

# Annual Report

2024/25



Heath Hands  
The Dairy, Kenwood House, Hampstead Lane, London, NW3 7JN

Registered charity no: 1173419

**Trustee Committee**

Rachel Chapman (Chair)

Sarah Williams (Treasurer)

Trustees: Liz Andrew, John Arnoldi, Stuart Clark, Susie Gorney, Andrew Morgan

Co-optee: Jeremy Simons

Ex-officio: Bill LoSasso and William Upton (both CoLC)

**Chief Executive Officer:** Colin Houston

**Programme Manager:** Karin Oleinikova

**Banks:** Lloyds, United Trust

**Independent Examiner:** Simon Erskine FCA FCIE DChA

**Governance and management**

Heath Hands is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), governed by its Trustees, all of whom are appointed by its members at General Meetings. The Trustees herein submit their Annual Report including independently examined financial report for the year ended 31st March 2025. The Trustees employ a staff team to manage and deliver our charitable objectives and programmes, while membership is open to those who are registered and can contribute to our charitable activities.

Heath Hands works in partnership with the City of London Corporation (CoLC) and English Heritage (EH). We have a partnership agreement with CoLC, which includes the secondment of our Chief Executive and an occupancy agreement for our base on Hampstead Heath, the Hive. We are grateful for this support, alongside the wider collaboration across all our areas of work, particularly the supervision of our volunteer sessions.

At each AGM of the CIO, the members elect from amongst themselves charity trustees that hold office from the conclusion of that meeting. The Chair of the Hampstead Heath Management Committee and Superintendent of Hampstead Heath are trustees, while English Heritage may appoint a trustee.

The trustees have given consideration to the major risks to which the charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to manage those risks.

**Objects of Heath Hands**

To help, engaging volunteers, to conserve, protect and enhance Hampstead Heath, the Kenwood Estate, Highgate Wood, Keats House and such other areas as the charity trustees may determine from time to time (the “Relevant Open Spaces”);

To advance education in conserving, protecting and enhancing the environment of the Relevant Open Spaces for the benefit of the members of the CIO and for the benefit of the public at large, and

To help the bodies responsible for the Relevant Open Spaces to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation by the members of the CIO and the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life.

## Chair's statement

What a momentous year it has been for Heath Hands! We celebrated our 25th anniversary with a spectacular party at Kenwood (see the front cover!) and released a special film to celebrate all the great work that we do as a charity. This report tries to capture and recognise the incredible achievements that our staff, volunteers, members and activity participants have contributed to over the year. As you can see, there have been an incredible number of successes. Thank you to everyone for your time, effort, dedication and passion. The success and future of Heath Hands is attributable to you.



Behind the scenes, our trustees and senior staff have worked incredibly hard with our colleagues at the City of London Corporation, led by the Superintendent, Bill LoSasso. We agreed a new long-term partnership agreement, outlining our shared aspirations and responsibilities, we signed an occupancy agreement for our Parliament Hill base (the Hive) and formalised the continuing secondment of a member of staff. We also signed a new agreement with the team at Keats House to cover the ongoing maintenance of the gardens there.

This year we appointed our first Chief Executive (Colin), cementing our continued growth, development and maturity as an organisation. A big thank you goes to our partners at the City of London Corporation and English Heritage, without whose support we could not achieve what we do. Their management of our green spaces provides huge public benefit and we're looking forward to many more years of collaboration.

Thank you again to the staff, trustees, volunteers and partners of this wonderful charity who ensure that we conserve our green spaces so that they may be enjoyed by future generations.

*Rachel Chapman*

Rachel Chapman - Chair of Trustees

## Message from the Chief Executive - the year in review

This last year has been an unforgettable one, firstly on a personal level as I reached a decade working for Heath Hands, and was honoured to be appointed as our first Chief Executive. However, any personal achievements have only been possible due to a phenomenal team of people, particularly the charity's staff and hard working volunteers, and my tremendous colleagues at CoLC and EH. The graph below shows the breadth of what our team at Heath Hands deliver each year - an absolutely amazing effort by everyone!

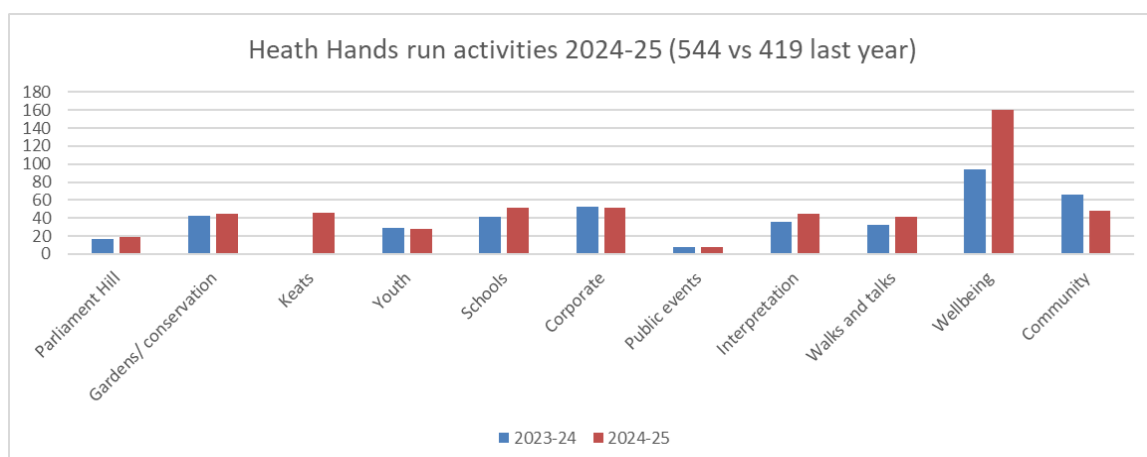


It's been a really successful year in terms of fundraising, with more detail later in this report, but generous donations from our Heath Friendly Schools, campaigns and income from corporate volunteering enabled us to offer more free programming for various youth and community groups at a staggering 544 different sessions.

It's always fantastic to see the collaboration with others organisations at places like Keats House, Highgate Wood and out in the local community. The graph of our volunteer contribution on the next page shows that breadth and impact, and also significant growth in our activity levels over the past year. A massive thank you to everyone who made the last year such a success!

*Colin Houston*

Colin Houston - Chief Executive Officer



## 2024-25 in numbers

**17,175** volunteer hours  
across our green spaces

## 41 guided walks and workshops

**2,279** participants on our wellbeing, health walks and nature mindfulness sessions

**275** members

**500+** practical  
volunteer sessions

**544** activities delivered  
by the Heath Hands team

48 community engagement sessions

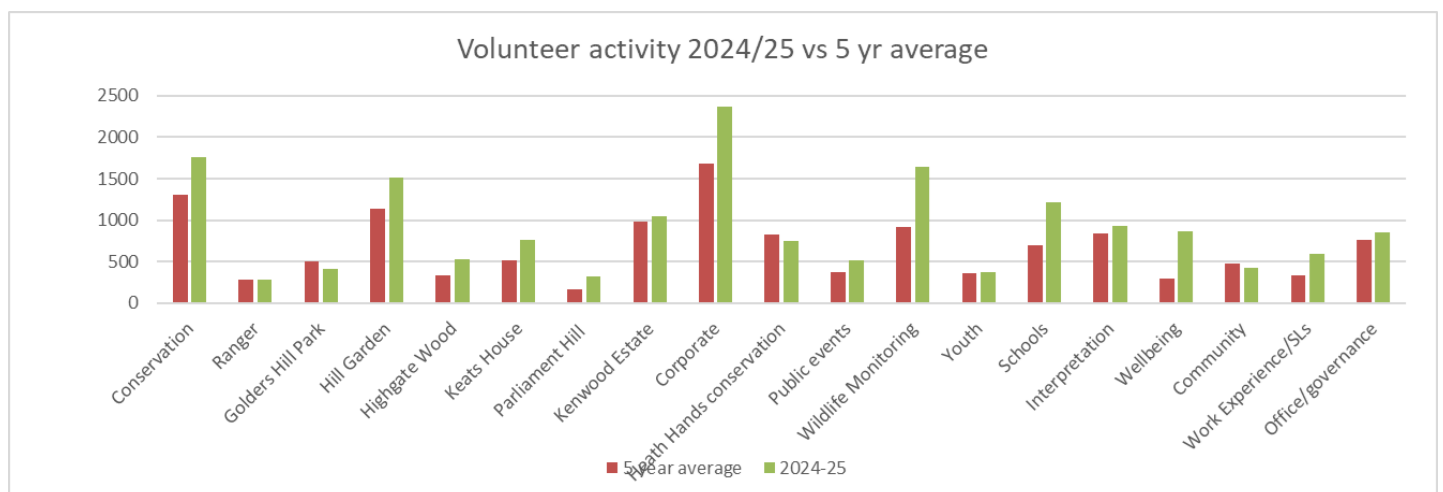
**12,000+** participants  
across all our programmes

**1,009** young people involved  
individually or with their school

4,300 public engagements  
through interpretation programmes

### Volunteering contribution

In 2024-25, Heath Hands volunteers contributed 17,175 to the green spaces, compared to a 5-year average of 12,663. The chart below details how this is broken down across activities and teams.



## Impact on participants

Our annual opinion survey demonstrates the importance of our work for people and their wellbeing. The word cloud below summarises some key impacts, and here are some positive results:

- 95% of our volunteers agree that participating in our activities improves their health and wellbeing
- 96% agree that our activities benefit the local community
- 95% feel that their knowledge of nature has increased as a result of our activities





## Strategic report

Heath Hands delivers a range of programmes, supported by our partners at CoLC and EH, as detailed in our Strategy. Our focus is on Conservation, Community, Learning and Wellbeing and we're involved with practical work and gardening activities, ecological monitoring, wildlife interpretation, youth and schools, community engagement and activities related to physical and mental health. We work get people involved regardless of ability or background, which supports the inclusion of underrepresented people and those with disabilities. .

Since Heath Hands was founded in 1999 our volunteers have contributed over 210,000 hours to the conservation of our green spaces. We deliver up to 20 volunteer and community activities per week and support many thousands of people getting involved each year. These are people of all ages and backgrounds, and we help to improve our participants' knowledge, skills and wellbeing.

Heath Hands trustees have given regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and our strategy governs all that we do and aim to achieve. This report details our key achievements against our four strategic aims in 2024-25.



### Strategic Aim: Conservation

*Heath Hands help conserve 350 hectares of amazing green space, helping maintain a rich mosaic of important habitats, conserving wildlife and preserving the unique character of this unique landscape.*

Over the past year, Heath Hands has:

- Delivered 471 practical conservation and garden maintenance volunteering sessions in collaboration with CoLC and EH.
- Expanded our **wildlife monitoring** activities, running 4 reptile, 2 butterfly, 1 dragonfly and 3 plant phenology transects in collaboration with LNHS.
- Expanded the **wildflower meadow** near the Hive and worked to enhance the Sparrow Site meadow on Parliament Hill Fields.
- Planted over 150m of native **hedgerows** around the Parliament Hill area; and worked on restoration of mature hedgerows to enhance wildlife connectivity.
- Continued enhancing the **Savernake Road** entrance to the Heath as a wildlife corridor and started work on a new **wildlife pond**.
- Supported the delivery of a conservation **grazing** project on the Extension in collaboration with other groups to enhance the grassland areas.
- Developed our **Hedgehog Friendly Heath** project to help conserve this iconic species, carrying out dozens of practical conservation sessions, checking and repairing over 30 hedgehog boxes across the Heath and working with community groups and schools around the fringes of the Heath on wildlife connectivity. We took part in two surveys during the summer in collaboration with CoLC and London Hogwatch.

## Conservation activities led by Heath Hands

A significant amount of our conservation activity is led by our team of Session Leaders - and focuses on the following areas of work:

### Conservation and gardens

We ran 19 **volunteer sessions around Parliament Hill** assisting with path maintenance, litter picking, hedgerow and meadow management and more. Sessions focused on litter and meadow management over the summer to support CoLC Ranger teams and moved on to **hedge** conservation and planting during Autumn and Winter.

Our team led popular sessions at **Whitestone Garden** involving landscaping and general maintenance. A heathland area has been created to increase plant diversity and the lost memorial tree and bench replaced to celebrate our 25th anniversary.

We have continued to lead on maintenance of the **Old Orchard Garden**, with work beginning on regeneration of play and natural features (e.g. willow tunnel), hedgerow management and general maintenance.



### Keats House

Heath Hands formally took over responsibility for upkeep at **Keats House** Garden in May 2024, signing an agreement with the City of London Corporation. Over the past year, this has led to training for staff in use of powered lawn mower and hedge trimmers to support our ongoing volunteering sessions, which contribute 760 hours to the maintenance of the site.

In addition to our regular gardening sessions, the team participated in a Green Changemakers climate education project at the Garden in collaboration with the City of London's Culture and Heritage Team.

### Savernake Road bridge and Hive area

Work continues on maintaining **Savernake Road Bridge** and areas around the **Hive** as green corridors for wildlife. Wildflower meadows, native hedgerows, a heathland area all created and maintained and interpretation signage helps engage visitors.

The **wildflower meadow** was expanded in Autumn 2024 to and we continued hedge planting and started work on creation of new **wildlife pond**.

### **Conservation Project: the Mixed and Men's Ponds**

Following accessibility works at the swimming ponds in 2023, Heath Hands was asked to help regenerate the areas that had been affected by the works. Our groups have been holding regular landscaping sessions at both ponds to increase biodiversity, enhance the post-works areas and make the area more appealing to swimmers, with the support of a public fundraiser.





## Conservation activities led by Heath Hands

### Corporate Volunteering

To support the conservation of the green spaces, 52 companies undertook volunteering in 2024/25, with over 755 participants contributing 2,300 hours. A range of tasks were completed including fence line maintenance, scrub management, garden maintenance, litter picking, invasive species control and path clearance.

### Youth Programmes

In order to involve young people in conservation, we run regular **youth volunteering** sessions from the Hive, contributing 375 hours of volunteering during term-time around the Parliament Hill area in 2024-25. In addition, we welcomed external youth groups, such as Project Impact, 7th St Pancras Guides, the Woodcraft Folk and Goal Youth Club to take part in practical tasks.

### Wildlife monitoring

A key element of our conservation work involves ecological monitoring, to collect data that help inform the management of the green spaces we work on.

This year, Heath Hands delivered record levels of monitoring, with over 1,600 volunteer hours contributed.

Collaborating with the CoLC Ecologist, we coordinate 4 reptile transects, 2 butterfly transects and one dragonfly transect and we've published reports on these surveys.

We've continued to support the London Natural History Society on the Nature's Calendar plant phenology monitoring project running since January 2023, expanding to 3 transects in 2024. The aim of this project is to collect long-term climate change-related data.



### Conservation Project: Hedgehog Friendly Heath

Building on various monitoring activities on Hampstead Heath since 2016, we launched Hedgehog Friendly Heath in April 2023. Our key aims are to increase wildlife connectivity, in particular for hedgehogs, between Hampstead Heath and nearby Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

In 2024-25, we have:

- Taken part in two large hedgehog surveys in collaboration with ZSL's London Hogwatch and colleagues at CoLC as well as carrying out targeted monitoring interventions at key sites.
- Worked with local partners to create corridors to other sites, for instance a corridor through Holly Lodge Estate towards Waterlow Park and Highgate Cemetery, in partnership with Growing Green.
- Planted 150m of native hedgerow and worked on hedge restoration
- Installed, monitored and repaired 33 hog boxes
- Updated hedgehog rescue procedures on Hampstead Heath and installed Hedgehog First Aid boxes at key locations on and around the Heath.
- Organised 23 community events and 15 school events to engage the local community

## City of London Corporation and English Heritage Teams

The majority of our practical volunteering sessions run with the Ranger and Gardening teams at the City of London Corporation and English Heritage. Here is a brief summary of our activities with them across the year:

### Highgate Wood

Weekly sessions run outside of bird nesting season, led by Highgate Wood Keepers, with Tuesday sessions extremely popular and 535 hours contributed to the conservation of the site.

Heath Hands ran a stall, litter picking and interpretation session at Highgate Wood Heritage Day.

### Conservation Team

The City of London's Conservation Team run regular habitat management and creation sessions at sites across the Heath on Wednesdays and Saturdays. 1,763 hours contributed since April at 84 sessions.

Heath Hands collaborated with the Heath and Hampstead Society, Mudchute City Farm and CoLC on sheep grazing project at Heath Extension.



### Ranger Team

The CoLC Ranger Team restarted regular sessions at the Heath Extension in 2024 following successful recruitment - these complement existing regular sessions at Athlone Gardens, increasing hours to 279 at 20 practical sessions across the year.

### Golders Hill Park and Hill Garden

The Garden Team led regular sessions working up to three times a week - 413 hours contributed across 27 sessions at Golders Hill Park, a slight decrease due to staff absence, and 1,511 at the Hill Garden across 75 sessions.

Apprentice Gardeners have been helping lead volunteer sessions, aiding their training.

### Kenwood Estate

The English Heritage Garden Team at Kenwood focused on conservation tasks across the Estate.

Sessions decreased to once a week due to staffing levels, however attendance at morning sessions increased, meaning 1,048 hours were contributed across 48 sessions - an increase since previous year.





## Strategic Aim: Community

*Heath Hands works to give everyone from the community, regardless of background or ability, a chance to get involved in volunteering and recreation on our green spaces.*

In 2024-25, Heath Hands delivered 48 dedicated **community outreach** activities with local organisations and eight events welcoming over 2,800 participants to both.

Our **community newsletter** readership increased to over 500 organisations locally and across London.

**Ongoing partnerships** with Umoja (African) Health Forum, Queens Crescent Community Association (QCCA) for wellbeing and family sessions on the Heath with groups from BAME communities. Continued **joint working** with wide range of organisations, including Kentish Town City Farm, GOAL youth club, Project Impact, 7th St Pancras Guides, Woodcraft Folk and Camden Duke of Edinburgh programme.

In 2024, we ran our annual Community Fun Day and Conker Championships, alongside supporting events, such as the Heath and Hampstead Society's Kite Festival.



## Strategic Aim: Wellbeing

*Heath Hands actively aims to provide opportunities to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of all participants in our activities*

**2,279 participants** took part in our wellbeing programmes in 2024-25. These included the following initiatives:

- **Ongoing walking programmes** - our weekly health walks with our volunteer Walk Leaders hugely popular, meaning a third weekly walk added Spring 2024. We also ran several family and community walks, and led monthly dedicated walks with Mind in Camden.
- 12 **Mindfulness** and mental health wellbeing sessions for the general public, with over 90 participants
- A successful pilot programme of **12 nature therapy sessions** for parents of young people facing a health diagnosis (see box below).
- **Social Prescribing**: new activities focusing on those with poor mental health in partnership with Mind in Camden and sheltered housing group. Visits organised with UCL / Royal Free medical students to increase their knowledge of Green Social Prescribing.
- 13 individuals with additional needs supported via **social prescribing** channels into beneficial activities across the green spaces.

### **Wellbeing Project: Parent and Carers**

Working in collaboration with Mindful Kids London, Heath Hands ran a pilot programme of 12 nature mindfulness sessions to support the wellbeing of parents of young people facing a mental or physical health diagnosis, with the aim of indirectly supporting the child. The sessions were universally well-received and we are seeking funding to continue this initiative.



## Strategic Aim: Learning

*Heath Hands works to engage and connect people with nature across our green spaces through a wide-ranging programme of learning activities and events .*

### Wildlife Interpretation

Our volunteer **Wildlife Interpreters** engaged over **4,400 visitors** about nature at 39 weekend sessions and regular Dairy openings. They took part in multiple activities each month on the Heath, plus participation in community events, Highgate Wood, Kenwood (Dairy) and street parties in local communities.

The **Dairy Nature interpretation centre** opened weekly in Summer and then jointly with English Heritage on monthly basis through Autumn and Winter.

Two nature outreach sessions delivered in the school holidays for young people at Kentish Town City Farm.

### Walks and talks

41 **walks, talks** and workshops this year, with bat walks particularly popular. Other topics including bugs, the River Fleet, history, birds and the Kenwood Estate.

Very popular **festive programme** of activities running in December for members and the general public.

Return of **member outings** with visits to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Kew Gardens Herbarium, Highgate Cemetery and more.



### Work Experience

**Work experience trainee** (Yago) joined us during summer, focusing on gardening and second trainee (Hannah) worked with us in the office in the autumn and winter.

8 volunteer **Session Leaders** regularly helping us lead community, youth and school sessions.

### Heath Friendly Schools

**52 school sessions** and outings delivered, involving **over 900 children** and contributing 1,200 volunteer hours. Successful fundraising initiatives and multiple visits to school assemblies and clubs.

**21 schools** now members including: Heathside, South Hampstead High School, Highgate School, the Village School, Gospel Oak, Hampstead Hill, Swiss Cottage, UCS, La Sainte Union, Parliament Hill, Christchurch, St Anthony's, Southbank, Netley and Abacus.

Supporting special educational needs (**SEN**) **projects** with weekly sessions during term time for Swiss Cottage Special Needs school and working with Camden DoFE to support their expedition preparation.

**Thank you to all our volunteers, staff and everyone at our partner organisations for making all this possible!**





## **2024-25 Financial review**

Total cash funds at the end of the period were £61,480 with £59,899 held in deposit accounts.

The charity's principal sources of income are donations, retail sales, grant funding, corporate volunteering plus the benefits in kind set out in the Notes to the Accounts. Total receipts for the period were £141,862.

Total payments for the period were £154,670 and included payroll, catering, events, office expenses, volunteer uniform and equipment, insurance and training.

### **Statement on reserves**

The trustees of Heath Hands employ a prudent approach in terms of financial management, retaining a fairly large reserve against risk, but spending a proportion of the reserves on beneficial projects that enhance our green spaces in line with our charitable objectives and Strategic Plan. The reserves were generated from a variety of sources including a major legacy left by our founder Bobby de Joia.

Heath Hands will retain reserves to cover 12 months of core operational costs for the charity, this has increased to around £60,000 due to the increased growth of the charity. Financial unrestricted reserves on 31st March 2024 were £61,056.

### **Signed on behalf of the Trustees**



Rachel Chapman, Chair - 11th June 2025

# Heath Hands Annual Accounts

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	2024/54 to 31 March	2024/25 to 31 March	2024/25 to 31 March	2023/24
	Restricted	Unrestricted	TOTAL	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>				
Interest Income	-	2,799	2,799	2,734
Merchandise	-	8,074	8,074	5,464
Donations	-	22,139	22,139	15,310
Friends	-	3,205	3,205	3,345
Heath Friendly Schools	-	8,418	8,418	8,440
Events and Venue Hire	-	3,377	3,377	5,913
Wildlife adoptions	-	2,035	2,035	2,550
Gift Aid	-	2,025	2,025	2,322
Corporate Volunteering	-	48,776	48,776	42,046
Grants	41,015	-	41,015	32,268
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>41,015</b>	<b>100,847</b>	<b>141,862</b>	<b>120,392</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Catering and events	814	6,700	7,514	3,836
Transportation	-	1,595	1,595	3,145
Insurance	-	1,599	1,599	1,439
Office expenses	-	11,488	11,488	10,197
Tools and equipment	1,747	7,698	9,445	7,349
Training	770	9,810	10,580	7,441
Volunteer Expenses	123	737	860	926
PPE/ Uniform	227	4,729	4,956	4,750
Buildings and Rates	-	4,456	4,456	6,012
Pensions Costs	-	2,508	2,508	1,416
<b>Salaries</b>	<b>44,827</b>	<b>54,842</b>	<b>99,669</b>	<b>91,652</b>
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>48,509</b>	<b>106,161</b>	<b>154,670</b>	<b>138,161</b>
<b>Surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>(7,494)</b>	<b>(5,314)</b>	<b>(12,807)</b>	<b>(17,769)</b>
Transfers	4,073	(4,073)	-	
<b>Surplus (deficit) after transfers</b>	<b>(3,421)</b>	<b>(9,387)</b>	<b>(12,807)</b>	
<b>Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>3,845</b>	<b>70,443</b>	<b>74,288</b>	<b>92,056</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>61,056</b>	<b>61,480</b>	<b>74,288</b>



## Heath Hands Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31/03/2025

### Bank balances

	2025	2024
Lloyds Cash	£2,689	£9,070
United Trust Savings	£59,899	£62,868
Virgin Money Savings	£-	£2,795
Credit card payable	(1,108)	(445)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£61,480</u></b>	<b><u>£74,288</u></b>

### Other assets

Equipment, stock and PPE	£16,826
Power tools	£600
ATV vehicle	£10,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£27,476</u></b>

### Debtors

Keats House garden maintenance fee Apr-Sep 2024	£3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£3,000</u></b>

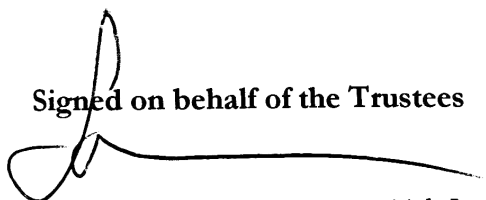
### Liabilities

PAYE due for Feb-Mar 2025	£2,372
Account examination fee	£1,330
Rent on Dairy for Apr 2025	£300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£4,002</u></b>

### Notes to accounts:

1. The full-time Chief Executive Officer is seconded from the City of London Corporation which meets all their costs.
2. Heath Hands occupies the Hive, Hampstead Heath, courtesy of the City of London Corporation.
3. Heath Hands leases part of the Dairy at Kenwood House for £300 per month. The lease is for a term ending on 30.8.2028.
4. Grants received in 2024-25: the Postcode Society Trust (£15,000), The National Lottery Green Recovery Fund (£8,800), The Young Camden Foundation (£5,000), Camden Giving (£5,000), Keats House (£3,000), The London Natural History Society (as part of a City of London Central Grant) (£2,745), Walking and Cycling Grants London (£1,500), the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (£1,000), Camden Festival Grants (£400).
5. Transfers represent the short-fall in funding of completed projects which has been met from Unrestricted funds.
6. Donations include £16,141 from Houlihan Lokey, £890 from Matt Phillips, £750 from the Mixed Pond Association, £500 from the Kenwood Lady walkers, £500 from the Men's Pond Association.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees



Sarah Williams - Treasurer - 11th June 2025

## **Independent examiner's report on the accounts**

Report to the trustees of Heath Hands, registered charity no. 1173419, on the accounts for the year ended 31/03/2025 set out on the preceding two pages.

### **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.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

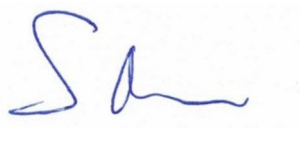
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### **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:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

**Signed:** 

**Date:** 11/06/2025

Simon Erskine FCA FCIE DChA  
61 Mortimer Road  
London  
NW10 5QR

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