bins in prominent positions throughout the gardens. This was predominantly scraps of discarded sweet wrappers, but there was also a considerable amount of take-away-food packaging and left-overs, and drinks bottles and cans.

2. Damage to plants

Damage to plants and plant thefts also continued. While there was less evidence of wilful vandalism than in previous years, repeated damage was caused by people picking flowers and deliberately digging up plants, often when they were in full bloom and the losses were most noticeable – and most upsetting for the gardeners who had spent time growing and nurturing them.

This included a worrying increase in young children trampling on plants and snapping off the heads of flowers growing in the railings bed in the play area, especially when the adults with them did nothing to deter them and were uninterested in the damage they caused, even when volunteers drew their attention to it.

3. Damage by dogs

Incidents of dog fouling and damage caused by dogs running unchecked by their owners continued to be a problem in 2024.

The park includes a dedicated area which is fenced off as a dog run, where dogs can be let off their leads. Dog walkers are welcome in most of the rest of the garden, so long as their dogs are kept on leads. Dogs are fully excluded from the Wildlife Area and play area, which are both protected as safe areas for children.

While many dog owners observed the regulations, a significant minority allowed their dogs to run freely in the park, including trampling and urinating on flowerbeds – even sometimes when the volunteers were working on them!

There was also a significant increase in dog owners not bagging up and removing dog waste, leaving them on paths, lawns and flower beds. This was evident throughout the park, but most particularly in the Wildlife Garden, where dogs are banned completely.

The volunteer gardeners often arrived for their sessions to find the gate to the Wildlife Area was closed and dog owners were allowing their dogs to run uncontrolled inside. We also often found large piles of dog poo after they had left, which we then had to spend time clearing up, rather than gardening.

This development is especially concerning as the Wildlife Area is regularly used by groups of very young children from local nursery schools, as an opportunity for them to explore a natural environment. Because of their age, their immune systems are more vulnerable, putting them at greater risk of serious infections due to contact with dog faeces, including toxocariasis that can cause blindness.

We'd raised the issue with Westminster Council and Continental in 2023 and additional signage was subsequently displayed around the park. But this did not make any noticeable difference and attempts by the gardening volunteers to point out the regulations to the dog owners were often met with hostility and aggression.

4. Damage to the compost

The dumping of waste matter in the compost bins in the Wildlife Area continued in 2024, but to a lesser extent than in former years, when the compost heaps were repeatedly contaminated by large mounds of pet litter.

This reduction was primarily thanks to actions taken by HCGA, first with the installation in 2023 of two beautiful woven-willow gates to enclose the bins, followed in 2024 by a lidded mesh roof covering. Together, these make it more difficult for litter dumpers to access the compost.

HCGA also organised a group to turn the compost heaps, which yielded a surprising amount of very good compost, which was used to enrich the soil in various beds.

8. Special thanks

As in previous years, we are indebted to the generosity of many supporters, including our partner organisations listed above. In addition, we would like to extend special thanks to the following people.

1. The time and expertise of our chair and treasurer

We are also extremely grateful to Ray Lancashire, as chair of FQPG, and Simon Walton, as treasurer. These are important administrative roles for the overall management of the Friends and we are very lucky to benefit from the generous contribution of their professional expertise and their time.

2. Gifts of plants and seeds from volunteer gardeners

During 2024, we received a number of generous gifts of plants, bulbs and seeds from volunteer gardeners. Many thanks to everyone who has added to the beauty of the garden in this way, in particular:

- Charlotte Chesney
- Claire Hickey
- Nigel Snuggs and Simon Walton

3. Happy Lizzy for our AGM

A very big thank you to Liz Thorpe-Tracey and the team at Happy Lizzy, who offered us a warm and comfortable meeting room for our 2023 Annual General Meeting at the new Happy Hub on Third Avenue. Held on 31 January 2024, it was our first AGM in person since before the Covid pandemic and it was so much more enjoyable and productive to sit together around a shared table rather than as little squares on computer screens. We greatly appreciate Liz's generosity in welcoming us into the new community hub before it was even officially opened.

4. And above all thanks to our volunteers

As with every year, we would like to give our biggest thanks of all to the people who make the garden grow, turning up on cold, wet days as well as in sunny weather, enduring the disappointments of plants that died or were stolen, alongside the pleasures of tending those that bloomed.

Together, they have made an outstanding contribution to Queen's Park Gardens, bringing huge benefits to the many local people who use the gardens. Without their efforts, there would be far fewer flowers and many more weeds and brambles.

9. Feedback from park users

One of the greatest pleasures we enjoy when we are gardening is the chance to meet other visitors to the gardens. The gardens were much used during the year, and many people made a point of stopping and thanking the volunteer gardeners, expressing their appreciation of their work to make the park a more pleasant and safer place to be.

APPENDIX 1: Volunteer gardening hours in 2024

In 2024, a total of 520 volunteer hours were recorded. These hours reflect time spent gardening; they do not include time spent on other additional volunteer activities, such as administration, procurement of materials and organisation.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Quarter 1 (January-March)	64 hours	76 hours	60 hours	114 hours	113.5 hours	174.5 hours	136 hours	119.5 hours
Quarter 2 (April-June)	94 hours	121 hours	80 hours	93 hours	146.5 hours	177 hours	156.5 hours	139 hours
Quarter 3 (July-September)	131 hours	99 hours	70 hours	141 hours	177 hours	179.5 hours	218.5 hours	169.5 hours
Quarter 4 (October-December)	75 hours	64 hours	46 hours	103 hours	130 hours	145.5 hours	92 hours	92 hours
TOTAL	364 hours	360 hours	266 hours	451 hours	567 hours	676.5 hours	603 hours	520 hours

APPENDIX 2: FQPG on social media

At the end of 2024, the FQPG X (formerly Twitter) account had 561 followers (down from 566 at the end of 2023).

We have 493 Facebook followers (up from 461 in 2023) and we had 446 Facebook page likes during the year, up from 416 over the same period a year ago.

In 2024, FQPG launched an Instagram account, which by the end of the year had two posts and three followers.

APPENDIX 3: Update on our 2024 objectives

The Friends of Queen’s Park annual general meeting was held on 31 January 2024. This was an opportunity for the FQPG committee to formally sign off on the 2023 Annual Report and also for the committee members and other gardening volunteers to propose and agree on the objectives for the year ahead.

Here, we give an update on how these objectives were turned into actions.

2024 objectives	Update on actions and outcomes
Overarching aim Maintaining and developing the Wildlife Area and the four other beds we have adopted.	As planned, we continued to use sustainable gardening practices, including collecting and sowing seeds harvested from plants in the garden, recycling plants across the garden, and growing plants that are bee-friendly and butterfly-friendly, as well as drought-resistant to reduce the need for additional water use.
Partnerships Continuing to build our partnerships with Westminster Council, HCGA, Continental Parks Management and QPCC.	As described in the partnerships section above, we worked closely with Westminster Council, Continental and HCGA and are grateful for the support they provided throughout the year.

2024 objectives	Update on actions and outcomes
<p>Wildlife Area – planting – Adding more plants, especially to the wildflower meadow.</p>	<p>As agreed at the 2023 AGM, we decided to include plants categorised as British wildflowers by RHS, including those that are naturalised as well as natives. We added plants in the wildflower meadow and elsewhere, thanks in large part to the generosity of one of the volunteer gardeners, Charlotte Chesney, who brought plants from her own garden (see above)</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – planting record Setting up a record of planting in the wildlife meadow to monitor biodiversity.</p>	<p>Recording of the plants has been carried out as a matter of informal practice rather than as a formal register.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – bug hotel Maintaining the bug hotel to attract an even greater variety of insects, beetles and other wildlife.</p>	<p>We added to the structure with bamboos, branches and twigs. But over the year the bug hotel moved more into a phase of self-sustainability, as the wood we'd added rotted down, providing a natural habitat for a range of grubs and insects.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – compost heaps Protecting the compost bins from the dumping of waste matter, so the compost can be used to enrich the soil in the garden.</p>	<p>As described above in the section on challenges, actions taken by HCGA to enclose and protect the compost bins have considerably reduced the dumping of waste materials.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – dog management Working with Westminster Council and others to reduce/eliminate access and damage by dogs in the Wildlife Area.</p>	<p>Despite support from Westminster Council and additional signage, there was an increase in anti-social behaviour by dog owners, letting their dogs run out of control and defecating on lawns, paths and flower beds in the Wildlife Area and other parts of the park (more detail in the challenges section above).</p>
<p>Triangular rose, circular, railings and benches beds Continuing to maintain and develop these beds.</p>	<p>As described above, these beds continued to be a main focus of our work and flourished, thanks to donations of plants by gardeners and partner organisations, including wallflowers which were among the suggestions for the railings and circular beds.</p>
<p>Extending the shrubbery along the main path Extending our gardening to add planting in the area by the Third Avenue entrance.</p>	<p>We explored with Westminster Council and Continental possible options for a low-maintenance solution to fill a bare gap where there used to be a bench behind the circular bed, such as low-level shrubs. But no further action has yet been taken.</p>
<p>FQPG tools storage Consolidating our gardening tools and equipment in one location.</p>	<p>FQPG tools that had been stored in a lock-up garage in the Mozart Estate on Third Avenue were moved to the Queen's Park Gardens hut, which is a more convenient location for gardening, shared with Continental and HCGA.</p>
<p>Software program for mapping plants Researching software programs that would enable us to map the planting layouts in the beds.</p>	<p>Research was carried out with partner organisations and others, but no suitable models have been identified that would fit our purpose.</p>
<p>QPCC events Participating in QPCC activities.</p>	<p>As planned, we hosted a stall in the Wildlife Area at the QPCC Summer Festival, but did not run the usual nature trail (see above).</p>
<p>FQPG volunteers Growing our group of volunteer gardeners.</p>	<p>We were delighted to welcome Tash Watt as a new gardening volunteer on our Saturday sessions, bringing much-appreciated skills and enthusiasm to the group.</p>

APPENDIX 4: looking ahead – our plans for 2025

Objectives 2025	Action planning
<p>Overarching aim Maintaining and developing the Wildlife Area and the four other beds we have adopted.</p>	<p>This will continue to be the focus of the work undertaken by FQPG.</p>
<p>Partnerships Continuing to build our partnerships with Westminster Council, HCGA, Continental Parks Management and QPCC.</p>	<p>We will continue to build on these very positive relationships, in particular with Megan Felton and Cathy Maund at HCGA, David Sear and Amanda Scott at Westminster City Council, and Chris Merlin at Continental Landscapes.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – planting Adding more plants, especially to the meadow.</p>	<p>We will continue to add plants and seeds to the Wildlife Area with a range of appropriate naturalised wildflower varieties, building up the bio-diversity of the garden.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – bug hotel Maintaining the bug hotel to attract a variety of insects, beetles and other wildlife.</p>	<p>Following a focus in previous years on constructing the bug hotel, we will now leave it to evolve naturally.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – compost heaps Protecting the compost bins from the dumping of non-compostable matter, so that we can use the compost for the enriching the soil in the garden.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with HCGA to optimise the compost bins, both for recycling gardening waste and for producing and using the compost that is generated. A particular focus will be on improving access to the bins, including a more suitable long-term mechanism for closing and securing the front gates, which are at present tied with temporary plastic lock-ties which have to be cut and replaced after each use. These ties are not especially secure (as they easily be cut by non-gardeners), neither are they environmentally sustainable.</p>
<p>Wildlife Area – dog management Working with Westminster Council and others to reduce/ eliminate access and damage by dogs in the Wildlife Area.</p>	<p>We will continue to raise concerns, both with irresponsible dog-owners and with partner organisations.</p> <p>We understand a borough-wide dog strategy is being developed by Westminster Council in conjunction with the police and other parties. We will be interested to see how this develops and contribute as appropriate.</p>
<p>Triangular rose, circular, railings and benches beds Continuing to maintain and develop these beds.</p>	<p>The bed includes many different rose bushes, which require different types of pruning and maintenance. To optimise the health, longevity and beauty of the rose bushes, we will develop a more co-ordinated approach especially for pruning, which is a specialist skill and can damage plants if mishandled. This will be led by Charlotte Chesney and Nigel Snuggs, our most experienced rose pruners, who will advise others. ‘Please do not prune’ tags will be attached to those rose bushes that are particularly sensitive.</p>
<p>Benches bed Maintaining and developing the benches bed.</p>	<p>Building on the success of the past few years, we will continue to add to the planting in this bed. We would like to incorporate climbing plants that along the back railings – but these would have to be shade tolerant, which unfortunately rules out many attractive plants.</p>
<p>Extending planting along the main path Extending our gardening to add planting in the area towards the Third Avenue entrance.</p>	<p>As part of our bulb-planting in the autumn, we will include a large order for daffodil bulbs, which we will plant along the border of shrubs that leads along the main path to add early spring colour to the park. Daffodils were planted there in the past, but less so in recent years and some have now died back.</p>

Objectives 2025	Action planning
	We will also explore with Westminster Council and Continental the possibility of getting some shrubs to fill an unsightly gap in the shrubbery behind the circular bed.
Environmental responsibility Gardening in ways that minimise negative environmental impact on the planet.	Selecting plants that are sustainable in changing climatic conditions, such as drought and heat. Avoiding the use of plastic wherever possible.
Software program for mapping plants Researching software programs that would enable us to map the planting layouts in the beds.	Simon will continue to explore options.
QPC events Participating in QPC activities.	We will continue to take part in events, including the Summer Festival and clean-up activities organised by QPC.
FQPG volunteers Growing our group of volunteer gardeners.	We will continue to promote the activities of FQPG in order to attract additional volunteers, with a focus on people who have some gardening experience. We will direct people who require more support to the HCGA gardening sessions, which are more suited for providing professional supervision and guidance.

APPENDIX 5: Committee elections for 2025

Post holders and committee members (2024):

Chair (committee member): Ray Lancashire

Treasurer (committee member and recorder of hours worked and gardening activities undertaken):

Simon Walton

Committee member: Alison Low Madigan

Posts and post holders for 2025

Elections were carried out at the FQPG annual general meeting on 18 February 2025, attended by the committee members and other FQPG gardening volunteers.

These elections confirmed the post holders and committee members for 2025 – as follows:

Post	Postholder (2025)	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chair	Vacant *		
Treasurer	Simon Walton	Charlotte Chesney	Alison Low Madigan
Social media	Ray Lancashire	Simon Walton	Charlotte Chesney
Committee member	Alison Low Madigan	Charlotte Chesney	Ray Lancashire

*After several years as chair of FQPG, Ray Lancashire announced his decision to stand down at the FQPG AGM. As no other committee members or gardening volunteers offered to take on the role of chair, there was a discussion about whether a replacement chair was needed at this time.

The Friends of Queen's Park Gardens is neither a registered charity nor formally constituted body and there is no legal requirement for a chair. However, a more formal structure was required in the past for governance purposes when the group applied directly for funding grants from QPC.

As this is no longer the case, it was agreed that the role could be vacant, with the functions associated with the role to be undertaken by other committee members alongside their other activities – including:

- Arranging and leading gardening sessions
- Communicating with gardening volunteers about the sessions
- Financial management

- Recording volunteer gardening hours
- Liaising with partner organisations
- Identifying FQPG needs for plants, bulbs, seeds and tools, etc and co-ordinating orders
- Communications on social media and notice boards about FQPG gardening sessions and activities
- Producing an annual report
- Convening an annual general meeting

APPENDIX 6: Approval of the Friends of Queen’s Park Gardens Annual Report 2024

The Friends of Queen’s Park Gardens Annual Report 2024 was reviewed and approved by the FQPG committee and gardeners at their AGM on 18 February 2025.

We thank everyone who contributed, both on the content and photography, for reflecting back on the achievements and challenges of 2024 and for developing our plans for 2025.