

Westmorland Damson Association.

Trustees' Annual Report - Year ended 31 December 2024

TRUSTEES

The Trustees who served during the year were:

Mark Basey-Fisher – Chair
Angela Slater - Secretary
Hilary Fitch – Membership Secretary
Peter Hensman – Treasurer
Andrew Griffiths
Desmond Holmes
Simon Patterson (resigned 23 July 2024)
Rebecca Patterson
Hartley Trotter
Adam Walker
Sandi Friend-Thornton (appointed 23 July 2024)

Andrew Griffiths stood down on 22 January 2025

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The Westmorland Damson Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) operating under a constitution approved by the Charity Commission and adopted on 7 June 2021. Membership of the Association is open to anyone who supports the objectives of the Association. The day-to-day affairs are managed by an Executive Committee comprising Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 6 other members who are appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting.

The Association can be contacted at Ingilnook, Charney Well Lane, Grange over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 6DB.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Westmorland Damson Association seeks to enhance the economy and landscape of traditional damson-growing areas in Cumbria by supporting the growing, picking and use of Westmorland damsons. The objectives of the Association are:

- To encourage, for the benefit of the public, the conservation and protection of damson orchards and the preservation of their genetic biodiversity, landscape and heritage value in Cumbria, including by planting and creating more damson orchards.
- To advance the education of the public in the growing, cultivation, preservation and use of the Westmorland damson variety common in Cumbria.

To pursue these objectives, the Association:

1. Organises an Annual Damson Day in April every year. This public event provides opportunities for those attending to learn about the history and techniques of damson growing in the area, to purchase damson trees for planting and to buy and sell damson-based and other local products.
2. Encourages the growing, picking and use of damsons by buying in damsons from growers at harvest-time, freezing them and then selling them to those requiring them throughout the year.
3. Encourages the planting of new damson orchards through its Orchard Grant Scheme and the supply of damson suckers.
4. Promotes the growing and use of damsons by providing advice to members and the public through the circulation of newsletters and other publications and by attending local agricultural shows.

By pursuing these objectives, the Trustees continue to give due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

Damson Day was held for the first time since 2019 at the new venue of the Westmorland Showground. The Trustees were disappointed that no suitable site with all-weather parking could be found in the Lyth Valley but were pleased with the facilities and easy access available at the Westmorland Showground. Sadly, the weather on the day was miserable and, despite good trader presence and a full programme of activities, attendance was poor and the Day made a significant loss. However, The Association is pleased to have been able to bring Damson Day back again after its 5-year absence and is grateful to the Westmorland Agricultural Society for the help it provided.

The 2024 damson crop was again affected by bad weather at blossom time which affected all growers. For the first time for many years there were no damsons to buy in at harvest time. Coincidentally, demand for frozen damsons picked up over the year with a number of new commercial customers being recruited. Sales grew to 1750kg leaving a stock of only 675kg at 31 December 2024. This will not be enough to meet demand through 2025. Although damson sales increased, so too did costs, with a considerable increase in the price of the electricity need to run the cold store.

The failure of the damson crop meant that plans to build on last year's fresh damson sales had to be put on hold.

Two walks through the damson orchards at blossom time were arranged for members and were well supported. There were no applications for orchard grants during the year. The Association responded to a number of requests for damson suckers to enable new planting.

Two stalls were again organised at the Westmorland County Show. Both raised the profile of damsons and their use, one through displaying the Association's archive and giving advice on damson growing and the other, in the food marquee, by selling frozen damsons.


The Association gained some notable publicity for damsons during the year including a Supertato podcast, a full page feature in the Financial Times and an article in Cumbria Life.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The poor weather and new venue reduced attendance at Damson Day. As a result it made a loss of £8038. Damson sales increased to £7350 (2023 £5393) but the increase in electricity costs meant that the deficit on sales was only marginally reduced to £1248 (2023 £1308). The overall deficit for the year was a substantial £9813 (2023 £1470). This reduced the balance in unrestricted funds at 31 December 2024 to £25541, of which £19084 are free cash reserves.

The Trustees aim to hold sufficient cash reserves to enable them to fund both a Damson Day and the purchase of a year's damson crop. They estimate that cash reserves required would be of the order of £20,000.

Approved by the Trustees on 6th May 2025.



M. Baisey-Fisher
Chairman

WESTMORLAND DAMSON ASSOCIATION CHARITY (No 1194710)
Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	Notes	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES (all unrestricted)					
Donations and grants					
Membership subscriptions		603.00		604.00	
Gift Aid Tax recovered		94.53		99.21	
Donations received		1.00		0.00	
			698.53		703.21
Charitable Activities					
<u>Damson Day</u>					
Receipts					
Sponsorship and donations		1500.00		0.00	
Displays and stalls		1560.00		0.00	
Gate and walks		3,690.00		0.00	
Other		813.00		0.00	
		7,563.00		0.00	
Expenditure					
Setting -up		8,745.75		0.00	
Advertising and printing		1,676.49		0.00	
Entertainment		1,940.00		0.00	
General		3,239.56		0.00	
		15,601.80		0.00	
Net incoming resources from Damson Day			-8,038.80		0.00
<u>Sale of Damsons</u>					
Sales		7,349.80		5,393.00	
Cost of sales	1	5,417.40		3,678.60	
Storage costs		2,423.28		1,633.60	
Other sales costs		25.00		657.25	
Depreciation of cold store		732.00		732.00	
		8,597.68		6,701.45	
Net incoming resources from Sale of Damsons			-1,247.88		-1,308.45
Interest on cash balances			480.60		619.12
Total Incoming Resources			-8,107.55		13.88

WESTMORLAND DAMSON ASSOCIATION CHARITY (No 1194710)
Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2024

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY (continued)

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
RESOURCES EXPENDED			
Charitable expenditure			
Orchard Grant Scheme for regeneration of Westmorland damson orchards		0.00	0.00
Management & Administration Costs			
Establishment & other costs	2	1705.6	1,483.67
Total Resources Expended		<u>1,705.60</u>	<u>1,483.67</u>
Net Movement in Funds for the year		-9,813.15	-1,469.79
Fund Balances at 1st January 2024		34,354.58	35,824.37
Fund Balances at 31st December 2024		<u>24,541.43</u>	<u>34,354.58</u>

BALANCE SHEET at 31st DECEMBER 2024

	2024 £	Notes	2023 £
Fixed Assets			
Share of cold store	3660.00	3	4392.00
Investments at cost, less provision for write down	0.00	4	0.00
	<u>3,660.00</u>		<u>4,392.00</u>
Current Assets			
Stock of damsons	1,797.60	1	7,215.00
Debtors & Prepayments	94.53	5	99.21
Bank and cash balances	19,046.60	6	22,853.37
	<u>20,938.73</u>		<u>30,167.58</u>
Less Creditors and advance receipts	57.30	7	205.00
Net Current Assets	<u>20,881.43</u>		<u>29,962.58</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>24,541.43</u>		<u>34,354.58</u>
Funds of the Charity			
Unrestricted funds	<u>24,541.43</u>	9	<u>34,354.58</u>

The attached notes form part of these financial statements.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

M Basey Fisher

PRW Hensman

Date: 12 June 2025

WESTMORLAND DAMSON ASSOCIATION CHARITY (No 1194710)
Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2024

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
1. Sale of damsons - cost of sales		
Opening stock	7215.00	7452.00
Purchases	0.00	3441.60
	<u>7215.00</u>	<u>10893.60</u>
Closing stock	1797.60	7215.00
Cost of sales	<u>5417.40</u>	<u>3678.60</u>
Stocks are valued at cost or realisable value, if lower .		
2. Establishment and other costs		
Insurance - Stock, buildings, cash in transit	1031.38	1087.67
Accounts Inspection	210.00	210.00
Bank charges	94.62	0.00
Miscellaneous	369.60	186.00
	<u>1705.60</u>	<u>1483.67</u>
3. Fixed Assets		
50% share of Cold Store	7320.00	7320.00
Less Accumulated Depreciation	3660.00	2928.00
	<u>3660.00</u>	<u>4392.00</u>
Depreciation is charged to write off the cold store over 10 years		
4. Investment Assets		
Shares in the Witherslack Community Shop, at cost.	5,000.00	5,000.00
Less provision for write down	-5,000.00	-5,000.00
	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
5. Debtors		
Gift Aid Claimable	94.53	99.21
6. Bank and cash balances		
Barclays Bank	0.00	1,439.48
CAF Bank	7159.14	0.00
Skipton Building Society	11,887.46	21,413.89
Cash in Hand	0.00	0.00
	<u>19,046.60</u>	<u>22,853.37</u>
7. Creditors and advanced receipts		
Receipts in advance	57.30	205.00

8. Trustees and related parties

No expenses were paid to trustees in 2024 (2023 £100)

9. Reserves

The Trustees aim to hold sufficient cash reserves to enable them to fund both a Damson Day and the purchase of a year's damson crop. They estimate that cash reserves required would be of the order of £20,000. At 31 December 2024, they were slightly below this level.