

**East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust  
Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Annual Report**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

**Company Registration Number 05413877  
Charity Number 1109514**

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Financial Statements**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The Trustees present their Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. They are satisfied that the Financial Statements comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the governing document as described below and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

### **Objectives and Activities**

The objects of the charitable company are to promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection, and improvement of the physical and natural environment within the area of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and the Otter Estuary. Our vision is for the Pebblebed Heaths and the Otter Estuary to be places whose special qualities and rich history are understood by all, places where rare species can flourish, and where society's ever-changing needs for recreation, health and learning can be fulfilled.

In planning our activity, the Trustees kept in mind the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and the site of special scientific interest along the River Otter Estuary are managed by the charitable company to provide public access for walking, rambling and other controlled purposes, public education, and conservation of the land for the benefit of future generations. As part of this work, the charitable company arranges:

- Public education through website content, books, information boards and leaflets about the area, the Countryside Learning Project and public meetings with the heathland wardens, the conservation manager and the education officer.
- Protection, monitoring and enhancement of wildlife habitats on the heathlands and estuary.

The primary aim of practical conservation work at both sites is to deliver 'Favourable Condition Status' (as defined by Natural England), with each site quinquennially assessed against key conservation criteria including habitat quality and population numbers of key wildlife groups. On the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, practical conservation work is guided by a ten-year management plan approved by Natural England, with visitor management guided by a visitor management plan.

### **Achievements and Performance**

The principal activity of the Charitable Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025 was the day-to-day maintenance, conservation and improvement of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the River Otter Estuary SSSI. The work was contracted out to the charitable company's wholly owned subsidiary, East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited, which received partial funding from Countryside Stewardship (CS), Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and Natural England Higher Level Environmental Scheme (HLS). Works of note during the year included:

### **Heaths Conservation Management**

#### Ecological Management Plan

All work follows the prescriptions of the Ecological Management Plan. This plan will be revised and reissued in 2025. The majority of this work is being funded by a Countryside Stewardship agreement which started Jan 2017, running for 10 years. We were granted a further HLS extension to the non SSSI areas of Dalditch Plantation and Mutters Moor finishing in 2027. We are working towards being part of the Landscape Recovery project from 2027 onwards.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Heathland Management Operations

As in previous years, our conservation work during the reporting period has focused on addressing outstanding issues related to those areas not yet in favourable condition. Unfavourable status largely relates to the significant size of even-aged heathland and the presence of too much scrub and tree regeneration.

The main focus of the winter was removal of lodgepole pine regeneration on Dalditch Plantation. This generated over 170 tonnes of material. This was cleared using tree shears by a contractor plus our team on chainsaws. The material was stacked whole and chipped on collection and taken for use in energy production. Smaller areas for scrub were also removed by staff and volunteers on Colaton Raleigh, Woodbury, Hawkerland and Bicton commons. This was a combination of scattered trees and dense clumps of regeneration of birch and pine. In total 8.7ha were targeted for scrub and tree removal. Follow up spot spraying of regeneration from felling in the previous season, along with spraying of seedling encroachment, also took place during the summer.

During spring 2025, a programme of prescribed burning to maintain a mosaic of diverse age structures across the site was undertaken. A total of 16 burns, totalling 3.3ha, were carried out across Colaton Raleigh, Woodbury and Bicton commons.

### Grazing

During summer 2024, Bicton Common (109ha) was grazed with ponies and cattle. Two grazing loops on Colaton Raleigh Common (48ha) were grazed with cows across the block. Hawkerland Common (75ha) was grazed with cattle and ponies. Dalditch Plantation (24ha) was not grazed.

A review of grazing is being carried out to inform our new management plan and planning for the Landscape Recovery project. There is an aspiration to graze more of the reserve than we are currently able to.

### Fire Management

Firebreaks associated with 50+ km of track have been maintained across the Heaths. One wildfire of 1.6ha occurred on Woodbury common during 2024/25. This was caused by a model aircraft; their operating procedures were reviewed and amended following the incident.

### Blackhill Quarry Restoration

The first units within Blackhill Quarry which underwent restoration following mineral extraction have come back to the estate, with 35ha now being managed by the Conservation Trust. There are on-going issues related to low levels of trespass by the public and dogs. Further fencing along the East Devon Way is to be carried out in spring 2025 to tackle this. The family of beavers in the quarry pond are still present and are being monitored. Goosander are making use of the pools as a winter roost, and little ringed plover were present but failed to breed in summer 2024. There is currently no funding to support operations at this location, although it is to be included in the Landscape Recovery area.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Invasive Species Control

There are several scattered populations of *Crocsmia* on East Budleigh and Bicton Commons. A small population of three-cornered leek persists on the roadside of Hawkerland with a small amount of Japanese knotweed on Bicton common. These are receiving annual chemical treatment.

*Buddleia* remains a problem on East Budleigh Common where historical disturbance and significant inputs of lime created ideal conditions for its growth. There are scattered plants in other areas that are due to be targeted for removal.

During 2024 clearance activities of balsam and other invasive species have been undertaken across Estate land, with work parties organised weekly throughout the summer period from June. Himalayan balsam is generally not found on the heaths but remains adjacent to them and monitored to ensure no encroachment on to the protected area.

### Heaths Projects

Water management issues at Blackhill are being targeted by a project with Westcountry Rivers Trust through the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP). This aims to slow the flow of water exiting the quarry onto Bicton Common. This area lies upstream of the village of East Budleigh that historically has suffered from fluvial flooding. Devon Wildlife Trust are also assisting by providing survey support and funding to install dams in the mire on Bicton. This work has been delayed due to protected species but is planned for later in 2025.

### Management of Heritage Features

Woodbury Castle - there are some small areas of erosion from persistent public access. However, these are discrete areas rather than the widespread damage that was seen before the restoration project in 2017. Ground vegetation cover has increased which has helped stabilise the earthworks. This year volunteer sessions tackled scrub on the outside of the ramparts. Tree safety work was also carried out on the beeches within the hillfort. These are over 200 years of age and are in decline.

A management plan for the hillfort is being created with Historic England. It is expected that required works will be eligible for funding through CS/LSR DEFRA grant stream. Once agreed this will enable the monument to be removed from the at-risk register.

Volunteers cleared scrub and bracken from a bowl barrow (SM1018050). Further work on other barrows to follow in the coming winter.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### Heaths Ecological Monitoring

Each year monitoring is carried out of key species:

#### Dartford Warbler

Since 2018 this species has steadily increased, with 2024 returning a count of 191 territories across the surveyed part of the SSSI in our management. The target for dartford warblers is 123 territories across the entire SSSI so this is currently being significantly exceeded. Across all heathland managed by PHCT (which includes areas that are not SSSI) territories recorded numbered 209. Their range across the heaths is expanding, with new territories being set up in areas that have recovered on Colaton Raleigh Common after the 2010 fire.

#### Nightjar

Consistent survey coverage continues across the SSSI and surrounding suitable habitat. Numbers were lower than in recent years though some birds were also recorded adjacent to the heath in the recent clear fell at Uphams. 45 churring males were recorded on the SSSI area we manage with a total of 58 recorded for land managed by PHCT (which includes areas that are not SSSI). The total across the SSSI is close to the target of 88. This annual monitoring represents a significant citizen science and partnership programme.

Full survey coverage of nightjar for a number of years, combined with visitor data, enabled a report looking at nightjar territory selection in relation to visitor pressure. The resulting model indicates that based on data from 2021-23 the distribution of nightjar is not currently markedly affected by the distribution of people and there is no clear evidence that nightjar avoid the areas of high recreation use.

#### Southern Damselfly

On Colaton Raleigh only 2 males were recorded summer 2023, counts were not carried out during 2024. As there is now no evidence of breeding for the CR colony this feature is listed as unfavourable declining. We are seeking support for further investigation into the current state of the species across the mire as none of the management interventions have improved the population at this location.

#### Silver Studded Blue Butterfly

For the 2024 season we have rationalised our butterfly monitoring based on advice from Butterfly Conservation. We have set up an all species transect as part of the UKBMS and a series of timed counts at key SSB locations. This enables us to target our resources and for data to be used and shared more easily.

#### Other Species of Interest

Bats are monitored in the military buildings on East Budleigh by the Devon Bat Group (DBG). Greater and lesser horseshoe and brown long eared are present.

Water vole have also been confirmed on the reserve thanks to surveying using a detection dog.

Beavers: the beavers are still present in Blackhill Quarry. Beavers have now also colonised parts of the heath managed by partner organisations.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Harvest mice: Surveys with Devon Harvest Mouse project took place on Hawkerland, Mutters Moor and the field on Colaton Raleigh. Presence was confirmed at Hawkerland but numbers have declined following the increase in grazing in the past 5 years. Presence was also confirmed on Mutters Moor and the field on Colaton Raleigh.

Reptiles: monitoring of refuge sheets continues across Bicton, Colaton Raleigh, Hawkerland and Woodbury commons. A new transect has been set up on Dalditch Plantation. Smooth snake has now been recorded at Dalditch due to the expansion of the reintroduction on the neighbouring common.

Hen harrier were not recorded at the traditional roost site on Colaton Raleigh during the winter season.

Curlew: None were recorded.

Snipe: 100 over-wintering were recorded in Thorntree (part of Blackhill Quarry area). Displaying breeding birds were also observed in the Colaton Raleigh and Bicton mires.

### **Heaths Visitor Management**

#### Mitigation Strategy

Visitor management remains a key challenge with the site now receiving an estimated 900,000 visits/year.

Funding overseen by South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) is available to mitigate the increased recreational pressure linked to local housing development via the SEDHRP Mitigation Strategy.

This strategy has been implemented across the designated site since 2016. The next phase of the mitigation strategy is now being discussed in relation to the emerging local plan. This will supersede the existing strategy and provides an opportunity to review the effectiveness of our past approach and adapt accordingly. With a new settlement of (initially) 2,500 homes planned within 3km of the reserve plus expansion at Exmouth, getting the appropriate mitigation in place is critical to ensure the long-term protection of the site. In addition to onsite mitigation measures, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) will be vital to give people alternative greenspace to alleviate footfall on the designated site.

A new visitor survey is planned for 2025/26. This follows on from the baseline in 2015 and the first survey during mitigation delivery in 2020/21. The results from this will assess the impact of the measures and inform intervention design going forward.

#### Visitor Infrastructure

The increased visitor pressure on the heaths has highlighted the importance of robust infrastructure and appropriate signage to manage public access, influence behaviours and protect the site. The car park refurbishment work which was consulted on in 2019 is now completed with Model Airfield, Uphams and Wheathill the focus during 2024. Improvements were also carried out at Mutters Moor. To date the work has been well received by the public. It is helping to reduce roadside parking and the amount of litter has reduced.

New signage associated with the car park works has been installed to encourage responsible recreation and highlight the status of the site as an NNR. It has been designed to capture the sense of place and demonstrate the special nature of the reserve making it clear how people can help us care for it during their visit. QR codes link to a webpage to provide further sources of information.

Maintenance has been on-going on all vehicle barriers across the SSSI. The usual ongoing maintenance of tracks has also taken place.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Permissions External Events

Time has been invested into publicising that permission is required for all events on the heaths. All activity providers we are aware of now have permission in place. A live 'What's on' page is maintained on the website that shows external as well as our own events. Sufficient parking continues to be the biggest challenge in accommodating larger events. Unless parking can be accommodated offsite these requests are being declined.

### Permissions Commercial Activities

Businesses and groups known to be operating on the heaths are licenced to ensure that they operate in line with our conservation objectives. A significant ongoing effort has been made to ensure that all those requiring a licence are approached. Particular effort continues to be invested in engaging with commercial dog walkers. This licencing scheme has been well received and we currently have 40 businesses on board. We liaise with them regularly. Other businesses linked to recreation are also licenced. These cover mountain biking, running, walking groups, horse riding, and outdoor education. All clubs and business we are aware of now have the correct permissions in place.

### Ministry of Defence (MOD)

All of the recruits that pass through Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) Lympstone each year are given a lecture on the conservation and cultural significance of the Pebblebed Heaths SSSI by Conservation Trust staff prior to training. Visiting MoD units receive a briefing from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The live firing range on Colaton Raleigh is generally used twice per month.

Damage from trampling was identified across the mire on Bicton Common so this area has been made out of bounds to enable the vegetation to recover. Damage near to the 'sheep dip' has also been identified for repair works.

### Illegal Activity

Illegal activity has taken place throughout the reporting period on an irregular basis, with occasional motorbike encroachment and regular fly-tipping which appears to have been more problematic this year. As part of the car park strategy, measures have been put in place to deter overnighting in vans and anti-social behaviour. These include lockable barriers, changing of car park layouts and improving the visibility in to parking areas as well as signs which clearly highlight no camping and site rules. We are trialling use of a local security firm on a retainer to deal with persistent overnighting in vans/travellers. No raves were recorded in the reporting period.

## **Otter Estuary Conservation Management**

### Lower Otter Restoration Project

The breach allowing tidal inundation into the Otter valley took place in October 2023 with remaining project work completed by March 2024. To ensure capacity to manage the Otter Estuary Nature Reserve following project completion, a new ranger role with a focus on engagement, ecological monitoring and site maintenance, was initiated in April 2023 and over the past two years has been crucial in ensuring that the reserve is well cared for and that our obligations as project partners are fulfilled.



# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Estuary Management Operations

Since September 2024 we have been responsible for the on-going management of landscaping. At the end of the summer the wildflower areas were mown and raked to maintain their floristic interest. The tree planted areas were brushcut to remove the weed burden and during the winter period tree/scrub plantings were checked and redundant tree guards removed.

The islands in Big Marsh South were cleared of weeds to keep them attractive to birds for roosting and potentially nesting.

Dead hedging and general hedge management was started on the embankment path to reduce incursions by dogs into the intertidal area.

Fencing was improved around the planting area by Big Bank/railway line track.

### Estuary Invasive Species Control

Himalayan Balsam in the areas out of tidal water was pulled to limit its spread. Russian vine is being monitored on the cliff at the southern end of the western footpath. Volunteer groups are pulling buttonweed (*Cotula coronopifolia*) which was discovered in the saltmarsh.

### Estuary Projects

An osprey nest platform was installed adjacent to the estuary as it was identified as having the potential to support a breeding pair.

### **Estuary Ecological Monitoring**

A LORP Environmental Monitoring Programme for the first five years post breach was agreed with the EA and is reported on annually. All monitoring was carried out in line with the agreed programme in addition to surveys regarding bird use and fish. From the data and reports collated for year 1, there are no apparent concerns, with the project area evolving as hoped and the impact on the existing estuary area largely as expected. A full year 1 report has been completed and submitted to Natural England and the Environment Agency. A summary of key monitoring elements is given below.

### Estuarine Morphology

Aerial and bathymetric surveys were used to create elevation maps that highlight significant deepening of the breach channel since 2023. Associated with the erosion (~3.5 m in places) the channel has widened in parts where the vegetated bank has been eroded by up to 2.6 m. There is some evidence that the previously very straight channel path is evolving with a shallow bank being established on the southern side which may continue to evolve until an equilibrium state is found. Across the site there are patches of accretion in the main Otter channel and the distal end of the pebble spit continues to evolve becoming narrower with material removed from the seaward side.

### Habitat Change

The establishment of saltmarsh vegetation within the LORP area was at a very early stage, being limited to a few pioneering salt tolerant plant species growing in marginal locations. There were no discernible saltmarsh zones; the majority of LORP area was dominated by bare mud, with dead vegetation and *Enteromorpha*. However, since the previous survey, cover of pioneering species, particularly *Salicornia* sp., has increased. An almost continuous band of pioneering species is now present around the margin of the LORP area, species

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

cover is still sparse in many areas, but if this rate of establishment continues, distinct zones may be mappable during 2025.

### Translocated Plants

Neither *Carex divisa* nor *Cyperus longus* were recorded at the receptor site locations during the survey. This is consistent with the results of the 2023 survey when no plants were recorded. Whilst no translocated plants were recorded, it is possible that plants may lie dormant, without flowering, following translocation. However, given that no plants have not been recorded over two consecutive years, the chance of plants being present but unrecorded is becoming increasingly unlikely.

### Birds

WeBS Counts are undertaken by independent observer and submitted to BTO every six months. This data has been collected since the beginning of construction (2021) from three sections – Big Marsh, Little Marsh, and Estuary / River.

Citizen Science – eBird. All bird observations are recorded using eBird by the site ranger and volunteers, including regular complete counts and breeding data.

Two Song Meter Micro2 audio sound recorders (Wildlife Acoustics) have been recording bird songs and calls 24/7 from May 2024 as a year-long trial to establish their effectiveness as a tool for monitoring long-term change in bird use of the site. This has been made possible through a donation made to PHCT.

Graphs for key wildfowl and wader species from 2014 to 2024, using a combination of WeBS and eBird records showing high counts per month, allows for a comparison of the site pre- and post-breach. These illustrate significant increases in many wildfowl and waders. For full detail see the Otter Estuary Nature Reserve Bird Report 2014-2024.

### Bird Disturbance

Vantage point surveys are carried out year-round at four locations on the estuary. During 2024 there were 62 observation sessions. Most common activities were walking and dog walking. The total number of birds seen was approximately 4,965. There were eleven disturbance events only logged during these observations with the total number of birds disturbed being 17. Ten of the events were recorded on the Old Estuary (six incidents related to dogs/dog walkers, two related to walkers, one related to angler, and one related to a child throwing stones).

Although there were eight observations of water users e.g. SUP, rowing boat, swimmers, kayak recorded, none were associated with disturbance events. Only one disturbance event was recorded using this method on Big Marsh South when one Shelduck was observed walking away from group of walkers.

Other records of disturbance outside vantage point surveys are recorded by staff, volunteers and the local community. This recorded 75 incursion incidents between May 2023 and Jan 2025. The majority of the incursions were by dogs largely on Big Marsh South of SFR and by SUP/kayak/kitesurfers on Otter Estuary. Not all incursions led to direct disturbance of birds. There have only been a handful of incidences where kayakers and paddleboarders have entered Big Marsh during the summer of 2024. To ensure this possibility is reduced further the intention is to place a buoy at the river end of the main channel leading to the footbridge.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### **Fish Monitoring**

A Fish Survey of the Otter Estuary and the LORP area was carried out in September 2024. The post-breach survey had two objectives: a) to survey the new realignment and assess how fish are utilising the new habitats available and b) to survey the existing saltmarshes.

Sea bass, thin-lipped grey mullet and common goby were the most abundant species found as in previous years. The numbers are now larger, given the higher sampling effort expended over three days rather than the two previously, but also because more fish are now spread across the extant saltmarshes and the new realignment.

One key find in 2024 was a european eel; it is encouraging to see this threatened migratory species beginning to colonise the new habitat. Juvenile herring and sprat were found in one site in the lower reaches of the realignment along with two species not reported in the previous surveys, the sand goby and the sand smelt.

### **Protected Species**

Monitoring of protected species has continued undertaken across the wider estuary reserve for beaver, dormouse, reptiles, owls, and bats. Beaver continue to make sporadic forays into the estuary area from higher up the catchment.

### **Carbon**

A series of carbon monitoring pins have been installed across the intertidal area to measure accretion to enable modelling of carbon sequestration. Baseline soil carbon surveys were undertaken prior to restoration.

## **Estuary Visitor Management**

### **Visitor Use**

Visitor counters have been installed to track levels of use. Since the re-opening of the estuary footpaths visitor use of the reserve has significantly increased. The range of people using the routes has also broadened due to accessibility improvements.

A number of groups including Seachange, Budleigh Lions Club and the local running club, regularly make use of the reserve for group walks/runs. There has also been an increase in use by people using wheelchairs and walking aids, as well as families with buggies.

The proportion of bird/wildlife watchers has increased due to the profile of the LORP project but people walking dogs still make up a large proportion of visitors.

### **Visitor Infrastructure**

There are now seven viewing areas across the reserve. There has been positive feedback on the structures and signage.

An accessibility check was carried out following the main LORP work. Opportunities for further path improvements and seating were identified which would make the reserve more accessible. The entire path network around the reserve can now completed in a mobility scooter.

Four additional benches have been installed in the southern part of the reserve, funded by donations. These seats are being well used.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

The new car park opened in October 2023. There is still significant parking on South Farm Road so it is not being used as much as it could. A request has been made to DCC regarding parking restrictions on SFR due to safety concerns. South Farm Road has now been adopted by DCC so this is expected to come in to force this summer. Repairs were carried out in the car park surface where some of the grass areas were not able to withstand the level of traffic.

### Permissions External Events

An increasing number of running and walking events are taking place which make use of the estuary path network. As these are public rights of way our permission is not required but we are requesting that event organisers liaise with us to limit the impact of these events on the reserve, wildlife and other visitors.

### Permissions for Commercial Activities

The only commercial operator using the reserve is the refreshment van located in the reserve car park associated with Otterton Mill.

### Illegal Activity

Occasionally there have been cases of graffiti on signage and benches, this is at a low level and is quickly removed. Antisocial use of the Nature Reserve car park has also been reported with occasional use of the public footpaths by cyclists. Signage is in place and staff engage with those breaking the rules.

## **Public Engagement**

### Heaths Events

We hosted 12 events, engaging with 580 people, as part of Heath Week 2024, with 20 events taking place across the heaths in total. All events were well attended with positive feedback. Some of the most popular events were our geology walk, archaeology day and botany walk.

Our monthly guided dog walks with *Devon Loves Dogs* were consistently fully booked with a mix of regulars and new contacts at each walk. In the period there were 130 attendees over nine walks. Although there is further demand for these educational walks from this key user group, staff capacity limits our ability to expand this engagement opportunity. For spring/summer 2024 we promoted the 'Paws On Paths' campaign during the bird breeding season. During the winter we promoted a 'bag it and bin it' campaign.

### Otter Estuary Events

In October we held our first Wetland Weekender, to celebrate the one year anniversary of the breach. Over three days we held ten different events and engaged with over 340 people. The weekend was well received and those who attended were given an update on the changes over the year.

Our monthly guided 'Ranger Walks' continue to be well attended, with 150 attendees across ten walks in the report period. Where possible we aim to hold regular pop-up events alongside these to give us the opportunity to engage with people that are not booked on to walks.

### Stakeholder Engagement

In Jan 2025 we held our Friends of the Common Forum, attended by 80 people. During the evening there was an opportunity for people to look at information stands from the Trust and our partners and to talk to the team. This was followed by presentations on the heaths, estuary, and the Heaths to Sea project. The event was held in Exmouth in order to make the event more accessible and accommodate a larger audience.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Engagement Plan

As part of the Pebblebeds for All project an engagement plan has been completed. This considers how we can make our engagement activities more inclusive, how we can better support health and wellbeing, and ways in which we can build people understanding and value of the nature reserve.

### **Volunteering**

#### Registered Volunteers

At the end of the period we had 98 registered volunteers, an increase of 20% from the previous year. These volunteers work on a range of tasks across the reserves including practical work, monitoring and engagement. This increase is due to new opportunities on the Otter Estuary and increased support from an engagement ranger. We have streamlined our sign-up process and are able to provide more support and regular communications with the group through a volunteer newsletter.

#### Friends of the Common Work Party

The Friends of the Commons practical volunteer work parties continued to meet throughout the year. Every Wednesday 15-20 volunteers attended. During this period these work parties contributed 845 hours work on the Pebblebed Heaths and Otter Estuary. Tasks have included: scrub clearance; vegetation management in silver-studded blue sites; scheduled monument management; removal of old fencing. The group also contributed a further 442 hours off the reserve carrying out conservation tasks such as Himalayan balsam management elsewhere in the local area.

#### New Volunteering Activities

We aspire to grow our volunteering offer further. The NNR Master Plan identifies opportunities to engage with young people and families. The Pebblebeds for All project will enable more people to take positive action for nature on the reserve in different ways over the next two years. 'Action for Nature' drop-in volunteer sessions were introduced in early spring 2025 and a youth ranger scheme is due to start in autumn 2025.

### **Education**

300 A-level biology students were hosted on the heaths to carry out fieldwork across seven sessions. Each session had an introduction from the site team. 120 A-level Environmental Science students from Exeter College carried out field work on the heaths across three days. Each day there was an introduction from our site team. 48 students from a French secondary school visited the estuary spring 2025 through our PACCO partners. 20 pupils from Woodbury primary school and 25 from Ide primary school also made formal visits to the estuary.

We are currently creating heathland focused educational resources for A-level students to be used in the coming year.

### **Communications**

#### Online Communications

We are investing time into building our online presence. This includes regularly posting on Facebook (2.3k followers) and Instagram (713 followers). We continue to add content and promote our website (pebblebedheaths.org.uk). As part of the Pebblebeds for All project we have improved our 'what's on' page to make it easier for people to find information about activities happening on the reserve. The website will be undergoing a full refresh next year.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Friends of the Commons Newsletter

At the start of April 2024, we had 1,352 subscribers for our email newsletter, a 9% increase. We are now issuing newsletters once a month due to the extra capacity provided by having an engagement ranger.

### Media

From April 2024 to April 2025, there were 54 mentions of the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust, the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, or the Otter Estuary in regional and national print, broadcast and online media.

The 'Pebblebeds for All' project gained coverage following the Heritage Lottery Funding announcement. There was also press coverage for the common registration linked to Blackhill Quarry with continued coverage of LORP in relation to arts projects and the visiting osprey. Articles linked to car park improvements and dog walker engagement work featured. Cover later in the year was largely related to the Heaths to Sea project.

Online coverage achieved an estimated 1.34m page views.

### **Research And Knowledge Exchange**

#### Site Visits and Sharing Best Practices

During the reporting period we hosted a number of professional site visits for Natural England, National Trust, Environment Agency, and the Met Office. We also presented at the National Heathland Conference and the Countryside Management Association annual conference.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the support of the many organisations and individuals who have helped us during the reporting period. The Conservation Trust works with a broad variety of conservation partners. These included Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency, the RSPB, the Devon Wildlife Trust, South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership, the East Devon National Landscape, local schools and community groups, including the Otter Valley Association. The Royal Marines and the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service are additional long-term partners who assist with essential conservation work. We would also like to thank the members of the NNR Advisory Board. A team of volunteers has assisted the Conservation Trust annually to undertake wildlife surveys, archaeology monitoring and habitat management work across our reserves and beyond. Special thanks to Doug and Joan Cullen who have supported our conservation work throughout the period.

### **Financial Review**

The charitable company had total income of £162,773 during the year (2024: £572,162). Income received during the year relating to restricted funds was £13,191. Unrestricted income received during the year was £149,582, of which £27,229 was a Gift Aid receipt from the charitable company's subsidiary.

Details of expenditure during the year can be found in note 6.

The statement of financial activities shows total net expenditure of £161,411 for the year (2024: net income of £419,478). This net expenditure includes a net gain on investments of £17,104 (2024: £125,252).

The balance sheet shows total funds of £2,189,113 (2024: £2,350,524).

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

### Reserves Policy

The Trustees and the officers responsible for day-to-day operations continually monitor the level of free reserves (unrestricted income funds including fixed asset investments which are held to provide on-going income) of the charitable company and ensure that they are sufficient to meet the payment obligations of the charitable company as they fall due.

At 31 March 2025, the charitable company had unrestricted reserves of £1,895,104. Of this, £1,617 represents tangible fixed assets, leaving £1,893,487 of free reserves.

The Trustees have plans to use these funds in pursuit of the charitable company's objects and are satisfied that they are sufficient to meet its financial obligations. Planned works over the coming decade include the delivery of the ten-year Ecological Management Plan of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, implementing both the fundraising and vehicle succession strategies, the implementation of the Visitor Management Plan of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths, and improving the extent and quality of the intertidal habitats and access facilities of the Otter Estuary, including through the delivery and legacy of the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

The Trustees have considered the appropriate level of free financial reserves to be maintained by the charity to enable it to meet its charitable objectives, enhance the underlying heritage assets within its control and manage conservation and education projects as they arise.

In this respect, it is the policy of the Trust to reach a level of reserves which is equivalent to three to five years of operational expenditure. Operational expenditure includes unrestricted expenditure for both the charity, and its wholly owned trading subsidiary East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited. In arriving at this reserves policy consideration was given to liquidity risk and the future uncertainty associated with government support, uncertainty associated with the timing of annual funding payments and the levels of project funding required ahead of specific grant payments.

The level of free reserves is currently in line with the reserves policy.

The level of free financial reserves will be reviewed annually by the Trustees and the policy updated to reflect any change in the target set.

### Investments

The investments held by the charity were acquired in accordance with the powers granted to the Trustees in the Settlement Deed and are managed on a discretionary basis by a firm of professional stockbrokers. The performance of investments is reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis.

### Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees identify and review from time to time the risks to which the Trust is materially exposed and the action to be taken to mitigate them. Presently, they are seen as:

- a lack of funds adequate to support the Trust's activities
- a lack of public support to enable the planned restoration and education projects to go ahead
- a lack of internal capacity to deliver the increased engagement, fundraising and administrative burden associated with the larger NNR designation.

In respect of the first risk, Trustees raise as much money as they are able and have safeguards in place to ensure they do not commit funds in excess of those available. One of the greatest challenges the Trust faces is securing income streams post Brexit which will require diversifying income streams so there is less reliance on agri-environment schemes. To address this, the Trust has developed a fundraising strategy and continues to try and secure existing agri-environment scheme opportunities whilst such sources of income last.

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

## **Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)**

**Year Ended 31 March 2025**

In respect of the second risk, the Trust operates a proactive policy of public engagement through its website, social media and consultation with community groups when considering new projects and ensures that relevant and appropriate surveys and applications for permission are received before a project is started. Public support is being specifically addressed through constant updating of the website, the creation of a Friends of the Commons group (now with 1,300+ members) and delivering annual education and engagement programmes.

In respect of the third risk, the Trust has recently appointed an Otter Estuary Ranger, has recruited a fundraiser and secured NLHF funding for a Countryside Ranger apprentice who started in September 2024.

### **Plans for Future Periods**

The Trustees are committed to building on the achievements of the year in future periods.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust was incorporated on 5 April 2005, as amended by special resolution on 4 January 2006, as a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 05413877, and governed under a Memorandum and Articles of Association. It has the registered charity number 1109514.

The Trustees confirm that the financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, with the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the recommendations of the Statement of Recommended Practice.

The principal address of the charitable company is Rolle Estate Office, Bickton Arena, East Budleigh, Budleigh Salterton, Devon, EX9 7BL.

### **Governance**

The four subscribers to the Memorandum and Articles of Association were the initial Members and Trustees. Further Members are appointed at the discretion of the Trustees and further Trustees may be elected at Annual General Meetings of the Members. Further Trustees may also be co-opted by the Trustees at any time, but co-opted Trustees hold office only until the next Annual General Meeting. A minimum of 3 and a maximum of 10 Trustees are required.

Newly appointed Trustees will be asked to meet the Reserves Manager, operational staff of the Land Management Company and employees of Clinton Devon Estates' finance and property departments responsible for the Conservation Trust's administration. The Trustee will also be given the following documents: Heaths Management Plan, Health and Safety Protocol and the latest Annual Report. The Trustee will also be given a summary of the responsibilities attached to the position as defined by The Charities Commission and Company Law.

The Members and Trustees meet at an Annual General Meeting. They also meet periodically throughout the year as required to receive and review reports on management matters and financial position.

The day-to-day operation of the charitable company is undertaken by officers of Clinton Devon Estates and a management charge is paid for this. The responsibilities of the officers include property, financial and general administrative duties for the charitable company. The management charge for the year ended 31 March 2025 is disclosed in note 14.



# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors'  
Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## **Reference and Administrative details**

**Registered charity name** East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust

**Charity number** 1109514

**Company registration number** 05413877

**Registered office** Centenary House  
Peninsula Park  
Rydon Lane  
Exeter  
EX2 7XE

**Trustees** The late Lord Clinton (to 2 April 2024)  
The Rt Hon Lord Clinton (appointed 26 June 2024)  
Mr D J R Robinson  
Mr J C Varley OBE TD  
Mr P J Gotham  
Mr A C J Cooper  
Mr M Williams MBE  
Mr N G H Manns  
Mrs C Walliker  
Mr P Nixon  
Mr J D Bevan (appointed 26 June 2024)  
Mr I M Monks (appointed 26 June 2024)  
Mr M Williams MBE (appointed 26 June 2024)

**Secretary** Mr D J R Robinson

**Independent Examiner** Neil Hitchings FCA  
Francis Clark LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
Centenary House  
Peninsula Park  
Rydon Lane  
Exeter  
EX2 7XE

**Solicitors** Forsters LLP  
31 Hill Street  
London  
W1J 5LS

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Trustees Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report for the Purposes of S415 Companies Act 2006) (*continued*)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees (who are also the directors of East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees Annual Report (incorporating the Directors' Report for the purposes of s415 Companies Act 2006) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

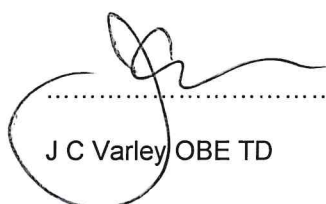
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Small Company Provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees



.....  
J C Varley OBE TD

Date: 24 June 2025

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Independent Examiners Report to the Members

Year Ended 31 March 2025

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's Trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

### Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.



Neil Hitchings FCA  
Francis Clark LLP  
Centenary House  
Peninsula Park  
Rydon Lane  
Exeter, EX2 7XE

Date: 4 November 2025

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust

## Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating the income and expenditure account)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and Legacies	3	13,191	96,593	<b>109,784</b>	243,979
Charitable Activities	4	-	-	-	273,887
Investments	5	-	52,869	<b>52,869</b>	54,276
Other		-	120	<b>120</b>	20
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>13,191</b>	<b>149,582</b>	<b>162,773</b>	572,162
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable Activities	6	111,729	229,559	<b>341,288</b>	277,936
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>111,729</b>	<b>229,559</b>	<b>341,288</b>	277,936
Net Gains/(Losses) on Investments	9	-	17,104	<b>17,104</b>	125,252
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure)</b>		<b>(98,538)</b>	<b>(62,873)</b>	<b>(161,411)</b>	419,478
<b>Transfers between funds</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>		<b>(98,538)</b>	<b>(62,873)</b>	<b>(161,411)</b>	419,478
<b>Reconciliation of Funds:</b>					
<b>Total Funds Brought Forward</b>	12	<b>392,547</b>	<b>1,957,977</b>	<b>2,350,524</b>	1,931,046
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>	12	<b>294,009</b>	<b>1,895,104</b>	<b>2,189,113</b>	2,350,524

The notes on pages 20 – 29 form part of these financial statements

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance Sheet  
Company Registration Number: 5413877

Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible assets	8	175,176	203,096
Investments	9	1,920,173	1,903,762
		<b>2,095,349</b>	<b>2,106,858</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	10	200,144	246,077
Cash at bank		20,438	194,170
		<b>220,582</b>	<b>440,247</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	(126,818)	(196,581)
<b>Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)</b>		<b>93,764</b>	<b>243,666</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>2,189,113</b>	<b>2,350,524</b>
<b>The Funds of the Charity:</b>			
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	12	<b>1,895,104</b>	<b>1,957,977</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>	12	<b>294,009</b>	<b>392,547</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>2,189,113</b>	<b>2,350,524</b>

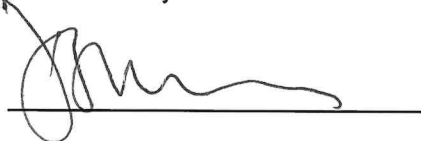
For the financial year ending 31 March 2025 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

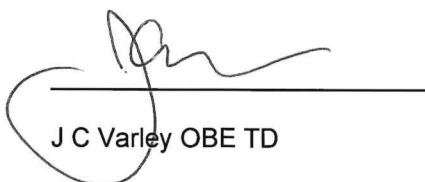
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small company's regime.

The financial statements on pages 18 to 29 were approved by the Trustees on 24 June 2025 and signed on their behalf by:-



D J R Robinson



J C Varley OBE TD

**The notes on pages 20 – 29 form part of these financial statements**

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### 1) General information

East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust is a company limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. Under the Memorandum of Association, each member is required, in the event of a dissolution of the company while they are a member or within 12 months afterwards, to contribute up to £1 toward the company's liabilities and dissolution costs.

The charity was incorporated in England and Wales and details of the registered office can be found in the reference and administrative section of the Trustees report.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The functional currency of East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust is considered to be pounds sterling because it is the currency of the primary economic environment in which the charitable company operates.

### 2) Accounting policies

#### (a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice' applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (March 2018) and the Companies Act 2006.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

#### (b) Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and the Trustees have considered the working capital requirements and are not aware of any material uncertainties that would cast doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The trustees have considered the impact of the current uncertain economic environment and are satisfied that the charity has sufficient unrestricted reserves to meet the charity's obligations for the next 12 months and therefore consider that the going concern assumption remains appropriate.

#### (c) Consolidation

In the opinion of the members of the committee, the charity and its subsidiary undertakings comprise a small group under Charities Act 2011 thresholds. The charity is not required to prepare group accounts and has chosen not to take up the option under Section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 to prepare group accounts.

The accounts present information about the charitable company as an individual undertaking and not about its group. Note 9 provides adequate details relating to the nature of the trading subsidiary.

#### (d) Income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charitable company is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- Grant income is recognised in the accounts when the qualifying conditions for the grant have been satisfied and there is reasonable certainty that the funding will be received.
- Income from donations is recognised on receipt.
- Donations received for specific purposes are identified as restricted funds income. Other grants and donations are identified as unrestricted funds.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### 2) Accounting policies (continued)

#### (e) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates:

- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charitable company in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries.
- Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charitable company, including costs linked to strategic management.

#### (f) Investment

Investments include the investment in the wholly owned subsidiary company, East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited, which is stated at cost. Investments also include stock market investments, which are carried at fair value. Gains or losses on disposals and changes in fair value are credited or charged in the Statement of Financial Activities. Dividends and interest receivable are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All fixed assets are initially recorded at cost.

#### (g) Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of a fixed asset, less its estimated residual value, on a straight line basis over the estimated useful economic life of that asset, at the following rates:

Buildings	-	10% and 20%
Equipment	-	20% to 50%

#### (h) Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charitable company.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

#### (i) Financial instruments

Financial assets and liabilities are recognised/(derecognised) when the charity becomes/(ceases to become) party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. The charity holds the following financial assets and liabilities:

- Equity investments are measured at fair value with movements being recognised in income and expenditure.
- Short term debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price and carried thereafter at amortised cost.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## 3) Donations and Legacies

	2025 £	2024 £
Donations	82,555	129,543
Gift aid receipts from subsidiary	27,229	114,436
	<u>109,784</u>	<u>243,979</u>

The income from donations and legacies was £109,784 (2024: £243,979) of which £96,593 was unrestricted (2024: £241,479) and £13,191 restricted (2024: £2,500).

## 4) Income from Charitable Activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Grants and contracts	-	273,887
	<u>-</u>	<u>273,887</u>

The income from charitable activities was £nil (2024: £273,887) of which £nil was unrestricted (2024: £Nil) and £nil restricted (2024: £273,887).

## 5) Investment income

	2025 £	2024 £
Income from:		
UK Investments listed on a recognised Stock Exchange	52,869	54,276
	<u>52,869</u>	<u>54,276</u>

All investment income received in 2025 and 2024 represents unrestricted funds.



# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## 6) Resources Expended: Charitable Activities

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Repairs and maintenance	-	103,993	103,993	74,197
Depreciation of equipment	-	808	808	808
Public interpretation	-	4,517	4,517	6,343
Lower Otter Restoration Project	20,171	1,623	21,794	107,055
Habitat mitigation works	4,119	-	4,119	-
AONB access	947	-	947	9,535
National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant	73,143	-	73,143	15,764
Cullen Fund	-	-	-	1,934
Environmental Impact Fund	7,658	-	7,658	-
Other restricted expenditure	5,691	-	5,691	2,500
Bank charges	-	454	454	466
Other administrative expenses	-	390	390	830
Legal and professional fees	-	14,866	14,866	841
Education initiatives/Countryside learning	-	10,694	10,694	10,266
Volunteer costs	-	155	155	510
Wages and salaries	-	673	673	1,235
Motor expenses	-	834	834	72
Staff training	-	1,203	1,203	-
Fundraising costs	-	39,812	39,812	-
Telephone and office	-	-	-	1,945
<b>Governance costs</b>				
Management	-	43,673	43,673	38,215
Accountancy & Independent examination	-	5,864	5,864	5,420
	<u>111,729</u>	<u>229,559</u>	<u>341,288</u>	<u>277,936</u>

The expenditure from charitable activities was £341,288 (2024: £277,936) of which £229,559 was unrestricted (2024: £131,639) and £111,729 restricted (2024: £146,297).

## 7) Staff Costs and Emoluments

During the year, the charitable company paid salary, employers NI and pension contribution costs totalling £27,522 (2024: £70,428) to Clinton Devon Estates for a Head of Conservation and Wildlife and Sustainability and Project Manager. These costs are funded through donations received by the charity.

The Trustees received no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses within the year.

Key management of the charity is considered to be the Trustees only.

No staff members were paid over £60,000.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## 8) Tangible fixed assets

	Short leasehold improvements £	Equipment £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025	<u>191,648</u>	<u>145,159</u>	<u>336,807</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 1 April 2024	69,220	64,491	133,711
Charge for the year	14,457	13,463	27,920
At 31 March 2025	<u>83,677</u>	<u>77,954</u>	<u>161,631</u>
<b>Net book value</b>			
At 31 March 2025	<u>107,971</u>	<u>67,205</u>	<u>175,176</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>122,428</u>	<u>80,668</u>	<u>203,096</u>

## 9) Investments

### Investment in Subsidiary

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Cost at 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025</b>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The investment comprises 100% of the ordinary share capital (equity) of East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited, a company incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office of this company is the same as the registered office of the Trust which can be found in the reference and administrative section of the Trustees report.

East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited is contracted by the charitable company to undertake the physical management of the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths and Otter Estuary land.

As at 31 March 2025, East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited had assets of £515,668 (2024: £439,775), liabilities of £364,579 (2024: £346,688) and capital and reserves of £151,089 (2024: £93,087). Its total turnover and other income for the year ended 31 March 2025 was £494,525 (2024: £441,880), expenditure was £409,294 (2024: £402,959) and its profit for the year was £85,231 (2024: £38,921).

The profit for the year ended 31 March 2025 was stated before charging company gift aid donations totalling £27,229 (2024: £114,436) to East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Charitable Trust.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## 9) Investments (continued)

### Stock Market Portfolio

	2025 £	2024 £
UK investments listed on a recognised stock exchange:		
1,240,000 Sarasin Endowments Fund Class A	1,902,227	1,532,640
100,000 Sarasin Global Dividend	-	162,700
150,000 Sarasin Climate Active Endowments Active Class A	-	188,400
Cash held as part of the investment portfolio	17,846	19,922
<b>Total investments at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>1,920,073</b>	<b>1,903,662</b>
Reconciliation		
Market value at 1 April 2024	1,903,662	1,812,555
Additions	339,883	398,300
Disposals	(338,500)	(331,580)
Net gain/(loss) on investments	17,104	125,252
(Decrease)/increase in cash held as part of the investment portfolio	(2,330)	(102,391)
Investment management fees credit	254	1,526
<b>Market value at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>1,920,073</b>	<b>1,903,662</b>

## 10) Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	-	-
Other debtors	200,144	246,077
	<b>200,144</b>	<b>246,077</b>

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## 11) Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts owed to group undertakings	116,318	188,285
Accruals	10,500	8,296
	<u>126,818</u>	<u>196,581</u>

## 12) Funds

Current year	At 31 Mar 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfer/ gains & (losses) £	At 31 Mar 2025 £
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>					
Habitat Mitigation Grant	4,119	-	(4,119)	-	-
Woodbury Castle Steps Grant	510	-	-	-	510
Lower Otter Restoration Project					
Capital Costs	169,120	-	(20,171)	-	148,949
Cullen Fund	23,066			(23,066)	-
AONB Access Capital Costs	7,574	-	(947)	-	6,627
National Lottery Heritage Fund					
Grant	164,181	-	(67,149)	-	97,032
National Lottery Heritage Fund					
Grant – Capital Costs	23,977	-	(5,994)	-	17,983
Environmental Impact Fund	-	7,500	(7,658)	23,066	22,908
Other restricted donations	-	5,691	(5,691)	-	-
	<u>392,547</u>	<u>13,191</u>	<u>(111,729)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>294,009</u>
<b>Unrestricted Funds:</b>					
General Funds	1,957,977	149,582	(229,559)	17,104	1,895,104
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u>2,350,524</u>	<u>162,773</u>	<u>(341,288)</u>	<u>17,104</u>	<u>2,189,113</u>

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust

## Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### 12) Funds (continued)

Previous year	At 31 Mar 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfer/ gains & (losses) £	At 31 Mar 2024 £
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>					
Habitat Mitigation Grant	4,119	-	-	-	4,119
Woodbury Castle Steps Grant	510	-	-	-	510
Lower Otter Restoration Project	-	35,432	(81,735)	46,303	-
Lower Otter Restoration Project					
Capital Costs	132,625	39,099	(20,171)	17,567	169,120
National Nature Reserve	1,081	-	-	(1,081)	-
Cullen Fund	25,000	-	(1,934)	-	23,066
AONB Access	-	8,588	(8,588)	-	-
AONB Access Capital Costs	8,521	-	(947)	-	7,574
National Lottery Heritage Fund					
Grant	-	173,951	(9,770)	-	164,181
National Lottery Heritage Fund					
Grant – Capital Costs	-	16,817	(5,994)	13,154	23,977
Other restricted donations	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
	<u>171,856</u>	<u>276,387</u>	<u>(131,639)</u>	<u>75,943</u>	<u>392,547</u>
<b>Unrestricted Funds:</b>					
General Funds	1,759,190	295,775	(146,297)	49,309	1,957,977
	<u>1,759,190</u>	<u>295,775</u>	<u>(146,297)</u>	<u>49,309</u>	<u>1,957,977</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<u>1,931,046</u>	<u>572,162</u>	<u>(277,936)</u>	<u>125,252</u>	<u>2,350,524</u>

FRS 102 requires unrealised gains and losses to be included in Net Income/(Expenditure) in the Statement of Financial Activities. This is included within general funds and not in a separate revaluation reserve.

#### Fund descriptions:

The Woodbury Castle Steps Grant fund has arisen due to Historic England offering to finance specific capital improvements to the Scheduled Monument.

The Lower River Otter restoration project fund has arisen as an Interreg grant promoting adaption to changing coasts has been received alongside donations to finance the development of Lower Otter Estuary to explore how we can preserve and improve the downstream part of the River Otter, its estuary, and its immediate surroundings for future generations in the face of a rapidly changing climate. The donations were freely given by donors for the purposes of sustainably improving the landscape. The Lower Otter Restoration Project Capital Costs fund represents the cost of capitalised expenditure as part of this project. The transfers into these funds represent match funding from the charity's unrestricted funds.

# East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

### 12) Funds (continued)

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Access fund has arisen from receipt of a grant from East Devon District Council. The grant represents funding for specific deliverables around improving opportunities for people with additional needs to access protected landscapes.

The Environmental Impact Fund supports a range of activities to manage and improve the condition of the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve for both the enjoyment of people and the protection of wildlife. Work which can be supported by this fund falls under four broad themes:

1. Heathland management (vegetation management, conservation grazing, etc.)
2. Wildlife monitoring and related equipment and training
3. Knowledge sharing: engagement (ex. School visits), volunteering activities, Ranger education.
4. Accessibility: signage and interpretation, access

The fund cannot support capital investments.

The National Lottery Heritage fund has arisen as part of the “Pebblebeds For All” project which launched in January 2024. The “Pebblebeds For All” project is supported by money raised by National Lottery players, the project will ensure the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve is inclusive and accessible. The funds are restricted to help improve access, engagement and education opportunities with a wide range of stakeholders.

Sufficient liquid resources are held by the charitable company to allow each fund to be applied in accordance with the conditions set by the donor.

### 13) Analysis of Net Assets Between Funds

#### 2025

	<b>Tangible fixed assets</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Current assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted Income Funds	173,559	-	125,397	(4,947)	294,009
Unrestricted Income Funds	1,617	1,920,173	97,685	(121,871)	1,897,604
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>175,176</b>	<b>1,920,173</b>	<b>223,082</b>	<b>(126,818)</b>	<b>2,191,613</b>

#### 2024

	<b>Tangible fixed assets</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Current assets</b>	<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>Total</b>
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted Income Funds	200,671	-	191,876	-	392,547
Unrestricted Income Funds	2,425	1,903,762	248,371	(196,581)	1,957,977
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>203,096</b>	<b>1,903,762</b>	<b>440,247</b>	<b>(196,581)</b>	<b>2,350,524</b>

# **East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust Company Limited by Guarantee**

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Year Ended 31 March 2025

## **14) Related Party Transactions**

Four of the Trustees of the charitable company are members, Trustees or employees of Clinton Devon Estates. During the year, the charitable company was charged £43,673 (2024: £32,681) by Clinton Devon Estates for management services, and £27,522 (2024: £70,428) for staff costs. At 31 March 2025, £Nil (2024: £Nil) was due to the charitable company from Clinton Devon Estates.

The charitable company has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited. During the year, the charitable company was charged £109,034 (2024: £73,285) by East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited for land management services. The charitable company also paid off the remaining part of a loan from East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited amounting to £115,000 (2024: £300,000) during the year. There is no interest payable on the loan, and it is repayable on demand. At 31 March 2025, £nil (2024: £115,000) of this loan was due from the charitable company to East Devon Heaths Land Management Company Limited. £109,034 (2024: £73,285) was due for the management services. During the year, the charitable company received £27,229 (2024: £114,436) in Gift Aid donations in relation to East Devon Heaths Land Management Company.

Total donations received from related parties (excluding East Devon Heaths Land Management Company) was £66,000 (2024: £125,000).