

NENTHEAD MINES CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Charitable Incorporated Organisation Number 1166281

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

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-25

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 serving in the reporting period

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

Other trustees co-opted during the reporting period

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:

Working Groups:

- Collections Working Group
- Conservation Working Group
- Finance and Administration Working Group
- Site Working Group
- Visitor 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.

Mining Remediation Authority (was The Coal Authority) business is managed through the regular monthly Trustees and Officers meetings.

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

The last 5 years or so to 31st March 2025

2020

- Rain water runoff from Storm Dennis in February led to serious flooding of the ground floor basement of the Barracks building containing the Society's Office and Archive. Fortunately the latter's contents had just been relocated temporarily into the top floor of the Assay House pending an planned extension to the office space in the basement.
- The COVID lockdowns of 2020 meant that NMCS needed to change its working practices in order to continue to function through the crisis. We moved to online meetings for all Trustee and Officer business and increased the frequency from quarterly to monthly.
- The Land Asset Transfer from Cumbria CC to NMCS was completed in October. NMCS was now able to apply for grants from grant awarding bodies in its own right.

2021

- We created a new Working Groups structure for managing and delivering day-to-day and project operations, each with its own Convener.
- Not wishing to put the Office and Archive back into the basement of the Barracks, volunteers built a new Office and Archive 'pod' into one half of the Workshop building. A wood stove was added next to heat the other half of the building - for use as a warm, dry volunteer mess room and *ad hoc* meeting place for visitor tours etc.

- We moved to an online shared document system to better organise and facilitate all the Society's activities. This was part of a suite of on-line facilities in a Google Workspace provided at no cost to the Society by Google.
- We won our first grant - just under £16,000 to create the Geology Trail Steps.

2022

- We were awarded a 'Stage 1' grant of around £5,000 to undertake design work for roof repairs to the Brewery Shaft building. This involved: working with a local conservation architect who drew up the plans; obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England; getting planning permission from Cumbria County Council; and submitting a grant application for 'Stage 2' funding to do the work defined in Stage 1.

2023

- We were further awarded just under £75,000 to do the 'Stage 2' Brewery Shaft building repair works. The entire wooden structure of the roof was replaced and better roof ventilation added. The original stone tiles were re-used.
- We also won 2 grants - of £5,000 and £2,800 - to fence and plant new mixed deciduous woodland at the top of the valley of Dowgang Burn.

2024

- The Government's Environmental Stewardship scheme was replaced by the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Existing Environmental Stewardship agreements (like that held by NMCS to 2028) remain active until their natural expiry, save for woodland management elements that would now be separately managed under the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. Working towards an eventual Countryside Stewardship agreement application, we made a Woodland Management Plan that was subsequently approved (January 2024) by the Forestry Commission for all of the wooded areas on our land holdings.
- We worked on defining and building cases for support for our next building renovations and repairs projects, e.g. replacing the Assay House windows.

2025

- Work continues towards a woodland conservation and development Countryside Stewardship application.
- Ongoing liaison with the government's Mining Remediation Authority (was The Coal Authority) as it continues to work through options and planning for an anticipated formal planning application for a mine water treatment scheme at Nenthead Mines.

External funding has greatly leveraged the relatively modest amounts - small £1,000's - that the Society has been able to put to major projects from its own resources.

REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS FOR FY24-25

Collections Working Group in FY24-25 (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.

We have not had any large new collections donated this year.

We have started to scan maps and photographic slides. Our aim is to scan the documents, maps, plans and photographs so that members can have easy access to them via the Society's website.

Conservation Working Group in FY24-25 (Convenor Rosemary Vidler)

The group works to maintain the site and scheduled and SSSI areas on the site and to comply with various legal requirements for these specialist areas of archeology, flora, fauna and geology.

To check compliance with the various requirements a member has taken on the role of checking that the required items, such as reporting of Scheduled Monument Consent and Section 17 Agreement processes have been done.

An earlier proposal for tree felling/thinning work in Dowgang Woods, under the Woodland Management Plan, met unforeseen circumstances and was abandoned.

A further plan is under discussion with a view to fencing a part of Dowgang Wood and then doing some replanting within that area to encourage diversity. This would require external funding.

Liaison with the Volunteer Working Group has resulted in path edging above Carr's Mine entrance being replaced with the aim of preventing further erosion in the area.

Some of the fenced areas around the shafts by Smallcleugh level have had rabbit proof fencing put in place, aiming to replicate the method that protected the wild flower area in the car park. Noticeable improvement in the flora around these shaft tops is being seen through summer-autumn 2025.

This is just some of the work carried out by this group and future projects are under discussion.

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 of the Society's other routine administrative needs.

Site Working Group in FY24-25 (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, have improved the visual appearance of the site. As always, there is always more work to do.

A number of works have been completed over the past year, including gutters and drainage for Carrs Shop, replacing the old wire fencing behind the Assay House with post and rail fencing, using a mini JCB to excavate and repair a collapsed culvert near the Barracks, another double bunk has been installed in the Assay House rear bedroom, a new sink unit has been installed in the kitchen, there are a number of ongoing projects e.g. repointing the Workshop with lime mortar, rabbit proofing the fenced mine shafts above Carrs Mine (grant aided by Alston Moor Parish Council). This has proved very successful with a good flower display this Spring/Summer. We aim to rabbit proof more areas, plus a number of tidying up jobs around the site.

Visitor Working Group in FY24-25 (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:

- 11 public Open Days and approximately 460 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.
- 10 group visits, ranging from school groups, U3A groups, private groups and universities. This was a further 177 people learning about the site, both overground and underground.
- We have been working closely with the National Landscapes Land of Lead and Silver project resulting in more school groups and dark skies events.
- Open days and group visits continue to be the main income for the Society/

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.

PROJECTS WITH EXTERNAL FUNDING IN FY24-25

Woodland and Open Access Land access improvements at Nenthead Mines

The project created, protected, and now manages access to an area of new broadleaved woodland to replace open grassland, with the intentions of:

1. In due course, promoting wind-blown self-seeding into the existing Dowgang woodland. This is currently notably poor in broadleaved species and dominated by conifer and larch.
2. Improving public access to the new woodland area and the other Open Access land around it by providing new gated access and related trackway / walling repairs.

The project was funded by the DEFRA *Farming In Protected Landscapes* programme, the Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust and NMCS.

Brewery Shaft Buildings Renovations Stage 2

The Brewery Shaft is a key feature of the diverse industrial heritage at the Nenthead Mines site. The shaft, and the remaining engineering equipment within it, are part of a unique underground hydraulic scheme that supplied compressed air to the mines at and around Nenthead.

The project stripped and then renewed the roofs of the two building structures at the shaft top in order to maintain public access to see and experience the shaft top.

The project was delivered in two stages. Stage 1 (delivered before this reporting period) designed and tendered the works and obtained all the necessary permissions for proceeding to Stage 2. Stage 2 delivered the works programme determined by Stage 1.

The project as a whole was majority funded by the DEFRA *Farming In Protected Landscapes* programme, complementing smaller inputs from NMCS itself, Subterranea Britannica and the winding up of the charity The Friends of the North Pennines.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

North Pennines National Landscape Partnership

The Society is a member of the North Pennines National Landscape (NPNL) Partnership. The Society is represented on the NPNL Partnership Geopark Advisory Group and the NPNL Historic Environment Working Group by Trustee Peter Jackson.

The NPNL manages and administers the DEFRA *Farming in Protected Landscapes* programme, within which the Society has been successful in a number of competitive grant competitions.

Report from NMCS participation in the North Pennines National Landscape (NPNL) Historic Environment Working Group (HEWG)

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

Report from NMCS participation in the *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.

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. The Society must obtain legal consents from one or both of Historic England and Natural England for many operations on site.

We have sought and obtained 4 new Scheduled Monument Consents from Historic England in the reporting period. Each is valid for 5 years.

Potential mine water treatment scheme at Nenthead Mines

The Mining Remediation Authority (MRA, was The Coal Authority) along with the Environment Agency (EA) have continued to undertake work on a water treatment scheme aimed at reducing mine water

pollution in the River Nent. The scheme targets the removal of dissolved metals exiting from the Rampgill Mine and Capelcleugh Mine entrances and passing on into the River Nent.

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 MRA 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 formal Planning Application and our reaching satisfactory agreements with the MRA 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.

- The volunteer Mine Manager is Member and Trustee Peter Jackson.
- The volunteer Deputy Mine Manager is Member Colin Hindle.

Nenthead Community Projects in FY24-25

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

We produce an occasional Newsletter to members which aims to keep them informed about volunteering opportunities. There were 9 issues of the Newsletter in the reporting period.

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

The number of members and friends is currently remaining fairly stable year on year.

Date	Number of Members	Number of Friends	Total at Date
9th April 2024	130	29	159
8th April 2025	125	23	148

12th September 2025	133	26	159
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Most of the work on NMCS activities is carried out by volunteers on site or remotely, organised through the various Working Groups:

All volunteer work totals	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	Totals	Totals	Totals	Totals	Totals
Trustee/Convener on site hours	788	1393	1692	1323	1341
Trustee/Convener remote hours	607	2173	2719	1875	1535
Other volunteer hours	219	1955	2314	1842	1960
Total hours	1614	5521	6725	5040	4836

The number of volunteer work hours per annum is averaging around 5,500 over the last four complete calendar years (2021-2024). This translates to the equivalent of 687 working days per annum (at 8 hours each) or 2.75 Full Time Equivalents employed, if the Society employed staff instead.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FY24-25

This AGM reports Financial Year 2024-2025 completed 31st March 2025.

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."

For the 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 2024 – 31 March 2025

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT			
YEAR ENDING MARCH 2025		2024/25	Starts Apr 2024 - ends Mar 2025
	Figures as at	15-Sep-25	
INCOME	Open days	£ 6,238.37	Carrs Mine trip donations, refreshments
	Private Visits	£ 1,979.71	Carrs Mine trip donations, refreshments
	Assay House	£ 3,825.00	Overnight stays in Assay House
	Membership	£ 1,549.17	Membership & Associate fees
	Donations	£ 1,453.00	All Donations
	Other Income	£ 2,102.24	Book etc. sales and one-offs
	High Level Stewardship	£ 7,540.42	

	Nenthead Hydro	£ 2,610.25	
	FiPL Grant Brewery Shaft Stage 2	£ 13,602.98	FiPL = DEFRA's <i>Farming in Protected Landscapes</i> programme
	Sub Brit Grant	£ 600.00	Subterannea Britannica
	FiPL Grant - New Woodland	£ 5,525.14	FiPL = DEFRA's <i>Farming in Protected Landscapes</i> programme
	Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust	£ 2,541.41	
	Total Income	£ 49,567.69	
EXPENDITURE	Working Group	Total spent	
	Collections	£ 453.85	Archive boxes, general stationery, extra shelving
	Conservation	£ 208.51	Archaeological consumables etc.
	Finance & Admin	£ 8,396.15	All utilities, insurances, safety inspections, office expenses, website
	Visitors	£ 686.63	Expenses for Private Visits, Open Days, Merchandising for visitors
	Site	£ 3,703.48	General Maintenance
	Budgets subtotal	£ 13,448.62	
	Projects		
	Internal commitments		
	Brewery Shaft Stage 2	£ 23.70	
	New Woodland	£ 47.40	
	Tree Felling	£ 780.00	
	Externally Funded		
	Brewery Shaft Stage 2 - FiPL	£ 12,239.80	FiPL = DEFRA's <i>Farming in Protected Landscapes</i> programme
	New Woodland - Ext. fund	£ 8,198.10	DEFRA's <i>Farming in Protected Landscapes</i> programme and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
	Projects subtotal	£ 21,289.00	
	Treasurer only		
	Brewery Shaft Company	£ 34.00	
	NAMHO	£ 20.00	
	Refund	£ 549.00	
	Donation	£ 100.00	
	Subtotal	£ 703.00	
	Total Expenditure	£ 35,440.62	
	SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR to date	£14,127.07	(which is the candidate reserve for next FY)
			Signed off by: David Gough, Treasurer 15 September 2025

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 2025

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 ('theAct').

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.

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