THE WILTSHIRE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY TRUST CIO

Registered charity no. 1196961

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

Introduction

The trustees of the charity are required to approve an annual report and accounts prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission. This document, which must be made available to the public, covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Its purpose is to review the charity's activities against the charity's aims and objectives. Specifically, it contains information regarding the charity's trustees and their appointment, constitution, and financial affairs. It also includes a statement of the charity's public benefit.

Charity name
The Wiltshire Victoria County History Trust CIO

Charity registered no.
1196961

Trustees
The Trust's constitution is dated 12 May 2021. It stipulates a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 20 trustees, one of whom is nominated by the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (WANHS).

The nominated trustee serves until a replacement is nominated. The remaining trustees serve for periods of up to four years, specified in the constitution and designed to ensure that all do not come up for replacement/re-appointment at the same time. Future appointments will all be for four year periods.

During the period to which this report relates, the following trustees held office.

Mrs R Addington
Mrs G Alder
Mr J d'Arcy
Mrs M Barnett
Mr C Caswill
Mrs T Dallaway
Mr M Higgs
Mr M Hodges
Mr J Holden
Mrs A Loyd
Ms A McConnell
Mr D Moss
Mr W A Perry (nominee of WANHS)
Mr M Stone
Mr H Wright

Mr D Moss held the position of Chairman and Mr M Hodges held that of Vice-Chairman for the whole of the period. Since the end of the financial year, Mr Moss has retired as Chairman and Mr J

Ashbridge has been elected to replace him (Mr Ashbridge having been appointed as a trustee in July 2026).

Hon. officers
The Treasurer was Mrs T Dallaway, a trustee.

Offices
As it neither owns nor leases any premises, the Trust has no office of its own. During the year, Trustees' meetings are usually held at the Wiltshire Museum by courtesy of WANHS, but with Zoom also available for those unable to attend in person. Correspondence may be addressed to the Chairman, whose postal address is Yew Tree Cottage, 4 Patney Road, Chirton, Wiltshire SN10 3QT.

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre at Chippenham kindly provides facilities for researchers and others engaged on Trust business, and as a depository for the Trust's official records.

Objectives
As set out in the Constitution previously referred to, the purpose ("object") of the Trust is "to advance the education of the public through knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history of the historic county of Wiltshire (including the borough of Swindon) by researching for, preparing and writing the Victoria County History of Wiltshire, and to raise and apply the monies and commission the research necessary to achieve that purpose".

Public benefit and review of activity
The Victoria County History (VCH) was established in 1899 to publish a history of every community in England. Working from original documents and extensive fieldwork, professional historians produce a comprehensive history of each parish, including its physical features, ways of life, economic activity, transport, local government, key institutions and buildings, courts and leisure activities. The production of the histories is under the aegis and academic supervision of the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London.

Wiltshire is among the leading counties with 19 completed volumes to date. Work commenced in 1947 with financial support from local authorities (and for nine years, the University of the West of England). Following restrictions on spending by local and public authorities, the Trust undertook from 2013 to raise funds for future research and publications.

The Trust has responsibility for commissioning the historical research for future volumes. During the year work preparation of the volume covering the Chippenham area (volume 20) for publication was completed, which was followed by publication in July 2026. Work is also now well underway on a volume covering the Alderbury area (volume 21).

In addition, the Trust has been keen to support the work being undertaken by the Institute of Historical Research to complete Vol. 19 (Mere and neighbouring parishes) and has made a financial commitment to it. Work on this volume is nearing completion.

Completed volumes of the VCH form a definitive record of Wiltshire's history. They are available on line, free of charge, as well as published in big 'red books'. They are a resource for current and future generations of historians, both professional and amateur, and the public at large. As such, it is the trustees' belief that the work of the Trust is for the "public benefit", the criterion used by the Charity Commission to assess charitable status.

Fund-raising
The Trust has two principal approaches to fundraising – a garden party in the mid-summer and a series of lectures given by Zoom, by courtesy of the Wiltshire Museum, in addition to seeking donations and sponsorships. There are also the 'Friends of the Wiltshire VCH' who pay an annual subscription. Trustees continue to review possibilities for spreading understanding of what the Wiltshire VCH is and of its importance and, at the same time, for tapping new sources of funding.

Fund-raising is crucial to the ability of the Trust to progress work on the VCH volumes. A small group of trustees meets regularly to consider ways of raising funds and to review the outcomes.

Commissioning
As demonstrated in the accounts which follow, the funds available to the Trust have enabled work on volumes 20 and 21 to be progressed, marks of the Trust's success in meeting its aims and objectives. Subject to strategic approval by the trustees as a whole, this aspect of the Trust's work is overseen by a Project Group with advice from consultant editors and an academic adviser.

It is important that the Trust has funds to meet known commitments. Trustees have an approved policy of maintaining sufficient funds to meet the full costs of all known commitments plus a working reserve of £2000.

The accounts were approved by the trustees at their meeting on 10 July 2026 and the text of this report was approved by the trustees at their meeting on 30 October 2026.

[signed] Jon Ashbridge
Chairman

Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026

Income and Expenditure account

	YTD Mar 26	2024/25
	£	£
Income		
Friends	1,360	*1,080*
Other Donations	4,428	*7,564*
Interest	1,508	*1,782*
Bremhill	0	*0*
Income from events	6,465	*4,200*
Total	13,762	*14,626*
	0	*0*
Expenditure		
Administration & miscellaneous	819	*1,002*
Volume 19 production	2,000	*3,000*
Volume 20 production	5,700	*4,000*
Volume 21 production	22,671	*19,579*
Bremhill project	0	*0*
Funds generation costs	0	*0*
Kingtons	0	*0*
Events costs	298	*272*
Total	31,487	*27,853*
Excess of income over expenditure	-17,726	*-13,227*

Balance sheet as at:	YTD	*YTD*
Current assets	£	£
NatWest current account	264	*877*
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	23,706	*37,222*
CAF	10,646	*14,242*
Debtor	0	*0*
Total	34,615	*52,341*
Current Liabilities		
Volume 20 contracts awarded and outstanding	4,404	*10,000*
Volume 19 contribution promised to VCH central	2,000	*4,000*
Kingtons Fund	0	*0*
Volume 21 contracts	13,710	*20,481*
Reserved for Bremhill project	0	*0*
Website development	400	*400*
General	2,000	*2,000*
Sundry	500	*500*
Total (excluding basic reserves)	23,014	*37,381*

Net unallocated assets	11,601	*14,960*

