

Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust

Looking after Buckinghamshire's Natural and Historic Environment

Chairman's Report 2023 - 2024

In the wettest February for a long time, indeed in the wettest 18 months period since the 1830's, volunteers from the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, ably aided by Sandy Kidd (Board Member) supervised the digging of 187 post holes and sifting through any finds all with permission from Historic England, to relocate the characteristic iron fence moved from St Peters and stored until it was possible to re-install to afford protection for the wider historic site. Despite some waterlogging the project was completed successfully, and the only find of note turned out to be an animal bone. The fence now creates a significant presence and sense of place, particularly as the interpretation boards are now well placed to explain both the church and the landscape.

The new website <https://www.buckinghamshireconservationtrust.co.uk/> is still under development, although a QR code has been created so that once in place on the boards people with smartphones looking at the interpretation boards on the site can immediately augment the information. Trustees proposed a wealth of material to add to the website and various permissions for the use of images are currently being sought in order to complete the site.

The success of the cycleway in opening up the site has continued, but has brought headaches of it's own, as anticipated. However, there have been no dramatic incidents involving the police, as in the past, but the nagging nuisance of litter and graffiti, a feature of life everywhere which just has to be dealt with. I appreciate the brunt of this is borne by Mike Woods, our CEO, but without our ranger and the volunteers this would be all the harder. I believe it's because of them and the wider public use of the site that we remain fortunate.

The main issue with the cycleway has been verge maintenance as anticipated. The newly disturbed soil along the route generated a wealth of plant life over a metre high which was eventually cut back by us and the invoice passed to Buckinghamshire Council (BC) despite no formal agreement having been reached. We were reimbursed for this and we are now working with BC, our major partner, to put an agreement in place for the future.

In addition a line of dead elm trees in a hedgerow bordering the verge needed to be removed as they risked falling across the cycleway. Since Dutch Elm Disease, elm trees in hedgerows reach a certain height and then die back and eventually fall.

Our annual Countryside Stewardship grant was slightly bigger than anticipated, (+£1800) although full transfer to the replacement ELMS scheme

is still awaited. This, with a retrospective payment of £895 from Eastern Electricity for the overhead pylon network across part of the site reduced the deficit budget originally set for this year.

In October 2023 the Trust exhibited at the Buckinghamshire Local History Network conference alongside Buckinghamshire Young Archaeologists. Kim Biddulph (Board Member) has produced a leaflet featuring the history of Quarrendon Leas specifically for young people interested in archaeology. We held a volunteer day in March and the annual site visit for Trustees in September and Roger King (Board Member) has led several guided walks with local groups on the site.

Moving forward the CEO Mike has been successful in May 2024 in obtaining a Countryside Stewardship Grant of £9,500 for hedge laying and planting in the coming year.

We are grateful to Mike for maintaining an excellent relationship with our partners on the site particularly the grazier for the sheep without which the site could not be preserved and maintained, BC for the issues around the establishment of the cycleway/acting as our major partners, our maintenance contractors, and our ranger and volunteers.

The relocation of a now redundant footbridges (subsequent to the cycleway) and the sheep crush is still pending although a site for the sheep crush has been identified.

Signed; Chairman Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust

Avril Davies

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Dated; 6 June 2024

Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2024

£	2023 £		£
		INCOME	
-		Grants	-
12,981		RPA Farm payments	10,547
16,340		Countryside stewardship	17,845
2,740		Fundraising donations	600
1,073		Farm rent (Lear)	1,073
-		Eastern Power	895
180		Other income	192
	33,314		
		EXPENDITURE	
13,249		Chief Officer fees	12,600
954		Site management - Rangers	750
243		Site security	471
2,567		Materials, fencing gates etc	2,493
6,102		Conservation / restoration	13,008
1,122		IT related expenses	1,219
-		Marketing & interpretation	2,657
-		Equipment & tools	110
2,913		Project expenditure	982
14		Bank charges	-
542		Insurance	921
13		Companies House	13
-		General Admin	1,450
-		Travel exps CEO	754
-		Travel exps Rangers	257
1,405		Miscellaneous eps	353
	29,124		
	<u>4,190</u>	Suplus / (deficit) for the year	

Signed; Chairman BCT

Dated; 6 June 2024

2024
£

31,152

38,038

-	<u>6,886</u>
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No financial issues

Dated; 6 June 2024

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