



Friends of Pinner Village Gardens

AGM Report April 2024 – March 2025

The friends of Pinner Village Gardens have had another successful year. The Gardens have been complemented for design, maintenance and tidiness. We have continued to build a great relationship with Harrow Council green Team.

During the year we also adopted Bridge Street Gardens into the oversight of Friends of Pinner Village Gardens (FOPVG) at a Special Meeting on 21st October 2024.

The Gardens

Blooming good!

Maintenance around the park took place as usual, in every season throughout the year, while new planting was carried out in Spring and Autumn being times when plants establish best. 2024-25 also saw new plants in a number of places in the park.

We aim to ensure we have interest all year in the park: We aim for best value, impact, and longevity where possible, and choose plants suited to the conditions. Plants bought are often small – enabling a greater quantity to be bought.

The Rose Garden was replanted with over 1,600 spring flowering bulbs – mostly tulips and white daffodils. The result was much appreciated by the park's visitors. To maintain the spectacular Spring show, is very likely that the Rose Garden will need replanting in the autumn of 2027. This is because tulips do not reliably repeat flower and get smaller each year. FoPVG cannot afford to replace the bulbs every year.

We topped up spring bulbs and tried out some new species especially at the entrances. Hyacinths for welcoming fragrance were added in trial quantities. At the Compton Rise raised box bed the 'exploding fireworks' of the large Alliums aim to say, '*look at me*'.

At the Whittington Way entrance we continued to enhance the warm tones in the island bed with more Heuchera (Coral bells). On the side bed new evergreen Euonymus filled a large gap. At Hereford Gardens (tennis courts entrance) more Heuchera were added repeating the plum-colours in the planting scheme. The plan to add to the fragrant pink winter wall of Viburnum.

We planted many Crocuses and Spring Snowflake – particularly at Everest Circle. However, only a few survived because of the squirrels.

In late Autumn '24 we planted over 300 ferns, and some 600 primulas (primroses and cowslips), blue camassias and anemone bulbs in Compton Copse. These were the result of a successful bid to Harrow Green Grid. The primulas were supplied as plug plants and benefited from us potting them on and planting in the ground in early Spring '25. The ferns will provide cover for amphibians (frogs and newts) that live in the area, while primula flowers provide a nectar for pollinators like brimstone and small tortoiseshell butterflies.

Maintaining existing plants is also very important. Many need pruning once a year to encourage bushy growth. The Veronica's at the Rayner Lane rejuvenated successfully after we pruned back the stems that had been seriously scorched by the sun in the Summers of 22 & 2023, and we have now been pruning more of them. This encourages new growth from lower down and removes the otherwise leggy bare stems.

The water lilies and other plants in the pond – another successful bid to Harrow Green Grid – bloomed in the summer of 2024. As they were new to the pond this indicated that they had settled in happily.

The wet Spring 2024 made it impossible to get big bags of compost delivered around the park and so delivery was delayed until autumn for specific distribution around the part in 2025 for greatest benefit during the growing season.

Most new planting in the park is paid for by FoPVG Annual Memberships and donations of money. To keep the park looking as good as it does need your continued support. By donating funds to the park, we can get the plants that are needed to fill gaps, maintain interest all year, are suited to the various conditions in the park and purchase at trade rates. We really appreciate all the membership contributions and donations – it makes a difference for the whole community.

Volunteering

Work parties & volunteers.

We have held regular weekly work parties gardening on alternate Tuesday and Friday mornings throughout the year, except Bank Holidays. In recent months our regular volunteers have increased in number, so we are often five or six regular volunteers, sometimes more, but we still need more to join us.

Two other regular volunteers focus on the Rose Circle, a park highlight, and they have maintained it to a standard which has attracted great praise, with a number of people coming to PVG specifically to see it.

We are also immensely grateful to our regular and occasional litter pickers who keep the park looking clean and tidy, which is not always the case in parks and public spaces.

Much of our work has focussed on the four entrances, the azalea beds, the pond arc, and the Everest Circle. Other parts of the park have received occasional, although often intensive attention, such as Compton Copse, and the children's playground. We ran some ad hoc sessions which have helped to boost the amount we are able to do, in particular clearance of excessive invasive bramble.

Geocache volunteers have been three times in the year to help us with pond weeding and planting, tasks which are difficult to achieve without their waders and enthusiasm. They also helped with planting Spring flowering bulbs. We are extremely grateful to them and look forward to their regular support.

Corporate volunteering

We have been keen to engage with businesses wanting volunteering opportunities for their staff as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes. The FoPVG Newsletter has already reported on days with Borrás Construction, and two very productive visits from accountants BDO LLP who have indicated they wish to work with us again in the future, to which we look forward.

These days are very productive, and we are always keen to receive more corporate social responsibility groups, and indeed already have a couple lined up for this summer.

Community Payback

Community Payback were generally regular in their attendance on Wednesdays and have done some very useful work. In particular they assisted in planting the new ferns, primroses, cowslips and woodland bulbs in Compton Copse and in managing grass incursion on path edges and around benches. They also assist in watering, leaf gathering, basic weeding and removal of dead and surplus tree branches etc.

While some are not very conscientious, others are hardworking and contribute

well. They are supervised by a member of staff from the Ministry of Justice' Probation Service (MoJ) and advised/directed by a FoPVG representative who works alongside the group. The MoJ recorded 1,319 hours for their attendees in calendar year 2024, although this includes breaks for lunch etc.

Note the scheme is paused at the time of this report due to staff shortages at MOJ. We very much hope the programme will resume after the summer, as Payback participants can make a noticeable difference as they undertake tasks that then leave FoPVG's volunteers more time to concentrate on more skilled gardening tasks.

Maintenance team

This small, hard-working group of volunteers give invaluable help with stone wall, bench and bin maintenance. In addition, they address water related issues such as fixing taps and topping up pond. This year they have laid down hidden permanent hoses to make it much less labour intensive to provide essential water to plants at Compton Rise and Whittington Way.

Jonathan Freedman – Volunteer Co-ordinator says.

I want to record my thanks to all those who have volunteered during the year, without whom our park would not be the joy that it is.

Events

On 2nd June we hosted a very successful Pinner picnic following a similar format to the Coronation. There was strong attendance and very positive comments about the event. The children's rides, music and dog show were all very well received. The food stands did not prove as popular and would need to move position in a future event. The dog show would also need an amplifier. The volunteers all worked very well and the take down team left the park looking pristine.

Pond dipping

In addition to pond dipping at the Pinner Picnic **Simon Braidman** hosted a pond dip on 15th August in the afternoon. Around 25 people attended, and a lot of pond life was observed.

Bat Walk

On Saturday 31st August **Simon Braidman** hosted a bat walk which c15 people attended. There was very good feedback about an enjoyable evening despite not seeing any bats! The group did see some interesting pond life.

Bridge Street Gardens

At a special meeting on October 21st, 2024, it was agreed that the regeneration of Bridge St Gardens effort should come within the oversight of Friends of Pinner Village Gardens. The council have agreed and provided a budget for tools which are jointly shared with the FoPVG. However, the ongoing planning of Bridge Street Gardens, its work parties and budget remains separate and independent from that of the Friends of Pinner Village Gardens.

In May 2024, regular work parties were established to litter pick, cut back intrusive weeds, prune shrubs, repair fencing, pick up items from the river and generally try and improve conditions for those using the gardens. Along with the repair of the foot bridge, this has resulted in significant improvements to the Gardens.

The team also significantly reduced the height of the boundary hedge to improve visibility into and out of the gardens providing a brighter, less isolating feel to the gardens.

At the end of March 2025 year, the team were joined by Harrow Litter Pickers who carried out a 'deep clean' of the gardens that involved removing difficult to reach rubbish, thorough cleaning of the benches and removal of debris from the river.

In 2025 a proposal to improve the gardens was submitted to the council. This has been designed by **Dodie Melville -Riddell**. The plan is to work with the shade a soil quality in situ to bring colour and vibrancy back to the gardens. There is also a wildlife area to attract both pollinators and families. The design was approved in principle and is moving forward.

Finances

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Membership subs	983.16	Planting & maintenance	3875.56
Life membership fees	1324.25	Pinner picnic	1203.14
Donations	962.13		
Pinner picnic	2107.45		
Compton Rise/plants	105.16		
TOTAL	5482.15	TOTAL	5078.70

Surplus for the year £403.45

Bank Balance 31 March 2025 4783.00

Membership

We continue to operate a membership model which is an important source of income.

Annual memberships paid for 2025 amounted to 43. We have continued to experience decline in membership numbers and plan to address this in year 2024-5. We have experienced difficulties with accepting memberships via the website and this is being rectified. We also have 90 life members.

However, we have experienced an increase in donations from the public which has ensured we can continue to do the work. We estimate it costs £5,000 every year to maintain the gardens to the standard the community currently enjoys.

Communication

The Facebook page continues to achieve good engagement with around 1,400 followers.

We continue to look for a volunteer who can support communications and the writing of a newsletter as well as regular posting on FB.

Junior Park Run

The Junior Park run which takes place at 9am every Sunday morning continues to be a huge success. March 2024 saw the 150th run and there are over 100 runners every week. The success is due to the commitment of volunteers who run the event every week.