Charity Number 1188060

FRIENDS OF BROOMHILL

www.friendsofbroomhill.org.uk
Registered Office:
69 Brompton Farm Road, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3QX

Annual Report & Accounts 2026

for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026
prepared by Susan Fletcher (Treasurer)

1 September 2026

Introduction

The Friends of Broomhill ("**FoB**") are dedicated to the improvement and enrichment of Broomhill Park situated in Strood, Kent, ME2 3NB. Broomhill Park was created in 1980 from land which had been used for post-war temporary housing (known a prefabs). The site was cleared and landscaped in 1979. The FoB were inaugurated in May 2007, registered as a charity (1154998) in 2013, and became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) on 19 February 2020 with registration number 1188060. We work closely with Medway Council to enable the Park to be 'Strood's Hidden Gem'.

Following a campaign to raise funds for the nine-acre woodland site (known as the Old Orchard) adjacent to the Park, the land was purchased by the FoB for £45,000 in May 2018 with donations from the general public, companies and match funding from Medway Council. Our aim was to incorporate the Old Orchard into a unified and extended Broomhill Park. Our Constitution does not allow us to sell the Old Orchard. If the FoB were to dissolve, this land would be gifted to another Trust to be protected for all time.

Structure

Our Board currently consists of four Trustees. We meet six times per year to review and plan future activities, oversee finances and deal with any ongoing matters. Our Constitution dated February 2020 sets out the rules by which we govern ourselves. New Trustees are currently being sought from our membership for the skills they can bring to the Board. They have an induction with our Secretary to welcome them and provide essential information on responsibilities, procedures and policies. The purchase of the Old Orchard has increased responsibility for the charity and therefore robust management arrangements, insurances, liabilities, and health and safety have been fully considered. Our membership currently stands at 103 members.

Current Trustees

David Park (Secretary and Acting Chair)
Susan Fletcher (Treasurer and Membership Secretary)
Andrew Millsom (Technical Officer)
Colin Pearson (Grants Officer)

Retired Trustees

May Draper (former Chair)
Barbara Harrison (Trustee)
John Lawrenson (Trustee)

Bank

CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA.

Public benefit

Broomhill Park is a valuable greenspace for Strood and its surrounding areas. We are very thankful to our hard-working volunteers who enthusiastically help maintain both the Park and the Old Orchard. Our group of 18 volunteers completed over 1,900 hours of volunteer time during the last year (with an average of 12 volunteers attending each session). They have worked in all weathers to ensure pedestrian access through the Old Orchard is safe by cutting back vegetation on overgrown paths, wood chippings have been laid on muddy paths, and entrances improved with the installation of handrails. Our Management Plan (revised in 2021) sets out our proposals, projects and recommendations to guide improvements to the Old Orchard. We keep the public informed on our progress with regular posts and photos on social media (Facebook).

Our weekly Thursday morning workgroup focuses on the Old Orchard and our Sunday morning workgroup, usually the first Sunday of the month September to April (excluding January), focuses on the Park. The benefits of volunteering are many. It can provide a sense of purpose, the chance to use existing skills and learn new ones, an opportunity to develop new friendships, it encourages physical activity, improves self-confidence, enhances wellbeing, and brings a sense of achievement in doing something which benefits all.

We have now completed the second stage of our exciting project to create a pocket orchard in the lower glade. As there were very few remaining orchard trees, we decided to experiment with returning a small part of the Old Orchard to its original use. We began the lengthy task of preparing the area in 2024. We sourced 26 apple, pear, plum and quince varieties with Kentish connections from a local nursery. The first batch of 14 fruit trees were planted in January 2025 followed by a second batch of 12 fruit trees in January 2026. The area was sown with wildflower meadow seed during October 2025. Two benches have been installed in the pocket orchard to enable the local community to relax and enjoy the Spring blossom.

Memorial tree planting (wild cherry, rowan, goat willow, crab apple and guelder rose) has introduced a greater selection of trees to the scrubby woodland which had mainly consisted of mature hawthorn. We have also continued to improve diversity by the planting of native species of bulbs (including English bluebells, snowdrops and wild garlic). The Old Orchard provides a valuable habitat for wildlife. We have noticed that birds, butterflies and insects are enjoying our improvements with this increased diversity of flora.

FoB are continuing to provide work experience sessions for Further Education students and staff from Abbey Court Community Special Foundation School (for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties). We meet for an hour a week during term time with a group of older students (usually eight students with four teachers) and carry out tasks such as litter picking. The benefits of these sessions are two-fold – they help students build confidence and increase their dexterity by handling the equipment, and it also helps us to keep the Park a tidy and safe place for all.

We were delighted to have been contacted by Leigh Academy in Strood who have assisted with Abbey Court's litter picking sessions in the Park. The introduction of Leigh Academy to Abbey Court is mutually beneficial to both schools.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty to have regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission in determining the activities undertaken by the charity. We understand the charity's purposes as set out in our Constitution. The Trustees are able to explain how its activities support its purposes, and understand how the charity benefits the general public. To underpin these activities, the FoB have public liability insurance.

Awards achieved

Since our Annual Report & Accounts 2025 (dated 7 May 2025), we are delighted that Broomhill Park has received Green Flag Awards in 2025 and 2026, making a total of 15 consecutive years for this prestigious award. The FoB were also pleased to receive the "It's Your Neighbourhood Award" from the RHS South and South East in Bloom Awards, and a "Silver" award from the Kent Wildlife Trust Wilder Kent Awards in 2025/26. These are all great achievements to recognise the hard work of our volunteers.

Income

The total gross income for 2025/26 was £3,894.81. Many thanks to our generous members who made donations (£381.44) with their annual subscriptions (£520.00). We were very grateful for donations (£335.00) in memory of one of our much-missed volunteers who had worked with us for many years. We also received £150.00 towards memorial tree planting in the Old Orchard.

Many thanks also to our members for raising £224.04 by using easyfundraising for their online shopping. easyfundraising is a free fundraising platform where retailers send us a free donation based on the amount the shopper spends and with no extra cost to the shopper. This money has been used to install handrails on an entrance into the Old Orchard.

Medway Council asked us to help repair the safety barrier and fence near the Hillyfields Close area of the Park. We received a grant from Councillor Stephen Hubbard (£1,719.00) in 2025/26 towards this project. This sum was in addition to the two grants received from Councillors Zoe Van Dyke and David Field during financial year 2024/25 (£349.00).

We received a total of £154.56 for Gift Aid claims made to HMRC in respect of subscriptions and donations received between the period of 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025. CAF Bank interest amounted to £410.77.

Expenditure

Total expenditure in 2025/26 amounted to £4,751.84, of which £2,702.41 was spent on the Old Orchard. The £1,140.15 expenditure on the second stage of our pocket orchard project was covered by the grants we received in financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The remedial work on the safety barrier and fence near Hillyfields Close has now been completed. The total cost (£901.35) was covered by the grant money we had received during financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The increase in costs for our website (£424.25) is due to a new website being created following numerous technical issues with our old website. This new website will be going live shortly.

Park extension

The landscaping of the new parkland area at the top of Broomhill Park is now nearing completion. This site had once been owned by Southern Water until it came into private ownership. A plan was developed by the owners to build two semi underground houses in the old reservoirs. In 2014/2015 the FoB mounted a campaign to oppose this development. The planning application was refused but, following an appeal and a revised planning application, Medway Council granted planning permission. This improved planning application returns the reservoir area to valuable greenspace and allows the new parkland area to link up the Park and the Old Orchard as set out in the Broomhill Park 2013-2023 Vision Document.

Our Technical Officer has been closely involved with the design of the landscaping of this parkland area with Hillstone Homes. The paths have been laid out, various saplings have been planted, and wildflower seed sown. The site will remain fenced until planting is established. This highest point in Strood has been designed to provide excellent views across Rochester, the River Medway and the Thames, with a seating area at the top for the general public to enjoy. Ownership will be transferred to the FoB if and when appropriate when all conditions have been met, any concerns addressed, and in agreement with Medway Council's Section 106 Planning Department.

Our aims and plans for 2026/27

Maintaining the Old Orchard is an ongoing project throughout the year including the care and maintenance of our pocket orchard, keeping the main paths clear for access and safety reasons, and planting to increase biodiversity. We are very disappointed that we have suffered some vandalism and fires in the Old Orchard, but we will carry on with our work to maintain the area for the benefit of the general public and local wildlife.

We will continue to assist with the valuable task sessions for Abbey Court School students.

We are hoping to encourage new members to join us. We post regularly on Facebook seeking new members and volunteers, and have recently distributed leaflets to some roads surrounding the park. Becoming a member, making a donation, volunteering, giving a grant, or leaving a gift in a will makes a vast difference to our work and benefits all our community as well as future generations to come.

Conclusion

2025/26 has been a successful and productive year for us. It has been very gratifying to get many complimentary remarks and much support from the local community for all our efforts.

Although our Accounts for 2024/25 and 2025/26 have both shown a net loss, this deficit is due to the fact that we have been spending the pocket orchard grant money we previously received for this project.

Many thanks to our members and all our wonderful hard-working volunteers for their continued support.

S. Fletcher

Susan Fletcher
Treasurer
on behalf of the Trustees of the
Friends of Broomhill

FRIENDS OF BROOMHILL
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT - 1 APRIL 2025 TO 31 MARCH 2026

BALANCE SHEET

	2024-2025	2025-2026
	£	£
Cash at Bank		
Balance brought forward	25198.15	23207.12
Excess of Income over Expenditure	**-1991.03**	**-857.03**
Total Cash	**23207.12**	**22350.09**
Balance at 31 March represented by:		
CAF Bank Gold Account	22429.71	22023.44
CAF Bank Current Account	704.06	314.11
Cash held by PayPal	43.35	12.54
Cash held by JustGiving	30.00	0.00
Balance carried forward to next financial year	**23207.12**	**22350.09**
Current Assets		
Old Orchard (historic value)	45000.00	45000.00
Tools	900.00	1000.00
Total Current Assets	**45900.00**	**46000.00**
Current Liabilities	**0.00**	**0.00**

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	2024-2025 £	2025-2026 £
Income		
Subscriptions	482.38	520.00
Donations from members	143.75	381.44
Memorial donations for a member/volunteer		335.00
Memorial tree planting donations	30.00	150.00
Easyfundraising	397.25	224.04
HMRC Gift Aid	111.73	154.56
CAF Bank interest	441.40	410.77
Medway Council ward grant - repairs to Park safety barrier & fence	349.00	1719.00
Tesco Stronger Starts grant for Pocket Orchard	1000.00	
Total Income	**2955.51**	**3894.81**
Expenditure		
Pocket Orchard project (incl. trees, tools, tree surgeon etc)	3895.24	1140.15
Old Orchard - general planting	217.95	715.48
Old Orchard - signage	52.78	75.60
Old Orchard - memorial bench		205.06
Old Orchard - entrance improvements project		163.90
Old Orchard - insurance	402.22	402.22
Park - repairs to safety barrier & fence near Hillyfields Close		901.35
Website fees	136.78	424.25
CAF Bank fees	60.00	60.00
PayPal and JustGiving fees		25.24
AGM costs	51.54	40.00
Stationery	7.00	54.48
FoB advertising leaflets		209.00
Refreshments	94.85	128.93
First aid supplies	8.18	6.23
Other Tools & Equipment		177.95
Sundries	20.00	22.00
Total Expenditure	**4946.54**	**4751.84**
Excess of Income over Expenditure	**-1991.03**	**-857.03**



