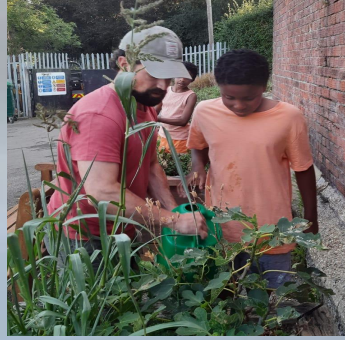
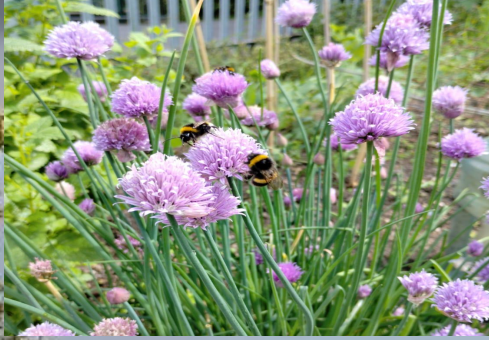


A vibrant rainbow arches across a cloudy sky above a lush green garden. In the foreground, a wooden fence runs along the left side, with a yellow 'CCTV' sign and a black sign attached to it. A red bin is visible near the fence. The garden is filled with various trees and bushes, and a path leads into the distance. The text 'Friends of Hillside and Palace Road Nature Garden - Annual Report 2022' is overlaid in the center of the image.

Friends of Hillside and Palace Road Nature Garden - Annual Report 2022

Hillside Gardens Park in 2022



The last year brought major upgrades to the park, and (almost) ended a process that started in 2017 with the allocation of money from a local development to the park. After four long, frustrating years of planning, Lambeth Council finally delivered the parts most important to most users of the park: renovation of the play park and the resurfacing of all sport courts. Both renovations would not have been possible without the Friends of the Park - we pushed Lambeth and contractors to actually deliver and secured substantial additional funding. Other highlights this year: another wonderful, ever-popular Sports Day in September, the second installment of the Halloween Fiesta in October and many planting activities throughout the year. Most importantly: many happy people playing in the park, being active with friends and family, getting to know new people, and enjoying the outdoors in our suburban park in the heart of our community.

Committee and Meetings

The Friends of Hillside Gardens Park and Palace Road Nature Garden is a registered charity established in the early 2000s by the local community. Our aim is to protect and improve, promote and enjoy the park as well as the nature garden.

In 2022, the “Friends” committee was as follows: Tom Stanbury and Stephanie Charalambous - Co-chairs, Evan Lerwill - Secretary, William Palau - Treasurer, Andreas Kappes - Communications Secretary, Nigel Duckers - Meetings Secretary. Funds for 2022 stood at £5000.02.

The AGM in November 2022 elected the following on to the Committee: Stephanie Charalambous - Chair, Evan Lerwill - Secretary, Tom Stanbury - Horticulture Secretary, William Palau - Treasurer, Andreas Kappes - Communications Secretary, Nigel Duckers - Meetings Secretary.

Dates for “Friends” meetings for 2023: 23th January, 27th April, 19th June, 11th September 20th November (Annual General Meeting) **(all Mondays, 7:30pm). Friends meetings are open to everyone - please join us!**

Horticulture



Many activities throughout the year helped the plants to flourish in the park, led by Tom Stanbury, and helped by many volunteers, notably the lovely people from the GoodGym. With the help of The Conservation Volunteers, over 50 shrubs and new plants in the park were planted, quite a variety that included Ajuga, Fuschia, Hibiscus, Hebe, Geranium, Skimmia, and Salvia. The Friends and Goodgym planted over 50 whips (hazel, hornbeam, rowan, hawthorn, blackthorn and cherry plum) to create a new hedgerow. The hedgerow trees came from the Mayor of London Community Tree packs. The summer brought a severe drought, and Tom, Delphine, Evan and other volunteers ensured with their watering that the existing and newly planted shrubs made it through. The hot summer seemed to cause many of the trees to shed their leaves later than normal. And everyone who was in the park surely has seen Tom and others volunteering clearing leaves.



Renewal of Sports Surfaces

After years of pressure, lobbying and liaising with Lambeth Council officers, a contract to renew the the surfacing of sports courts was finally awarded in April. New macadam surfaces and fences were installed on the tennis courts and multi-games areas (MUGAs). Electric cabling to allow for floodlights to be installed on tennis courts in the future was also installed. We think the new courts look lovely sprayed in bright acrylic colours and with new lines and markings. However, we are disappointed that Lambeth Council are not willing to install a soft surface for football and contact sport on one MUGA as has long been requested by the Friends. We will continue working with Lambeth to ensure our playing courts are properly maintained and push for floodlights to allow access to more hours of tennis, especially in the winter months.



Sports and Exercise in the Park

Since the renewal of the sports surfaces, all the courts are buzzing with activity. The coaches Rosena and Dino from Serious about Tennis (who were also instrumental for the new sports surfaces) are at the heart of it, with social tennis groups, tennis coaching for toddlers, adults, and everyone in between. The park is now the training place for the Lambeth tennis youth team. Other tennis coaches are popular too (such as Eduardo and his many groups). Throughout the week, the park is busy with dog walkers, personal training and users of the outdoor gym while afterschool and on the weekends, there are always young people playing table tennis, basketball and football.



Play park

Our play park badly in need of repair, and despite the Friends raising this with Lambeth repeatedly, the play park was long ignored. In 2021, we found out that the allocated money would not enough anymore to do the needed renovations. Evan Lerwill (Secretary of the Friends) successfully led a Lambeth Council “Changing Lives Fund” application for an additional £40,000 to for the play park refurbishment work. Constructors Kompan then installed the play equipment and Billy Bounce laid the rubber mulch. In October, the play park was open and immediately used. MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy formally opened the park two weeks later.



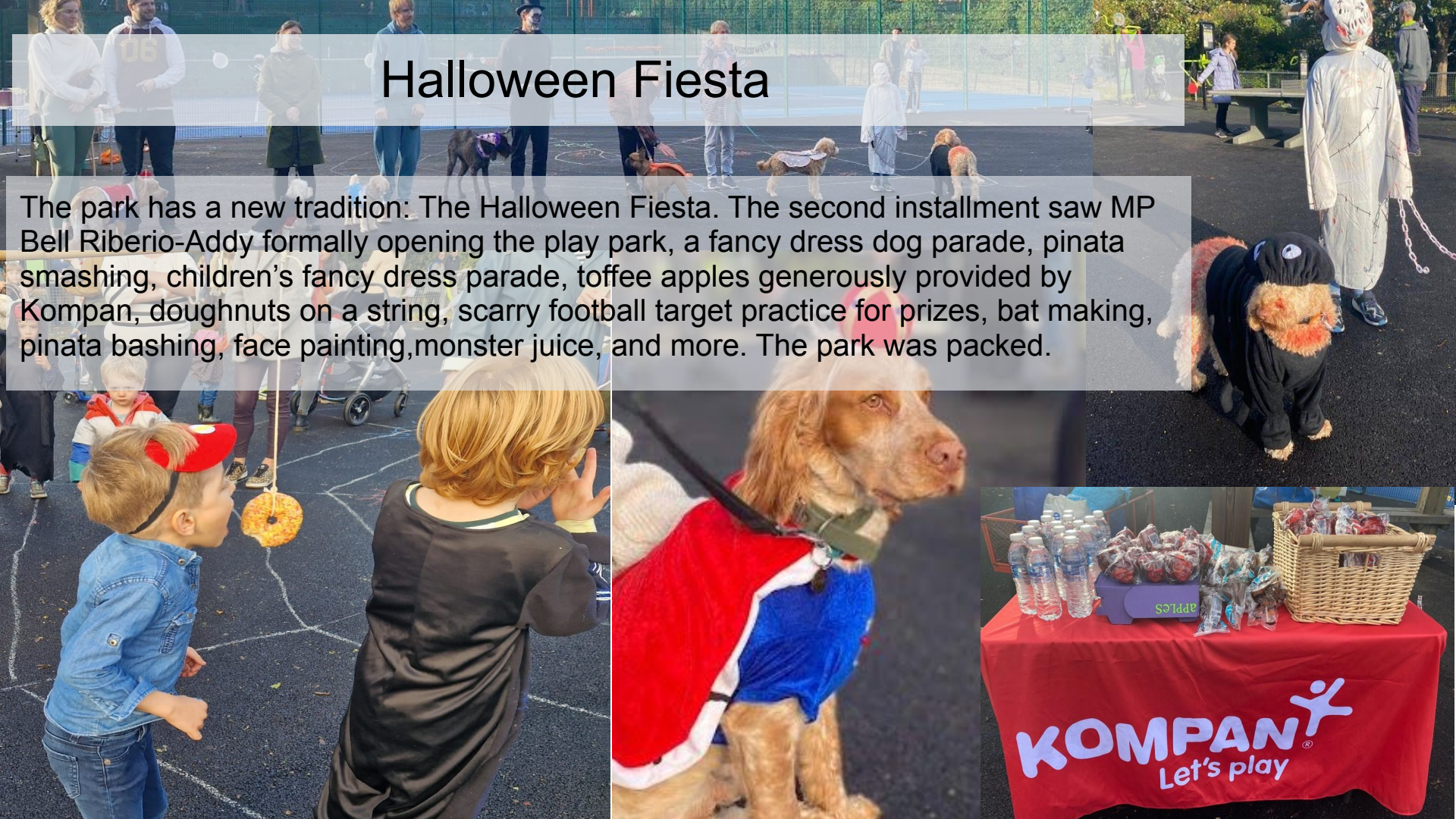
Sports Day

On Saturday, 10th September, we held our annual Sports Day, taking full advantage of the newly-laid (though not-painted) sports surfaces. Volunteers and community organisations delivered for free a range of activities for all ages to our Streatham Hill neighbours of all ages. The Friends provided refreshments from the Hillside Children's Centre building. Activities included yoga, tai chi, walking football, tennis, basketball, cricket and of course our traditional Sports Day races, welly boot throw and tug-of-war.



Halloween Fiesta

The park has a new tradition: The Halloween Fiesta. The second installment saw MP Bell Riberio-Addy formally opening the play park, a fancy dress dog parade, pinata smashing, children's fancy dress parade, toffee apples generously provided by Kompan, doughnuts on a string, scary football target practice for prizes, bat making, pinata bashing, face painting, monster juice, and more. The park was packed.



Hillside Gardens Allotment Group

In 2022, we have been trying to get to know each other better via monthly meetings. The aim was to liaise over growing strategies, identify plants, and tidy up the area. Tasks were allocated between members such as organisation of the shed, sharpening of tools, repair of the greenhouse and a wishlist of tools to be bought identified. A power socket was installed, making a big difference to the routine maintenance jobs. Members have been able to grow a range of vegetables and the apples, blackcurrants, gooseberries, plums and blackberries were available for communal enjoyment. During the heatwave members shared watering responsibilities and the water tanks were employed during the hosepipe ban. Currently, all allotments have been allocated and seven new applications were received. Allotments are reallocated as they become available.



Palace Road Nature Garden

Palace Road Nature Garden continues to be a valuable community resource for people to connect with nature in our busy urban environment. It is frequently visited by groups from local schools, nurseries and childminders for whom it is an adventure playground in the wild.

In 2023, our volunteers with the help of GoodGym looked after the garden, trees, wildlife pond and meadow. Hops and vines were planted with the first hops harvest added to a local homebrewers' mash. Gerry spearheaded intensive lobbying of construction developers and Lambeth Council and secured a new gate and planting of wildflower seed on the bare verge. Lambeth Parks mowed the dried meadow grass during the very hot summer removing a fire hazard. A collaboration with the new Hive Cafe opposite is now underway: all coffee grounds from the cafe are now stored in the garden ready to be used as planting mixture for a food growing project in 2023.



Hillside Gardens and Palace Road NG Partnership Board

In 2021, Lambeth Council established the a Partnership board to “oversee the strategic and operational management of Hillside Gardens Park and Palace Road Nature Garden”. The Friends have participated in quarterly meetings of the Partnership board since its establishment. Members of the Board are: Cllr Liz Atkins (Chair), Ian Ross and Ruth Davies (Lambeth Parks), Tom Stanbury and Ben Hyde (Friends of Hillside), Christine Mukasa (Allotment Group/Community Growers), Lucy Ritchie (Hillside Gardens Tenants and Residents Association), Phyllis Hayden (Hitherfield Childrens Centre). Other Friends have attended the Partnership Board public meetings throughout 2022. The position of youth rep is vacant: we would welcome expressions of interest from young residents for this position.

We appreciate actions by Lambeth Park officers to manage the Sports and Playground development plans and to respond to maintenance and other issues raised throughout the year. However, our position as Friends is that the Board falls short in achieving its stated aims of strategically managing the park and garden - instead management is reactive and ad-hoc. Lambeth has presented no plans for management, biodiversity, a user survey, a maintenance and repairs, fundraising and future capital as stated in the Partnership Agreement. We will continue to push Lambeth Parks to deliver on these.

For the Friends, areas of focus for 2023 include: maintenance of play courts, maintenance and enhancement of horticultural assets, repair of park equipment such as the circular bench and fencing, installation of floodlights on tennis courts, lighting on central path, delivery of murals in park using the allocated arts funding and investigating the opening of the hatch as a refreshment facility.

Our Partners: Thank you to all those who worked with us this year

Serious about Tennis

www.seriousabouttennis.com

Hitherfield Primary School & Children's Centre

www.hitherfield.co.uk/our-school/childrens-centre/better-start

London Thunder Basketball

<https://thunderbasketball.net>

Surrey Cricket Foundation

www.surreycricketfoundation.org

Maths Explorers www.roots2grow.org

Yoga Debra www.yogadebralondon.co.uk

Lambeth Council

The GoodGym www.goodgym.org

Conservation Volunteers www.tcv.org.uk

St Margaret's the Queen Hub <https://smtghub.org>

Bloom Nursery Preschool

<https://bloomdaynurserypreschool.uk>

Kompan (outdoor play equipment)

www.kompan.com

Hive Cafe <https://www.facebook.com/hivecafes>

All Streatham Hill neighbours and all those who use the park and nature garden are welcome to our meetings and activities. Please get in touch if you want to get involved. We would very much like to have a dog-walkers representative on our group. We also are very interested in new partnerships and ideas for events to provide more opportunities for sports and outdoor recreation for all ages.



@hillsidegardenssw2



hillsidegardenspark.co.uk



@HillsideGdns



hillsidegardensstreatham

Join our WhatsApp group to learn about what is going on in the park and upcoming events.

Hillside Gardens Park
WhatsApp group

