



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

## **Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2024**

**Charity No. 1126535**  
**Registered No. 6661092**

## **Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2024**

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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 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st July 2024, 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. Trustees may at any time appoint new trustees, who then need to be reappointed at the next AGM.

### **Overview 2023/24**

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.

A total of 54 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



outdoor events, offering talks to a variety of organisations about our work, and maintaining an active social media presence.

We benefitted significantly from a further extension of funding by Fidelity International, our corporate sponsors.

### **Funding of the Trust**

We very much appreciate the regular core funding that is received from membership subscriptions and for donations received from members, individuals, and local organisations. Particular thanks are due to Eezesport for the generous donation received from them following the Teddy Bear Picnic event that they sponsored in Nonsuch Park in June.

The sponsorship of the Trust by Fidelity International commenced in January 2019 and was again renewed in January this year for a further 2 years. This support makes 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 continues to undertake a variety of corporate fundraising initiatives from which the Trust has benefitted significantly. Fidelity funded almost all the grants awarded from our unrestricted funds in 2023/4 and the Trust and the Downlands Partnership are extremely grateful for this generous support.

In March, we learned from the City of London that the bid submitted jointly with the Downlands Partnership for funding from August 2024 over 2 years to enhance the habitats for Skylarks and Yellowhammers on Riddlesdown and Farthing Down had been successful.

As in previous years, the Beavers section of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tadworth Sea Scouts completed a sponsored swim and donated the proceeds to the Trust. This will be used to purchase a ram for the Partnership's grazing team.

We again thank 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.

54 grant applications with a total value of approximately £54,000 were approved in 2023/24. 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:

- a substantial contribution towards the cost of a new Toyota Hilux off-road vehicle and associated equipment for the Grazing Team. Acquisition of this vehicle had become a matter of urgency because of the increasing unreliability of the team's ageing Land Rover and its non-compliance with ULEZ standards
- additional GPS collars for sheep and cattle. These devices are now becoming standard equipment for the management of conservation grazing
- specialised equipment to support the Grazing Team's operations
- excavation of a wildlife pond at Old Lodge Farm
- power and hand tools for the Grazing and Task Teams
- training for Partnership staff and volunteers
- bird and bat boxes for Little Woodcote Wood in Woodmansterne
- site notices alerting the public to the presence of grazing animals and nesting skylarks

The Trust continued to engage with, and support, local groups. Grants were awarded to:

- LB Croydon for the clearance of scrub in Happy Valley SSSI, Coulsdon
- Woodchips (Banstead Woods) for hand tools
- Banstead Commons Conservators for fencing materials to enable the construction of additional grazing paddocks
- Blanchman's Farm Nature Reserve (Warlingham) for hand tools

## **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 our unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on furthering the Trust's objectives. 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.

The 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 sponsorship of Fidelity International which will continue until December 2025.

## **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 £60,000 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.

The interest rate offered by Shawbrook Bank became significantly uncompetitive during 2022/23 and the investments have been transferred to 12-month bonds with the United Trust Bank where they continue to be protected under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

## **Engagement with the Public**

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

- sharing a stall with the Downlands Partnership at fetes and fairs, including Old Coulsdon Village Fair and the Carshalton EcoFair. Downlands Trust branded merchandise is sold at these events together with native chalk loving plants grown by the Partnership's grazing team at Old Lodge Farm.
- giving presentations about the work of the Trust to local organisations, at which the opportunity is taken to distribute information leaflets and printed copies of our newsletter
- maintaining an active presence on Facebook and Instagram, leading to a steady increase in the number of views and followers
- maintaining and enhancing our website. We receive good numbers of visitors and queries about the work of the Downlands Trust, the Downlands Partnership and chalk grassland are answered on a regular basis
- providing complimentary copies of our newsletter to an increasing number of conservation organisations in the area. We continue to receive positive feedback from recipients.



## **Membership**

The number of members as at 31st July 2024 was 175, an increase of 19 over the membership of 156 at the same time last year. We have gained 40 new members over the financial year and lost 21 due to members moving away or failing to renew. A couple of our long-term supporters have sadly died.

Many new members have been recruited as a result of the activities described in the above section. Others have joined following corporate workdays organised by the Downlands Partnership at which volunteers gained conservation experience through helping with practical tasks. A recent special offer combining membership and merchandise has resulted in a surge of new members.

## **Financial Review of the Year**

During the year, the charity received income of £53,816 (2023: £50,727) and incurred expenditure of £55,730 (2023 - £33,835) on charitable activities. Reserves at year-end were £125,309 (2023 - £127,223).

## **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.

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 Mascal	
Sarah Milan	
Elsbeth 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 21st August 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Peter Wakeham



Chairman

## Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Downlands Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Downlands Trust (the "Charity") for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity (and also its directors for the purpose of the company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Charity 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 Charity 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.

Michael Tuckey FCA FCMA  
Chartered Accountant  
The Dutch House  
24 The Downsway  
Sutton  
Surrey  
SM2 5RN  
Date: 12/7/24





**Balance sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

	Note	2024	2023
		£	£
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash in hand and at bank		133,541	136,066
Inventory		465	344
Debtors	5	867	171
<b>Current assets</b>		<b>134,873</b>	<b>136,581</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(9,564)	(9,358)
<b>Current liabilities</b>		<b>(9,564)</b>	<b>(9,358)</b>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>125,309</b>	<b>127,223</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>125,309</b>	<b>127,223</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Restricted funds	7	1,703	1,240
Unrestricted funds	7	123,606	125,983
<b>TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS</b>		<b>125,309</b>	<b>127,223</b>

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 21<sup>st</sup> August 2024  
and signed on their behalf by



Peter Wakeham  
Chairman of Trustees

**Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)  
for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>					
<b>Donations and Legacies</b>					
Membership subscriptions	1	1,795	-	1,795	1,470
Donations including Gift Aid	2	44,334	2,000	46,334	45,452
<b>Income from other trading activities</b>					
Sale of plants		2,202	-	2,202	1,679
Sale of merchandise		643	-	643	1,387
Investment Income		2,842	-	2,842	737
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>51,816</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>53,816</b>	<b>50,725</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Grants	3	50,476	2,934	53,410	31,005
Other expenditure on charitable activities	3	2,320		2,320	2,830
<b>Total expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52,796</b>	<b>2,934</b>	<b>55,730</b>	<b>33,835</b>
<b>Net income and net movement in funds for the year</b>		<b>(980)</b>	<b>(934)</b>	<b>(1,914)</b>	<b>16,890</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward	6	125,983	1,240	127,223	110,333
<b>Reallocation of funds brought forward</b>		<b>(1,397)</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>123,606</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>125,309</b>	<b>127,223</b>

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 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024

### 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 comprise Downlands Trust branded merchandise and are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.



**Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (continued)**

**2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES**

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>Donations for Unrestricted Funds</b>		
Fidelity International	35,431	29,407
Donations from members	1,482	6,014
Copley Clark (sponsorship of newsletter)	900	840
Tadworth Beavers	596	375
Epsom 41 Club	-	1,716
Ezeesport	2,000	2,000
Surrey Hills Society	100	-
Donations from talks	369	923
Donations in memory of Graham Cole	-	940
Other donations	1,044	1,414
Gift Aid	2,412	507
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>44,334</b>	<b>44,136</b>
<b>Donations for Restricted Funds</b>		
Park & Bailey	500	1,200
Other donations	1,500	116
<b>Total Restricted</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>1,316</b>
<b>Total donations and legacies</b>	<b>46,334</b>	<b>45,452</b>

**3. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

	Un-restricted costs 2024	Restricted costs 2024	Total Costs 2024	Un-restricted costs 2023	Restricted costs 2023	Total Costs 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Grants to:</b>						
Downlands Partnership	43,244	-	43,244	20,031	-	20,031
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	-	2,934	2,934	-	4,238	4,238
Other local groups	7,232	-	7,232	6,736	-	6,736
<b>Total grants payable</b>	<b>50,476</b>	<b>2,934</b>	<b>53,410</b>	<b>26,767</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>31,005</b>
<b>Support costs</b>						
Administration	1,450	-	1,450	1,546	-	1,546
Governance	145	-	145	128	-	128
Purchase of merchandise	245	-	245	676	-	676
Independent Examiner	480	-	480	480	-	480
<b>Total Support Costs</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,830</b>
<b>Total Expenditure on charitable activities</b>	<b>52,796</b>	<b>2,934</b>	<b>55,730</b>	<b>29,597</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>33,835</b>

**Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (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**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accrued bank interest	690	171
Prepaid expenses	177	-
	<b>867</b>	<b>171</b>

**6. CURRENT LIABILITIES**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Due to Downlands Partnership for replacement vehicle	-	2,843
Other amounts falling due within one year		
- Examiner's fee	480	480
- Grant applications completed but not yet invoiced	8,803	5,760
- Purchase of merchandise	273	260
- Bank charges	8	15
	<b>9,564</b>	<b>9,358</b>

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (continued)

**7. ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS**

**Movement in funds in current year**

	Balance 1 August 2023	Income	Expenditure	Trans- fers	Balance 31 July 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>					
General fund	125,983	51,816	(52,796)	(1,397)	123,606
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>125,983</b>	<b>51,816</b>	<b>(52,796)</b>	<b>(1,397)</b>	<b>123,606</b>
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	1,240	2,000	(2,934)	1,397	1,703
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>(2,934)</b>	<b>1,397</b>	<b>1,703</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>127,223</b>	<b>53,816</b>	<b>(55,730)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,309</b>

**Movement in funds in prior year**

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



**Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024** (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.

**8. FUTURE COMMITMENTS**

At 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 the Trust had outstanding commitments of £1,969 (2023: £4,773) 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.