

**TRUSTEES' REPORT****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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The members, who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of the Companies Act present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)".

**Objectives and activities**

The charity's objects are specifically restricted to promotion for the benefit of the public of the advancement of education, the promotion of sustainable development and biological diversity, the advancement of rural regeneration and the conservation, maintenance, improvement and protection of the physical, natural and built environment of the Causeway Coast and Glens. The policies adopted in furtherance of these objects are as follows and there has been no change in these during the year.

- to advance the education of the public or any local or statutory authority in the principles and practice of conservation, and the conservation and protection of wildlife and marine life in an effort to encourage conservation;
- to advance, promote, preserve and further the conservation maintenance and protection of features of the landscape in the area of benefit with geographical, historic, physiographical or amenity value and to enhance their contribution to existing environmental amenities in the area of benefit for the public benefit;
- to advance the education of the public in subjects relating to sustainable development and the protection, management, enhancement and rehabilitation of the environment and to encourage and promote study and research in such subjects provided that the useful results of such study are disseminated to the general public;
- to advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the directors, may from time to time, decide in accordance with the law of charity.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

The direct benefits that flow from CCGHT's purposes are:

- Habitat protection and enhancement through measures including establishing habitat management plans, controlling invasive species and addressing the risk of wild fires.
- Protection of native species such as the red squirrel and native woodlands.
- Improved public access to the area and mitigation of the impact of increased visitor numbers through engagement with landowners and the building, maintenance and promotion of paths.
- Restoration of the built heritage through the repair of the historic stonewalls and other historic structures and monuments in the area.
- Securing of the living heritage of the area for future generations through the collection and collation of heritage material.
- Sharing of the heritage of the area for the education and enjoyment of the public through events, publications, exhibitions, training courses and volunteering opportunities.

The above will lead to protection of cultural values, heritage and the environment for future generations; enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the area; increased social and economic well-being of local communities; conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Causeway Coast and Glens for current and future generations; development of outdoor skills and active lifestyles.

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Our activities are designed to enhance and protect the environment and contribute to well-being. Any potential harms are outweighed by the benefits and alleviated through respecting the rights of all stakeholders, managing access, reducing wildfires and controlling invasive species.

The beneficiaries of the work of the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust are:

- The local population in terms of improved access, heritage events and interpretation and development of outdoor skills and active lifestyles.
- The general public including out of state visitors in terms of the conservation of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a public asset, improved access to enjoy the area and enhanced appreciation and enjoyment of the area through providing information on the living heritage, flora and fauna.
- Local landowners through the control of unwanted access and the safeguarding of boundaries and livestock through the building and repair of paths, stiles and bridges. Local landowners receive a private benefit through the control of unwanted access and the safeguarding of boundaries and livestock.

There are no private benefits to any other individuals connected with the organisation other than the payment of salaries to staff which is a necessary requirement in order to provide our services and therefore incidental to the carrying out of our purpose.



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**Achievements and performance**

2024-25 has proven to be a memorable year for CCGHT; a year of achievement as well as a year of challenges. CCGHT entered the 2nd year of its 5-year funding cycle under DAERA's Environment Fund. This allows the Trust to undertake its core activities relating to the management of the 3 AONBs in the area and the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site. This year CCGHT formally assumed the additional responsibility from DAERA for the management of the Rathlin Environmental Forum.

CCGHT's biggest ever project, the Binevenagh Landscape Partnership Scheme, received a 2-year extension from the main funders, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and will now continue until September 2027. The Trust is also grateful for the continued support for the Scheme from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, the Loughs Agency, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust and others.

The Trust also received core support from CCGBC to undertake a combination of environmental and sustainable tourism activities. Unfortunately for the first time in over 20 years no funding was received from Tourism Northern Ireland. Coupled with the lack of funding from Mid and East Antrim Borough Council financial management remained a significant challenge.

In order to reduce reliance on public sector grants and to help ease the funding situation in future years the Trust established a subsidiary trading company to provide a focus for its non-core enterprise activities which will include oversight of the Magilligan Tree Nursery. This has become an important part of the Trust's work in partnership with HMP Magilligan. This project received generous support from the Dormant Accounts Fund administered by Charities Lottery.

Perhaps the highest profile event of the year was the Trust's announcement that it has assumed responsibility for the ongoing management of the Dark Hedges. A Dark Hedges Management Forum has been established under CCGHT leadership, which will develop a masterplan and a management plan for the site to include the exploration of funding opportunities. Prior to taking a formal lead, through the transfer of responsibilities of the former Dark Hedges Preservation Trust and a lease agreement with the landowners, CCGHT carried out preventative and emergency work at the site to ensure visitor safety and following storm damage. The Trust recognises the finite life of the attraction but is committed to providing the best possible experience at the location for as long as possible.

This year CCGHT hosted the 3rd international Économusée conference as part of its ongoing management of the Économusée network in the region. The conference in Ballycastle attracted participants from all parts of Canada, Norway, Ireland and Northern Ireland and included visits to all 11 Northern Irish artisan workshops.

In March the Board of CCGHT agreed a new strategy which refocused the activities of the organisation along the themes of delivering a high-quality programme of protected landscape management; inspiring local communities; and conserving and enhancing the natural built and cultural heritage of our area.

From a strategic perspective the Trust has continued its work on the development of a new UNESCO Global Geopark for County Antrim as well as to lay the groundwork Northern Ireland's first UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve to act as a lasting legacy for the Binevenagh LPS. Significant groundwork has been laid relating to participation in a number of EU funded PEACEPLUS projects in the fields of managing coastal change, provision of access and improving environmental awareness which are all expected to come on stream in the next financial year.

This year saw the appointment of Geoff Nuttall as the Antrim Coast and Glens and Marine Project Manager. Geoff has also been appointed, on behalf of CCGHT, as the Chair of Landscapes NI, the partnership body promoting all aspects of sustainable protected landscape management. Conor Johnston was appointed as the Trust's Communications Officer replacing Portia Woods. This post, as well as that of Fundraising Manager, has been generously funded through Heritage Lottery's CRESI programme.

At Board level Edward Mason has been appointed as the National Trust's representative replacing Max Bryant and Cllr John Wisener was appointed to replace Cllr Darryl Wilson, one of the 4 CCGBC representatives.

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CCGHT expenditure exceeded £1m in 2024-25 for the first time (£1.088m). With 16 members of staff the organisation was at its largest to date. 6 members of the team were 100% funded through lottery schemes with the remainder being funded from a combination of sources, particularly the Environment Fund. Direct staff costs reached £620k. Income at £758k meant an operating deficit of £310k. The deficit was due, amongst other things, to delays in the capital elements of the Binevenagh Project for which an apportionment charge was expected, no funding arriving from TNI or M&EABC. Included in the deficit was also an allocation carried forward from the previous year. The deficit was managed by using existing resources held by the Trust.

**Financial review**

The Charity regularly reviews its policy on risk. The main risks to the Charity are associated with being adequately funded to continue with its main objectives. The Charity is heavily dependent on grants from DAERA each year, with DAERA being the biggest individual funder with a grant of £357,649.

The net deficit for the year to 31 March 2025 was £310,285 (2024: net surplus of £209,652).

The organisation has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and is satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

**Structure, governance and management**

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. Causeway Coast and Glens is governed by a memorandum and articles of association. the company is recognised as a charity by HMRC (Charity Number: 106064).

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mrs Julie Ann Taylor

Mr George McAuley

Prof Joan Condell

Cllr Bill Kennedy

Dr Paul Jose

Mr Andrew McAlister

Prof Patrick McKeever

Cllr Oliver McMullan

Ald Richard Stewart

Mr Robert Wilson

Cllr John Wisener

Mr Edward Mason

(Appointed 4 June 2024)

(Appointed 15 October 2024)

None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.



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CCGHT is a public/private/ voluntary sector partnership set up in 2002 and managed by a Board of 13 Trustees who are familiar with and have knowledge and regard to the Charity Commission NI's Public Benefit requirements. Representation on the Board includes the local councils, voluntary sector bodies, tourism, government, farming and community organisations. With a small core staff and time bound project staff the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust is led by the Chief Executive Officer in the small North Antrim village of Armoyle.

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) has no statutory powers and as such seeks to influence and work in partnership with a range of statutory and other bodies to achieve its aims, purposes and objectives. In addition to influencing strategic direction, CCGHT secures and distributes funding to assist in the implementation and delivery of its own objectives. It supports the development of strategies and the delivery of programmes and plans, which aim to ensure the long-term benefit of the area and to balance this with current economic development in a sustainable manner.

CCGHT has responsibility for a large area of Northern Ireland covering two council areas – Causeway Coast & Glens and Mid & East Antrim Borough Councils. It includes three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - Binevenagh, Causeway Coast (including the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site) and Antrim Coast and Glens (including Rathlin Island). It also includes several Ramsar sites, which all have international importance for their bird life alongside many Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Areas of Special Scientific Interest.

**Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees, who are also the directors of Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust Limited for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

**Auditor**

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that IDS Chartered Accountants LLP be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

**Disclosure of information to auditor**

Each of the Trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Graham Thompson (Secretary)

Dated: 9 December 2025