THE HURST WATER MEADOW TRUST

REGISTERED CHARITY: 1191096



Annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026

Reference and administration details

The Hurst Water Meadow Trust was formed on 13 October 1995 to acquire the land and fishing rights to an ancient water meadow in Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire. It was transformed into a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 1st April 2021.

Charity's principal address

11 Queen Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7HR

The Trustees

The trustees who have served during the period are as follows:

- Thom Airs (Media)
- Graham Beland (Land and tree management)
- Louise Beland (Volunteer coordinator)
- Sally Bell (Honorary Secretary)
- Sandra Harding (Education)
- Roger Seabrook (Chairman)
- Sophia Stewart-Liberty (Arts)
- Chris Smith (Honorary Treasurer)
- Richard Tilley (Ecology)
- David Wilkinson (Archaeology and ecology)

Main advisers

Independent examiner

Malcolm Lucas (Chartered Accountant), Watling Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames

Bank

CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Structure, Governance and Management

Type of governing document and constitution

The organisation is a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which assumed the responsibilities for the Hurst Water Meadow Trust on 1st April 2021.

Trustee selection policy

The Trust aims to have a maximum of ten trustees which there were on 31st March 2026. New trustees are selected by majority vote of standing trustees, with reference to their commitment to the charity's aims and expertise. Eight of the ten trustees must be local residents. Dorchester Parish Council has the power to appoint a Parish Councillor as an additional trustee.

Trustee training

New trustees are introduced to the operating procedures of the Hurst. Trustees are regularly informed of important matters and updated on significant changes in Charity Law.

Decision-making processes

The day-to-day management of the charity rests with the trustees. Specific projects such as land acquisition, fundraising and site improvement are managed by committees formed to carry out these tasks. The Trustees meet at least twice a year, and often more frequently.

Risk policy

The Trustees monitor health and safety and would employ specialist advisors if required. New projects of a capital nature involving risks which are not normally encountered in day-to-day management are undertaken, taking special care to understand the risks involved and with funding in place.

Objectives and Activities

Objects

The objects of the Trust as set out in the Trust Deed are:

- to preserve, conserve and protect The Hurst Water Meadow and any other land acquired by the Trust, its terrestrial and aquatic life and their habitats for the benefit of the public.
- to advance public education in the study and research of Dorchester on Thames' water meadows and their conservation and the dissemination of the useful results of such research.
- to provide on such land appropriate facilities for recreation for the benefit of the public with the object of improving the conditions of life of said public.

Main activities carried out by the Trust

- The priority is the care and appropriate management of the land currently owned by the Trust, using volunteers and contractors as needed. This was greatly assisted by a donation from the Mid-Thames Quakers which was used to repair pathways on the Hurst
- Special attention is given to the creation of a 'riparian wildlife corridor' along the river Thame.
- Provision of educational facilities for school parties and other visitors to the meadows.

Objectives for 2026-2027

- As we look forward, our aims and objectives remain unchanged and the main activity is the Dorchester weirs fish pass project being led and managed by the River Thame Conservation Trust (RTCT). They are the lead organisation, responsible for delivering all

aspects and managing all risks of the project as well as consulting the public, especially those who live close to the meadows, to ensure that those voices are heard as the project proceeds.

- We are pleased to continue our practice of providing a grant to support St Birinus Forest School and we hope to continue to welcome other groups of young people, via the Earth Trust and Icknield Community college, to the meadows to increase their understanding and appreciation of these wonderful places.
- We continue to implement the land management plan prepared by an independent consultant, to enhance biodiversity.
- Manage the new wetland areas in Old Bridge Meadow and the new eco-hydrology arrangement in the Hurst Water Meadow to ensure that they deliver the intended outcomes agreed.
- Increase our understanding of wildlife populations on the meadows.

Plans for the future

- As a result of the generous donation from Hankinson Duckett this year we will be engaging the services of an ecologist and botanist to prepare species reports for the Hurst meadow. These will give us a status update for this particular meadow as well as help determine potential improvements or actions with our plans for the future.
- The Trust is open to any opportunity to acquire or manage land between the Hurst and Old Bridge Meadow that it does not currently own, thus extending our riparian wildlife corridor to the confluence of the river Thame and river Thames.

Volunteers

The Trust is grateful for the services and gifts in kind donated by its many volunteers. The Trust does not have a policy to measure the economic value of these activities. Major regular gifts of time and services include accountancy, administration, biodiversity advice, bookkeeping, education, fundraising, site maintenance and development. In addition, other professional services are received as and when the situation requires.

Achievements and Performance

Review of charitable activities

Aside from general maintenance of the meadows and encouraging enjoyment of the meadows by members of the public, the Trust made a grant of £4,175 to St Birinus school to support educational activities undertaken by the Forest School.

Fundraising

During the year the Trust continued its fundraising activities to enable it to finance the on-going maintenance of the meadows.

Public response

The Trust continues to receive positive feedback from users of the meadow and its providers of funds.

Financial review

Finances

Income for the past year was £**29,023** (2025, £25,701) and expenditure £ **18,105** (2025, £10,125) resulting in a surplus of £**10,918** (2025 £15,576). Donations increased by £2,075 + 25%), with notable donations from Hankinson Duckett and the Mid-Thames Quakers. Grant income increased by £1,636, reflecting the increased visits by local schools and colleges.

The income for the year comprised entirely unrestricted funds. Unrestricted expenditure was £18,105. Bank balances total £100,789 (2025, £89,781) of which nil is restricted, (2025 £0 was restricted). This means that £100,789 is available to manage the Hurst (2025, £89,871).

Reserves policy

Through the continued support from voluntary donations and grants the Trust has maintained adequate reserves to manage and enhance the water meadows and deal with any unexpected setbacks. Unrestricted reserves were £100,789 at the end of the year (2025, £89,781). The trustees have designated £24,000 to cover unexpected setbacks, £28,000 for tree surgery, £2,293 for legal fees, £11,400 for replacement of equipment, leaving £35,096 (2025, £26,071) unallocated reserves.

Principal funding sources

The main funding sources for the financial year were as follows:

- Donations from local residents, charities and businesses towards the general running of the Trust.
- Rural Payments Agency (DEFRA) under the Basic Payments Scheme, and Higher Level Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- In 2026 our DEFRA Countryside Stewardship grants come to an end. It is our intention to apply for the new countryside stewardship scheme, which hopefully (but not definitely) will bring in income for 2027- 2029.
- Volunteers, gifts of time and services at no charge to the Trust.

Finances for 2026/2027

The Honorary Treasurer estimates that the normal running costs (i.e. excluding grants, projects and unforeseen events) of the Trust should be £12,000 for the year.

Fundraising policy

The Trustees take the view that money invested in fundraising is an investment for the Trust's future and will deliver long-term benefits to the local community, the public and wildlife.

The Trust has been successful in raising funds from the Rural Payments Agency, as well as from statutory and voluntary sources to manage and enhance the meadows.

The Trust aims to cover its ordinary activities through the grants and local fundraising. Any significant new projects or land acquisition would require a specific fund-raising initiative.

The Trust welcomes the following:

- Legacies and 'in memoriam' donations
- Pledges to support land acquisition
- Donations of cash, shares and land
- Regular giving to help with annual costs.

How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity

£1,253 of the unrestricted expenditure was used on the general maintenance of the meadows, tools and wildlife monitoring equipment. Tree and land management cost £6,790, insurance premia and banking fees amounted to £806 and the maintenance of the web-site cost £253. The grants to St Birinus School amounted to £4,175. Legal fees of £4,708 were incurred to ensure access via the car park to Old Bridge Meadow and Overy Mead Piece in perpetuity. The remaining spend of £120 was for sundries and other expenditure.

There were no restricted funds received or restricted expenditure incurred this year.

Reporting and keeping the public informed

As a charity the Trust is registered with and regulated by the Charity Commission and complies with its legal requirements and recommendations of best practice.

It operates to the highest standards of financial controls, produces annual accounts which are examined in accordance with the latest Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) regulations. The Independent Examiner is a Chartered Accountant.
The Trust reports regularly to the local community through newsletters published in the local Parish magazine, through its website and notice boards.

Public Benefit Statement
'Public benefit' is the legal requirement that every organisation set up for one or more charitable aims must be able to demonstrate that its aims are for the public benefit if it is to be recognised, and registered, as a charity in England and Wales.
The Hurst Water Meadow, Old Bridge Meadow, Overy Mead Piece and any land acquired by the Trust is open to all members of the public for their enjoyment and education. The Trustees constantly review accessibility issues to the land for all sections of the community. The Trustees therefore confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Commission.

Responsibilities of the Trustees
The charity's Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.
Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

S Bell

Sally Bell (Honorary Secretary)
Date: 12/9/2026

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of the Hurst Water Meadow Trust

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31 March 2026 set out on pages 7-10.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act"). The charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Hurst Water Meadow Trust

Basis of independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity Trustees as a body, for my work or this report.

Malcolm Lucas FCA DChA
Independent Examiner
Watling Lane, Dorchester on Thames
Date : 12 September 2026.

Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Restricted Funds 2026 £	Unrestricted Funds 2026 £	Total Funds 2026 £	Total Funds 2025 £
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Donations		10,520	10,520	8,445
Grants received		16,036	16,036	14,400
Tax recovered		601	601	879
Sale of cards and scrap equipment		0	0	0
Bank interest		1,616	1,616	1,726
Incoming resources from charitable activities	**0**	**28,773**	**28,773**	**25,450**
Fishing		250	250	251
Total incoming resources	**0**	**29,023**	**29,023**	**25,701**
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Resources expended on Charitable activities				
Tree & Land Management		6,790	6,790	4,203
Machinery & Tools		1,098	1,098	607
Expert Advice		0	0	0
Bank Fees		60	60	60
Insurance		746	746	701
Legal Fees		4,708	4,708	0
Noticeboards and Website		253	253	343
Grant to St Birinus Forest School		4,175	4,175	2,904
Subscriptions		0	0	0
Training		0	0	0
Wildlife monitoring		155	155	1,113
Sundries		120	120	194
Total resources expended	**0**	**18,105**	**18,105**	**10,125**
Net incoming / (expended) resources	**0**	**10,918**	**10,918**	**15,576**
Bank balances				
CAF bank account			1,228	147
CAF savings account			99,561	89,724
TOTAL			**100,789**	**89,871**

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 March 2026

		Note	2026 £	2025 £
Fixed assets		5		
	Hurst Water Meadow		34,000	34,000
	Old Bridge Meadow		42,475	42,475
	Bridge		25,211	25,211
	Overy Mead Piece		33,911	33,911
			135,597	**135,597**
Current assets				
	CAF current account		1,228	147
	CAF savings account		99,561	89,724
			100,789	**89,871**
Net assets			**236,386**	**225,468**
The funds of the charity:				
	Fixed assets fund		135,597	135,597
	Restricted funds		0	0
	Designated funds		65,693	63,800
	Unrestricted General funds		35,096	26,071
	TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS		**236,386**	**225,468**

Approved by the Board of Trustees on / / 2026 and signed on its behalf by Chris Smith

Chris Smith

Treasurer
Date: 12/9/2026

Notes to the accounts

1. Basis of accounting
The accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis and under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011. The principal accounting policies which have been applied on a consistent basis are set out below:

2. Incoming resources
Donations and grants are accounted for when received. Any income tax recoverable on donations under the gift aid scheme is included when the cash is received from the Inland Revenue.

3. Resources expended
The trustees do not consider it appropriate or material to allocate resources expended between the costs of generating funds, charitable activities and governance.

4. Going Concern
The Trust's reliance on volunteers for almost all of its activities enables it to reduce the impact of higher levels of inflation experienced in recent years. With undesignated (free) reserves of £35,096 it is therefore the Trustees' opinion that the going concern basis for the preparation of the accounts continues to be appropriate.

5. Fixed assets and fixed assets fund
Fixed assets comprise land and are stated at original cost. The cost of small tools, agricultural equipment and wildlife monitoring is expensed in the year of acquisition. As the accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, any depreciation would be shown as a movement on the fixed assets fund.

	2025 £	Additions / (disposals) £	Depreciation £	2026 £
Hurst Water Meadow	34,000			34,000
Old Bridge Meadow	42,475			42,475
Bridge	25,211			25,211
Overy Mead Piece	33,911			33,911
Total	135,597			135,597

6. Trustee expenses
Trustees do not receive remuneration for their services. It is the Trust policy to reimburse Trustees for authorised purchases and expenses incurred on behalf of the Trust.

7. Trustee interest in contracts
There was no trustee interest in contracts to report in the year ended 31st March 2026.

8. Taxation
The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

9. Purpose of restricted funds
Restricted funds are generated when the donor stipulates how the income may be expended. In most cases there will be a timing difference between when the income is received and when it is spent, resulting in balances being held on these funds at year-end.

There were no Restricted funds as at 31st March 2026 or 2025.

10. Purpose of unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are generated when there is no stipulation from the donor as to how the income may be spent and includes designated funds where the Trustees have set aside moneys for a specific purpose.
The Trustees have agreed to set up the following designated funds and movements for the year:

- A contingency fund representing two years estimated running costs to fund emergency expenditure such as the repairs to the Hurst access bridge in 2019
- An equipment replacement fund: The Trustees have agreed to set aside £600 a year for the replacement of significant equipment
- A land acquisition fund: There are currently no plans to purchase land and therefore no fund has been created for this purpose
- A tree surgery fund: Given the long-term nature and unpredictable timing of tree surgery costs the trustees have decided to establish a fund which seeks to provide sufficient funds to enable the trees on the various meadows to be maintained over a 20-year cycle.

	Restricted	**Unrestricted**					**Total** £
		Undesignated	Designated:				
		Free £	Contingency £	Legal Fees £	Equipment £	Tree Surgery £	
At 1st April 2025	0	26,071	21,000	7000	10,800	25,000	89,871
Surplus (Deficit) for year		10,918					10,918
Increase Contingency fund		(3,000)	3,000				
Increase Legal Fees		4,708		(4,708)			
Increase Tree surgery fund		(3,000)				3,000	
Increase Equipment replacement fund		(600)			600		
At 31st March 2026	0	35,097	24,000	2,292	11,400	28,000	100,789

Small numerical differences are due to roundings