

Downlands Trust

(A company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023

Charity No. 1126535
Registered No. 6661092

CHARITY COMMISSION
FIRST CONTACT

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ACCOUNTS
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Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023

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Company information

Trustees	R Findlay (Treasurer) G Haseler P Mascall S Milan E Pringle N Siba P Wakeham (Chairman)
Registered office	46 Wilmot Way Banstead Surrey SM7 2PY
Independent examiner	Michael Tuckey FCA FCMA Chartered Accountant The Dutch House 24 The Downsway Sutton Surrey SM2 5RN

Trustees' report for the year ended 31st July 2023

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st July 2023, which also meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

Objectives and Activities

The Downlands Trust was created as a charitable trust in November 2008. It supports countryside conservation and management across northeast Surrey and the adjoining urban fringe, including Addington, Caterham, Chelsham, Woldingham, Warlingham, Salt Box Hill, Kenley, Riddlesdown, Woodmansterne, Chipstead Downs, Banstead Woods and Merstham. This is not an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the range of sites covered.

Many of the sites are of high conservation and scientific significance and encompass a wide variety of environments, including rare and valuable chalk grassland and ancient woodland. The majority are directly managed by the Downlands Partnership on behalf of their local authority owners, but the Trust also provides financial support for local countryside conservation groups.

The Trust's objectives as defined in its Memorandum of Association are to:

- (1) promote for the benefit of the public the conservation of the physical and natural environment through management of the countryside
- (2) advance the education of the public in the conservation and management of the physical and natural environment

The Trust achieves its objectives by raising funds through memberships, donations, and corporate sponsorship. It then provides grants for investment in the future of the local countryside and engages in the promotion of conservation and the encouragement of access for all.

The trustees hold quarterly review meetings.

Affiliation

The Downlands Trust is not affiliated to any other charity.

Structure and Governance

The Downlands Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is run entirely by volunteer trustees who ensure that the Trust acts in accordance with its published constitution, the rules governing its charitable trust status, and in the best interests of its membership. The administration is governed by the Memorandum of Association and the Articles of Association, both dated 15 January 2008.

The founding documents require that one-third of trustees retire by rotation at each AGM, with the option to offer to be reappointed. The existing trustees can at any time appoint new trustees, who then need to be reappointed at the next AGM.

Overview 2022/23

The Trust enjoyed another active and productive year. Our focus remained firmly on supporting conservation activities that benefit chalk grassland, primarily in association with the Downlands Partnership. We benefitted significantly from a further extension of funding by Fidelity International, our corporate sponsors.

32 grant applications were approved during the year and we took full advantage of opportunities to publicise the work of the Trust. These included sharing a stand with Downlands Partnership staff at several fetes and fairs, offering talks to a variety of organisations about our work and maintaining an active social media presence.

Following delays occasioned by a shortage of computer chips and then by a major flood in Toyota's South African factory, the Downlands Partnership has now taken delivery of the Hilux off-road vehicle for use by the Task Team. Funded by grants from the Trust, Fidelity International, several other organisations and individual donors, the vehicle is now in service and is playing a key role in supporting conservation work in the local countryside.

Funding of the Trust

We very much appreciate the regular core funding that is received from membership subscriptions and for donations received from members and local organisations. We received two particularly generous donations in the year. The Epsom 41 Club organised a quiz night in January, the proceeds from which were received by the Trust and a similar donation was received from Ezeesport for an event that they sponsored in Cheam Park.

The sponsorship of the Trust by Fidelity International for 5 years from January 2019 until December 2023 has made an enormous difference to the number and value of the grants that we have been able to award. In addition to providing us with a generous annual budget, Fidelity has also undertaken a variety of corporate fundraising initiatives from which the Trust has benefitted significantly. In 2022/23, Fidelity funded almost all the grants awarded from our unrestricted funds, and the Trust and the Downlands Partnership are extremely grateful for their generous support.

We are also grateful to Park & Bailey (Estate Agents) whose support has benefitted conservation work in the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area and to Copley Clark (Solicitors) who fund the printing of our newsletter.

Grants Awarded by the Trust

Grant applications are considered by the trustees according to several criteria, the most important being compliance with the Trust's Objects as set out in our Memorandum of Association. We periodically review our financial standing and take this into consideration when making decisions on grant applications. As a general policy, we do not provide grants that would result in long term commitments or any that would create a dependency for the beneficiary.

32 grant applications with a total value of approximately £30,000 were approved in 2022/23. The majority were awarded to the Downlands Partnership which is responsible for the maintenance of many of the green spaces in the Trust's area and continues to be our key partner. Grants awarded to the Partnership included funding for:

- 3 Sussex steers for the grazing team
- NoFence GPS collars. These are rapidly becoming standard equipment for conservation grazing
- power tools and hand tools
- protective clothing for volunteers
- skylark nesting signs, to be installed at sites where skylarks nest to help ensure that they are able to do so without disturbance
- repair and replacement of gates, fences and steps

The Trust continued to engage with and support local groups and awarded grants for the:

- restoration of Elmore Pond by the Chipstead Village Preservation Society, involving desilting and the removal of invasive vegetation
- provision of hand tools to the Banstead Commons Conservators for use by volunteer work parties
- clearance of invasive scrub from ancient woodland used by the 15th Reigate Scouts in Chipstead. This will encourage the spread of existing plants that are currently being shaded out, including Bluebells, Wood Anemones and Wild Garlic.

Reserves

As demonstrated by the financial statements included in this report, the Trust enjoys comfortable reserves that will ensure its longer-term financial sustainability.

The Charity Commission expects every charity to have a reserves policy, reserves comprising that part of a charity's *unrestricted funds* that is *freely available to spend on the charity's purposes*. Our reserves policy is based upon an assessment of likely future income and expenditure over the next few years, taken together with the need to maintain the financial resilience of the Trust.

Our policy specifies that reserves should be maintained within the range of £40-60,000 and, whilst our reserves now comfortably exceed the upper limit, this is largely attributable to the generous sponsorship of Fidelity International. This will cease at the end of 2023 and, if we do not enjoy a similar relationship with a new sponsor, our reserves will reduce to a level more closely aligned with the reserves policy.

Investment Policy

The Trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association provide the power to make investments. Accordingly, the Trust may invest surplus funds, defined as cash not required for the short-term funding of grant applications. In 2020/21 we invested £50,000 in two 12-month fixed rate savings accounts with Shawbrook Bank through the Charities Aid Foundation. We benefitted from a substantially better interest rate than that offered by our HSBC savings account and the investment was fully protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. In 2021/22 these investments were rolled forward for a further year and an additional £10,000 from our general reserve was added to these accounts.

The interest rate offered by Shawbrook Bank became significantly uncompetitive during 2022/23 and £29,000 was therefore transferred to a 1-year bond with the United Trust Bank. The investment remains fully protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Engagement with the Public

The Trust continued to engage with the public and this has helped us to enjoy a steadily rising profile. Our activities have included:

- giving presentations to a variety of local organisations, including the Epsom Common Association and several local Rotary and u3a associations. These events resulted in donations to the Trust and the recruitment of new members
- distributing our information leaflets to the public at fetes and fairs, at presentations, and from the leaflet holders that we have installed at key locations across our area
- maintaining an active presence on our Facebook and Instagram accounts. The number of views and followers continues to rise
- merchandising in the form of Downlands Trust branded linen bags and greetings cards that are offered for sale at events. This also provides an additional source of funds for the Trust and stocks are managed to minimise the risk of unsold inventory.

- continuing to attract good numbers of visitors to our website. Queries about the work of the Downlands Trust, the Downlands Partnership and chalk grassland are received and answered on a regular basis
- sharing a stand with the Downlands Partnership at fetes and fairs, including Old Coulsdon Village Fair and the Carshalton EcoFair. Sales of native chalk plants grown by members of the Partnership's grazing team at Old Lodge Farm have generated significant additional income for the Trust at these events, for which we are extremely grateful.
- providing complimentary copies of our newsletter to an increasing number of conservation organisations in the area. We continue to receive excellent feedback from recipients.

Membership

The number of members as at 31st July 2023 was 156 which is an increase of 2 over the membership of 154 at the same time last year. We have gained 16 new members over the financial year and lost 14 due to members moving away or failing to renew. A couple of our long term supporters have sadly died. We tend to gain new members following talks to local organisations about the Downlands Trust and we have an increasing profile via the provision of leaflets at countryside sites. People also joined following corporate workdays organised by the Downlands Partnership where volunteers learn about conservation work while helping with practical tasks. We continue to run stalls at local summer fairs, and these have generated a good level of interest in our work, particularly through sales of chalk downland wildflowers.

Financial Review of the Year

During the year, the charity received income of £50,725 (2022: £58,055) and incurred expenditure of £33,835 (2022 - £42,841) on charitable activities. Reserves at year-end were £127,223 (2022 - £110,333).

Risk Review

Risks to which the Trust may be exposed are maintained under periodic review and procedures established to mitigate those identified, so minimising any potential impact. These measures include ensuring strong financial control of our funds, maintaining adequate reserves to meet future funding requests, ensuring that we are covered by public liability insurance when we interact with the public, and safeguarding our members' personal information through a data protection policy that complies with the GDPR.

Outlook

The Trust continues to operate within the context of financial pressures on local authorities and their need to prioritise essential services, often resulting in diminished funding for environmental management and conservation. The Trust has a role to play in helping to mitigate the impact of such budget reductions.

We will maintain our strong support for the Downlands Partnership which will continue to be the Trust's main beneficiary. We will also endeavour to extend our engagement with other potential grant recipients active in the conservation of local green spaces. Opportunities with organisations representing younger age groups will continue to be explored.

The Trust and the Downlands Partnership will maintain a joint presence at summer fetes and fairs and our stand will continue to raise awareness of our role in conserving chalk grassland.

The sponsorship of the Trust by Fidelity International will cease at the end of December 2023 and we will actively seek a new sponsor.

Our financial reserves remain strong and will ensure that we are able to continue to operate effectively.

Directors and Trustees:

The Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Roger Findlay (Treasurer)
Geof Haseler
Pamela Mascall
Sarah Milan
Elspeth Pringle
Noreen Siba
Peter Wakeham (Chairman)

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

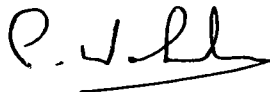
Company law requires the Trustees to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the situation of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these accounts, the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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice
- 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 accounts, and
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The above report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Trustees on 12th September 2023 and signed on their behalf by



Peter Wakeham

Chairman

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Downlands Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (the "Trust") for the year ended 31st July 2023.

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 your Charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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 (other than that disclosed below) which gives me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- i) the accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- ii) the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- iii) the accounts did not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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

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.



Michael Tuckey FCA FCMA
Chartered Accountant
The Dutch House
24 The Downsway
Sutton
Surrey
SM2 5RN
Date: 12th September 2023

Balance sheet as at 31st July 2023

	Note	2023	2022
		£	£
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash in hand and at bank		136,066	114,808
Inventory		344	-
Debtors	5	171	108
Current assets		136,581	114,916
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(9,358)	(4,583)
Current liabilities		(9,358)	(4,583)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		127,223	110,333
NET ASSETS		127,223	110,333
FUNDS			
Restricted funds	7	1,240	4,162
Unrestricted funds	7	125,983	106,171
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS		127,223	110,333

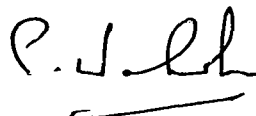
The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

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

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

Approved by the Trustees on 12th September 2023
and signed on their behalf by



Peter Wakeham
Chairman of Trustees

**Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)
for the year ended 31st July 2023**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and Legacies					
Membership subscriptions	1	1,470	-	1,470	1,395
Donations including Gift Aid	2	44,136	1,316	45,452	54,404
Income from other trading activities					
Sale of logs		-	-	-	1,059
Sale of plants		1,679	-	1,679	920
Sale of merchandise		1,387	-	1,387	-
Investment Income		737	-	737	277
Total Income		49,409	1,316	50,725	58,055
Expenditure					
Grants	3	26,767	4,238	31,005	41,330
Other expenditure on charitable activities	3	2,830	-	2,830	1,512
Total expenditure on charitable activities	3	29,597	4,238	33,835	42,842
Net income and net movement in funds for the year		19,812	(2,922)	16,890	15,213
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	6	106,171	4,162	110,333	95,120
Total funds carried forward		125,983	1,240	127,223	110,333

All of the company's operations are classed as continuing. The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities. The movement on reserves is shown above.

The notes on pages 11 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The accounts 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 Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1st January 2015), with FRS102 and with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Downlands Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

Currency and rounding

The accounts are presented in sterling and rounded to the nearest £1.

Income recognition

All donations and legacies are recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Membership income is recognised when received.

Resources expended

- Expenditure is recognised on an accrual 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 charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about Downlands Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Inventories

Inventories relate to unsold purchases of Downlands Trust branded merchandise and are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023 (continued)

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations for Unrestricted Funds		
Fidelity International	29,407	36,214
Donations from members	6,014	1,141
Copley Clark (sponsorship of newsletter)	840	630
Tadworth Beavers	375	315
Epsom 41 Club	1,716	-
Ezeesport	2,000	800
Donations from talks	923	498
Donations in memory of Graham Cole	940	-
Other donations	1,374	3,823
Donations via Easyfundraising and Amazon	40	1,808
Gift Aid	507	481
Total Unrestricted	44,136	45,710
Donations for Restricted Funds		
City of London	-	7,494
Park & Bailey for Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area	1,200	1,200
Caterham Festival for Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area	116	-
Total Restricted	1,316	8,694
Total donations and legacies	45,452	54,404

3. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Un-restricted costs 2023	Restricted costs 2023	Total Costs 2023	Un-restricted costs 2022	Restricted costs 2022	Total Costs 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Grants to:						
Downlands Partnership	20,031	-	20,031	25,006	14,189	39,195
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	-	4,238	4,238	-	628	628
Other local groups	6,736	-	6,736	1,507	-	1,507
Total grants payable	26,767	4,238	31,005	26,513	14,817	41,330
Support costs						
Administration	1,546	-	1,546	976	-	976
Governance	128	-	128	116	-	116
Purchase of merchandise	676	-	676	-	-	-
Independent Examiner	480	-	480	420	-	420
Total Support Costs	2,830	-	2,830	1,512	-	1,512
Total Expenditure on charitable activities	29,597	4,238	33,835	28,025	14,817	42,842

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023 (continued)

4. STAFF AND TRUSTEES

The charity had no employees during the year or the previous period.

The charity trustees were not paid and did not receive any benefits from the charity during the period. No expenses were reimbursed to trustees and no charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity.

5. DEBTORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accrued bank interest	171	108
	171	108

6. CURRENT LIABILITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Due to Downlands Partnership for replacement vehicle	2,843	2,843
Other amounts falling due within one year		
- Examiner's fee	480	420
- Grant applications completed but not yet invoiced	5,760	1,314
- Purchase of merchandise	260	-
- Bank charges	15	6
	9,358	4,583

The replacement vehicle has been purchased and delivered to the Downlands Partnership and is currently undergoing fitting of approved extras and logos.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023 (continued)

7. ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS

Movement in funds in current year

	Balance 1 August 2022	Income	Expenditure	Trans- fers	Balance 31 July 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	106,171	49,409	(29,597)	-	125,983
Total Unrestricted Funds	106,171	49,409	(29,597)	-	125,983
Restricted Funds					
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	4,162	1,316	(4,238)	-	1,240
City of London	-	-	-	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	4,162	1,316	(4,238)	-	1,240
Total Funds	110,333	50,725	(33,835)	-	127,223

Movement in funds in prior year

	Balance 1 August 2021	Income	Expenditure	Trans- fers	Balance 31 July 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	84,835	49,361	(28,005)	(20)	106,171
Total Unrestricted Funds	84,835	49,361	(28,005)	(20)	106,171
Restricted Funds					
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	3,590	1,200	(628)	-	4,162
City of London	6,695	7,494	(14,209)	20	-
Total Restricted Funds	10,285	8,694	(14,837)	20	4,162
Total Funds	95,120	58,055	(42,842)	-	110,333

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2023 (continued)

The restricted fund shown as "Sanderstead to Whyteleafe" represents donations received specifically for use in the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Recreation Area. The warden of that area must obtain the Trustees' approval before spending from this fund.

The restricted fund shown as "City of London" related to grants awarded annually by the City of London Corporation for work done by the Downlands Partnership on specific sites. The grant application for 2022/23 was unsuccessful.

8. FUTURE COMMITMENTS

At 31st July 2023 the Trust had outstanding commitments of £4,773 (2022: Nil) relating to grant applications where the work had not yet been undertaken.

9. COMPANY STATUS

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity.