

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

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 1 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 AUGUST 2022

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 2022, 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 was elected as a trustee for a further term. Peter Gray and Roger Webster were the other two elected members of the Trust.

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 has been appropriate, and for the sixth year the Trustees are not proposing any increase. Nevertheless, the Trustees have agreed to ask members to review their contributions to the Trust in the light of the increases in the costs of maintenance of the land and in particular the anticipated cost of the grass cutting in 2023. The membership for the year

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to August 2022 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, with many visitors throughout the year. In May the Trust took part in Topsham's "Join the Club" event with stalls both in Matthews Hall and on our land. We received many positive comments and several new members as a result. 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.

Unfortunately, due to the weather and other commitments, our usual contractor was unable to cut the grass on the meadows or remove the crop. When the contractor finally confirmed that he was unable to cut the grass we arranged for a new contractor, although this was on a commercial basis rather than in exchange for the hay crop. On the advice of the Management Committee the Trustees have agreed to employ the new contractor for the year 2022-23 in order to ensure that the hay is cut at the right time. This will result in an increase in our annual running costs, but the Trustees consider that an increase in the annual membership fee is not necessary this year.

Over the past years maintenance of our trees by a tree surgeon has regularly been necessary. At the same time the tree surgeons check to see if any further work is required. However, as it was five years since the last full report on the trees, the Trust commissioned a further full survey of the trees. Regular inspection of our trees is recommended but no immediate surgery is required. However, one of our older trees will need some work in the near future. The elm trees in the northern hedge suffer from Dutch Elm Disease and die when they reach the usual size for the disease to take effect. Whereas previously the Trust allowed dead trees to remain where they fell as part of its rewilding programme, it was decided that in future log piles would be created which are more beneficial for wildlife. Some thinning of the trees in the old woodland will also be necessary in due course.

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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. Consequently, no significant changes were undertaken during the year. The trees which were planted in the first years of the Trust are now growing well and are blending in with the existing woodland. The apple trees are also establishing and received pruning during the year to encourage their proper development.

In June the Trust organised the planting of a commemorative oak tree to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The tree was planted by people representing the organisations which set up the Goat Walk Land Trust as well as

the committee which raised the funds,
the Trust's Management Committee,
Topsham's many clubs and societies,
the historic families of Topsham,
the town's elected representatives,
the Town's maritime heritage, and
local children.

All those present at the celebration were then invited to help with further shovels of soil and many local people very much appreciated the chance to be involved.

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 2022. 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 31/08/2022

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	2020-
	£	£	£	21
				£
Incoming Resources				
Donations	0	2925	2925	3365
Gift Aid	0	589	589	631
AGM bar surplus	0	0	0	0
Wayleave payment	0	86	86	87
Contribution to benches	0	0	0	1650
Bank interest	0	117	117	180
Total income	0	3717	3717	5913
Resources Expended				
Web site	0	184	184	217
Publicity	0	0	0	250
<i>Charitable Activities</i>				
Meadows	0	390	390	475
Tools and materials	0	0	0	317
Trees	0	535	535	750
New benches	0	0	0	2500
Insurance	0	358	358	348
Bank charges	0	93	93	84
<i>Governance</i>				
AGM	0	0	0	0
Meetings room hire	0	0	0	0
Total expenditure	0	1560	1560	4941
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Surplus 21-22	0	2157	2157	972

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Balance Sheet as at 31st August 2022

2020-
21

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Fund	Total Funds	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Community Land	300505	0	300505	<i>300505</i>
Current Assets				
Debtors	0	0	0	<i>0</i>
HMRC Gift Aid	0	589	589	<i>631</i>
Cash at CAF Bank	0	2950	2950	<i>3762</i>
Cash at Lloyds Bank	0	8193	8193	<i>5182</i>
Cash at Shawbrook Bank	0	20000	20000	<i>20000</i>
Liabilities				
None	0	0	0	<i>0</i>
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Net Assets	300505	31732	332237	<i>330080</i>
The Funds of the Charity				
Funds B/F	300505	29575	330080	<i>329108</i>
21-22 Surplus	0	2157	2157	<i>972</i>
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Funds	300505	31732	332237	<i>330080</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

Goat Walk Land Trust

On accounts for the year
ended

31/08/22

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 31/08/22.

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.

Signed:

Geoffrey L. Wilkinson

Date:

02/11/22

Name:

Geoffrey Wilkinson

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

IER

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Oct 2018

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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.