Friends of Yeovil Country Park

"Supporting and helping to maintain Yeovil Country Park in conjunction with the Countryside Team"

Reference: FOYCP04082026 Dated: 10 Aug 2026

Friends of Yeovil Country Park

Trustees Annual Report

for the Year ending

31 December 2025

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Reference and administrative information

The reference and administrative information forms part of this report.

Charity name

Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Registered Charity number

Charity No: 1185579 Registered 1 October 2019

Principal and operational address

Yeovil Country Park, Brunswick Street, Yeovil BA20 1QZ

Trustees

The Trustees who served during this period in alphabetical order are as follows:

- Amanda Card - Treasurer
- Gary Cashmore - Chairman
- Nicholas Hill
- Edward Sadler
- Alison Suter

Constitution

Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO was registered on 1 October 2019. The Constitution for the Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO has been reviewed and we can confirm that Issue 3 remains the current version, document Reference: FoYCP28042019 Issue 3.

Trustees Report

Friends of Yeovil Country Park report and financial statement as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the Charity's sixth period ended 31 December 2025.

We remain a group with five Trustees, and together with the Members successfully managed the organisation over the year.

The year commenced with the sad news that the founder member of the Friends group Robin Makay passed away. He was the Chairman back in 2012 before handing over to our current Chair. The family collected donations and gifted them to the Friends Charity, which was very generous of them and reinforced the passion to support this wonderful place.

Over the period we have been trying to find suitable candidates that may like to join as new members with suitable skills that can complement the work that we undertake. A new Friends member was recruited, bringing some great

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experience to the team. We will always consider Members who bring the appropriate experience and qualifications for the role of Trustee in our team.

The backbone of the organisation is all of the Trustees, Members and Volunteers who generously gave their time and expertise over the year to achieve the goals of the Charity. We thank them all for their support, they are our most valuable asset.

This year we held eight meetings which included the AGM and this was supplemented by adhoc reviews and electronic communications. The documentation and processes for the operation of the group were reviewed over the period. As a result a new Conflict of Interest policy was produced covering members who are employed by Yeovil Town Council, the document signed March.

The Friends decided to fund Park Yoga on the basis that it would bring more people to the Country Park and this would be a free of charge activity due to the economic times. We advertised that the Friends were funding this and hoped that some people would donate to the Friends. High numbers attended over 1,200 in total for the year which averaged 65 over the 19 sessions funded.

Wassail held in the apple orchard in February, the second year this new event was run. Unfortunately the weather was not kind with rain and numbers lower than expected as a result. It was still classed as a success for those attending and generated some income.

The April Spring Trail was a great day for all involved. This year we had some 392 parents and children enjoying themselves. Lots of positive feedback was received from the public. We were able to secure support from local supermarkets Asda, Morrisons and Tesco who generously donated the confectionery which was handed out to the children for completing the Trail.

Its Your Neighbourhood (IYN) 2025 RHS Britain in Bloom - encouraged by the Countryside team, the Friends entered this scheme with our entry submitted February 2025. The team was delighted to receive Level 5 Outstanding recognition, all down to the effort made by everyone at the Park.

Thales volunteering team visited the Park for a day's activity in July and on 27 August for community litter picks. Working with Thales could provide valuable help with projects in the future.

Somerset Community Foundation/Wessex Water Foundation. We applied for a grant to construct a new tree nursery area and were delighted to be accepted for a grant in August 2025. This area will be used to grow new trees for the Park. The grant awarded was for £1,000:00 and covers the major element of the funding, with the remainder coming from public donations. Rangers and volunteers will build and establish the new facility.

The Forest School area, which is developing into an educational zone for the Park, continues to make significant progress.. As mentioned in the last report, following help from Spark Somerset, the grant money was received in January to

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deliver the project. We are very grateful to the Prime Foundation for supporting our cause and have used the money to build a sheltered zone equipped with many materials to run Forest School sessions, as part of the expenditure was the delivery of Forest school experience days to school groups.

Our Community Ranger has developed a comprehensive curriculum, and the facility is already being put to excellent use. Recently delivered were several courses, including sessions with pupils from the Cambian Group, Lufton College (a specialist learning centre), with four additional sessions completed.

This project has required the Friends to collaborate with two councils to achieve successful delivery. The Forest School area, now known as “Robins Willow”, provides children with a safe, immersive outdoor experience within the heart of Yeovil Country Park. We would collectively like to thank the Prime Foundation for their support and partnership. As a result of their funding, the Country Park now boasts a premier educational facility that will be enjoyed for many years to come. Everyone involved in this project should be very proud of what has been achieved.

Earth Day during April was a positive event with good feedback from the public and a day to promote the Park and Friends group.

Over the year support from the general public has been an enormous boost to the volunteers, with lots of positive feedback received, together with donations for future Park projects.

During the year it was identified that the existing pond dipping platform was suffering from decay and needed to be replaced. The Friends have been working with the Countryside Team on a replacement pond dipping platform for a grant application to Morrisons, but with the Rangers unable to undertake the installation it made the application over the threshold for the grant to be pursued any further. Existing Friends funds will be used to provide a significant contribution to the cost of the project.

The team at the Park Café continue to be enormously supportive, promoting the group and collecting donations. A secondhand book section is up and running with much interest and use.

Following the Park ownership transferring to Yeovil Town Council, a new Friends policy was compiled (March) covering conflict of interests to protect the Charity and Yeovil Town Council.

As mentioned in the last report and the importance of gaining Green Flag recognition for the Country Park, we are delighted that support for the Green flag award will continue. This year the entry funding was taken over by the Countryside Team Yeovil Town Council (the previous year entry was funded by the Friends). Our group has been supporting Green Flag since the original Friends group formed in 2012 and recognise the value and status this award brings to the Country Park, Charity and public. A mystery shopper assessment occurred in November and another award.

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We continue to enter the RHS South West in Bloom Pride in Parks award. Our application was made in May with judging in October. The judges always seem to be impressed with the work that goes on within the Park and this year was no exception. The judge had knowledge of the Country Park since it started. A discussion about achievements over the year was followed by a tour of the Park. We continue to achieve the full 5 star recognition which is a tribute to everyone at the Park.

We continue to check and review all our documentation over the year.

Our responsibilities for any waste produced following a review process resulted in registration with the Environment Agency for the Friends as a lower tier waste carrier 14 May 2025. This was a legal obligation for us as a CIO for waste management charity/voluntary sector waste.

We attended and supported the Yeovil Town Super Saturday event held July and September, with the aim of advertising the Country Park.

The traditional Hallowe'en Trail is one of our major events organised with the Countryside team and Friends, generating funds for Country Park projects. The weather played a significant part in numbers turning out with a torrential downpour at one stage. Despite this, good numbers of the public attended. The event is supported by local supermarket stores Asda, Morrisons and Tesco who have been supporting us over many years and we value their contribution. Positive feedback from those participating was well received.

Finally, our Chairman has decided to stand down as Chair of the group after over 8 years in the position. We thank him for his contribution especially as he played a pivotal role in establishing the Friends as a registered charity. We will be looking for a new Chair in the New Year.

Friends of Yeovil Country Park, since becoming a CIO registered Charity October 2019, continues and remains an active going concern.

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Accounts

The accounts are checked at each of the Friends regular meetings and feed the year end position. The final year end statement is reviewed and approved by the Trustees. The detailed Accounts are included below.

We had approximately 8 volunteers, excluding Trustees.

Income and Spending

Accounting period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 and the financial controls for the period of this report were reviewed by the Members and Trustees at meetings held throughout the year.

The accounts include funds and commitments from 31 December 2024 accounts. These amounted to £18,509.85

Funds generated principal income;

Our two principal events, namely the Spring and Hallowe'en trails, were both successful, with the Spring Trail generating an income of £376.40, a decrease of just over 50% from the previous year due principally to lack of numbers attending.

The Hallowe'en Trail generated an income of £849.00, a decrease of 58% from the previous year and again due to a reduced number of attendees.

Friends pencil sales accounted for another £210.80, public donations received £58.73, donations for dog biscuits £384.14 and book donations £479.66 totaling £827.01

The key income was from the Prime Foundation with a grant award of £4,045.00 and Wessex Water grant of £1,000.00, total value of grants received £5,045.00

Donations in memory of Robin Mackay, who was the previous Chair and founder member of Friends Charity, amounted to £168.17

The above together with other sundry items are detailed on the accounts sheet.

In total, receipts for the year amounted to £7,727.35

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Key spending was for;

Expenditure associated with delivery of the Prime Foundation grant amounted to £1,367.78 and covered the canopy structure and forest school equipment and essential equipment for those participating in forest school activities. Forest school handout materials £520.00

Wassail event incurred expenditure of £162.00

Purchases for the Park include smaller items for the build of the tree nursery, forest school items etc. £1,117.58

Park Yoga costs £1,445.00

Google domain name yearly expenditure of £10.00

Miscellaneous items for the year amounted to £117.47 and included RHS Southwest in Bloom entry £30.00

Together with other costs the total expenditure for the year amounted to £5,140.25

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Accounts summary sheet;

Friends of Yeovil Country Park

Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances for the year ending 31st December 2025

Receipts		Payments	
Tesco Bags of Help	0.00	Purchases	0.00
Post Code Lottery Award	0.00	Prime Grant expenditure	1,367.78
Sales of Knitted/Handmade Items	0.00	Misc Expenses	117.47
Sponsorship	0.00	Spring Trail Expenses	0.00
Public Donations	58.73	Purchases for Park	1,117.58
Super Saturday	12.00	Calendar Printing	0.00
Pencil Sales	210.80	Activities	0.00
Book Donations	479.66	Park Yoga	1,445.00
Grants	1,000.00	Halloween Expenses	0.00
Dog Biscuits Donations	384.14	Google Domain Cost	10.00
Post Card Sales/Donations	39.60	Wassail Event Event	162.00
Halloween	849.00	Pencil Purchases	390.09
Calendar Sales	0.00	Seeds/Plant	0.00
Sale of Photographic Prints	0.00	Bank Payment Charges	10.33
Spring Trail	376.40	Forest School	520.00
Wellness Event	0.00		
Wessex Water Grant	0.00		
Asda - Green Giving Tokens	0.00		
Other Grants	4,045.00		
Wassail Income	103.85		
Legacy	168.17		
Other Income	0.00		
Total Receipts	**7,727.35**	Total Payments	**5,140.25**
-	-	Excess of Receipts over Payments	2,587.10
	7,727.35		**7,727.35**

RESERVE FUND		REPRESENTED BY:	
Balance at start of year 1st Jan 2025	18,509.85	Balance at Bank 31 December 2024	
		Current Account Old	0.00
		Current Account New	21,056.87
Excess of Receipts over Payments	2,587.10	Deposit Account	0.08
		Cash in hand of Treasurer (Café safe)	40.00
-	-	Credits yet to be on statement	
		Cheques (and Debit Card) not on staten	0.00
Balance to date	**21,096.95**		**21,096.95**

Amanda Card, Honorary Treasurer

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Objectives and activities

Fundraising opportunities. We continue to identify sponsors who we can work with to improve the Park facilities.

A key objective going forward is to deliver more educational activities in the Country Park and enhance the public connection with the Town centre.

We continue to hold regular Friends group meetings to review plans and ideas, matching funds and exploring opportunities to further enhance the facilities and events for the public.

Summary of main achievements during the year

Our main achievements for the year were the successful applications made, leading to significant grant awards from the Prime Foundation and Wessex Water.

Key plans for the future

In conjunction with the Countryside Team, we will continue to run the well established key public events, namely the Spring Trail and Hallowe'en Trail;

Drive to recruit more volunteers;

Establish the Friends own website;

Explore new fundraising and sponsorship opportunities;

Potential to review Park Yoga at the Park to encourage visitor numbers if a better deal can be secured with shared funding.

Reserves policy

Our reserves policy is to retain a working capital to cover costs incurred prior to income being received; cover unforeseen events; project overrun costs; etc. The amount is set at £2,500 unallocated reserves. This remains unchanged from previous years.

Risk

Funding opportunities are increasingly harder to identify in the current economic climate, some key developments planned for the Park could be impacted.

Inflation continues to be a challenge for family expenditure and the ability to attend events in the Park where a charge is levied, which means there is more pressure on seeking/generating funding in order for events to have a lower charge or be free to attend for the community.

Following the announcement by the Chair to stand down, there is a risk that it will be difficult to find someone who has the same knowledge of the Friends

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group and charity leadership. A risk is that the proactive funding opportunities etc. will take a back seat until a replacement Chair is found.

DBS

This was reviewed over the year and the current roles remain the same. No action was required for this financial year, since the original guidance was obtained from DBS. We currently have no Trustees, Members or Volunteers who are in roles that are eligible.

Report approval

Report approved by the serving Trustees of Friends of Yeovil Country Park.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees;



Gary Cashmore

Amanda Card

Position: Trustee - Chairman

Position: Trustee - Treasurer

Date: 07 Oct 2026

Date: 07 Oct 2026

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