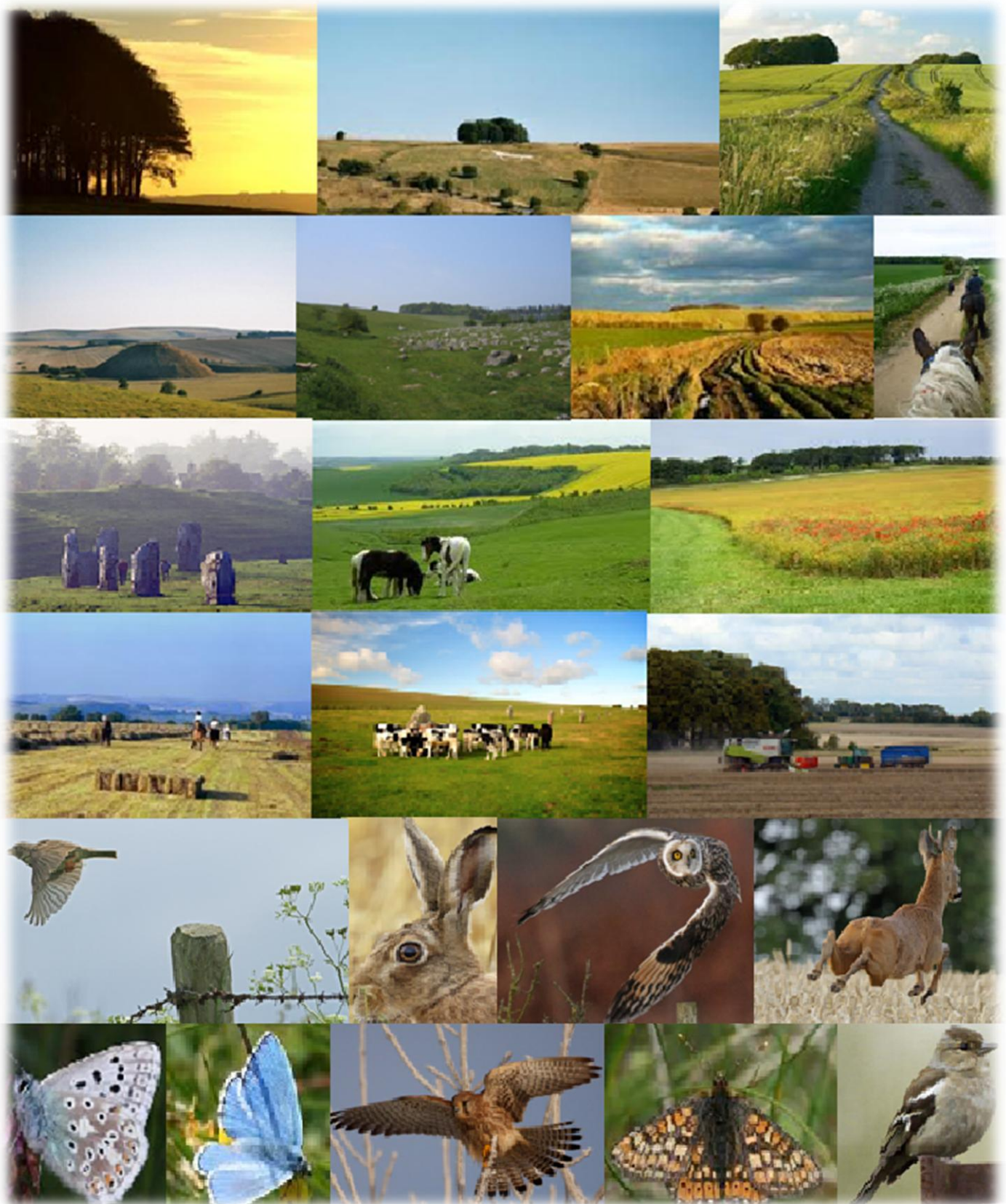
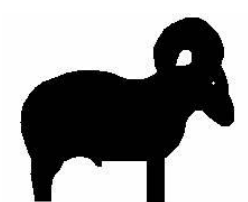


The Marlborough Downs: Space for Nature



Thirteenth Annual Report



Dr Jemma Batten
Marlborough Downs Space for Nature Project Manager
Arnolds Hill Farm Cottage
Arnolds Hill – Wingfield – Trowbridge – Wiltshire BA14 9LD

☎ 07855 506112

✉ jemma.batten@blacksheepcountryside.co.uk



The Marlborough Downs
Nature Enhancement Farming Group
(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year to 31st March 2025

Registered Charity Number: 1147925

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Group

(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

The trustee board presents its annual report and unaudited financial statements for year to 31 March 2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS

Charity Registration No: 1147925

Principal Address: Arnolds Hill Farm Cottage, Arnolds Hill, Wingfield, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9LD

Registered address: Arnolds Hill Farm Cottage, Arnolds Hill, Wingfield, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9LD

Trustees that served during the period:

- Christopher Musgrave – Chair
- Marcus Robert Cooper
- Robin Butler
- Gillian Carter
- Peter Lawson
- Victoria Lowes
- Piers Maynard
- Matthew Moore

Project Management: Black Sheep Countryside Management – Lead Dr Jemma Batten

Independent Examiner

Not required as income was less than £25,000

Bank

Barclays Bath Branch, 4-5 Southgate Street, Bath BA1 1AQ

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Group

(A Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEE BOARD

1. Chairman's Introduction

As we mark our thirteenth year since the inception of our farmer-led group, it is with immense pride that I reflect on our journey and the progress we have made together. This year has been a pivotal one, as we transitioned from a Charitable Company limited by guarantee to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This structural shift not only enhances our operational efficiency but also strengthens our commitment to our mission.

It has been both a pleasure and an education to meet up at our seasonal events, where experts and group members have shared invaluable insights on relevant issues related to farming, wildlife, the landscape, and the environment in a broader context. These talks have sparked meaningful discussions, igniting a collective drive for change among our members and the wider community.

One of the most heartening developments has been the continued commitment of local farmers to the concept of working together as a cohesive group. In a world increasingly challenged by environmental crises, this solidarity among farmers showcases our collective commitment to sustainable practices and shared goals. Together, we are tackling the significant challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss, demonstrating that collaboration can lead to impactful solutions.

As we look to the future, I am excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. With our new structure and the continued support of our dedicated members, I am confident that we will carry our mission forward and make an even greater difference in the years to come.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and passion for our cause. Together, we can forge a sustainable path for our community, our landscape, and our planet.

Chris Musgrave
Chair

2. Structure, governance and management

Governing Document

The charity became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 8 November 2024, converting from a charitable company limited by guarantee which was originally incorporated on 12 January. The company first registered as a charity on 3 July 2012.

The CIO is governed by an 'Association' model constitution (with voting members other than its charity trustees) which establishes the objects and powers of the CIO. In the event of the charity being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Organisational Structure

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Group has a board made up of farming and non-farming trustees and invited associates. Chris Musgrave is the chair of the charity board.

Projects are a collaboration between the farmers of the Marlborough Downs (who are members of the Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming CIO), Black Sheep Countryside Management (responsible for project delivery), and various other stakeholders. Board meetings are run as project board meetings and for this purpose representatives from the non-farming community and partner organisations have been co-opted to the board. They are:

- Victoria Lowes and Christopher Musgrave (non-farming representatives)
- Jemma Batten, Senior Consultant, Black Sheep Countryside Management (project director)

Other key stakeholders may be invited to attend board meetings from time to time. All strategic decisions are taken at these properly constituted project board meetings. All agenda items are supported by board papers, which include a risk analysis and clear recommendations to be discussed and considered. The decisions are clearly recorded, and meeting minutes with actions are circulated and made available to all members via the website.

Recruitment & Training

This is the thirteenth year of the charity, and this report covers the year ended 31st March 2025. The charity continues with the same overall aim as in previous years. All but one of the trustees are currently or have previously been farmers and represent the farming community in the Marlborough Downs area. Some have been on the board from the start of the charity and others have joined since. No new trustees were appointed in the year to 31st March 2025.

The skills of the project board and their advisers are considered to be appropriate for the requirements of the charity's objectives and have been able to meet the project targets over the year. Trustees are offered training to fill any further gaps identified and if required additional trustees with new skills would be recruited.

3. Financial Review

This has largely been a year of reflection, redefining the structure of the partnership and the Space for Nature project, and as such has been a quiet one in terms of activities delivered. Income has been generated through one-off donations, with bi-annual group events being self-funded through ticket sales. Overheads appear disproportionately high this year, due to the amount of work required to achieve the conversion from charitable company to CIO, and the fact that regardless of the level of activity, there are certain administrative tasks that remain a legal requirement (for example, an AGM, annual report and accounts).

Activities	Income	Spend	Under/over-spend
Community	£250	£202	£48
Landscape	£2,321	£1,720	£601
Overheads	£1,594	£3,432	(£1,838)
Total	£4,165	£5,354	(£1,189)

Please note: All figures are rounded to the nearest £1. Numbers in brackets are negative, i.e. overspend.

£21,259 of restricted funding was brought forward (Landscape).

Reserves Policy

The policy on reserves is accepted as being minimal as offices are virtual and all work is undertaken by volunteers or contractors. In the past, a reserve of £4,000 for unforeseen events has been considered adequate as this could cover half a year's management costs in an emergency. As of 31 March 2025, we had £1,636 unrestricted funds in reserve which was considered sufficient at the time as we were about to collect subscriptions from members which would significantly boost this figure.

Donations In Kind

In addition to the actual management of the budget, the charity benefits from items and services donated as 'in kind'. As in previous years, much of this has been in the form of pro bono staff time to support the project, habitat management activities undertaken by members, and free venue and facility use. Volunteer time accounted for a proportion of activities undertaken including additional project management time. However, the majority of this was not recorded due to the lack of reporting and paid support time to record and collate.

4. Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

The trustees function as custodians and ultimately the controlling group of the funds held. This was limited during the year as explained above. Otherwise, no funds are held on behalf of others.

5. Public benefit statement

Through the Space for Nature project, the Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Partnership aims to deliver a more biodiverse, more attractive, and more accessible landscape. Alongside these obvious, tangible benefits come a suite of gains that may be more difficult to quantify but are known collectively as ecosystem services. Such gains include improved water quality due to reduced agricultural inputs; a contribution towards the physical and mental health of residents and visitors through access to green spaces and fresh air; mitigation against climate change through building robust ecological networks; better crop pollination; support for a strong rural economy via agriculture, tourism and recreation; and the social, cultural and educational benefits that are a result of interaction with nature.

The partnership is driven by the fact that despite decades of conservation effort, many of our habitats and species are at best stable and at worst in decline and while most of the farmers in the area have long been involved in environmental schemes, we have shown that the farmer-led, bottom-up approach of this initiative can lead to far greater and more wide-reaching benefits as a result of the 'ownership' conferred on us by the Space for Nature project. We have also demonstrated that the longevity of this project exceeds that of others that rely upon financial incentives rather than personal commitment.

As well as environmental and conservation benefits there is an emphasis on education of the public through volunteer opportunities to support the project as well as direct educational activities provided by the project. We work to provide better public access and information to encourage people to enjoy and understand the landscape while improving their health and wellbeing.

6. Objectives and activities

The objectives of the charity are:

- To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection, and improvement of the physical and natural environment.
- To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection, and improvement of the environment.
- To promote sustainable development for the benefit of the public by the preservation, conservation and the protection of the environment and the prudent use of resources.
- The promotion of sustainable means of achieving economic growth and regeneration.

We understand that a landscape-scale approach cannot succeed without widespread farmer involvement, and we have ensured that all farmers in the area have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the project, and this year have welcomed members from farms that were previously outside the project boundary. Members have access to high quality, relevant workshops,

advice, and information on a wide range of topics which enable them to collectively deliver the aims and objectives of the Space for Nature project across the Marlborough Downs.

We also encourage local people to get more involved in the countryside, and promote greater awareness of landscape, wildlife, and farming. We are keen to enthuse people about the countryside and get the non-farming community involved with activities on and about the Downs through events and activities, workshops, and work parties. We work with other grass-roots groups to promote community effort and cohesion, as groups and individuals are brought together with a common aim.

7. Achievements and performance Year 13 (April 2024 to March 2025)

As stated in the previous annual report, in January 2024 members came together to review and update our project aims and objectives. We identified new goals and aspirations and agreed that once the conversion to CIO was completed, the project team would use these goals and aspirations to prepare a new three-year project plan to identify activities and apply for funding.

Conversion to CIO took rather longer than expected but to keep the organisation active, several events were planned for the spring and summer of 2024 (see overleaf).

Date	Event	Venue (and number attending)
Apr 17	Spring Celebration with presentations on The Southern Streams Farmer Group and Farmland Birds on the Marlborough Downs	Marlborough Golf Club (32)
May 17	Trees, woodland, and agroforestry workshop	Cancelled due to lack of uptake
May 23	Foraging with Fred	Cancelled due to lack of uptake
Jun 6	Photography Masterclass	Avebury (5)
Jun 19	Summer Farm Walk	Temple Farm (30)
Oct tbc	Pasture for Life workshop	Cancelled by Pasture for Life
Nov 20	AGM and Seasonal Supper with presentations on Project Peewit and Elm Trees, Past, Present and Future	Marlborough Rugby Club (35)
Dec 4	Trustees meeting	Online (9)

The events that did go ahead were very well attended, and members remained keen to get together and to re-launch the project in the new year.

8. Progress Planned for future Years

We remain committed to the aspirations and goals identified last year (see overleaf) and will use the next Spring Celebration to encourage members to sign up to the CIO, commit to an annual subscription to ensure the financial security of the organisation, and identify specific activities that they will support in order to achieve the agreed objectives.

Board Statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (issued March 2005).

It was approved by the trustee board on 30th October 2025.

Signed: _____



Christopher Musgrave

Chair

Date: 30th October 2025

2025-2028

Aspirations and Goals



Environmental planning & delivery

Baseline surveys and
opportunities mapping
Small actions, big scale



Representation & advocacy

Better use of social media
Share achievements
Case studies



Links with other groups

Field trips to landscape projects
Invite other groups to visit
Mutual learning



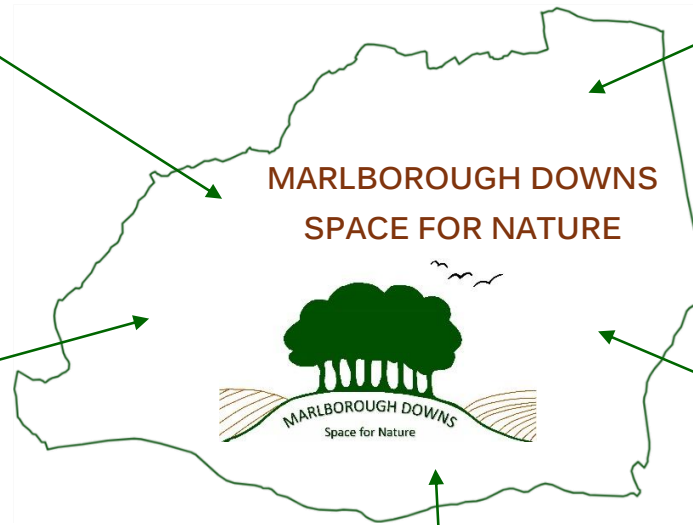
Community & Outreach

Varied events programme
Build public support
Focus on schools



Partnership Working

Shared resources
Advice and funding
Joint projects



THE MARLBOROUGH DOWNS
NATURE ENHANCEMENT FARMING CIO
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
	Notes				
<u>Income from:</u>					
Donations and legacies	3	2,532	531	3,063	19,190
Charitable activities	4	1,102	0	1,102	3,246
Total income		3,634	531	4,165	22,436
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
Raising funds	5	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	6	4,294	1,060	5,354	40,514
Total resources expended		4,294	1,060	5,354	40,514
Net income/expenditure for the year/ Net movement in funds		(660)	(529)	(1,189)	(18,078)
Fund balances at 1 April		2,296	21,259	23,555	41,634
Fund balances at 31 March		1,636	20,730	22,366	23,556

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

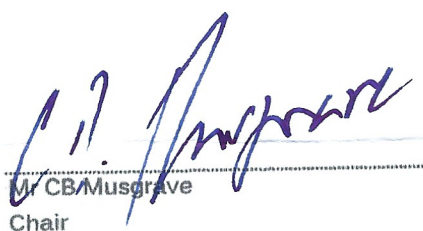
THE MARLBOROUGH DOWNS
NATURE ENHANCEMENT FARMING CIO
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

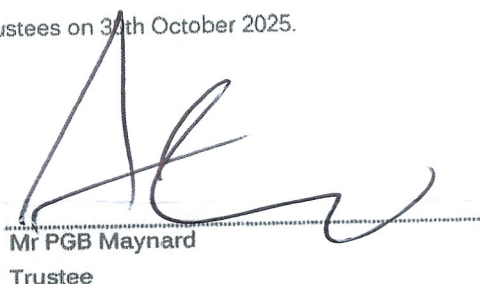
	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors		0		3,397	
Cash at bank and in hand		24,517		24,498	
			24,517		27,895
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	2,151		4,399	
Net current assets			22,366		23,555
Income funds					
Restricted funds			20,730		21,260
Unrestricted funds			1,636		2,296
			22,366		23,556

As the gross income for this financial year was less than £25,000, the Trustees have agreed that there is no requirement for any external scrutiny of their charity's accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small charities in accordance with FRS102 SORP.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 30th October 2025.


Mr CB Musgrave
Chair


Mr PGB Maynard
Trustee

Charity number 1147925

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Limited is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, charity number 1147925. The registered office is Arnolds Hill Farm Cottage, Arnolds Hill, Wingfield, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9LD.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Farming Group ("the CIO")'s Constitution 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)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016). The is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The CIO has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the CIO. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the CIO has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives unless the funds have been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are as follows:

Restricted fund	Purposes	Uses in 2024/25
Bybrook Trust	Conservation agriculture	Best practice workshops

1.4 Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the CIO is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the CIO has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Turnover is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and represents amounts receivable for goods and services provided in the normal course of business.

1.5 Resources expended

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the CIO to pay out resources.

There are no costs for accountancy, governance or trustee meetings or constitutional matters.

1.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.7 Financial instruments

The CIO has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the CIO's balance sheet when the CIO becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the CIO's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the CIO's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3	Donations and legacies	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		funds	funds		
		2025	2025	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£
	Donations and gifts	890	-	890	1,769
	Gift Aid	48	-	48	-
	Subscriptions	-	-	-	-
	Donated goods, facilities and services	1594	531	2,125	6,815
		<u>2,532</u>	<u>531</u>	<u>3,063</u>	<u>8,584</u>
4	Charitable activities	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		funds	funds		
		2025	2025	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£
	Sales within charitable activities	-	-	-	20
	Grants	-	-	-	10,606
	Other income	1,102	-	1,102	3,226
		<u>1,102</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,102</u>	<u>13,852</u>
5	Raising funds	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		funds	funds		
		2025	2025	2025	2024
		£	£	£	£
	Fundraising costs	-	-	-	-
		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

6	Charitable activities	Charitable expenditure	Charitable expenditure
		2025	2024
		£	£
	Best practice: wildlife and countryside	1,480	15,823
	Best practice: agriculture	240	1,020
	Farmland bird programme	-	137
	Community events	-	13,970
	Outreach/promotion/printing	202	622
	Bank charges	-	156
	Insurance	93	377
	Office expenses	-	5
	Meeting expenses	-	55
	Employee travel	58	459
		<u>2,073</u>	<u>32,623</u>
	Share of governance costs (see note 7)	<u>3,281</u>	<u>7,891</u>
		<u>5,354</u>	<u>40,514</u>
	Analysis by fund		
	Unrestricted funds	4,294	8,739
	Restricted funds	<u>1,060</u>	<u>31,775</u>
		<u>5,354</u>	<u>40,514</u>
7	Support costs	Governance costs	Governance costs
		2025	2024
		£	£
	Legal and professional	3,281	7,826
	Accountancy	-	65
		<u>3,281</u>	<u>7,891</u>
	Analysis by fund		
	Unrestricted funds	2,461	7,321
	Restricted funds	<u>820</u>	<u>570</u>
		<u>3,281</u>	<u>7,891</u>
8	Trustees		
	None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.		
9	Employees		
	There were no employees during the year.		
10	Creditors	2025	2024
		£	£
	Amounts falling due within one year:		
	Trade creditors	<u>2,151</u>	<u>4,339</u>
		<u>2,151</u>	<u>4,339</u>