

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

Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025

Charity No. 1126535
Registered No. 6661092

Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025

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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 2025

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st July 2025, 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 2024/25

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 38 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 year of funding by Fidelity International, our corporate sponsors, and from a generous legacy from a former member.

Funding of the Trust

We very much appreciate the regular core funding that is received from membership subscriptions and for donations received from members, other individuals, and local organisations. Particular thanks are also due to Eezesport for the donation received following the Teddy Bear Picnic event in Nonsuch Park in June, also to the Beavers Section of the 1st Tadworth Beaver Sea Scouts who, as in previous years, completed a sponsored swim and donated the proceeds to the Trust. This will be used to purchase livestock to support the Partnership's grazing operations.

The sponsorship of the Trust by Fidelity International commenced in January 2019 and was again renewed in January 2024 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 2024/5 and the Trust and the Downlands Partnership remain extremely grateful for this generous support.

It was reported last year that the Trust and the Downlands Partnership had successfully bid for funds from the City of London for a 2-year project to support habitat improvement work on Farthing Downs and Riddlesdown by the Partnership. The objective is to increase the populations of Skylarks and Yellowhammers at these sites. Scrub clearance work was carried out during the winter and volunteers were recruited who recorded Skylark and Yellowhammer numbers this summer. Guided walks for the public were held to explain the importance of the flora and fauna present at these sites.

We were informed in March 2024 that the Trust was a beneficiary in the will of a former member and in November we received an interim payment of a very generous legacy, for which we are extremely grateful. For the Trust, this means that we will be able to fund projects that are more ambitious than was previously possible, with commensurate benefits for the local countryside. This will be a significant change to the Trust's ability to fund large projects and we have been in discussion with local conservation groups to help identify projects that would meet the Trust's criteria. This is a one-off opportunity to provide such funding for a decade as, once this legacy fund has been spent, the Trust will have to rely on its current funding arrangements.

Following receipt of this legacy, we were delighted to receive an additional and substantial donation from one of our members, further securing the Trust's financial position.

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.

38 grant applications totalling over £44,000 were approved in 2024/5. 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:

- power tools and hand tools for both the Task and Grazing Teams
- woodworking equipment for producing countryside furniture
- replacement fencing for grazing paddocks on Chipstead Downs and Riddlesdown
- electric fencing
- pygmy goats for managing coarse scrub
- a gazebo for promoting the work of the Partnership and the Trust at events
- a contribution towards the cost of a hay baler
- high capacity water tanks for Grazing Team sites

The Trust continued to expand its engagement with local groups and grants awarded included:

- hand tools and PPE for the WoodChips Conservation Volunteers (Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs)
- hand tools and PPE for the Sanderstead Plantation Partners
- hand tools for The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), Croydon
- gazebo and display materials for the Banstead Commons Conservators
- funding for a reprint of the Oaks Park Tree Trail leaflet
- repairs to steps in Happy Valley
- new dipping platform and pond clearance at Banstead Wildlife Field

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 Nature Discovery Day on Banstead Heath. Downlands Trust branded merchandise is sold at these events together with native chalk loving plants grown by Partnership's grazing team at Old Lodge Farm.
- presentations 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 very positive feedback from recipients.

Membership

The number of members as at 31st July 2025 was 182, an increase of 6 over the membership of 176 at the same time last year. We have gained 36 new members over the financial year and lost 30 due to members moving away or failing to renew. A couple of our long-term supporters have sadly died.

A number of Downlands Partnership volunteers have joined the Downlands Trust as members and we are especially grateful to them. Other members have joined following corporate workdays organised by the Downlands Partnership at which volunteers gained conservation experience through helping with practical tasks. Quite a few recent members joined at events but did not subsequently renew their membership, accounting for the relatively high turnover.

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 November, the Trust received a substantial interim payment from a legacy left to us by a former member. It was decided that, at least initially, the legacy would be held in cash funds rather than in stocks and shares. Options were investigated and it was decided to invest through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), specifically the CAF Charity Deposit Platform which is provided by Flagstone Investment Management. The platform enables charities to access over 100 savings accounts from a wide range of banks through a single account, making administration straightforward and enabling us to maximise interest income through the ongoing review of available accounts. The Trust has diversified its Flagstone investment portfolio such that the initial investment of £1 million is fully protected by the FSCS guarantee for deposits of up to £85,000.

The Trust has recently renewed two fixed term bonds held with the United Trust Bank who continue to offer a very competitive rate of interest.

Financial Review of the Year

During the year, the charity received income of £1,089,977 (2024 - £53,816) and incurred expenditure of £55,617 (2024 - £55,730) on charitable activities. Reserves at year-end were £1,159,669 (2024 - £125,309).

Reserves

As demonstrated by the financial statements that follow this report, the Trust enjoys reserves that will ensure its long-term financial sustainability.

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

In recent years, our reserves policy has been based upon maintaining reserves of £40-60,000, a target which we comfortably exceeded. Following receipt of the large legacy of £1,000,000 earlier this year, the gap between the targeted reserves and our actual reserves has widened significantly. The Trustees have reviewed the position and, as it is the Trustees' intention to award large grants over the next ten years, decided that no change is needed to our reserves policy.

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 and our strong financial position will enable us to fulfil this objective.

We will maintain our strong support for the Downlands Partnership which will continue to be the Trust's main beneficiary. We will also continue to extend our engagement with other organisations active in the conservation of local green spaces.

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 are strong and 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 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 2nd September 2025

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 31st July 2025.

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').

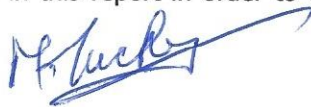
Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your Charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). 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:

2/10/2025

Balance sheet as at 31st July 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash in hand and at bank		1,159,858	133,541
Inventory		466	465
Debtors	5	14,644	867
Current assets		1,174,968	134,873
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(15,299)	(9,564)
Current liabilities		(15,299)	(9,564)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		1,159,669	125,309
NET ASSETS		1,159,669	125,309
FUNDS			
Restricted funds	7	3,323	1,703
Unrestricted funds	7	1,156,346	123,606
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS		1,159,669	125,309

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 2 September 2025
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 2025**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations and Legacies					
Membership subscriptions	1	1,940	-	1,940	1,795
Donations & legacies including Gift Aid	2	1,045,427	6,204	1,051,631	46,334
Income from other trading activities					
Sale of plants		1,492	-	1,492	2,202
Sale of merchandise		224	-	224	643
Investment Income		34,690	-	34,690	2,842
Total Income		1,083,773	6,204	1,089,977	53,816
Expenditure					
Grants	3	48,565	4,584	53,149	53,410
Other expenditure on charitable activities	3	2,468	-	2,468	2,320
Total expenditure on charitable activities	3	51,033	4,584	55,617	55,730
Net income and net movement in funds for the year		1,032,740	1,620	1,034,360	(1,914)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	6	123,606	1,703	125,309	127,223
Total funds carried forward		1,156,346	3,323	1,159,669	125,309

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 2025

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 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 31st July 2025 (continued)

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Unrestricted Funds		
Legacies	1,010,000	-
Fidelity International	29,027	35,431
Donations from members	902	1,482
Copley Clark (sponsorship of newsletter)	840	900
1 st Tadworth Sea Scouts Beavers	698	596
Ezeesport	1,000	2,000
Donations from talks	302	369
Other donations	2,152	1,144
Gift Aid	506	2,412
Total Unrestricted	1,045,427	44,334
Restricted Funds		
Park & Bailey for Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	-	500
City of London	6,204	-
Other donations	-	1,500
Total Restricted	6,204	2,000
Total donations and legacies	1,051,631	46,334

3. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Un-restricted costs 2025	Restricted costs 2025	Total Costs 2025	Un-restricted costs 2024	Restricted costs 2024	Total Costs 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Grants to:						
Downlands Partnership	38,912	-	38,912	43,244	-	43,244
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	-	446	446	-	2,934	2,934
City of London	-	4,138	4,138	-	-	-
Other local groups	9,653	-	9,653	7,232	-	7,232
Total grants payable	48,565	4,584	53,419	50,476	2,934	53,410
Support costs						
Administration	1,526	-	1,526	1,450	-	1,450
Governance	228	-	228	145	-	145
Purchase of merchandise	114	-	114	245	-	245
Independent Examiner	600	-	600	480	-	480
Total Support Costs	2,468	-	2,468	2,320	-	2,320
Total Expenditure on charitable activities	51,033	4,584	55,617	52,796	2,934	55,730

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025 (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

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accrued bank interest	14,448	690
Prepaid expenses	196	177
	14,644	867

6. CURRENT LIABILITIES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other amounts falling due within one year		
- Examiner's fee	600	480
- Grant applications completed but not yet invoiced	14,691	8,803
- Purchase of merchandise	-	273
- Bank charges	8	8
	15,299	9,564

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025 (continued)

7. ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS

Movement in funds in current year

	Balance 1 August 2024	Income	Expenditure	Trans- fers	Balance 31 July 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds					
General fund	123,606	1,083,773	(51,033)	-	1,156,346
Total Unrestricted Funds	123,606	1,083,773	(51,033)	-	1,156,346
Restricted Funds					
Sanderstead to Whyteleafe	1,703	-	(446)	-	1,257
City of London	-	6,204	(4,138)	-	2,066
Total Restricted Funds	1,703	6,204	(4,584)	-	3,323
Total Funds	125,309	1,089,977	(55,617)	-	1,159,669

Movement in funds in prior year

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

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 a grant awarded by the City of London Corporation for work done by the Downlands Partnership on habitat improvement on Riddlesdown and Farthing Downs.

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025 (continued)

8. FUTURE COMMITMENTS

At 31st July 2025 the Trust had outstanding commitments of £3,286 (2024: £1,969) relating to a grant application where part of 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.