

CABRERA TRUST **Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024**

1. Background to the Trust

- 1.1 The Cabrera Trust is constituted by Deed of Trust as amended by a Scheme made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science dated 24th March 1972 and is a registered charity, No. 305020. Runnymede Borough Council is the Trustee. The registered address of the charity is the Runnymede Civic Centre, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2AH.
- 1.2 The Trust is responsible for the management of the open space playing area on Cabrera Avenue and approximately 52 acres of land alongside the River Bourne known as the Riverside Walk. It is also responsible for the administration and use of the Trust funds. The Trust Deed requires that the Riverside Walk is maintained for the exercise, recreation, and benefit of the inhabitants of Virginia Water and the neighbourhood, and the open space on Cabrera Avenue is to be used as a public recreation ground for the benefit of the same area.
- 1.3 A Management Committee has been set up by the Trustee to provide a clear local focus for the management of the Trust land, with the benefit of professional advice. The Management Committee comprises the three Virginia Water Ward Councillors together with two Council Officers appointed annually by the Community Services Committee of the Council.
- 1.4 During the year the membership of the Committee was:

The three Virginia Water Ward Members of Runnymede Borough Council:-
Councillor C Howorth
Councillor J Hulley
Councillor D Coen

Runnymede Borough Council Officers

Honorary Secretary: Open Spaces and Community Development Manager
(Chris Swatridge)

Honorary Treasurer: Corporate Head of Financial Services
(Paul French)

- 1.5 The objectives adopted by the Management Committee in the management of the Trust land are to maintain the playing area to a proper standard and, in relation to the Riverside Walk, to retain the major part of the land as an area of natural woodland providing a habitat where a variety of animal and plant species can flourish with part having well marked and maintained footpaths for public access.
- 1.6 In January 2019 the Management Committee adopted a mission statement to reflect these objectives 'To protect and enhance nature conservation interests at the Riverside Walk while promoting safe public access to parts of the site and to provide a well-maintained public recreation ground at Cabrera Avenue'

2. The Past Year

- 2.1 Several site meetings have been held during the last year to seek advice on how the site could be managed going forwards. The Council's Biodiversity Officer (Andi Roy) and Chris Swatridge first met with Forestry England in November 2023 to discuss the various woodland management options for the site alongside any potential stewardship applications. This was followed up with a site visit by the Woodland Trust in June 2024. Both visits proved fruitful with various ideas put forward by the woodland experts, though this did tend to reinforce the views of Andi and Chris. It was suggested that a management plan could identify works going forward but this would need to be done with the support of Runnymede Green Space Officers to understand their capacity. It is not likely that stewardship funding is going to be overly game-changing but could prove more lucrative if combined with other woodland sites and management prescriptions going forward. Further site visits with the Environment Agency are planned for the summer to understand the hydrology and river conditions which will further lead to management guidance for the site.
- 2.2 During the year there were a number of site visits and an inspection of trees. This highlighted various incursions and fly tips which Runnymede officers took away to pursue. The winter inspection of the river highlighted a need to carry out tree works to the northern and western boundary of the site which would now be carried out early in the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.3 The coppicing tree works that had been carried out in February 2023 had been successful and as a result there was now an increase in understorey species including Red Camion and Dog's Mercury.
- 2.4 The Trust agreed to co-opt a member of the newly formed group, The Friends of Cabrera Woods (FCTW), onto the committee. The FCTW has been set up to help manage the site through volunteer sessions, work with external bodies on funding applications and to raise funds for specific projects on the site
- 2.5 The Trust would like to thank the co-opted members – Mr P Beesley, Mr P Grobien and Mrs M Owen for their continued support in managing the Trust's land.

3. Finances

- 3.1 The Charities Act 1993 requires charities with income or expenditure over £25,000 to be subject to an independent examination. The Trust's income and expenditure fell below this threshold in 2023/24 and accordingly no independent examination has been undertaken.
- 3.2 The Statement of Financial Activity showed a deficit for the year of £1,052 before variations in the valuation of investments. All investments held by the trust are with M&G Charifund, this year's accounts recorded a deficit in the market value of £2,242.
- 3.3 As at the 31 March 2024, the value of the holding in the M&G Charifund Shares was £120,513. These are held as long-term investments and provide a regular income stream. The dividend income received from M&G Charifund for the year was £7,118.
- 3.4 The Balance Sheet shows an overall fund balance of £122,096 as of 31 March 2024, a decrease of £3,294 from the previous year. It is the Trust's aim to

maintain balances at a level that will provide sufficient investment income to cover the annual running costs.

- 3.5 Given the Trust's aim, the Members of the Trust committee were advised during the year that the continual withdrawal of the Trust's funds to pay for ongoing revenue expenditure was not sustainable as each investment withdrawal reduces the amount of dividend income available to pay for annual expenses.

Chair of the Cabrera Trust Management Committee
18 July 2024