

CLARA VALE CONSERVATION GROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 1201323

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2022-12-13

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Clara Vale Conservation Group
Clara Vale Village Hall
South View
Clara Vale
Ryton
Tyne And

Phone 0191 413 8287

Email gordon@pollinger.org.uk

Website <https://cvcg.org.uk/>

Activities

Objects: ? TO PROMOTE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC THE CONSERVATION PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OF CLARA VALE AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA. ? TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC IN THE CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Activities: We manage the Clara Vale Local Nature Reserve to protect the wildlife and habitats and enhance biodiversity. The Reserve is open to the general public throughout the year and is used by local schools. There are several ponds and two bird hides. The Group has also established a Community Orchard. We have a Nature Club for children and their parents/carers. We publish a regular newsletter

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space
- **What:** Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Gateshead

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-05-03	£4,928	£1,504	-	-
2024-05-03	£2,192	£2,184	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
DAVID HOWDON		2026-02-09
Donald Kenneth Atkinson		2022-12-08
Michael James McFarlane		2022-12-08
Penny Ann Gray		2022-12-08
Rosemary Davies		2022-12-08
Sarah Elizabeth Raad		2022-12-08
Sean Clay		2022-12-16

Accounts

Charity Commission Report: May2024 – May2025

Purposes of the Charity

To promote for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Clara Vale and its surrounding area including the the promotion of environmental diversity and contribution towards conservation work nationally To advance the education of the public in the conservation and protection of the physical and natural environment.

Main Activities

Management of the Clara Vale Local Nature reserve to maintain and Improve biodiversity.

Allow and encourage public access to the Nature Reserve to observe its wildlife Through the Nature Club, provide an opportunity for children and their parents or carers to experience and explore the natural environment.

Management of the Clara Vale Community Orchard.

This, we believe, conforms to the Commissions guidance on public benefit, PB1. The Nature Reserve and Community Orchard are freely open to the public at all times.

Contribution made by Volunteers

The Conservation Group is entirely dependent on volunteers to care for the Nature Reserve, the Community Orchard and run the Nature Club. There are no paid employees.

For the period of this report voluneers have given a total of 142 days days of their time to running the Conservation Group.

An approximate breakdown is as follows:

Managing the nature reserve: 59 days

Managing the Community Orchard: 47 days

Running the Nature Club: 18 days.

Administration 18 days

This is likely to be an underestimate as volunteers contribute to the Conservation group in ways they do not think is volunteering such as talking to other agencies, producing notices for events, advertising activities on social media etc.

We are very grateful for the many hours volunteers have given to the Group, which, for a small village, is exceptional.

Governance document.

Constitution adopted 10th June 2024

How the charity is constituted

Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Trustee selection method.

Trustees are appointed or reappointed at the AGM in June and at other times as required.

Our main achievements and activities May 2024–2025

The Reserve continues to be a haven for wildlife compared to the intensively farmed fields surrounding us. And we continue to receive appreciative comments about it as a place to enjoy nature.

The wildlife in the reserve appears to have followed national trends which, sadly, is a decline in biodiversity, with a few exceptions.

Flora

There is lots of “Nature” in the Reserve. One of the reasons it is of value is because of the variety of plants it contains in such a small area. The Reserve is only about 9 acres there are around 200 different flowering plants. There are also mosses, fungi and lichens which we have yet to identify. Cutting the meadow areas and controlling the scrub is how we maintain this diversity.

Without this management the reserve would by now be mostly scrub and woodland . Apart from the group’ s management, the variety of plants comes about from the mix of habitats, and that it has never had herbicides or fertiliser spread on it

Small pockets of grassland and scrub survived the 70+ years it was the site of a coal mine, enough to seed much of what is there now. Today, were it not a Local Nature Reserve, it's likely it would be classified as a brownfield site, ripe for development.

There's nothing particularly rare on the reserve but it is rich assembly of plants, probably one of the best in Gateshead Borough.

Birds

There are 37 nest boxes in the reserve. We put them up to attract tree sparrows, a bird that has declined nationally by 93% since 2008. This was very successful with around 600 nestlings ringed between 2016 and 2022. In 2023 there was a crash in numbers and only three boxes were used. In 2024 only one box was used and it was unsuccessful the young were found dead in the nestbox. This year no boxes have been used by tree sparrows. And they have been rarely seen or heard. Bird flu could be a cause, If so as the numbers hopefully will recover we will see them using the boxes again. The big decline in insect numbers is also a likely cause. with not enough young birds surviving to maintain the population.

Tree sparrows mostly eat seeds but they feed their young on insects. If that's what's behind the crash in numbers, it could be a long time before we see tree sparrows back in the Reserve

Last year the boxes were taken over by blue tits and great tits. Blue tits used 12 of the boxes and raised 42 chicks. Great tits used 7 of the boxes and raised 18 chicks. We'll have to wait to see what the coming year brings but so far it is not looking promising.

Apart from monitoring the nest boxes, the Northumbria Ringing Group visits monthly between November and April over the winter months demonstrating to the public what ringing birds involves and why it is undertaken. This is a very popular activity giving visitors the opportunity to see birds that have been captured close up. The Group ringed 263 new birds last year. Blue tits were the most frequently caught at 80 followed by great tits (34) and goldfinches. The least were magpie, long tailed tit, reed bunting and goldcrest, 1 each. Many thanks to the Northumbria Ringing Group for all the work put in to monitoring the nest boxes and particularly the ringing sessions over the winter months.

Two newish bird arrivals to the reserve this year are harlequin duck, a pair used the pond in the feeding station, and ring-necked parakeet. Both nest in holes in trees, and were probably looking for somewhere suitable. Neither have bred here yet. Some residents have had the bright green parakeets on their garden bird feeders. There is concern that they are a threat to native species like woodpeckers by displacing them from their nest holes, but so far there is only limited evidence for this.

Bird migration this year has been slow and some species such as swallows and willow warblers numbers appear to be below average.

The swift boxes under the eaves of the village hall, have so far failed to attract swifts but are much appreciated by house sparrows and jackdaws.

The tawny owl box that's visible from the Alex West hide has been replaced but was quickly taken over by a pair of jackdaws. It was put up late in the season so we're hoping it might be used by a tawny next year.

Insects

Butterflies and moths

2024 was one of the worst years on record for butterflies in the UK and we weren't spared here. Small tortoiseshells, normally one of the commonest butterflies was very scarce. The wet spring and cool summer were the main factors, along with pesticide use, habitat destruction and climate change. 39 of the 57 resident species in the UK are in decline.

The Reserve holds 16 resident species of butterfly plus red admiral and painted lady which migrate here. We've lost a couple of species over the past few years: dingy skipper and wall butterfly. 16 out of 51 species is a decent total for such a small reserve and is no doubt due to the mix of habitats and plants

Whilst there are only 57 resident species of butterfly in the UK, there 2500 species of moths.

Moth trapping has been undertaken in the reserve over last year and 150 different species have been recorded.

Moths have some unexpected names: Green Carpet, Snout, Dingy Footman, Ingrailed Clay, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Flounced Rustic, to name but a few

We plan to organise a moth trapping demonstration over the summer/autumn.

Mammals.

The wild mammals in the reserve are less visible. Grey squirrels, brown rats, and roe deer are perhaps the most likely to be seen. Rabbit numbers fluctuate due to myxomatosis but there are usually a few around. There is evidence of badgers digging beside the paths in the reserve. And of course there's plenty of evidence of moles. Foxes are present but perhaps not as common as in the past. Maybe they have become urban foxes. Stoats and weasels have been spotted from the hides.

Four species of bat are present: Common and Soprano pipistrelle, Noctule and Daubenton's. We hope to organise a bat walk later in the year.

Amphibians

Frogs have never been common in the Reserve. Most years only small amounts of frog spawn is it be found. Toads are more common and in the late summer there can be hundreds of toadlets wandering around the reserve. We're really not sure why there is this difference.

There are smooth newts in the Reserve ponds but no great crested.

Management of the reserve by means of coppicing, scything and scrub control will continue. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with this, in all weathers, throughout the year.

Without their help the Reserve would not display the biodiversity it does today.

The Nature Club

We've had another successful year of monthly Nature Club sessions for village children aged 4-11. The number of children attending sessions has averaged 8. Over the year 17 village children have joined for one or more sessions.

Topics covered in Nature Club sessions have included: exploring minibeasts and their

habitats, pond dipping, seed dispersal, apple day activities in the village hall and in the orchard, Gruffalo trails, making Christmas wreaths, the RSPB bird count, signs of spring, parts of a tree and leaf shapes. Each session has its own structure but we always gather together in a circle to welcome everyone and to sit quietly together at the end, sharing some of our findings and listening to a poem or reading a story. During the session there is often a nature trail or a spotter sheet to complete. Children no longer race off to finish first but take their time, observing details and taking care to step gently with respect for the animals and plants in the reserve. There is usually a creative activity using natural materials or children record their observations in their nature journals.

The Nature Club leaders plan sessions for a few months ahead. Although we have a plan for each session one of our principles is that we are flexible and respond to what is happening in nature around us or when children come up with their own ideas. In December, huddled around the Kelly Kettle drinking hot chocolate, we had a spontaneous review with both parents and children sharing their highlights of the year.

Another essential principle is to give time for children to engage in activities at their own pace. Some of the group might move on to the next activity while one or two children will still be engrossed in their work and wish to continue without interruption.

Parental engagement continues to be an integral element of nature club with children and

parents engaging in the tasks together. In this way children and parents learn together, e.g. parents might use the wildlife guide to identify a flower then support their child to look closely at the flower parts, counting the petals and checking the leaf shape to decide together if this is their specimen. On one memorable day, children chose one of the soft toy birds and headed off with their parents to make a nest for their bird. Parents also enjoy the creative activities working alongside their children. Observing this, it feels as if this is precious time for families to spend together.

A new development this year has been to sometimes run Nature Club on the same day as a Conservation Group task day. Children have observed volunteers scything and coppicing and creating a dead-hedge to deter deer from eating away at the coppiced trees. Members of the conservation group have answered children's questions and explained how and why the reserve needs to be managed. When we established the nature club, we envisaged that children might themselves become conservationists in the future. Being actively involved in conservation tasks from a young age will hopefully ensure some of them become tomorrow's conservation volunteers.

We have recently introduced the Green Tree Badge, run by the Royal Forestry Society. The aim is to help children learn more about the amazing world of trees and forestry. We will incorporate activities into Nature Club sessions. When children have completed at least eight activities (we may do more), they will receive a Green Tree Badge to sew on to a jacket.

Clara Vale Nature Club is thriving. In so doing it provides opportunities for children and their parents to engage with nature and learn how they can play their part in caring for the environment.

The Community Orchard

The orchard theme this last year have been about stability and the consolidation of the new membership system and natural environments, along with community favourites events like Apple Day.

1. The new online membership system with card payments and membership reminders has been a success with everyone commenting on how easy the new system is to use, and improving our online records management including data retention management and new ways to communicate with members and potential volunteers. We now have 39 registered members.
2. Apple Day was a huge success with favourite activities like apple juicing, apple fritters and tea and cake in the Hall being enjoyed by all. It was great to see so many people and families chatting, socialising and having fun in the autumn sunshine with more than one person commenting to me after the event about the community feel as everyone contributed what they could to make the juice. The highlight was a musical parade with the village children from the Village Hall to the Community Orchard.
3. Following a risk assessment after the new orchard pond iced over, we undertook some risk remediation work to reduce the depth of the pond to a safe depth to allow easy egress, and this work also improved the underwater habitat.
4. The new orchard pond showed early Spring signs of amphibian life with many smooth newts, some frogs and a few great crested newts.
5. Management tasks included regular strimming of the paths to allow safe and easy access, bulb planting and hedge trimming.
6. In 2026 we are looking to plant some new trees to increase crop variety and biodiversity, perhaps nut trees.

Finally, here is some feedback from a local resident about the orchard:

“I just wanted to message and say I have lived in this village since I was younger than 2, on and off with moves and travels. I grew up around the community orchard playing and passing through. Today I went for the first time in years and I must say it’s absolutely gorgeous! Everyone has done an AMAZING job it not only keeps all my

childhood memories but also has improved massively. The pond - incredible, the little walk from the path into the woodland bit it's so well kept!

My family buried my pet rabbit down there when I was a little girl and it just warmed my heart today going down."



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name LARA VALE CONSERVATION GROUP	No (if any)
--	-------------

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	4 May 2024	To	12 May 2025
------------------------	------------	----	-------------

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Private donations	4,246	-	-	4,246	-
Orchard membership	339	-	-	339	-
Apple day	273	-	-	273	-
Garden bird watch	20	-	-	20	-
Orchard donation	50	-	-	50	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>AR)</i>	4,928	-	-	4,928	-
sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sub total</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	4,928	-	-	4,928	-

A3 Payments

Insurance	277	-	-	277	-
Bird food	597	-	-	597	-
Equipment	492	-	-	492	-
Administration	61	-	-	61	-
Tree certificates	20	-	-	20	-
Nature club	57	-	-	57	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-

<i>Sub total</i>	1,504	-	-	1,504	-
A4 Asset and investment					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
<i>Sub total</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Total payments</i>	1,504	-	-	1,504	-
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	3,424	-	-	3,424	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,561	-	-		-
<i>Cash funds this year end</i>	7,985		-		-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Orchard	2,698	-	-
	Nature Reserve	5,287	-	-
			-	-
	Total cash funds	7,985	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
	Details	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-

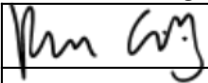
Charity's own use

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which	Amount due	When due
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Penny Gray	12 May 2025

Accounts

Trustees Annual Report for the period:

13/12/2022 – 03/05/2024

Charity name: Clara Vale Conservation Group

Charity No. 1201323

Charity Trustees

- 1) Don Atkinson
- 2) Sean Clay
- 3) Rosemary Davies
- 4) Penny Gray Treasurer
- 5) Michael Mc Farlane
- 6) Gordon Pollinger
- 7) Sarah Raad

Purposes of the Charity

To promote for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of Clara Vale and its surrounding area including the the promotion of environmental diversity and contribution towards conservation work nationally

To advance the education of the public in the conservation and protection of the physical and natural environment.

Main Activities

Management of the Clara Vale Local Nature reserve to maintain and Improve biodiversity.

Allow and encourage public access to the Nature Reserve to observe its wildlife

Through the Nature Club, provide an opportunity for children and their parents or carers to experience and explore the natural environment.

Management of the Clara Vale Community Orchard.

This, we believe, conforms to the Commissions guidance on public benefit, PB1.

The Nature Reserve and Community Orchard are freely open to the public at all times.

Contribution made by Volunteers

The Conservation Group is entirely dependent on volunteers to care for the Nature Reserve and the Community Orchard. There are no paid employees. We are very grateful for the many hours volunteers have given to the Group.

Governance document.

Constitution adopted 10th June 2024

Financial review

The charity made a small profit in the reporting period. Our policy on reserves is to hold £1000 for the payment of unexpected expenses not covered by insurance, for example replacement tools and small running repairs. The accounts show that the charity currently holds this in reserve in the current account and we are not in a deficit position.

How the charity is constituted

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Trustee selection method.

Trustees are appointed or reappointed at the AGM in June.

Our main achievements and activities

The Nature reserve

The Nature Reserve developed from the site of the Clara Vale coal mine. A campaign by the residents of the village in the 1980's resulted in it being declared a nature reserve rather than for industrial use. It was formally designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in 1995 which gives it additional legal protection.

From the start the objectives of the Clara Vale Conservation Group have been to maintain and enhance the habitats and biodiversity of the site and to enable the general public to observe nature in the Reserve.

It attracts visitors both locally and from the region. We receive many compliments that it provides a haven of peace and tranquillity. That it was once a coal mine working twenty four hours a day, visitors find hard to believe. It is open to the public throughout the year and is visited daily by many people from the village and the region. It is a small site with diverse habitats which require active management to maintain.

Scything the meadows and coppicing willow and hawthorn are two of the main management activities employed to maintain the Reserve's varied habitats. The meadows in the Reserve, although they are small, are some of the best areas of grassland for wild flowers in the Gateshead Borough. Scything is how we maintain and improve that diversity. The Exmoor ponies, courtesy of the Mousie Trust are important helpers by grazing the Reserve for a couple of months in late autumn/winter.

Coppicing lets light onto the woodland floor giving different plants a chance to colonise, for example primroses. The regrowth that follows coppicing is ideal for nesting birds such as willow warblers and blackcaps.

The Bird hides continue to be popular. They attract local visitors as well as visitors from around the north east and beyond. We feed the birds every day from the end of October until the end of May. This has helped sustain Red Data book species such as yellowhammers which are declining nationally. The Northumbria Ringing Group visited monthly to catch and ring birds between October and April giving the general public the chance to see birds close up, in the hand. Many thanks to the Northumbria Ringing Group.

We have put up thirty six nest boxes in the nature Reserve. Birdlife in the Reserve seems to be reflecting the national picture of many species declining. The nest boxes were very successful up until last summer. In particular tree sparrows, a species that has declined nationally by 90%, had been making good use of them and over 400 nestlings have been ringed in the past 5 years. Last year however only three boxes were used by tree sparrows and only 11 nestlings ringed. This year, so far, only one box has been used by tree sparrows the other boxes being used by blue tits and great tits. It is far from clear what has caused this collapse but we know it is being repeated elsewhere. Thanks again to the Northumbria Ringing group for monitoring the nest boxes. All the data collected is sent to the British Trust for Ornithology and contributes to the national picture of bird population trends. The eight swift boxes on the village hall were once again ignored by the swifts but rather liked by the house sparrows which are also birds whose population is in sharp decline.

Of course there are not just birds in the reserve. Of other animals, roe deer are seen very frequently, stoats have been spotted, along with their favourite food, rabbits. Foxes and badgers are here but seen less often. Wood mice and voles are often seen from the hides. Bats can be seen at dusk mainly pipistrelles but there's also Daubenton's bat hunting over the ponds.

Butterflies are perhaps the Reserve's most visible insects. There are only 59 species of butterfly in the UK and 18 of them can be seen over the spring and summer, which is an indicator of the health of the Reserve. Moths are less obvious but more numerous (2500 different species). They are important pollinators. After two attempts at moth trapping last summer were rained off, we were eventually successful in early September (which is getting a bit late in the season) and caught 32 different species. The Nature Club children were fascinated by the different moths and did some excellent drawings of them.

The other very visible insects are the dragonflies and damselflies that breed in the reserve. There are 57 different species in the UK, 12 have been seen in the reserve. The ponds and wetlands hold populations of common frogs, common toads and smooth newts. There are also great diving beetles, caddis flies, water boatman and many other aquatic invertebrates.

Overall, the Reserve continues to thrive as a small but diverse mix of natural habitats, allowing the Nature Club, local schools and the public to explore and experience a range of habitats within a relatively small and accessible space.

Nature Club

Clara Vale Conservation Group provide a monthly Nature Club for village children aged 4-11 who attend with their parents or carers. It meets on Saturday mornings in the Nature Reserve or in the Community Orchard. Its first meeting was in May 2022.

Over the period covered by this report, seventeen village children participated with numbers averaging around 8 each session.

The sessions are planned around the seasons. We often begin with nature news where children talk about what they have observed in their gardens and local area. We remind each other about taking care and 'treading gently' so as not to harm wildlife or habitats. There will often be a nature trail and the children go off with their parents/carers to hunt for the items on their sheet. They love following a map. We encourage co-operation and working in pairs or small groups. Then we come back together and share our findings. There will normally be a creative activity linked closely to the topic using natural materials. Every child has a Nature Journal to record their observations. We usually end with a game and then stories and poems. The sessions are flexible so that we can respond to what we observe in the environment, the weather and to children's ideas. The wide age range and varying needs of the children encourage co-operation and empathy among the children.

Sometimes Nature Club coincides with task days on the nature reserve when volunteers from the conservation group are coppicing or maintaining habitats. The volunteers explain what they are doing and why. This gives children an understanding of the work of the conservation group and how the nature reserve is managed hence sparking children's interest from an early age in the importance of conservation. On several occasions members of the conservation group have also shared their knowledge with nature club. Moth trapping was a particularly popular session after a moth trap was set overnight and children came along early the next morning to investigate. Also popular with nature club families are the regular bird ringing sessions by the Northumbria Ringing Group. These experiences extend children's knowledge of the natural world and they return to nature club keen to share their experiences.

These are topics covered over the period:

Hapa Zone crafts (leaf bashing)

Building a bug hotel in the community orchard

Apple day craft activities and making apple juice in the orchard

Hibernation

Willow stars and Christmas wreaths

Habitats in the orchard and wassailing

Winter tree identification, bark rubbing

Sticks and dens

Wildflower planting in the orchard

Water colour painting of trees in blossom

The colour green in spring

Pond dipping

Moth trapping

Parents or carers attend with their children and are fully engaged in the sessions. Parent say they value this opportunity to experience nature alongside their children and that they are more confident about sharing nature activities at other times as a result of joining in with nature club. Over time children have learnt to observe and note detail. They have extended their understanding of seasonal changes and life cycles. They are very keen to learn new vocabulary to describe natural phenomena and the names of plants and animals. Above all, nature club is always a joyous time and there are many moments of awe and wonder throughout the year.

Community Orchard

Orchard History

The Clara Vale Community Orchard was created by the Conservation Group in 2000 as a Millenium Project. The site, which previously was the grounds of Stanners House until it fell into dis-repair, is approximately 0.9 acres, and was converted into a productive and well-loved community space through multiple community led efforts to clear the grounds and create an orchard. Currently there are approximately 100 fruit trees. We describe the orchard as “The wild and fruity space for people and nature” to reflect our community and conservation values.

Objective

We aimed to make gradual changes and implement small interventions to benefit both the local community and the ecological health of the area. Our main objectives for the Clara Vale Community Orchard during the period of 2023-2024 were to: 1. Continue the maintenance of the orchard in a lightly managed working condition while preserving its natural and wild essence. 2. Implement the new member management scheme and member website. 3. Implement the new bio-diversity plan.

Orchard management

Through a combination of pruning days with multiple volunteers, and individual volunteers taking on specific tasks (such as maintaining the willow arch or keeping the paths clear), we have maintained the productivity and aesthetics of the orchard whilst keeping it a safe and open community space. A previously disused water trough was dug out and restored to a working condition allowing members to water their trees during the increasingly hot summers. Harvest last year was somewhat mixed with some trees producing well, but others that had previously been productive produced less fruit. Risks assessments for volunteers days, and general orchard risks, have been produced or updated.

Apple Day

This popular annual community event was a big success in both reporting years, with good attendance in the Orchard and Village Hall, income in line with previous years, and lots of laughs and sugary apple fritters washed down with delicious fresh apple juice. A membership station in the Hall gave support to member enquiries about the new membership website.

New management scheme

We successfully moved from the original management scheme (one renter per tree with an annual tree rent) to a new more open community management scheme. Under the new scheme, any resident of Clara Vale or Stannerford Road can join the scheme at any time, and they are then welcome to pick a fair share of fruit from any tree through the harvest season. Initial community feedback has been positive, although membership has perhaps was lower than hoped in the first year. In 2024 we introduced a new membership website. The focus for this site, was ease of use, transparency on member benefits and to provide card payments (based on feedback from many members who no longer use cash) whilst preserving a cash option for those who don't use the internet. The website received many positive comments from the community and helped us return the membership numbers to close to the older levels, but still some work to be done to increase membership.

New bio-diversity plan

Following the ideas generated in the management scheme consultation survey, a bio-diversity plan was produced to increase the ecological health of the orchard and surrounding areas. The big project was to add a nature pond. This was no small undertaking and we would like to thank our donors who paid for any new materials required (e.g. the pond liner), the core team of volunteers who dug a BIG hole and made it into something beautiful, and all the other volunteers who dropped in to help when they could. Within a matter of weeks wildlife had started colonising the pond and it has generated a lot of positive community conversation. A big early

success was repeated sightings of Great Crested Newts, presumably migrated from a nearby chain of ponds along the railway which have other recorded populations. We have also developed the back edge of the orchard into a path of connectivity for wildlife which includes a new native tree hedge (courtesy of QTS Network Rail Contractors) and a butterfly wildflower bar (which was a joint project with Nature Club).

Conclusion

The Clara Vale Conservation Group has achieved its original objective of developing and maintaining a site for nature. The development of the Community Orchard increased the range of habitats. The Nature Reserve and Nature Club and the Orchard provide spaces for the community in which to relax, enjoy and learn about the natural world.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
CLARA VALE CONSERVATION GROUP

No (if any)

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period
from

1 Decembe 2022

To

3 May 2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
A1 Receipts				
Private donations	1,401	-	-	1,401
Apple day including tree rents	741	-	-	741
Garden Bird Watch	50	-	-	50
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	2,192	-	-	2,192
(see table).				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	2,192	-	-	2,192
A3 Payments				
Insurance	554	-	-	554
Bird food	318	-	-	318
Equipment	1,166	-	-	1,166
Administration	91	-	-	91
Tree certificates	55	-	-	55
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	2,184	-	-	2,184
A4 Asset and investment				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total payments	2,184	-	-	2,184
Net of receipts/(payments)	8	-	-	8
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,554	-	-	4,554
Cash funds this year end	4,561	-	-	4,561

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted to nearest £	Restricted to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Orchard	2,648	-
	Nature Reserve	1,913	-
		-	-
	Total cash funds	4,561	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details		
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
			-
			-
			-
			-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which	Amount due
			-
			-
			-
			-

Signed by one or two trustees on

Signature	Print Name

CC16a

**Last year
to the nearest £**

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
-
-

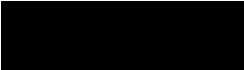
-

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
-
-

-

-
-
-
-



**Endowment
to nearest £**

-
-
-
-

OK

**Endowment
funds
to nearest £**

-
-
-
-
-
-

**Current value
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-

**Current value
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

When due

Date of approval