

OXFORDSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST

Report and Accounts

1 October 2024 - 30 September 2025

Introduction

1. This report and the accompanying receipts and payments accounts for the year ending 30 September 2025 have been prepared by the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust. The report and accounts are intended to help users understand what the Trust was set up to do, the resources available to it, how these resources have been used and what has been achieved as a result of its activities.

Objectives and Activities

2. The objectives of the Trust are to raise funds for the historical research, writing, update (if no longer consistent with contemporary standards of historical accuracy) and publication relating to all the parishes in Oxfordshire, so that there is a consistent high quality Victoria County History volume covering every part of the county.
3. The VCH is a national project to publish a detailed history of every parish and town in the country. The research, writing and part of the publication costs of the Oxfordshire volumes have to be raised locally by the Trust.
4. In Oxfordshire there is a research team consisting of a county editor and, usually three with replacement under discussion, assistant editors who are accommodated and employed by Oxfordshire County Council subject to a legal agreement that the Oxfordshire VCH Trust pays for the employment costs of the assistant editor posts and part of the cost of the County Editor's post. Amateur volunteer groups are involved in the research process by the editorial team.
5. The activities of the Trust are to raise funds to meet these employment costs and to contribute to publication costs.
6. The Trustees confirm that they have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The Trust provides public benefit in enabling histories of educational and community value to be made available to the public and in enabling the involvement of local groups in the process.

Achievements and performance

7. OVCH has published 21 main-series volumes (known as 'The Big Red Books') and 2 paperback volumes. The remaining Volume XXII parishes (Chadlington, Kiddington with Asterleigh, Spelsbury (including Ditchley), and Chilson (with Shorthampton) were all completed in draft, and all except Chilson added to the website, with Chilson to be added very shortly. The volume overview is also in draft, and the whole volume is now being revised ready to be submitted for academic peer review during October 2025. Work has now also begun on rural parishes for Volume 23
8. During 2024-25 the funds raised by the Trust have enabled the Oxfordshire VCH to:
 - Host a reception at Hook Norton Brewery to launch of Volume XXI in October 2024.
 - Research parishes in the west of the county for Volume XXII as above.
 - Several talks to local history groups, and a highly successful series of 'Exploring Local History' weekly sessions led by VCH staff at The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock
 - Host a fund-raising reception and talk on our current research at St John's College in December 2024.
 - Circulate one newsletter in print and online.
 - Publicise its activities through the VCH Twitter (now X) and BlueSky accounts, which together have over 900 followers.

Financial Review

9. Charitable Trust donations were, generally, at a lower level than recent years, with donations of £5,000 or more becoming harder to secure, which resulted in the Trust's income in 2024-5 more-or-less broke even including Gift Aid of some £5,200 which was received and accounted for the previous year. Future gift-aided donations are forecast to remain at this lower level with the claim for 2024-5 being some £5,200, but to reduce in 2026-7. During 2024-5, one of our researchers moved on, resulting in a significant reduction in salary costs but a reduction in our research capability. The replacement and viability of so doing are under discussion by the trustees. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to forecast our future annual out-turn. Support from Oxfordshire County Council, or its possible successor, towards salary costs remains key. Nevertheless, we remain committed to meet future research costs, with plans under discussion to update the much earlier research of the Vale of White Horse when the present research comes to an end by about 2030.

The Trust operated in accordance with the charity's statement on risk assessment and financial controls. The work of the research team remains essential to the high quality of the Oxfordshire VCH publications. Their continuing contribution and commitment to complete the Oxfordshire series is greatly appreciated.

10. All Trustees (including the Chairman and Treasurer) are unpaid, and have given their services voluntarily. No expenses were paid to Trustees during 2023-24. The Trust employs no paid staff.

11. In the year, a trustee donated a total of £15,000 (2024: £10,000), but had advised a reduction to £5,000 next year. There were no other transactions between the trust and the trustees in the year.

Structure, governance and management.

12. The Trust was established in 1997 by deed.

The trustees met formally twice during the financial year, as well as informally at its public events.

13. The appointment of new trustees is by resolution of the existing trustees. The number of trustees is limited to a maximum of 21 by the trust deed which also provides for an uneven number of trustees, if possible. There are currently fifteen trustees. New trustees are selected for their commitment to the project, to the raising of funds, and for their particular skills and contacts.

14. Due to advancing years, the Treasurer has advised his wish to stand down from his role, but is prepare to stay in this role until a replacement is found, with active steps being taken.

Reference and administrative details.

15. The Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust was established by a Trust Deed on 19 September 1997. It is a registered charity, number 1064776. The Trust also operates as the Victoria History of Oxfordshire Trust.

16. The address of the Trust is c/o the Hon. Treasurer, 48 High Street, Wheatley, Oxford, OX 33 1XX.

17. The following were trustees on the date this report was approved:

Prof. William Whyte (Chairman)
Mr John Harwood (Vice-Chairman)
Prof. Robert Evans
Mrs Catherine Fulljames
Brigadier Nigel Mogg
Mr Tom Hassall
Mr Christopher Parker
Dr Jill Pellew

Mrs Hilary Hibbert-Biles
Dr Donald Ratcliffe
Mrs Sarah Taylor
Dr Michael Heaton (Treasurer)
Mrs Amanda Ponsonby
Prof. Elizabeth Gemmill (elected 18.3.2024)
Dr Laura Flannigan (elected 18.3.2024)

18. The Independent Examiner of the Trust's accounts is: Andrew Rodzynski FCA, Wenn Townsend, 30 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LE.

The Trust's bankers are Lloyds Bank

OXFORDSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST - YEAR ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

RECEIPTS

	Total 2024-25 £	Total 2023-24 £
Gift Aid Donations	22,060	20,980
Non Gift Aid Donations	90,105	139,595
Event income	0	390
COIF interest	14,490	16,960
Gift Aid repayment to 5 April 2024	5,245	<u>7,104</u>
Total receipts	<u>131,900</u>	<u>185,029</u>

PAYMENTS

Donations towards research costs	122,992	152,296
Fundraising	3028	1,352
Examination of accounts	870	828
Internet costs	58	58
Publications	1,814	
Total payments	<u>128,762</u>	<u>154,534</u>
Surplus	<u>3,138</u>	<u>30,495</u>

STATEMENT OF BALANCES

Cash at Lloyds Bank at 1 October 2024	4,655
Charities Official Investment Fund deposit account at 1 October 2024	349,631
Surplus of Receipts over Payments, accounting period 2024-2025	<u>3,138</u>
Balances at 30 September 2025	<u>347,424</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Cash at Lloyds Bank at 30 September 2025	26,368
Charities Official Investment Fund deposit account at 30 September 2024	<u>331,056</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>357,424</u>

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by William Whyte on 17 March 2026 :



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Oxfordshire Victoria County History Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30th September 2025 which are set out on page 3.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect that:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act;
- or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



A. Rodzynski FCA
Partner
Wenn Townsend
Chartered Accountants
Oxford
7 March 2026