

NENTHEAD MINES CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1166281

Nenthead Mines, Nenthead, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3PD

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

APRIL 2023 TO AUGUST 2024

CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

The objects of the CIO are to advance the education of the public about mining, quarrying and smelting at Nenthead and in the North Pennines by:

1. Researching, restoring, maintaining, owning and exploring the historic and natural features relating to mining, quarrying and smelting at Nenthead and adjacent mining areas.
2. Encouraging and advocating the conservation of the remains of the mining, quarrying and smelting industries; and conservation of the geological features and natural environment, both above and below ground level.
3. Undertaking archaeology projects.
4. Recording and archiving information.
5. Sharing available information with the public.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Trustees to / at 21st August 2024

Nick Green, David Gough, Andy Hopkirk, Anne Hopkirk, Peter Jackson, Allan Richardson, Rosemary Vidler

Other trustees co-opted during the year

None

Operation

The Charity was registered on 30th March 2016 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation using the Charities Commission model document. The governing document is published on the Society's website and is available from the principal office at Nenthead.

The members present at the meeting appoint Trustees at the Annual General meeting of the Society by election. The Trustees may also appoint other Trustees during the year but their appointment is only valid until the next Annual General Meeting.

Trustees have held monthly online video conference meetings during this year. Convenors of Working Groups who are not Trustees are invited to attend the monthly meetings in a non-voting capacity.

Trustees established a number of delegated Working Groups to handle the detail of regular operations. Their objective by this is to involve more people in discussions thereby promoting informed and timely decision-making and allowing Trustees' meetings to be focussed on strategic decision-making:

Active groups:

- Collections Working Group
- Conservation Working Group
- Finance and Administration Working Group (was Infrastructure)
- Site Working Group
- Visitor Working Group

Inactive groups:

- Major Projects Fundraising Working Group
- Schools Liaison Working Group

A Membership Committee reviews and decides applications for full or associate membership. Trustee Anne Hopkirk is the Membership Secretary.

The Treasurer maintains the accounts of the Charity and, in partnership with the Trustees, accepts and makes payments. Trustee David Gough is Treasurer.

The Coal Authority (Mine Water Treatment Scheme proposals) Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees stood down in favour of this business being managed through the regular monthly meetings of all the Trustees.

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charities Commission.

ACHIEVING THE CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY

REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

Active Groups

Collections Working Group (Convenor Sheila Barker)

This group manages the Society's collections of artefacts, minerals, maps and plans, photographs, books and documents.

All these have been catalogued and packed in suitable materials. They are stored in various locations around the site.

This year we have received three new donations of documents and photographs from mining historians. They are in the process of being catalogued.

Our aim is to scan the documents, maps, plans and photographs so that members can have easy access to them via the website.

Conservation Working Group (Convenor Rosemary Vidler)

This group covers all aspects of complying with and maintaining the Scheduled and SSSI designations of the site, including archaeological, nature (flora and fauna), and geological areas of specialist interest.

After a protracted wait, the Woodland Management Plan for Dowgang woods was agreed by the Forestry Commission. This includes a felling licence and funding is being sought to fell some trees to open areas for planting with deciduous trees to improve diversity. A survey of the area will check the flora and fauna present.

The Assay House, Barracks and Workshop are in need of conservation work e.g. replacement windows and doors, pointing and other fabric repairs. As well as being important buildings in their own right they also play a part in raising income to fund maintenance. It was decided to get the work done by trade rather than by building and are in the process of getting quotes for new doors and windows for these buildings as well as the other fabric repairs.

Recent other work has been the annual flower survey to check the health of the flora on the site.

Finance and Administration Working Group (Convenor Andy Hopkirk)

This group has met fortnightly in the current reporting period covering:

- the banking and other financial processes
- the online membership administration service
- all the Society's other routine administrative needs.

Site Working Group (Convenor Allan Richardson)

The group meets monthly online to discuss current and future activities, and at other times *ad hoc*. Activities vary from those we can just get on with, to those which require permission from Historic England or Natural England. The scope varies from minor repairs or maintenance to major building repairs using outside contractors.

The Brewery Shaft project is nearly completed, just the snagging list to be worked through. The building looks much better, now that the stone roof doesn't appear to be about to collapse. Various tidying up works, removal of old fences etc, has improved the visual appearance of the site. As always there is always more work to do.

Visitor Working Group (Convenor Joyce Jackson)

The group continues to manage the visitor experience by publicising and promoting visits to the site and coordinating members to help with the events.

Over the last year there have been:

- 13 public Open Days and approximately 540 people have been on Carrs mine trips.
- As part of the Open Day experience we have introduced Geo trips which are a walk and a Carrs mine tour, both with a geological focus. A detailed geology trail guide has been produced to support these events.
- 12 group visits, ranging from school groups, U3A groups, private groups and universities. This was a further 200 people learning about the site, both overground and underground.

To support all of the above we have a group of 15 - 20 members who help on site and bring their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Inactive Groups

Major Projects Fundraising Working Group (Convenor Andy Hopkirk)

The group determined it would be loosely organised and task-oriented, only convening and working as needed for specific projects or other targeted funding requirements.

The Society has been fortunate in the reporting period to have found grant support for its project needs via DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. As such, the group has not been asked to take on any tasks in this reporting period.

Schools Liaison Working Group (Convenor - vacant position)

The group has been unable to progress its remit in the reporting period.

PROJECTS WITH EXTERNAL FUNDING

Woodland and Open Access Land access improvements at Nenthead Mines

Funded by the DEFRA Farming in Protected Landscapes programme - £5,742 in December 2023 - and the Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust - £2,154 in January 2024.

The project created, protects, and manages access to an area of new broadleaved woodland to replace open grassland by the top of Dowgang Hush, with the intention of promoting wind-blown self-seeding into the existing conifer + larch dominated Dowgang Hush woodland which is currently particularly broadleaved species poor. It also improves public access to the new woodland area and the other Open Access land around it.

Brewery Shaft Buildings Conservation Stage 2

In March 2023, the Stage 2 proposal that was the outcome of the Stage 1 project was successful and a grant of £75,579 was made from the DEFRA Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to deliver the project. The Society also benefited from a donation of £932 from the winding up of the Friends of the North Pennines which the trustees put up as match funding for this project.

The building work was completed and the site re-opened for visitors in time for the 2024 season, but not without a hitch. The ventilation slats that were originally fitted were not adequate to the job of ventilating the Shaft. After much discussion, Nick Green produced an option which was in due course supplied and fitted. The money for this change of design came from the project contingency budget. The project is now in the 'Snagging List' stage. A small percentage of the budget has been held back for a year to cover the snagging costs.

The volume of moist and relatively warm air rising from the flooded shaft is a challenging situation for any building to cope with, especially one with no forced ventilation. The project has renewed all the timber in the roofs of both halves of the site and is trying a new approach to the roof above the shaft itself whereby the old timber roof has been replaced with an insulated metal one plus improved ventilation. This should give the roofs another 30 years of life.

There are 3 new information boards showing the history and use of Brewery Shaft - these contain a wealth of information not previously on display.

The project also benefited from a grant of £600 from Subterranea Britannica in March 2024 towards the costs of printing the new information boards.

Security lighting

The security lights around the Smeltmill buildings at Nenthead finally failed some years ago. These have now been replaced with a modern system which works very well. As the Smeltmill area is used for “Dark Skies” visits, the security lights can be switched off for the duration of such events.

The new lights certainly make life easier on dark nights at Nenthead. With thanks to Subterranea Britannica for a £ 1,686 grant towards the project whose total cost was £ 1,792.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

North Pennines National Landscape (was North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Partnership

The Society is a member of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership. The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been renamed and repurposed as the North Pennines National Landscape (NPNL).

The NPNL manages and administers the DEFRA Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, within which the Society has been successful in competitive grant competitions (see above).

We are represented on the NPNL’s Partnership, Geopark Advisory Group and Historic Environment Working Group by Trustee Peter Jackson.

Report from NMCS participation in the NPAONB’s Historic Environment Working Group (HEWG)

The HEWG met several times during the year. The HEWG is involved with the Land of Lead and Silver project (LOLAS) for which there is a separate report below.

Report from NMCS participation in the NPAONB’s Land of Lead and Silver Project

Funded principally by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England, the *Land of Lead and Silver* is a 4 year project which started in March 2024. The project team has used the Nenthead Mines site for events and for training sessions. Some society members are personally involved in the work of the project.

The project includes a capital programme of works for heritage at risk sites, work to engage new audiences, training for volunteers and capacity building for the voluntary sector. It is possible that some of the buildings at Nenthead may be included in the project.

Historic England and Natural England

The majority of the Nenthead Mines site is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site also contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest and our site boundary contacts another. As a consequence of these circumstances, we must obtain legal consents from one or both of Historic England and Natural England for many operations on site.

In the reporting period, we have sought and obtained:

- 15 new Scheduled Monument Consents from Historic England

- 1 new Site of Special Scientific Interest consent from Natural England.

Potential Coal Authority mine water treatment scheme at Nenthead Mines

The Coal Authority (CA) along with the Environment Agency (EA) have continued to undertake work on a water treatment scheme (the Scheme) aimed at reducing mine water pollution in the River Nent. The Scheme is mainly targeting the removal of dissolved metals exiting from the Rampgill Mine and Capelcleugh Mine entrances.

NMCS is the registered landholder of the Nenthead Mines site and is responsible for the management of the site as a whole. The Society has had regular contact with the CA in order to share Members' knowledge and experience of the site in detail and to understand the implications of the proposed Scheme should it proceed. The Trustees' view continues to be that the heritage and legal status of the mines should be protected and that access to the mines and the Nenthead site for leisure purposes should not be obstructed. The Trustees are currently minded to support the Scheme subject to seeing the detail of its final form in the CA's formal Planning Application and reaching satisfactory agreements in respect of an option, lease and licensing arrangements, for example.

Health and Safety Executive

The operation of Carrs Mine requires that we comply with the law including the Mines Regulations 2014. We have appointed a volunteer Deputy Mine Manager (Member Colin Hindle) to support the volunteer Mine Manager (Trustee Peter Jackson).

Approved Mine Routes for Adventure Groups

We were members of a scheme that managed and financed an engineer's report for certain routes into Smallcleugh and Rampgill Levels to allow their use by commercial Adventure Groups. This scheme was suspended on the advice of the HSE. The scheme has not operated during this period and no expenditure has been required.

Nenthead Community Projects

This group (independent of the Society) was established in order to lead community projects for the benefit of the Nenthead community. We have supported their work in establishing a memorial garden at the entrance to the village car park. We plan to continue to work with the group and have agreed with their proposal to repair and reinstate fencing at the Village Car Park entrance. We have financed the cost of materials for the fencing.

Others

We have continued our annual memberships of the **Cumbria Local History Federation** and the **National Association of Mining History Organisations**.

ENCOURAGING AND DEVELOPING MEMBERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERING

The Society had 136 Members and 28 Friends on 30th July 2024 - total 164 compared to 143 at the last AGM.

At the end of July 2024, our numbers were as follows:

Membership renewals for 2024	116
Friends renewals for 2024	21
New memberships for 2024	20
New friends for 2024	7

We have had an influx of local members this year - from Nenthead itself and the surrounding area. This has been a most welcome addition and we hope to see them become involved in helping the Society to meet its objectives.

We produce an occasional Newsletter to members which aims to keep members informed about volunteering opportunities. There were 16 issues of the Newsletter during this year.

Most of the work on the Nenthead Mines site in the reporting period was carried out by volunteers organised through the various working groups. Volunteers contributed a recorded 5,040 hours - equivalent to 630 x 8 hr working days - in calendar year 2023. (Compared to 5,521 hours / 690 working days in 2021 and 6,725 hours / 841 working days in 2022).

Volunteers do not receive any payment for time and travelling costs except in exceptional circumstances.

TREASURER'S REPORT

BUDGETS AND RESERVE POLICIES

The trustees' reserves policy states:

"NMCS aims to maintain sufficient reserves to finance 12 months routine operating expenditure and an appropriate long-term programme of maintenance of the Nenthead Mines site."

This AGM reports Financial Year 2023-24 completed at the end of March 2024.

For the new Financial Year 2024-25, the Trustees earmarked £15,098 as the Contingency Reserve (was £7,700 in FY 2023-24) and set formal budgets for the Working Groups and other planned project expenditures in the year amounting to £15,006.

FINANCIAL REPORT 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT			
YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024		2023/24	
INCOME	Open Days' takings	£6,996.90	Carrs Mine trip donations, refreshments
	Private Visit takings	£ 2,360.52	Carrs Mine trip donations, refreshments
	Assay House Fees	£ 1,964.00	Overnight stays in Assay House
	Membership Fees	£ 1,597.15	Membership & Associate fees
	Donations	£ 1,818.40	Donations except that shown in other income
	Gift Aid	£0.00	From membership fees.
	Books and Maps	£884.45	

	Other Income	£ 60,411.27	Nenthead Hydro £1,916.07, FIPL Grant £56,809.20 Brewery Shaft stage 2, Sub Britannica £1,686.00 for Electrical Upgrade
	Total Income	£ 76,032.69	
EXPENDITURE	Working Group		Information
	Collections	£ 270.00	Archive Boxes & shelving
	Conservation	£ 97.54	Archaeological Consumables
	Finance & Admin	£ 7,468.45	Utilities, Insurance, Website and Office expenses
	Projects	£0.00	Projects planned at start of Financial year, See below
	Visitors	£412.16	Open Days, Private visits & Merchandising
	Site	£ 2,876.982	General Maintenance
	Fundraising	£0.00	
	Schools Outreach	£0.00	
	Budget subtotals	£11,125.13	
	Projects		
	Brewery Shaft Stage1	£400.00	
	Brewery Shaft Stage 2 FIPL	£57,013.20	
	Brewery Shaft Stage 2 NMCS	£1,164.53	
	Electrical Upgrade	£1,792.34	
	New Woodland	£27.07	
	Woodburner Installation	£974.94	
	Projects subtotal	£61,372.08	
	Treasurer Only		
	Brewery Shaft Company	£13.00	
	Refund	£240.00	
	subtotal	£253.00	
	Total Expenditure	£ 72,750.21	
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		£3,282.48	Signed off by typed signature: David Gough, Treasurer 21st April 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Nenthead Mines Conservation Society.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society (the Society) for the year ended 31st March 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

As a charity trustees of the Society you are responsible for the preparation of accounts in accordance with the requirements of Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Society's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act 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 examiners's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Society as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in the report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Signed:

Name: Mr Chris Butler
F.M.A.A.T.

Address: Butler & Gee Accountants
7 Newgate
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8NQ