



Land of Oak & Iron Trust

Celebrating Heritage, Culture & Landscape

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity No. 1188152

Trustees' Annual Report

2022 - 23



Clockburn Lake, Winlaton Mill

Photo © Michael Turner



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The Land of Oak & Iron



The Land of Oak & Iron (above) is centred on the valley of the River Derwent, which passes through Northumberland, Durham and Gateshead before joining the River Tyne.

Background

In 2016 Groundwork North East and Cumbria successfully bid for four years of Heritage Lottery funding to form the Land of Oak & Iron Landscape Partnership, which breathed new life into the history and heritage of the area via a range of projects.

These included environmental improvements - such as planting woodland and building a fish-pass - and working with young people in schools on local culture, with 320 participants gaining a recognised qualification in traditional skills. A major success was building a new Heritage Centre at Winlaton Mill, owned and managed by Groundwork North East and Cumbria. The Heritage Centre has a successful café, acts as a community hub, and runs a year-round events programme.



River Derwent - Ebchester

Photo © Peter Atkinson

The Trust

The Land of Oak & Iron Trust (LOIT) was created to ensure a legacy for the Landscape Partnership. The Trust was established on 20 August 2019 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 24 February 2020. This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The objects of the Trust as set out in its governing document are:

- To promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural, industrial and cultural heritage of the Land of Oak & Iron
- To advance the education of the general public in the natural, industrial and cultural heritage of the Land of Oak & Iron

Overview

During this year, the Trust has spent considerable time talking to existing and former volunteers, partners, community groups, visitors and many other stakeholders to decide what the next phase of development for the Trust should be. This informed the creation of a five-year outline strategy, used to draft an expression of interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, that received positive feedback.

The Trust also signed a partnership agreement with Groundwork North East and Cumbria, to formalise the current close working relationship and help the Trust achieve its ambitions over the next few years.

The focus in the coming year will therefore be to develop priority areas of activity with partners, to allow LOIT to achieve its aims, increase capacity and grow the work of the Trust. Ways to finance these priorities will then be sought, whether by grant funding or other sources.

Activities

The Trust has several groups of volunteers, who this year have pursued the following activities:

1 Publications

This group identifies topics of interest to today's audiences celebrating the stories, people and history of the Land of Oak & Iron. These may be published works about the history, legends and culture of the Land of Oak & Iron - many of which are out-of-print and difficult to find - or new publications, which provide the Trust with a small but regular income stream. To date LOIT has published six works.

During this year, the copyright arrangements for all current, past and planned publications were reviewed and any anomalies tackled to ensure that the Trust is complying with all current regulations.

This year one new book has been prepared and is due to be published: ***A History of Birds in the Derwent Valley***. This is an eclectic compilation from local ornithologist and LOIT trustee Michael Turner, taking a personal look at some of the people, books and events that have inspired him, starting from the 19th century to post-Covid. Featuring stunning illustrations from local photographers and artists, this latest publication does not pretend to be a full historical avifauna, but prefers to 'dip its toe' into the the social and ornithological history of this beautiful valley.

2 *Heritage Education and Development*

Formerly known as the Young Persons Group, this was established to encourage young people aged between 5 and 24 years to take pride in their heritage, and to encourage them to conserve the culture and landscape of the area for themselves and future generations.

Previous activities were based on traditional aspects such as literature, history, local heroes, arts, dance and crafts (eg making proggy mats). However, post-Covid, both schools and volunteers were reluctant to re-engage face-to-face to deliver projects in classrooms. New ways of delivering activities to engage young people are being considered, so this group has effectively been dormant for this reporting period.



Goosander

Photo © Ian Hey

3 *Research*

Formerly referred to as the mapping group, these volunteers are working to create a digital, interactive and easy-to-understand resource for local people and visitors to explore the history of the area, the industrial past.

To do this, information from maps spanning a period of over two hundred years was combined into a single map. This is being supplemented by additional layers of research to highlight features such as transport routes, industrial sites or whatever might be of interest. A narrative to accompany the maps is also being developed. The maps cover an area considerably larger than the Land of Oak & Iron to show the wider connections between communities. Topics include waggonways (1625-1800), historic roads, and township boundaries. During this year, volunteers have worked on bridges and river features, coal industry sites, land use and places of worship.

Several maps are now available on the LOIT website, with more being developed. One of the aims of seeking funding will be to engage professional help to convert these data into an interactive and visually engaging format, to be used for example on touchscreens at the Heritage Centres and other suitable local venues. An experimental interactive map relating to the coal industry is available on our website at <https://loit.org.uk/coalmapv3>

NB. There are currently two linked LOI websites, one run by Groundwork focused on the Heritage Centre's activities and the second by the Trust. This is being kept under review and may change in future.

Public Benefit

In carrying out these activities, the Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's Guidance on the public benefit requirement (PB1, PB2 & PB3) and have complied with their duty to have due regard to this guidance when exercising their powers and duties.

Financial Summary

The Trust's income amounted to £1,443, of which £1,178 came from the sale of books. Total expenditure of the Trust was £3,275, including expenditure on Heritage Education projects of £1,860.

There was a balance of £5,150 in the Trust's bank account on 31 March including £1,476 deferred grant for a schools' project which has not yet been delivered. Ways to deliver the rest of this project are being sought.

A balance of £3,674 remains in general funds.

A copy of the annual accounts is attached to this report as Appendix A

Reserves policy

The Trust has no employees or physical assets, so wind-up costs would be nominal. Trustees have agreed to a reserves policy of approximately 12 months' running costs, this year set at £800.

Structure, Governance and Management

Structure and Governance

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation whose only members are the trustees. It has no employees.

The name of the charity is Land of Oak & Iron Trust. It uses no other name.

The charity is registered in England and Wales (Charity number 118152).

The address of the principal office of the charity is 19 Springhouse Lane Ebchester DH8 0QF.

The Trust's governing document is its Constitution, based on the Charity Commission's 'foundation' model CIO Constitution.

Board of Trustees

During this year the trustees were:

John Hunter
Bob James
Geoff Marshall (Chair & Treasurer)
Marion Schooler
Michael Turner

Policies

The Trust has agreed policies relating to:

Code of Behaviour	Health & Safety
Conflicts of Interest	Risk Management
Expenses	Safeguarding
Equal Opportunities	Safe Recruitment
Financial Controls	Supervision
GDPR General Policy	

Volunteers are informed of these policies on joining and they are available for inspection on the Trust's website.

Structure and Management

Special Interest Groups:

During this year the following groups were operational:

- Heritage Education and Development
- Research (formerly Mapping)
- Publications

Other groups will be formed as and when required depending on activity and interests. As a rule, each group includes a trustee and a lead volunteer.

Partnerships

Partnership Group

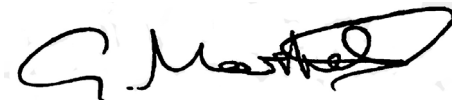
The Partnership Group is made up of the three Local Authorities (Gateshead, Durham and Northumberland), Groundwork North East, and the Trust. The Trust is represented by two trustees. The group identifies opportunities and priorities for collaboration.

Delivery Group

This group did not meet during the current year, however it may well be reformed in the coming year as new people are brought on board to deliver different strands of activity.

Approved by the Trustees on: 22 January 2024

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



Full Name: Geoff Marshall

Position: Trustee



Appendix A

Accounts for the Period: 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

Income

	2022-23	2021-22
Book Sales	1,178	3,012
Donations		
Grants		
Insurance Claim		650
Merchandise	5	
Talks	260	55
Bank Interest	0	0
	£1,443	£3,717
<i>Income / Expenditure</i>	<i>(£1,832)</i>	<i>£1,600</i>

Expenditure

	2022-23	2021-22
Computing / Website	11	25
Events		
Insurance	361	293
Book launch	170	
Mapping / Research	103	68
Merchandise		
Office Equipment		703
Postage / Sundries		150
Publishing	711	817
Room Hire	60	
Stationery		61
Travel		
Heritage Education Activities	1,860	
	£3,275	£2,117

Balances

	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Current Account	5,145	6,982
Cash in Hand	5	
	£5,150	£6,982
Liabilities		
Creditors		
Debtors		
Grant expenditure pending	1,476	3,324
	£3,674	£3,658
Net Worth		

Assets and Reserves

	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Assets		
Fixed Assets		
Merchandise	1,200	1,600
	£1,200	£1,600
Reserves		
General Fund	3,674	3,658
Restricted Reserves	1,476	3,324
	£5,150	£6,982