

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 2022 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.



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

Date ..20.march..2023



Friends of the QUANTOCKS

31st December 2022

President:

Lady Gass DCVO

Vice President:

Mr Hugh Warmington

Vice President:

Mrs Jane Warmington

Chairman:

Mr John Andrews

Vice Chairman:

Mr Philip Comer

Treasurer:

Mr Robin Stamp

Secretary:

Mrs Trudi Mansfield

Membership secretary

Mrs Mary ter Braak

Trustees:

Mr John Andrews

Mr Robin Stamp

Mr Tim Whittingham

Mr Philip Comer

Mr David Lloyd

Mr Ian Kett

Mr Alan Hughes

Committee:

The Trustees

Rev Stephen Campbell

Mr Jeremy Scott-Bolton

Mr Ben Bartlett (Quantock Commoners)

Mr Iain Porter (AONB service)

Bankers:

HSBC 17 North Street, Taunton

Somerset, TA1 1NA

Principal Address:

Church House, Crowcombe, Taunton,

Somerset TA4 4AA

2022 TRUSTEES' REPORT & ANNUAL REVIEW

We are managed by Trustees elected by the membership. Trustees have the power to appoint others to assist their work. The combined Committee met five times in 2022 and established a management team of the officers and one additional Trustee to handle work within approved policy.

There have been a number of changes in the Committee since the last report. Our long-serving Vice President Laetitia Kelly died unexpectedly at the start of the year. Hugh and Jane Warmington became joint Vice-Presidents. Philip Comer, who had been Chairman since 2018, stepped down and was replaced by John Andrews; Philip became Vice Chairman, replacing Alan Hughes who remains as a Trustee. Mary ter Braak stood down as Committee Secretary but continues as Membership Secretary. Trudi Mansfield took over the Secretary role.

Chris Edwards, the long-serving AONB Manager retired and Iain Porter, his deputy, was appointed in his place. Iain attends our Committee as well liaising with us informally over current matters, while we are represented by Philip Comer on the AONB Board.

Early in the year the Trustees decided to appoint a part-time officer to promote our work to the public, raise membership and funds and develop relationships with other local bodies. We were fortunate to appoint Zoe Hicks, a Quantocks resident with a strong professional background in marketing and public communications. This has enabled us to much increase our activity on the ground, including more events for members, and through social media. We have also commenced a quarterly emailed newsletter to members in addition to this annual publication.

With membership and Charity Commission approval we will be changing our name to Friends of The Quantocks and also our logo. These you will see in 2023 along with a redesigned website.

We continue to work closely with the AONB Service and the Lottery-funded Quantocks Landscape Partnership Scheme and contribute grants towards work like hedge-laying. One small but, to us, very important project was the construction of a ditch beside the Crowcombe - Over Stowey road to prevent parking on our land which was harming the SSSI and the grazing. We have also taken up with County Highways the inadequate maintenance of this road and its passing bays.

The tragic death of Anthony Trollope-Bellew, the Chair of the AONB Board, means that the planned relocation of the Crowcombe Gate car park to another and better site on his land is now on hold at least until probate has been granted by which time the QLPS funding for it may no longer be available. We had committed £30,000 towards the cost and will be considering other options with the AONB though there is no available location of equal suitability.

We were approached in the summer by Nigel Phillips, an established wildlife author and photographer, with the most generous offer that he would write a book about Quantocks wildlife for us if we would cover his expenses. Work is now under way with a likely publication date in 2024. Nigel has also been co-opted onto the Committee and will be chairing a working group looking at biodiversity issues and opportunities on the hills.

Thanks to our Treasurer Robin Stamp's personal interest we have established a Quantocks-wide *i-Naturalist* project that enables anyone with smartphone to record our wildlife; this is adding rapidly to our knowledge of species distribution and fortunes and thus informing good management.

We are also very fortunate to have Tim Burton, a planning consultant with great knowledge of local issues, steering our efforts to scrutinise and respond to planning applications in or close to the AONB that may pose a threat to its natural beauty.

One quite unexpected threat to our hills' natural beauty is the proposal by DEFRA to promote the culling of red deer stags so as to reduce deer numbers and facilitate new tree establishment. We support more tree planting and accept that deer are a problem but all informed parties agree that a reduction in numbers can only be achieved by culling hinds. With advice from Matt Peaster, who runs the annual deer count, and others, we responded strongly to DEFRA as the stags are a really important part of the Quantocks scene.

The Commoners, whose livestock play such a role in shaping the landscape of the hills are represented on our Committee by Ben Bartlett and we are most grateful to him and Mrs Bartlett for hauling away from our Sandy Beds parking area an abandoned caravan which they then stored until we could get it removed entirely. Fortunately, most litter is less problematic though hardly less annoying. Our Observers, who check our landholding and help to keep it tidy, met in summer for a pub lunch and an update on our plans. Their presence on the ground is much valued.

We still await government's final decisions on the recommendations of the Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs, published in 2019, and on the detail of future funding for agriculture which has such a powerful influence on the wildlife and landscape of the Quantocks.

There is little point in speculating about what next year will bring in the way of challenges but what we can do and are doing as Trustees is to seek to develop our activity both to support the AONB and to build public appreciation of its unique qualities of beauty and access.



John Andrews
Chairman

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.



Friends of the QUANTOCKS

Financial Report to 31/12/22

Current Monetary Funds:

HSBC Community Account:	12,481
Paypal: Trading account	17

Total instant access £12,498

Cambridge & Counties Bank:

45 day notice: (2.35%) 62,617

120 day notice (2.60%) 21,839

United Trust bank:

120 day notice (3.00%) 25,546

Total Monetary Funds: £122,500

Investment funds

Fidelity Investment portfolio (£65,000 invested 20/08/21) 52,465

Total Funds including investments: £174,965

Financial obligations:

Landscape Partnership Hedgebank project	5,000
Landscape Partnership Crowcombe Park Gate car park	20,000
Crowcombe Park Gate c/p maintenance	10,000
Total	£35,000

Date needed

April 2023

2024

10 year

Reserves £139,965

The charity reserves have been allocated to the following agreed priorities

Internal Projects fund including-	20,000	2023/25
• Rebranding-web update (£5,000)		
• Tree & Scrub clearance (£3,000)		
• Footpath at Kilve (£2,500)		
• Archives (£1,000)		
• Other projects to be agreed		
External grants and sponsorship fund	20,000	2023/25
• Rights of way repairs (£5,000)		
Employment continuity fund (Three years base salaries)	36,000	2023/25
Legal fighting fund/land purchase fund	63,965	long term
Hedges reinstatement (£2,400)		
Total	£139,965	

Friends of the Quantocks is a CIO, Registered in England No. 1154378

Registered address: Church house, Crowcombe, Taunton TA4 4AA

Also known as "Friends of Quantock"

President: Lady Elizabeth Gass DCVO

www.friendsofquantock.com

Friends of the Quantocks**Income and expenditure account for year ending 31/12/22**

Receipts:	2022	2021
Annual Subscriptions	£4,188	£4,013
5 yr subscriptions	£750	£975
Business subscriptions	£975	£1,045
sub-total	£5,913	£6,033
Donations	£162	£140
Legacy	£0	£45,049
Events	£56	£216
Sales	£1,600	£74
Gift Aid reclaim	£1,370	£1,297
interest	£867	£1,255
	£9,968	£54,064
Investment growth/loss	(£12,939)	£404
Total Receipts	(£2,971)	£54,468
 Payments:		
AONB contribution	£1,000	£1,000
Project officer	£5,503	£0
Project officer travel and expenses	£67	£0
Audit costs	£240	£240
Clerical expenses	£400	£400
Print, post, stationery & sundry expenses	£1,828	£1,030
Bank Charges	£110	£28
Insurances	£182	£326
Event costs	£722	£414
Land maintenance costs	£1,472	£1,004
Landscape Partnership	£5,000	£10,542
Grants and Sponsorships	£500	£500
Total expenditure:	<u>£17,024</u>	<u>£15,484</u>
 Deficit/Surplus for the year:	(£19,995)	£38,984
 Balances at end of year	 £174,965	 £194,960