



Cotswolds Conservation Board Statement of Accounts

Financial year ending 31st March 2023

Cotswolds Conservation Board
Cotswold Business Centre
2 A P Ellis Road
Upper Rissington
Gloucestershire
GL54
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

BACKGROUND

The Cotswolds Conservation Board was established in 2004 under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Board's Establishment Order (SI 1777/2004) was agreed by Parliament in July 2004. The Board's statutory purposes are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and to increase the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the AONB. In fulfilling these purposes, the Board seeks to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

In February 2023 the Board adopted a Management Plan for 2023-25, which articulates its vision, its objectives and its policies for the management of the AONB.

The Board's Business Plan sets out a wide-ranging programme of activity associated with the delivery of its purposes. The Board operates to a budget based on the agreed grant aid from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Natural England and local authorities. Additionally, the Board either takes the lead role or actively participates in a range of partnership schemes to secure external funding for additional project work.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Accounting Framework

Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Board is classed as a smaller relevant body for financial reporting purposes. As such it is required to comply with the mandatory guidance for Conservation Boards issued in March 2022 by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance.

This Statement of Accounts summarises the Board's activities for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. It has been prepared in accordance with proper accounting policies and practices, and on an accruals basis.

Income and Expenditure Account

The Board has adopted the National Park Authority model for its Income and Expenditure Account to enable comparability with similar organisations.

The Account shows the costs of providing services across the various activities and projects that the Board has supported during the year, and how these projects were financed from grants and income. Gross revenue expenditure for the year was £2,485,984 (2021/22 £2,086,120) and gross income was £2,504,627 (2021/22 £2,021,827). Taken together, these items show a net surplus for the year of £18,642 (2021/22 deficit £64,293).

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet details the Board's financial position as at 31 March 2023, listing the value of its assets and liabilities. The Board's practices on financial reserves comply with the formal guidance issued in July 2014 (CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99). The Finance Officer considers that the level of reserves, taken with their future targets, are at an acceptable level.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board publishes an Annual Review by the end of July each year describing its activities in the previous year, and setting out its performance against the Business Plan. This publication is available on-line at www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

2021/22		Expenditure	2022/23	
Net		£	Income	Net
£			£	£
559,521	Conservation of Natural Environment	1,078,334	(310,540)	767,794
81,122	Conservation of Cultural Heritage	252,591	(52,498)	200,092
190,801	Recreation Management and Transport	602,445	(162,792)	439,653
239,755	Promoting Understanding: Information Interpretation and Education	216,175	(48,187)	167,988
114,373	Volunteers	116,583	(4,390)	112,193
75,501	Forward Planning	74,759	(15,894)	58,866
93,742	Corporate Management and Administration	145,098	(12,435)	132,663
1,354,815	Net Cost of Services	2,485,984	(606,736)	1,879,248
766	Interest Receivable		(1,027)	(1,027)
1,354,049	Net Operating Total	2,485,984	(607,764)	1,878,220
(498,017)	DEFRA Contribution		(529,743)	(529,743)
(135,964)	Local Authority Contributions		(137,538)	(137,538)
(655,755)	DEFRA – Farming in Protected Landscapes		(994,589)	(994,589)
-	DEFRA – Removing Barriers		(234,993)	(234,993)
(1,289,756)	Total Financing		(1,896,863)	(1,896,863)
64,293	(Surplus) Deficit for the Year	2,485,984	(2,504,627)	(18,642)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

31 March 2022 £		Note	31 March 2023 £
-	Fixed Assets & Long-Term Investments	1	-
166,358	Debtors and Prepayments	3	438,253
88,766	Short Term Investments		89,430
0	Stock		0
1,011,035	Cash and Cash Equivalents		818,442
1,266,159	Current Assets		1,346,125
(593,172)	Creditors and Accruals	4	(504,690)
(30,897)	Receipts in Advance		(180,703)
(624,069)	Current Liabilities		(685,393)
642,090	Net Current Assets		660,732
642,090	Total Net Assets		660,732
	Financed by:		
489,885	Restricted Funds		433,210
79,080	Earmarked Reserves		151,166
73,125	General Fund		76,357
642,090	Total Reserves		660,733

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**1. Fixed Assets & Long-Term Investments**

The Board maintains asset and inventory registers for all of its significant assets. Board policy is that assets with an individual value in excess of £10,000 are recorded in the Fixed Assets Register but treated as any other purchase in annual income and expenditure account. The Board currently has four assets in excess of this threshold with a total value of £77,740.

2. Income

The Board derived income from the following main sources:

Source	2021/22	2022/23
	£	£
DEFRA Grant	498,017	529,743
DEFRA – FIPL	655,775	994,589
DEFRA – Removing Barriers	-	234,993
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	40,000	-
Local Authority Contributions	135,964	137,538
Natural England	138,929	106,669
Thames Water	60,000	112,878
Severn Trent	-	60,000
National Grid – Landscapes Initiative	218,608	59,292
Kingfisher Trail	78,827	-
Rural Payments Agency – LEADER	7,667	4,468
National Highways - BNG	-	49,793
Highways England – Dark Skies and DWS	-	25,900
Other grants and earned income	188,040	188,764
Total	2,021,827	2,504,627

3. Debtors and Prepayments

Year-end debtors and prepayments are categorised in the table below:

Source	2021/22	2022/23
	£	£
DEFRA – FiPL 4 th installment	-	243,582

RPA – LEADER	3,837	-
National Highways - BNG	-	60,800
Natural England – Cotswold Way	117,011	82,437
Other	6,280	51,434
Total	166,358	438,253

No debts were written off during the year, and no provisions were required.

4. Creditors and Accruals

A breakdown of the main categories of creditors and accruals is shown below:

Category	2021/22	2022/23
	£	£
Local Authorities and Other Public Bodies	178,926	46,455
Farming in Protected Landscape grants	-	407,449
National Trust	-	17,114
Other	414,246	208,803
Total	593,172	679,821

5. Value Added Tax

The Board was not registered for Value Added Tax in 2022/23.

6. Member Allowances

Board members are paid allowances and reimbursed expenses in accordance with a Member Allowances Scheme which is reviewed annually and published in the Board's Constitution. Payments in 2022/23 are summarised in the table below:

Category	2021/22		2022/23	
	Allowances £	Expenses £	Allowances £	Expenses £
Board Chair/Vice Chair	5,100	-	5,362	223
Executive/Sub-Committee Members	9,042	116	6,750	449
Ordinary Members	4,480	332	7,872	340
Total	18,622	448	19,984	1,011

7. Related Party Transactions

Concept

The principal issue in determining whether a person or an organisation is a related party is the degree of control exerted by one party over the other. This can arise during a financial period where:

- one party has direct or indirect control of the other party;
- one party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party; or
- the parties are subject to common control or influence from the same source.

The Government

The Government has influence over the general operations of the Board. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Board operates. The Secretary of State appoints fourteen members of the Board under arrangements set out in the Board's Establishment Order. The Government provides a large proportion of the Board's funding in the form of grants channelled through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Natural England. Other government departments and agencies such as the Rural Payments Agency also fund the Board's activities.

Local Authorities

The fifteen local authorities covered by the Cotswolds area each appoint a Board member under the terms of the Board's Establishment Order.

Parish Councils

Parish Councils, Town Councils and Parish Meetings appoint eight members of the Board in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Establishment Order.

Friends of the Cotswolds

The Friends of the Cotswolds act as the Board's landlord. Following the end of the financial year, from April 2023, the registered office address changed to the Cotswold Business Centre 2 A P Ellis Road, Upper Rissington, GL54 2QB. An occupancy license was also issued by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust for the sharing of office premises at Greystones Farm in Bourton-on-the-Water and at Robinswood Hill Country Park, Gloucester.

Members and Officers

The Board approved Codes of Conduct for members and officers as part of its Constitution. The Codes include requirements to disclose and record interests where they may have, or appear to have, an influence on the decisions of the Board and are circulated to members and officers. The Board's procedural rules impose quorums on meetings to ensure decisions are not taken in isolation and require members to disclose interests at each meeting before the matter in which they have an interest is discussed. A public register of these interests is maintained by the Board's Monitoring Officer. In addition to the above, Board members and officers sign and return related party transaction declaration forms each year. During the year the Board made the following related party transactions:

- Gloucestershire Raptor Monitoring Group (Anna Field, employee is a Trustee) – grant paid £275 (2022 £nil)
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (Michèle Holden is a part-time employee of both organisations - grant paid £15727 (2022 £nil)

8. Employee Remuneration

The table below shows contracted employee numbers and their respective total remuneration received during the year in bandings of £5,000 at the financial year end. Total remuneration includes gross salary, employer Superannuation and National Insurance contributions.

Band (£)	2021/22 (Number of employees)	2022/23 (Number of employees)
0 – 5,000	3	5
5,000 - 10,000	3	2
10,000 - 15,000	2	2
15,000 - 20,000	1	-
20,000 - 25,000	1	4
25,000 - 30,000	1	4
30,000 - 35,000	2	1
35,000 - 40,000	3	-
40,000 - 45,000	2	3
45,000 - 50,000	5	2
50,000 - 55,000	-	3
55,000 - 60,000	-	1
100,000 - 105,000	1	1
Total	24	28

At the 31st March 2023 there were 21.7 whole time equivalent employees (31st March 2022: 18.7).

The figures shown above are based on bandings of total actual remuneration received during the year.

9. Retirement Benefits and Pensions

The Board is a member of the Gloucestershire Pension Fund, which is a defined benefit scheme administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. Under the Regulations, the fund is subject to an independent triennial actuarial valuation to advise on each employer's contribution rate and on the funding levels of the scheme.

The last valuation was carried out as of 31 March 2022. Due to the high cost of fees involved with obtaining data, the Board opted not to obtain an entity specific valuation. However, the ratio of the funding level of total assets compared to total liabilities of the fund, as assessed by the actuary, was 110%. The employer contributions have been set at 19.8% of pensionable pay for the next three years (2022/23 19%).