

Wootton Conservation Trust  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Registered Charity No 1163549

Trustees Annual Report  
For the year ending 31 December 2024

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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 £5,255 in 2024 and incurred expenditure of £5,513, a yearly deficit of £268. Total funds at the end of the year were £9,268.

Income rose 38% in 2024 due to the receipt of a large payment of £2,895 from the Rural Payment Agency related to repairs and clean up costs from flooding. Income from the Trust's Higher Level Stewardship agreement with the RPA remained the largest regular source of income (£1,930), with fundraising / donations amounting to £430, a fall on the record year in 2023 but above medium term averages. Despite the Trust's best efforts, including a number of meetings held, the Trust did not receive a grant from Wootton Parish Council during the year (2023: £600).

Expenditure rose 61% compared with 2023, largely due to the purchase by the Trust of a ride on mower and trailer to facilitate maintenance of the meadows (£3,650). Another significant item of expenditure was £713 for trees and tools to enable volunteers to plant a Community Orchard on the meadows; this project was the subject of a successful grant application from West Oxfordshire District Council and the funds should be reimbursed in 2025. Other items of expenditure totalled £1,149, notably insurance, hedge cutting / field topping and the hire of a skip for maintenance. There was no expenditure on replacement fencing in 2024; this is lumpy but has averaged around £1800 pa in the past, and there was also no payment made to Oxford Conservation Volunteers.

Its also important to note that a programme of traditional hedge laying was undertaken in 2024 on the Trust's land, which the Trustees feel has improved the environment. We are very grateful to Wild Oxfordshire for funding this work; as this was paid directly by Wild Oxfordshire to the contractors this does not appear in our accounts.

The Trust reported a deficit of £268 in 2024 compared with the surplus of £398 in 2023.

The Trustees have developed a plan for long term management of the land which will necessitate spending these additional accumulated resources. Notably there is a need to replace at least of one of the bridges on the Trust's land, as well as a material need for replacement fencing in various areas of the land, for pollarding of trees and trimming and/or laying of overgrown hedgerows. Plans to install an information panel at the meadows explaining about the local flora and fauna and the conservation mission of the Trust remain active and this should be realised in 2025. These items are expected to

represent a material cash outlay over the next few years. The overall reserves of the Trust remain healthy but the Trustees expect that expenditure will exceed income in 2025/26. This will deplete our reserves, but we remain confident that the Trust is on a sustainable financial footing.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 20 January 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Fairweather', written over a light grey rectangular background.

David Fairweather (Treasurer)

**Receipts and Payments**  
**for the 12 months ended 31 December 2024**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
	Funds	Funds
	£	£
Receipts – donations and grants	5,255	3,819
Total receipts	5,255	3,819
Expenditure	5,513	3,421
Net income/(expenditure)	(268)	398
Other recognised gains/(losses)	0	0
Net movement in funds	(268)	398
Reconciliation of funds:		
Total cash funds last year end	9,526	9,128
Total cash funds this year end	9,268	9,526

**Balance Sheet**

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of the period  
As at 31 December 2024**

		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Cash funds		9,268	9,526
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		9,268	9,526

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 20 January 2025 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.