



Trustees' Annual Report

For the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Objectives and Activities

Purposes of the charity

The objects of the CIO are to advance public education by the restoration, preservation, maintenance, operation and development of the Downs Light Railway as a heritage asset for the provision of practical education to young people between the ages of 7 to 18, in particular but not exclusively by: (a) educating young people in engineering disciplines, including civil, mechanical, electrical, design, and workshop practice; and (b) promoting science, technology and engineering focused activities and careers.

Summary of the Main Activities for the public benefit

Policy Objective: Provision of practical activities on the Downs Light Railway to further the education of young people aged from 7 years and upwards in practical engineering mediums and railway operation.

- During 2024-25, 27 children aged between 7 and 13 years from the adjacent school benefited from the provision of extra-curricular activities in railway engineering on Saturday mornings at the railway during term time in the Autumn and Summer terms.
- These open sessions consisted of instruction in general railway maintenance activities and concentrated on track repairs and maintenance.
- All young people participating in railway activities were given the opportunity to operate the railway and learn about safe operating practices.
- The children have the benefit of a Personal Track Safety regime that enhances everyone's safety whilst working on or about the railway. A new Personal Track Safety training document has been approved, printed and distributed to enhance the existing safety instruction regime.
- Training achievements: 5 blue necker qualifications were awarded in the period, recognising the knowledge and skills developed to maintain and operate petrol hydraulic locomotives to haul goods and passenger trains and assist instructing others.
- Events: the railway operated to great acclaim at the Friends of The Downs' Summer Celebration event on 22 June 2024, allowing beneficiaries to showcase their skills running passenger rides with exemplary focus and responsibility.

Policy Objective: Protection and preservation of the Downs Light Railway and its heritage, as the world's oldest private miniature railway, and the only railway directly operated for, and by, young people.

- The railway enjoys three fully operational locomotives in its fleet: Brock, James Boyd & Tim Cadbury. Throughout the period the maintenance schedules and the input of volunteers has ensured these remain serviceable and available for the DLRT's training programmes.

- BROCK underwent professional repairs to defective welds in the dome, and was fitted with new safety valves.
- TIM CADBURY had remedial work to address electric start problems.
- A concentrated effort has been ongoing to improve the railway trackbed, with gravel boards and retaining structures installed to help contain stone ballast under the track and improve operational track stability. As a result, there were no hobbles in the spring term 2025 while key turnouts in the railway yard were lifted and overhauled as part of the ongoing infrastructure maintenance programme.
- Signage improvements around the tunnel have been put in place to enhance safety.
- Two new ballast wagons have been delivered. Built by Peter Beevers, who very kindly donated his time, their smaller size makes these wagons easier and safer for children to use than the existing stock.

Charity Governance

The trustees continued the comprehensive review of the charity's safety and safeguarding structures, including engaging with external experts.

The charity faces ongoing challenges in two primary areas:

- The need to recruit new personnel remains acute, both administrative (trustees, charity secretary), and technical. With our lead steam volunteer shortly moving to another part of the country, the trustees also need to prioritise additional steam expertise.
- The DLR's legacy buildings and container remain inadequate for proper rolling stock storage and workshop instruction, yet redevelopment plans remain stalled due to slow progress on discussions with the landowner.

Active discussions with Malvern College on the buildings are ongoing, and have broadened to explore possible synergies in provision of safeguarding, Health and Safety, first aid and other areas.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of education and heritage protection.

Contribution made by volunteers

The Downs Light Railway Trust is a volunteer led organisation, with no paid staff. In addition to the three trustees, there are several other regular and occasional volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to the running of the Downs Light Railway. These include instruction in miniature railway operation, contributing track maintenance expertise, help with fundraising and at events, and contributing time, expertise and equipment for special projects such as infrastructure or engineering works.

In 2024 – 2025, our non-trustee volunteers carried out instruction for educational activities, assisted with track maintenance, helped at events and assisted with locomotive maintenance and engineering works.

Achievements and Performance

The Downs Light Railway Trust has made a difference to the lives and educational experience of the young people who engage in our activities, through the development of their practical STEM skills. Our feedback from parents and carers demonstrates that our activities are extremely beneficial to those young people who take part, through enhancing their skills, confidence and teamwork, and raising their awareness of STEM and heritage related careers.

Heritage rail is a vital component of our cultural heritage and tourism industry and currently heritage railways are finding it challenging to attract young people. Our activities through education and engagement of young people represent the delivery of wider benefits to society by raising the awareness of heritage rail as a career or volunteering opportunity, to support the ongoing operation and preservation of our industrial and cultural heritage.

Financial Review

The charity's accounts are set out below. The accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis and were subjected to an independent examination (report attached).

The £2,484 deficit in the year results from expenditure on the 2 new ballast wagons and remedial work to BROCK's dome, combined with the decrease in revenue due to the pause of Hobbies provision in the Lent term. More broadly, over the last 5 years there has been a general decline in public donations and significant increase in insurance costs. A realignment of hobbies charges is anticipated, pending the outcome of the ongoing discussions with Malvern College which impact the charity's fixed cost base.

Policy for Holding Reserves

The Charity holds two specific reserve funds, identified as the Locomotive Maintenance Fund (LMF) and the Centenary Development Fund (CDF). Funds raised in anticipation of development or acquisition costs are also held on reserve until the time of such expenditure.

The LMF provides a sinking fund of unrestricted monies for the purpose of planned preventive maintenance costs on the locomotive assets.

The CDF is a restricted fund whose use is restricted to expenditure incurred towards achieving the Centenary Development Programme with the aim of providing new buildings and infrastructure.

Statement of Financial Activity

Downs Light Railway Trust

Receipts & Payments Account

	31/03/2025	31/03/2025	31/03/2025	31/03/2024	Notes
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total	
Receipts					
Donations	£345	£0	£345	£497	
Grants/Funding	£2,345	£0	£2,345	£808	
Sales	£561	£0	£561	£455	
Other	£42	£585	£628	£703	
	£3,292	£585	£3,878	£2,463	
Payments					
Administration	-£2,922	£0	-£2,922	-£2,976	
Operations	-£3,440	£0	-£3,440	-£1,642	
Publicity	£0	£0	£0	£0	
	-£6,362	£0	-£6,362	-£4,617	
Transfers of Funds	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Net movement of funds	-£3,070	£585	-£2,484	-£2,155	
Total Funds b/f	£7,670	£56,939	£64,609	£66,764	
Total Funds c/f	£4,600	£57,525	£62,125	£64,609	

Registered Charity no. 1195660

HMRC reference ZD17159

Downs Light Railway Trust
Statement of Assets & Liabilities

		at y/e	31/03/2025	31/03/2024	
Assets	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total	Notes
Cash Resources					
Petty Cash	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Bank – General	£1,792	£0	£1,792	£2,972	
Bank – LMF	£2,808	£0	£2,808	£4,698	
Bank – CDF	£0	£57,525	£57,525	£56,939	
	£4,600	£57,525	£62,125	£64,609	1
Other Monetary Assets					
- Receivables	£0	£0	£0	£1,300	
	£4,600	£57,525	£62,125	£65,909	

Significant Assets

- Petrol-hydraulic locomotive TIM
- Steam locomotive JAMES BOYD
- Steam locomotive BROCK
- 4No. passenger carriages
- 5No. works carriages
- Laid trackwork (approx. 650m)
- Tools and Equipment

		at y/e	31/03/2025	31/03/2024	
Liabilities	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total	
Short-term Liabilities					
- Uncleared payments (payables)	£99	£0	£99	£53	
Other Liabilities	re Fund	Timing (opt)	Amount (opt)		
- [None]					

Notes

Note 0

These accounts are drawn up on a receipts and payments basis

Note 1

Cash Resources represent	Fund ID	Type	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
- General Administration Fund	General	Unrestricted	£1,792	£2,972
- Locomotive Maintenance Fund	LMF	Unrestricted	£2,808	£4,698
- Centenary Development Fund	CDF	Restricted	£57,525	£56,939
			£62,125	£64,609

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Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Constitution dated 21 April 2023.

Constitution

The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Trustee selection methods

New Trustees are appointed by Resolution of a meeting of the Trustees. Selection is based on required skills, experience, and needs of the Trust. There is no provision in the Constitution for nominated or ex officio trusteeships.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name

Downs Light Railway Trust

Registered Charity Number

1195660

Charity's Principal Address

Downs Light Railway Trust
The Downs Malvern
Brockhill Road
Colwall
Worcestershire
WR13 6EY

Trustees

Mr Nick Dodson	<i>Chair</i>
Dr Henry Fletcher Winstanley	<i>Treasurer</i>
Dr Eleanor Jane Brown	

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved this report.
Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s)

Full name(s)	Mr Nicholas Dodson	Dr Henry Fletcher Winstanley
Position(s)	Chair	Treasurer

Date



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name Downs Light Railway Trust		
On accounts for the year ended	31/03/2025	Charity no (if any)	1159660
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2025.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

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 using checklist CC32 which is the guidance for examiners as stated by the Charities Commission.

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: 18/07/2025

Name:

Timothy Kenneth Bone

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
FCMA
ID: 1-JNDL

Address:

16 John Williams Close
Priorslee
Telford
TF2 5AA

Section B

Disclosure

No concerns to report.