

Wootton Conservation Trust
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Charity No 1163549

Trustees Annual Report
For the year ending 31 December 2023

Trustees:

Philip Parker (Chair)

David Fairweather (Treasurer)

Edward Taylor

Malcolm Barnicoat

Marcus Brown

Sarah Brown

Address:

c/o Yew Trees House, 32 Castle Road, Wootton OX20 1EG

Objectives

Wootton Conservation Trust CIO ("WCT CIO" or "the CIO") was established in 2015 by the Trustees of the Wootton Conservation Trust, registered charity 1070246 ("WCT" or "the original Trust").

The objectives of the CIO and the original Trust are to preserve and protect for the public benefit all forms of wildlife in the civil parish of Wootton, and to advance education of the public regarding wildlife and to increase understanding and appreciation of nature, its value and its conservation, in particular by the promotion of the evolution and enhancement of the landscape and the promotion of access to the land through provision of permissive paths, subject to certain restrictions.

The CIO was established with the intention that the property and activities of the WCT Trust be transferred to the CIO, in order to simplify the administration of the charities, and in particular to allow the CIO to own the land directly, which is not possible for the original Trust as it is an unincorporated trust.

On 30th September 2019 the trustees transferred the Trust's property and activities to the CIO, since which time the CIO has taken over the activities of the Trust and the management of Wootton water meadows and adjacent limestone grassland.

Activities and Finances

The CIO received income of £3,819 in 2023 and incurred expenditure of £3,421. Total funds at the end of the year were £9,526.

Income rose significantly (+54%) in 2023, driven by a large increase in income from fund raising events (notably the very successful Indian food events), and also by the return of a grant from Wootton Parish Council. Income from the Trust's Higher Level Stewardship agreement with the RPA remained the largest source of income (£1,930, around half the total), with fundraising / donations amounting to £1,289 and the Parish Council grant £600.

Expenditure fell 15% compared with 2022 and was below the 10 year average. The largest bucket of expenditure remained fencing and gates (£2,590) with the installation of a new of new gates and a small amount of additional fencing. This amount was smaller than in 2022 as no large fencing runs were replaced, but the Trustees expect to have to incur higher expenditure in 2024. Other items of expenditure totalled £831, notably insurance, contributions to Oxford Conservation Volunteers in exchange for work done, and a small amount of hedge cutting. This amount is significantly below the long run average of around £1,800, mainly due to the lack of significant hedge cutting / pollarding / mowing costs in 2023.

As a result of the increase in income and the lower expenditure, the Trust reported a surplus of £398 in 2023, a large improvement compared with the deficit of £1,564 in 2022.

The overall reserves of the Trust remain healthy, largely resulting from the accumulation of reserves that resulted from the generous donation of the proceeds of the Wootton Village Hall Talks between the summer of 2019 and March 2020 – these totalled £4,960 but no further funds have been received for almost four years. The Trustees have developed a plan for long term management of the land which will necessitate spending these additional accumulated resources. There is a material need for replacement fencing in various areas of the land, for pollarding of trees and trimming and/or laying of overgrown hedgerows. The Trust is also planning to install an information panel at the meadows explaining about the local flora and fauna and the conservation mission of the Trust. These items are expected to represent a material cash outlay over the next few years. The Trustees expect that expenditure will exceed income in 2024-2025, which will deplete our reserves, but remain confident that the Trust is on a sustainable financial footing.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 January 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

David Fairweather (Treasurer)

Receipts and Payments
for the 12 months ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
	Funds	Funds
	£	£
Receipts – donations and grants	3,819	2,474
Total receipts	3,819	2,474
Expenditure	3,421	4,037
Net income/(expenditure)	398	(1,564)
Other recognised gains/(losses)	0	0
Net movement in funds	398	(1,564)
Reconciliation of funds:		
Total cash funds last year end	9,128	10,691
Total cash funds this year end	9,526	9,128

Balance Sheet

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of the period

As at 31 December 2023

		2022	2021
		£	£
Cash funds		9,526	9,128
Other monetary assets		0	0
Assets for the charity's own use	Note 1	0	0
Liabilities		0	0
Total funds at this year end		9,526	9,128

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 5 January 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Chairman
Philip Parker

Treasurer
David Fairweather

Notes

1. WCT owns the freehold to approximately 32 acres of land near the village of Wootton, Oxfordshire, comprising largely water meadows and adjacent limestone grassland. As this was transferred from the old Trust to the CIO for nil consideration and is intended to be held in perpetuity this land is carried at zero book value.