

Charity Number: 1183986

FRIENDS OF THE LOWER DERWENT VALLEY CONSERVATION GROUP
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Period ended

31 December 2024

Phoenix Accountancy and Business Consultancy Limited

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For the period ended 31 December 2024**

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Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024

The Trustees present their report with the independently examined financial statements of Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisers.

Name of charity: Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group

Charity Registration Number: 1183986

Contact Address: Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group
Natural England
Church Lane
Wheldrake
York
YO19 6FE

Trustees

Names of trustees who served during the period were as follows:

Michael Frederick Jackson
Josephine Jean Thorpe MBE
Nicholas Carter
John Matthew Stone

Independent Examiner Rebecca Triffitt MAAT
Phoenix Accountancy and Business Consultancy Limited
Morley's Cottage
Morley's Yard
Walkergate
Beverley
East Yorkshire
HU17 9BY

Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024

Bankers

HSBC
Market Place
Selby
North Yorkshire
Goole
YO8 4PA

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by its constitution (Foundation model), registered with the Charity Commission on 20 June 2019.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Constitution outlines the procedure for the appointment of Trustees. There must be a minimum of 3 trustees and there is no maximum number of Trustees.

Trustees are elected for a term of two years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Charity Trustees. Any person retiring as a Charity Trustee is eligible for reappointment.

Trustee Induction and Training

All Trustees are provided with a copy of the Constitution, Charity Commission guidance "The Essential Trustee" and a copy of the CIO's latest Trustees Annual Report and financial statements.

Organisational Structure

The charity is managed by the Board of Trustees and is responsible for all strategic decisions. Trustees are made aware that any conflicts of interest must be declared and minuted.

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Risk Management

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, are regularly reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity as set out in the constitution are:

"To promote for the public benefit the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the Lower Derwent Valley, in particular but not exclusively by conducting environmental improvement works and providing or assisting in the provision of research activities relevant to the species and the habitat of the Lower Derwent Valley and to publish the useful results thereof.

To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the Lower Derwent Valley."

The Trustees have given regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

Achievement and Performance

Review of Activities 2024

2024 was another successful year with many positive developments including more strategic land purchases and continuing conservation management of our existing land holdings in the Valley. Further ongoing survey and research was undertaken to help underpin the charity's aims. It is pleasing to note that we remain in a strong financial position with additional income streams, and a continued recovery in accessing grants again to support our ambitions.

Land purchase

We continue to look for opportunities, acting either on our own behalf or working in partnership with other conservation organisations, to acquire land of conservation value within the Valley.

**Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024**

Achievement and Performance

Review of Activities 2024 (continued)

As planned, the land at Acaster Malbis on which we completed the purchase in 2023 continued to be held and managed as a traditional hay meadow during 2024. The ownership of this land will be transferred to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in exchange for land which they own within the Lower Derwent Valley plus the difference in agreed value being paid to us in cash.

Working in partnership with Carstairs Countryside Trust we were able to complete on the purchase of 15 acres at Melbourne and Thornton lngs, including SSSI and non SSSI meadows. We also worked with Carstairs Countryside Trust to purchase most of land at North Duffield lngs which remained outside of the ownership of conservation bodies. This was in addition to a 9-acre parcel of traditional meadow at North Duffield lngs which we were able to purchase acting on our own behalf and which completed just before the end of 2024

Once these transactions are completed, we will have a total of 8 landholdings in the Valley covering 60 acres (24 hectares). Of these 18 acres fall outside the existing formal conservation designated network but which enable the existing conservation areas to be buffered from development pressures. Our landholding is in five different sites across the Valley giving us a voice in wider conservation management policy.

All land holdings are in or planned to be in the pipeline for Countryside Stewardship and as such provide a valuable source of income for land management and our further ongoing activities.

Land Management

New Meadow – North Duffield Carrs

Having completed the land purchase and early hedge planting at 'New Meadow' – the 11-acre arable reversion site adjacent to North Duffield Carrs, habitat management work continued during the first half of 2024. Over 1500 hedging plants were planted to complete a new dividing hedge, the field was fenced with access gates and the two halves were sown as a wild flower meadow and wild bird mix. Both crops grew well and the new wild flower meadow was topped in mid-September to thicken the sward and then was grazed off by a local farmer in late November. This area proved attractive for butterflies and damselflies during the year and up to 40 Brown Hares were using the site in autumn, whilst the wild bird mix attracted flocks of feeding Linnet (up to 150) and Goldfinch. Signage and a new viewing screen were provided to further public enjoyment of the North Duffield Carr's visitor facilities and these were well used.

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Achievement and Performance

Review of Activities 2024 (continued)

Fleeman's Snippets (North Duffield Carr's) and Carters Corner (Ellerton Ings)

Both sites were well managed during the year with Ragwort pulling and Dock control. Both were cut and grazed under licence to aid their recovery from the long-protracted flooding in the 2023/24 winter. Both sites recovered well, supporting good numbers of wintering and breeding birds as well as good quality MG4 grassland at Carter's Corner. Whilst the sale was yet to complete on a parcel of land at North Duffield Ings, we took over land management control in June and that parcel was cut and grazed and was in good condition by late autumn.

Thornton Ings

Having completed the purchase by late November, work started on these parcels during December, including the provision of access gates and adjacent fencing. Tree works were undertaken as part of a wider project to reinforce and improve some of the remaining scattered hedgerows, planting these up with a mix of native species and additional Crab apple whips supplied by a grant from the Tree Council (see Grants). Works will continue (ground conditions permitting) into early 2025

Research and Monitoring

Both Whimbrel (3) and Black-tailed Godwits (2) were fitted with Global Positioning System (GPS) tags in April and May as part of wider research into these species and their wider use of functionally linked land surrounding the Valley. All five birds produced good quality robust data, providing valuable information of land use outside of the protected site by Whimbrel.

During the autumn, in September and October, 3 Golden Plover were also fitted with similar GPS tags and again produced previously unknown feeding site usage around the reserve. A single Spotted Crake was caught and radio-tagged in June and tracked for several weeks.

All of the work above gave opportunities for the ongoing training of ringers in capture methods and also in fitting tags with this work being supported by a generous grant from the Drax foundation

The Friends also collaborated together in developing a joint project with Spurn Bird Observatory to track the movements of Jack Snipe using the Motus tracking system tags. following a grant from British Birds for this project.

**Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024**

Achievement and Performance

Review of Activities 2024 (continued)

Cannon netting and the ringing of Wildfowl continued and again proved successful during the year with over 700 ducks caught and ringed. Many were colour-ringed or sampled as part of other research projects nationally including the taking of feather samples from Shelduck for isotope analysis to establish the moulting grounds of the various British populations

The outcomes from such research were shared with partners and also, where appropriate, made public via social media. These results also will be included in a new publication of 'The Birds of the Lower Derwent- Conservation and Migration' which was progressed during the year thanks to a grant from the Drax foundation and which should be ready for publication in early 2025.

Grants & Donations

The Friends continued to be successful in drawing in additional grants throughout the year in addition to the Countryside Stewardship payments and related flood recovery payments. Another Tree Council grant for hedging plants and crab apple whips and trees for Thornton Ings was approved during the year and in addition a Woodland Trust wildlife tree pack was secured and supplied for New Meadow at North Duffield Carrs. We were also successful in applying to the Drax Foundation with a grant application to help support Corncrake reintroduction into the Valley. Other supporters making donations during the year include Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, York Ornithological Club, Yorkshire Coast Nature and Tom Broxup

The Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley continued to meet our conservation objectives with further strategic land acquisition and conservation-based management of our existing land holdings. We have enjoyed success in being awarded Countryside Stewardship schemes and we have completed valuable research work and conservation projects. We have made successful applications for new grants and are in a strong financial position.

None of this would have been possible without our magnificent volunteers whose contributions underpin everything we do. We are extremely grateful to all the volunteers for their hard work in terms of carrying out land management works, both on our sites, but also in supporting Natural England and other partners in the valley and which unlock other streams of income and support. The trustees give their heartfelt thanks to them all for their hard work and continuing support. We are also extremely grateful for the continuing support of Natural England and offer particular thanks to Mr Craig Ralston, Senior Reserve Manager for his invaluable help, expertise and advice.

Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024

Future Plans

The charity greatly values its close working relationship with key partners whom continue to support the reserve, charity and its aims, whether through donations, purchase of services or supporting each other in grant bids and is grateful for all the on going support it receives. In 2024 the charity has successfully grown its financial reserves and aims to use the funds raised to competitively bid and purchase further land in and around the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve that is of high conservation value, as and when such land becomes available for purchase. Targeted on going land purchase will be the main use of the charities accumulated funds. Further the charity has continued to undertake on-going scientific monitoring, including the ringing of wildfowl and other bird species on the reserve. In 2025 the charity and its volunteers hope to be involved in tagging and tracking projects of wildfowl and wader species, from which knowledge will be gained of individual species movements and their use of areas of habitat. This knowledge may further inform the charity to target land for purchase by providing evidence of its ecological importance and functional linkage.

Financial Review

Reserves policy

The Trustees regularly review the Reserves policy of the charity to ensure it meets the needs of the Charity. Whilst the charity has only nominal operating costs, e.g., the payment of annual drainage rates for land owned, the charity seeks to hold an absolute minimum of £5,000 in reserve. This level of funds would allow the charity to meet all High-Level Stewardship (HLS) obligations for land owned for a three-year period, given current land ownings. Beyond this level of minimum reserve, the charity aims to ensure that funds in the region of a total of £20,000 are available to capitalise on any opportunities, such as match funding with key partners, such as the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. All other income and cash holdings, i.e., above £20,000 are held principally to support the purchase of new land, the development of new activities or where the Trustees decide it to be financially prudent.

**Trustees Annual Report
For the period ending 31 December 2024**

Statement of Disclosure of Information to the Independent Examiner

We, the trustees of the Charity who held office at the date of approval of these financial statements, each confirm that so far as we are aware:

- There is no relevant information of which the Charity's Independent Examiner is unaware.
- All steps have been taken to make ourselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the Charity's Independent Examiner is aware of that information.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the excess of income over expenditure for that period.

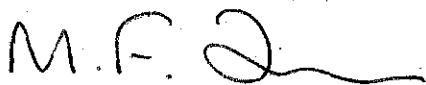
The Trustees confirm that the accounts comply with the above requirement. The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

During the period the income of the Charity was below £250,000, therefore in line with Charity Legislation the trustees have elected to prepare their accounts on the Receipts and Payments basis.

Independent Examiner

The Independent Examination was undertaken by Rebecca Triffitt, MAAT, Chartered Management Accountant, Director of Phoenix Accountancy and Business Consultancy Limited.

By order of the Board,



Michael Frederick Jackson
Chairperson

Date: 25th APRIL 2025

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley
Conservation Group**

I report on the accounts of The Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 12 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this financial period under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145 (5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

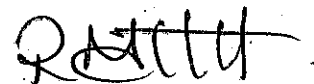
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - a. to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 and 131 of the Charities Act; and
 - b. to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rebecca Triffitt, MAAT
Phoenix Accountancy and Business Consultancy Limited
Morley's Cottage, Morley's Yard, Walkergate
Beverley, East Yorkshire HU17 9BY



Date: 31/5/25

**Receipts and Payments Account
For the year ending 31 December 2024**

		2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
		£	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS	1						
Grants	2	-	21,991	21,991	-	26,200	26,200
Donations		1,193	-	1,193	17,622	-	17,622
Conservation Services		37,645	-	37,645	29,920	-	29,920
Countryside Stewardship		6,876	-	6,876	1,685	-	1,685
Sale of logs and wildflower seeds		24,008	-	24,008	25,362	-	25,362
Interest		3,221	-	3,221	786	-	786
		72,943	21,991	94,934	75,375	26,200	101,575
PAYMENTS							
Land Purchases		129,000	-	129,000	162,000	-	162,000
Conservation Work		2,372	1,991	4,363	-	1,200	1,200
Insurance		264	-	264	277	-	277
Rates		93	-	93	54	-	54
Legal and Professional Fees		11,503	-	11,503	4,683	-	4,683
Publisher		-	8,971	8,971	-	-	-
Bank Charges		101	-	101	100	-	100
Accounts Fee		480	-	480	480	-	480
		143,813	10,962	154,775	167,594	1,200	168,794
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the period		(70,870)	11,029	(59,841)	(92,219)	25,000	(67,219)
Monetary balances brought forward		107,755	25,000	132,755	199,974	-	199,974
Monetary balances carried forward		36,885	36,029	72,914	107,755	25,000	132,755

The notes on pages 14 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at 31 December 2024**

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Monetary Assets			
Current Account		22,773	81,967
Savings Account		50,141	50,788
Total Monetary Assets		72,914	132,755
Comprising:			
Unrestricted Funds		36,885	107,755
Restricted Funds	3	36,029	25,000
		<u>72,914</u>	<u>132,755</u>
Non-Monetary Assets			
Fixed Assets for the Charity's Use (at cost)			
Land – North Duffield		25,000	25,000
Land – Ellerton Ing's		18,000	18,000
Land – Naburn, York		51,000	51,000
Land – between Bubwith & North Duffield		111,000	111,000
Land – Stubbins Land, Thornton		80,000	-
Land – Bubwith Ings, North Duffield		49,000	-
Motus Tracking Electronics		614	614
		<u>334,614</u>	<u>205,614</u>
Debtors		-	-
Creditors			
Accounts Fees		(480)	(480)
		<u>(480)</u>	<u>(480)</u>

These financial statements were approved by the committee on 25/04/2025 (date) and signed on its behalf by:

M. F. Jackson

Michael Frederick Jackson, Chairperson

Matthew Stone

Matthew Stone, Treasurer

The notes on pages 14 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the period ended 31 December 2024

Notes

1 Basis of Preparation

These accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments (R&P) basis in line with Charity Commission guidance for a charity of this size.

2 Grants

	2024 Unrestricted	2024 Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Unrestricted	2023 Restricted	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Drax Foundation	-	20,000	20,000	-	25,000	25,000
The Tree Council	-	1,991	1,991	-	-	-
City of York Council	-	-	-	-	1,200	1,200
	-	21,991	21,991	-	26,200	26,200

3 Restricted Funds

	Balance At 01/12/2024	Movement in Resources			Balance At 31/12/2024
		Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	
Drax Foundation	25,000	-	(8,971)	-	16,029
Drax Foundation	-	20,000	-	-	20,000
The Tree Council	-	1,991	(1,991)	-	-
	25,000	21,991	(10,962)	-	36,029

A brief description of the restricted funds are given below:

Drax Foundation

Restricted funding was received from Drax Foundation for the funding which comprises £15,000 towards a scientific monitoring and GPS tagging of birds and also £10,000 towards the publication of 'The birds of the Lower Derwent Valley' book. During 2024 another £20,000 was received from Drax Foundation to support Corncrake reintroduction.

The Tree Council

Restricted funding was received from The Tree Council for the funding of planting new hedging plants, crab apple whips and trees for Thornton Ings.

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the period ended 31 December 2024

4 Payments to Trustees

No remuneration directly or indirectly out of the funds of the Charity was paid or payable for the financial period to any Trustee.

There was no reimbursement of travel expenses in respect of the financial period.

5 Taxation

Friends of the Lower Derwent Valley Conservation Group is a registered charity. All the Charities' income is applied to its charitable objectives and the association is therefore exempt under current legislation from most forms of taxation.

The charity is not VAT registered and all expenditure includes irrecoverable VAT.