

GOATWALKLANDTRUST

Matthews Hall Fore Street Topsham EXETER EX3 0HF
Registered Charity No 1162973

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 TO 31 AUGUST 2021

The Charity Commission requires all charities to submit an annual report containing details of a charity's accounts, its management, how it has complied with the objects set out in its constitution and certain other specified information. Consequently, parts of this annual report, which covers the Trust's Financial year to 31st August 2021, will replicate last year's report. However, for new members the Annual Report gives a brief synopsis of how the Trust is managed as well as the report on our stewardship of the land during the year.

In February 2015, the Topsham Community Association and the Topsham Society jointly launched a public appeal to raise funds to buy the woodland and the fields behind the Goat Walk. Over £300,000 was raised, the bid was successful and 6 acres of land between the Goat Walk and Bowling Green Road in Topsham, Devon, was purchased for the benefit of the people of Topsham. In August of that year a Charitable Incorporated Organisation known as the Goat Walk Land Trust, established to own and manage the land, was registered with the Charity Commission. The Trust was established with the object, set out in its constitution of "*the maintenance of the rural environment and heritage of the historic town of Topsham through the preservation and enhancement, without any permanent buildings, of the Goat Walk land for the quiet enjoyment and pleasure of the residents of Topsham and visiting members of the public at large*".

The Trust's constitution provides for seven trustees to hold office for three years although they may hold office for two further three-year periods. Two trustees, Frances Nieduszynska and Jeremy Rawlings, were appointed by the Topsham Society; and two, John Bradley and Christopher Buckingham, were appointed by the Topsham Community Association Ltd. Three trustees are elected by the Trust's members voting at the Annual General Meeting. Each year one of the elected Trustees is required to retire although they may stand for three successive terms of office. At last year's AGM Russell Osborn retired but was re-elected as a Trustee. Chris Finney and Peter Gray were the other two elected members of the Trust.

In April this year Chris Finney sadly died. He was a member of the Management Committee from the start of the Trust, a volunteer on many of our working parties and latterly a well-regarded Trustee. With his background in agricultural economics Chris was a sure pair of hands on the Board and we will greatly miss his insight and expertise. His place as a Trustee was taken on a temporary basis by Roger Webster who has been the Chairman of the Management Committee for the last two years. Roger's tenure as

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a temporary Trustee will come to an end at the AGM but he has agreed to stand for election as a members' Trustee.

In 2016 the Annual General Meeting approved an annual membership fee of ten pounds on the basis that this would cover the normal annual running costs of the Trust. The annual accounts annexed to this annual report show that this level of income is appropriate, and for the fourth year the Trustees are not proposing any increase. The membership for the year to August 2021 stands at 243, an increase of ten over the previous year. For a second year the Covid-19 restrictions on people meeting together has meant that there have been only limited working parties to help with the maintenance of the land. In each case the working party was limited to two groups of five volunteers, one in each field with appropriate social distancing maintained. We are fortunate that the fields can be left with comparatively little annual maintenance but some of our 121 volunteers were also able to undertake individual maintenance by the removal of the seed heads of docks when this was permitted.

The Trust was established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a Membership Scheme which not only provides the income to fund the work of the Trust but also enables the community to become more involved in its organisation and governance. A Management Committee was set up by the Trust to deal with the day-to-day management of the land and the development of a long-term strategy to achieve the Trust's aims and objectives, namely that the land should be accessible, sustainable, rural in nature, simple to manage and for the quiet enjoyment of all. Members are appointed to the Management Committee by the Trustees to whom they are responsible.

Once again the land has proved its value to the community by providing a place for quiet enjoyment of the countryside. There has been a further increase in wildflowers with the notable addition this year of a Bee Orchid. The Trustees reviewed their decision that the land should be open to the public during the pandemic and agreed that it should remain so. Our fields continue to be a joy to the people of Topsham and further afield, providing somewhere for quiet exercise, away from public roads. This was the object of the Trust when it was established, and it has been greatly appreciated by the community during this second year of the Covid restrictions.

Unfortunately, due to the weather and other commitments, our contractor was only able to cut the grass on the meadows and not remove the crop. Next year we hope to start removing the hay crop again to reduce fertility which, over the years, will result in lower grass yields and a greater number and diversity of flowering plants.

Following the successful photographic competition last year, the Trust, in partnership with Topsham Allotments and Gardens Society and Estuary League of Friends, organised a photographic competition during the summer of 2021. The quality of photographs was again of the highest standard and this year the winners were displayed at the Annual Show of the Topsham Allotment and Gardens Society.

In the past few years maintenance has been necessary on several of our trees by a tree surgeon who checks to see if any further work is required. However, during the year a

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substantial branch of one of the trees bordering Bowling Green Road was blown down in a storm and had to be removed. The Trust has consequently commissioned a further full survey of the trees on our land.

The Trust has to date taken a cautious approach to the alterations that it has made to the land. The objective of the Goat Walk Land Trust is to keep the land as rural fields with an area of woodland. This was confirmed by the public consultation which indicated a wish to develop the fields as wildflower meadows. There was also support for an increase in the area of woodland, a small orchard and two water retaining scrapes.

In response to the public consultation the Trust planted over 400 trees as small whips of about 1- 1½ feet and several larger oak and apple trees. These are now beginning to form a significant extension to the woodland. Many of the small whips have now grown to over 6 feet and this year we saw the first apples. Six local varieties of heritage apple trees were selected and these were supplemented this year by a small number of local varieties of apple. A review of the land management was undertaken last year and, in response to the request by our members, a small extension to the woodland areas was undertaken. The Trust, with the help of the Woodland Trust, planted a further 30 woodland trees to form a new, small copse in the upper field and 150 trees to thicken and diversify the hedges, and to provide a food source for wildlife. These were again planted as small whips which in the past have proved to survive much better than larger trees. We were also able to plant a limited number of additional oak trees with the help of a donation by a member.

As part of the Trust's aim to provide better access to the land, the last two seats were purchased during the year with the aid of generous donations, one in memory of Jean and Brian Hancock. Access through the gate to the upper field was also improved by the realignment of rocks on the path and the scrapes continue to function well as a means of draining the boggy area near the gates onto Bowling Green Road.

The Trust is required as part of its annual return to the Charity Commission to include details of any serious incidents during the year. The Trustees are able to confirm that there have been no issues relating to fraud or financial crime; no unverified or suspicious donations; no significant financial losses; no safeguarding issues, nor any issues relating to terrorism or any other serious incidents. The Trust has no paid employees or advisors and does not make grants to individuals or other organisations.

This is a report of the Trust's activities for the year to 31st August 2021. The woodland and meadows continue to thrive, and any changes will be gradual and consistent with the Trust's objects and principles. The Trustees remain committed to keep the Goat Walk Land a place of quiet enjoyment for the people of Topsham and its visitors.

Chris Buckingham
Chairman of the Trustees

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CHARITABLE INCORPORATED
ORGANISATION

REGISTERED NUMBER 1162973

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 31/08/2021

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds £	Total 2019-20 £
Incoming Resources				
Donations	0	3365	3365	3010
Gift Aid (estimate)	0	631	631	615
AGM bar surplus	0	0	0	30
Wayleave payment	0	87	87	85
Contributions to Benches	0	1650	1650	0
Bank interest	0	180	180	0
Total Income	0	5913	5913	3740
Resources Expended				
Web site	0	217	217	276
Publicity	0	250	250	55
<i>Charitable Activities</i>				
Meadows	0	475	475	843
Tools and materials	0	317	317	91
New Trees	0	0	0	175
Tree surgery	0	750	750	0
New benches	0	2500	2500	0
Insurance	0	348	348	324
Bank charges	0	84	84	60
<i>Governance</i>				
AGM	0	0	0	121
Meetings room hire	0	0	0	30
Total expenditure	0	4941	4941 0	1975
Annual Surplus	0	972	972	1765

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Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2021

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Fund	Total Funds	2019-20
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Community Land	300505	0	300505	<i>300505</i>
Current Assets				
Debtors	0	0	0	<i>0</i>
HMRC Gift Aid	0	<i>631</i>	<i>631</i>	<i>615</i>
Cash at CAF Bank	91	3671	3762	<i>2908</i>
Cash at Lloyds Bank	0	5182	5182	<i>5080</i>
Cash at Shawbrook Bank	0	20000	20000	<i>20000</i>
Liabilities				
None	0	0	0	<i>0</i>
	—	—	—	—
Net Assets	300596	29484	330080	<i>329108</i>
 The Funds of the Charity				
Funds B/F	300596	28512	329108	<i>327343</i>
20-21 Surplus	0	972	972	<i>1765</i>
	—	—	—	—
Total Funds	300596	29484	330080	<i>329108</i>

GOATWALKLANDTRUST



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

The Goat Walk Land Trust

On accounts for the year
ended

31.08.21

Charity no
(if any)

1162973

Set out on pages

4 and 5

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 08 / 2021

As the charity's 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 all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission
under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130
of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements
concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities
(Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 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.

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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Geoff Wilkinson

Date: 27.10.21

Name:

Geoff Wilkinson

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

IER

1

Oct 2018

GOATWALKLANDTRUST

Address: 2 Tresillian Gardens, Topsham,

Exeter,

EX3 0BA

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.