

## **Annual Report September 2024 - September 2025**

### **Introduction**

The Association's work in 2024/25 has been productive.

### **Events and Activities Programme**

Over the last year we organised a programme of free activities for all ages including:

- A bandstand show by The Oxygen Thieves on 22 September 2024
- A guided heritage walk - 'Schools of Bermondsey: Part 2' led by Geoff Fairbairn on 29 September 2024
- A guided heritage walk - 'Airplane Crashes in Southwark Park' led by Pat Kingwell on 8 December 2024
- Carol singing at the Southwark Park Gallery led by Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Choral Society on 14 December 2024
- Beautifying the Park Depot by planting and fencing in March 2025
- A screening of films about South London, including Southwark Park, at Sands Films Studios on 1 May 2025
- A bandstand show by The Fabulous Honeys on 15 June 2025
- Attendance and award of cup, medals and certificates at the Bobby Abel Cricket tournament for primary schools on 24 June 2024, organised by the PE and Sports Network and won by Bessemer Grange School
- 'Come and Try' session for adults hosted by Southwark Park Bowls Club on 5 August 2025
- a bat watch for adults led by John and Janet Cadera and Andrew Self on 13 August 2025

We thank Southwark Council's Neighbourhoods Fund for financial support.

### **Tennis for Young People in Southwark Park**

During the autumn and winter months, in conjunction with local coach Denis McMillan, we ran free weekly tennis sessions for 7-13s at Decathlon Activities Centre. In April 2025 we concluded the programme. Since inception in 2022 over 100 children participated, over half playing the game for the first time. We heartily thank Decathlon and Artinvest for their financial support and Wade Hall, Bede Centre and Decathlon for the use of indoor spaces. Thanks too to Southwark Council for use of the park tennis courts and not forgetting the children and parents for their attendance and enthusiasm.

### **Trees in Southwark Park**

We:

- following a request from the friends of Leah Kirby, a great lover of Southwark Park, successfully liaised with Southwark Council to plant a tree in her memory which stands close to the Paradise Gates.
- as part of the Urban Tree Festival on 11 May 2025 organised a free guided tree walk led by noted expert Paul Wood.

- agreed with Southwark Council to plant a tree in memory of Sir William Maynard Gomm.

### **Community Engagement**

In addition to the activities mentioned above we took part in or supported:

- The Moreton Gate improvement consultations in October 2024
- Trees for Bermondsey's hedge planting in November 2024
- Remembrance Sunday on 10 November 2024 at West Lane Memorial Gardens
- Green Connections meeting with British Land in December 2024
- Norwegian Constitution Day on 17 May 2025
- Southwark Park Primary School's call for the provision of recycling bins in the park
- Bermondsey Carnival on 25 August 2025.

### **Watchful Eyes**

We know it is not always easy to maintain park facilities in good order, and thank the staff for their efforts. However, we are disappointed that the former Lido Fountain and former café building remain as notable eyesores. That the historic Jabez West Memorial Drinking Fountain does not work for the public is in our view inexplicable, and should be rectified. The bandstand also requires urgent maintenance.

We are pleased to see the satisfactory completion of the Ada Salter Garden works. Similarly, we are gratified that the Council accepted four of our recommendations for their Local List – the Park Superintendent's Lodge, former Lido Fountain, the 'Family of Dolphins' sculpture and Rotherhithe Caryatides – giving each some welcome protection. Our suggestion to add the Old Nursery site and Nature Area to the list was not accepted at this stage, but we have asked Councillors to reconsider. Investment for cricket was much-needed, and we thank the Southwark Park Cricket Club for their persistence in making the game available to the community. Other good news came with the Council's approval of our Cleaner, Greener Safer Fund proposals for more tables and benches; a wildflower area and a dog gym, all expected to be implemented in the coming year.

### **Promotion of the Parks**

We have maintained contact with our patrons, members, supporters, elected representatives and Council officers. An update has been regularly circulated to over 450 people and feedback tells us this has been appreciated, especially the detailed records of bird life provided by John and Janet Cadera and colleagues.

### **Partnerships**

As an open and outward-looking group we value partnerships and have been pleased to retain the positive links we have developed with many groups and individuals since our formation in 2018. In the past year we have especially benefitted by working with Albion Street Community Charity (kind funders of chairs for community events); Maddalena and Felice Kharfi of Deli Felice, Albion Street; Green Connections 106; Our

Rotherhithe Group; PE and Sports Network (Bacon's College); Peek Frean Museum; Rotherhithe and Bermondsey Choral Society; Southwark Park Bowls Club; Southwark Park Cricket Club; Southwark Park Galleries and Trees for Bermondsey. We have publicised the activities of many community organisations such as Appleby Blue Alms Houses, Rotherhithe and Bermondsey History Society, Rotherhithe Voices and Sands Films. Beyond the immediate neighbourhood we continue to be members of Community Southwark, Southwark Green Forum, London Federation of Green Spaces and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces. We regularly publicise the work of Fields in Trust and Trees for Cities.

### **Membership**

We have 358 individuals in our member/supporter database, and a further 116 people with whom we retain regular contact. With sadness we respectfully record the death of David Allen, who did so much to establish the galleries in the park. In July 2025 we attended a memorial event for David in the Dilston Gallery.

### **Finances and Funders**

Our account is in funds. We warmly thank our funders, including Albion Street Community Charity, Art Invest, Decathlon, Southwark Council and Trees for Bermondsey. We also thank those individuals who made financial and other donations to help us with our voluntary work.

### **Our Patrons**

We are honoured to have Jenny Bianco, Neil Coyle M.P. Travis Elborough, Mary Gibson and Rt. Hon. Sir Simon Hughes as our patrons.

### **Officers and Management Committee**

We thank the following people who served: Ballers Academy (co-opted), Dave Fisher, Gary Glover, Marjorie Hill (Assistant Treasurer), Pat Kingwell (Secretary), Denis McMillan (co-opted), Gary Magold, Flavia Malim, Barry Marsh, Benita Meli (Deputy Chair), Pam Miller (Treasurer), Marta Prieto (Projects), Ann Smith (Chair), Amanda Squires (co-opted), Sarah Vaughan (co-opted) and Simon Wilks (co-opted).

### **Meetings**

General Meetings were held on: 13 November 2024, 15 January 2025, 19 March 2025, 21 May 2025 and 16 July 2025.

Management Committee Meetings were held on: 8 October 2024, 10 December 2024, 11 February 2025, 15 April 2025, 9 June 2025 and 19 August 2025.

The Secretary  
Southwark Park Association 1869  
26 August 2025