



FRIENDS OF QUANTOCK

CIO Registered Charity No: 1154378

31st December 2021

President:

Lady Gass DCVO

Vice President:

Mrs Laetitia Kelly

Chairman:

Mr John Andrews

Vice Chairman:

Mr Alan Hughes

Hon. Treasurer:

Mr Robin Stamp

Hon. Secretary:

Mrs Mary ter Braak

Trustees:

Mr Philip Comer

Mr Alan Hughes

Mrs Laetitia Kelly

Mr Ian Kett

Mr David Lloyd

Mrs Mary ter Braak

Mr Tim Whittingham

Mr John Andrews

Mr Robin Stamp

Committee:

The Trustees

Rev Stephen Campbell

Mrs Jasmine Lucas

Mr Mike Pitcher

Mr Ben Bartlett (Quantock Commoners)

Mr Chris Edwards (AONB service)

Bankers:

HSBC 17 North Street, Taunton

Somerset, TA1 1NA

Principal Address:

20 Staple, West Quantoxhead, Taunton,
TA4 4DQ

Chairman's Annual Report for 2021

Despite some progressive easing of restrictions due to Covid, there were still constraints on what we, the AONB Service and the Lottery project – the Landscape Partnership Scheme – could do in 2021. Nonetheless progress was made on several fronts and as many projects are long-term, this report also brings matters up to date and looks forward to the future.

We are committed to maintaining our own landholding in optimum condition with respect to its landscape value, its varied wildlife and its importance for the Commoners' livestock. We discussed management of its varied habitats with Natural England and the AONB in 2021 and were in broad agreement about priorities.

After an interminable delay we finally got consent this winter to fell a mix of small trees downslope beside the Ramscombe Mire. The Commoners had asked for this to facilitate bracken control which will benefit livestock and wildlife. The work, funded by the AONB, was done very tidily by Matt Peaster and his team. And before that we consented a berry collection exercise by a firm that grows native provenance trees; given the problems with imported tree diseases this is something to foster whenever possible.

Elsewhere on our land we found we had an imported pest of our own – Japanese knotweed. Jeremy Scott-Bolton, who joined the Cttee in 2021, kindly agreed to tackle this notoriously difficult plant and that work is ongoing.

In passing I will mention that we anticipate more tree work, to prevent damage to the Dead Woman's Ditch, a scheduled ancient monument, possibly Bronze Age, by roots or by trees falling.

In the summer, at the request of the AONB, we ran at Ramscombe Mire a training day on plant ID and on how to assess the condition of mires. It was attended by AONB, Natural England and National Trust staff as well as a number of volunteers. The plan is that the condition of all the Quantock mires will be assessed – the main issue is excess grazing and trampling by livestock which prevents the plants from flowering and we hope that, if necessary, measures will be agreed with the Commoners to restore those that need it. The mires are extraordinary places – our patch holds 83 plant species – and a delight to the eye in summer.

The bank and ditch along the roadside from DWD to Crowcombe Gate, for which consent has been long-awaited, was constructed in March 2022 by a local contractor and we hope that it will prevent the casual and unsightly parking on our land that damages the old cultivation ridges as well as the grassland important for the Commoners' beasts and for wildlife. Bill Jenman of the LPS was a great help with arranging this.

Planning consent is still awaited for the new Crowcombe Gate car park but we are hopeful that it will be approved. We are contributing £20,000 towards the cost and have also committed to do necessary maintenance work for a decade.

Now for a look ahead. Thanks to generous legacies we have accumulated significant funds that will enable us to do more in and for the AONB. We have developed a three year rolling strategy in which the four principal proposals are these.

 2/6/22

First to employ a part-time Project Officer to promote membership and fundraising and also to support a number of new projects that we are considering.

Second, to seek somebody to enable us to play an active role in the planning process. Thanks to our Cttee member David Lloyd, we were able to submit a strong objection on landscape grounds to the Washford solar farm proposal and this made us realise that to properly carry out our role we need to be much more alive to developments in and around the AONB.

Our third proposal is to seek to develop an educational outreach project around the themes of farming and wildlife in the dozen or so local primary schools. However, that is for 2023 or later, depending on other factors.

Fourth, we are looking at grant-aiding projects to improve the landscape and access provision. Possible ideas include repairs to tracks on the hill, stone-bank repair, hedge-laying training, improving disabled access and a Quantocks walks booklet.

We now have the government's response to the Glover Review on the future role of National Parks and AONBs. While broadly to be welcomed it, typically, leaves a lot to be finally decided. There are important issues about powers, not least in relation to development control, and about future funding. An unresolved challenge is how to maintain and restore biodiversity while encouraging more public access. This is going to bite us here on the hill and it is good that the work in train, not least on the new car park, will help to ease the impact.

The AONB's draft reply to the government is very much in tune with our Committee's view and we have of course submitted our own response. As will be apparent from what is being done, we have a strong and positive working relationship with the AONB and I'm very pleased that both Chris Edwards and Iain Porter are here and will be speaking to us later.

Last but by no means least, I want to briefly mention people and things they do. We are very fortunate in that Philip Comber is continuing as Vice Chairman and as our lead representative on the AONB's Joint Advisory Committee and the Board of the Landscape Partnership Scheme. Equally important is that Alan Hughes, formerly Vice Chair, remains very actively involved - his knowledge of the Quantocks is invaluable to us.

Barbara Shaw, who arranged and led our invariably pleasurable and informative members' walks has retired. Mary ter Braak, for long our Secretary and expert in the detail of our charity rules, is stepping down from the role this spring. Our thanks to them both. However, Mary will remain our Membership Secretary and her husband Kees has kindly agreed to monitor matters connected with Hinkley Point. Trudi Mansfield, a newcomer to the Quantocks, joins us as Secretary and the Committee as a whole brings to bear a breadth of professional experience and opinion that makes them good to work with.

I look forward to an exciting year of progress.



Mr J Andrews

Date 2 June 2022

FRIENDS OF QUANTOCK
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF FRIENDS OF QUANTOCK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Friends of Quantock charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2021 which are set out on pages 3 and 4.

Responsibilities of trustees and examiner and basis of report

As the charity 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 the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

K. Davies

Kelly Davies ACCA
Thomas Westcott
7 Castle Street
Bridgwater
TA6 3DT

Date ..6.June.2022



Protecting the Quantock hills since 1949

Mr Robin Stamp, Treasurer,
20 Staple, West Quantoxhead, Taunton TA4 4DQ
Tel: 01984 633535: treasurer@friendsofquantock.com

Financial Reserve Policy Background

Over the years the charity has built up an income stream from membership subscriptions sufficient to cover the ongoing standard running costs and obligations for the charity plus a surplus which has generally amounted to around £4,000 p/a. During the past two years the world has been affected by COVID and many charities have seen income reduce, we are pleased to report that this has not been the case with the FoQ and income from subscriptions has remained stable.

In addition to the above income, the charity also receives ad hoc gifts plus bequests and retiring funeral collections from the estates of former "friends", which bolster reserves further.

Financial Reserve Policy

The trustees and committee treat very seriously the responsibilities they have to manage the charity resources for the longer term in line with the charities objective as set out in its governing document. In short, those objectives are as follows:

To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation protection and improvement of the landscape and natural environment of the Quantock Hills.

The charity will use its reserves to promote its aims within the wider Quantock AONB area and to seek further funding from grant giving authorities and to encourage individuals and local businesses to work with it to fulfil its aims.

The charity has a policy of holding reserves of funds to:

- Cover its short-term liabilities
- Maintain sufficient capital to allow a minimum of 3 years continuity to its services and employment obligations
- Provide capital for it to carry out land management and other projects on its land and across the wider AONB area
- To maintain a capital fund to allow it to fight planning applications or proposals that are considered potentially harmful to the Quantock Hills
- Provide grants to individuals or organisations whose aims are in line with that of the charity-in particular where such grants are not generally available through other grant giving organisations or authorities and to provide sponsorship funding for events planned and run by the AONB and/or English Nature.
- To build up a capital fund to allow it to pursue the purchase of further land within the AONB
 - Income that is surplus to the charities short term needs will be accumulated in this fund, annually where no other specific needs has been identified.

Financial report to 31/12/2021

Current Monetary Funds:	
HSBC Community Account:	20,420
Cambridge & Counties Bank:	
Easy access account (0.50%)	21,034
Total Instant access	£41,454
Cambridge & Counties Bank:	
45 day notice: (0.90%)	41,215
120 day notice (1.00%)	21,623
United Trust bank:	
12 month notice (1.16%)	25,263
Total Monetary Funds:	£129,555
Investment funds	
Fidelity Investment portfolio (£65,000 invested 20/08/21)	65,404
Total Funds including investments:	£194,959

Financial obligations:		Date needed
Landscape Partnership Hedgebank project	5,000	April 2022
Landscape Partnership Hedgebank project	5,000	April 2023
Landscape Partnership Crowcombe Park Gate car park	20,000	mid 2022
Crowcombe Park Gate c/p maintenance commitment	10,000	10 year
Total	£40,000	
Reserves	£154,959	

The charity reserves have been allocated to the following agreed priorities

Internal Projects fund including-	20,000	2022/23
• Tree & Scrub clearance (£3,000)		
• Footpath at Kilve (£2,500)		
• Archives (£1,000)		
• Mire projects		
• Other projects to be agreed		
External grants and sponsorship fund	20,000	2022/25
Employment continuity fund (Three years base salaries)	60,000	2022/25
Legal fighting fund/land purchase fund*	54,959	long term
Total	£154,959	

*These two funds have been listed as one entry as it is anticipated that calls on them will be few and far between and thus that the combined funds could be utilised for either purpose.

Friends of Quantock is a CIO, Registered in England No. 1154378
Registered address: 22 Church Lane, Bicknoller, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 4EL

President: Lady Elizabeth Gass DCVO

www.friendsofquantock.com

Friends of Quantock
Income and expenditure account for year ending 31/12/21

	2021	2020
Receipts:		
Annual subscriptions	£ 4,013	£ 4,064
5 year subscriptions	£ 975	£ 1,518
Business subscriptions	£ 1,045	<u>£ 1,090</u>
sub-total	£ 6,033	£ 6,672
Donations	£ 140	£ 100
Legacy	£ 45,049	
Events	£ 216	
Sales	£ 74	
Tax repayment	£ 1,297	£ 1,705
Interest on Investments	£ 1,255	£ 1,953
Investment growth	£ 404	
Total Income:	<u>£ 54,469</u>	<u>£ 10,430</u>
Payments:		
AONB contribution	£ 1,000	£ 1,000
AONB bird box contribution		£ 105
Audit costs	£ 240	£ 240
Clerical expenses	£ 400	£ 400
Print, post, stationery & sundry expenses	£ 1,030	£ 1,906
Bank Charges	£ 28	£ 17
Insurances	£ 326	£ 505
Event costs	£ 414	
Land maintenance costs	£ 1,004	£ 2,184
Landscape Partnership	£ 10,542	
Project costs		
Grants and Sponsorships	£ 500	
Total expenditure:	<u>£ 15,484</u>	<u>£ 6,357</u>
Surplus for the year:	£ 38,985	£ 4,073
Balances brought forward:	£ 155,975	£ 151,902
Total funds at year end:	£ 194,959	£ 155,975