Cleeve Common Trust

Charitable Purposes in Connection with Cleeve Hill Common

Charity No. 900131

Report and Financial Statements
for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

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Trustees Report for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

The Trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees

Name	Representing	Date appointed	Date resigned
Colonel (Ret'd) Philip A Robson (Chair)	Lord of the Manor		
Mrs Bryony Scott	Representative of Lord of the Manor		
Mrs Sylvia Hughes	Bishops Cleeve Parish Council		20/05/2026
Mr Alan Robinson	Bishops Cleeve Parish Council		20/05/2026
Mr Robert Stayt	Bishops Cleeve Parish Council		
Mr Murray Stewart	Bishops Cleeve Parish Council	20/05/2026	
Mrs Johanna Hamer	Bishops Cleeve Parish Council	12/10/2026	
Miss Sarah West (Vice Chair)	Woodmancote Parish Council		
Mr Brian Howell	Woodmancote Parish Council		
Mrs Marilyn Harris	Southam Parish Council		
Mr Robert Torrington	Southam Parish Council		
Mr Simon Wheeler	Cheltenham Borough Council		
Mr Cathal Lynch	Cheltenham Borough Council		31/07/2026
Miss Julie Sankey	Cheltenham Borough Council		29/05/2025
Mrs Karen Priest	Cheltenham Borough Council	31/07/2026	

Adviser
Cllr Cheryl Agg. representing Tewkesbury Borough Council

Clerk
Mr Michael Bates

Business Manager
Mr Anthony Thompson

Principal Office
Parish Office, Church Road, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, GL52 8LR

Independent Examiners
PBT Accountancy, Suite 1, The Business Centre, Innsworth Technology Park, Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1DL

Bankers
Lloyds Bank plc, 130 High Street, Cheltenham, GL50 1EG

Investment Managers
CCLA Investment Management, Zig Zag, 70 Victoria St, London SW1E 6SQ

Solicitors
Christopher Davidson Solicitors LLP, 2-3 Oriel Terrace, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, GL50 1XP

Structure, Governance and Management

The body of Conservators which manages Cleeve Common was established by Act of Parliament, The Commons Regulation (Cleeve) Provisional Order Confirmation Act (1890). The Charity, Charitable Purposes in Connection with Cleeve Hill Common (No. 900131), is an unincorporated association registered on 14 September 1989, which took the Act as its governing document. The working name of the Charity was changed to Cleeve Common Trust in June 2017.

All Trustees are appointed by local Borough and Parish Councils in accordance with the 1890 Act with the exception of Col (Retired) P A Robson, who has a place on the Board of Trustees by virtue of being a Lord of the Manor[1], and Mrs B Scott, who is the representative of a Lord of the Manor. In addition, the Board co-opts advisers, who are not trustees of the Charity; these are Cllr C Agg and, formerly, Mr P Lightfoot.

The Trust contracts with a clerk, a business manager, a ranger service, a conservation officer and a community engagement officer to deliver its activities. The Clerk and the Business Manager administer the Charity on behalf of the Trust and liaise with official bodies, local residents, councillors, landowners, farmers and users of the Common.

Objectives

The objectives of the Charity are:

- Management of Cleeve Common in accordance with the Commons Regulation (Cleeve) Provisional Confirmation Order Act 1890.
- Conservation of Cleeve Common's unimproved limestone grassland and other habitats.
- Facilitation and management of outdoor recreation on Cleeve Common.
- Provision of education on the natural habitat.

Activities

Delivering Public Benefit. The Trust's overarching aim is to conserve and responsibly manage Cleeve Common for the benefit of the public, now and in the future. It seeks to safeguard the Common's unique sense of space and tranquillity, together with its rich diversity of plant and animal life, so that future generations can continue to experience, enjoy and value this special landscape.

Land Management. The Trust facilitates the use of the Common by commoners with grazing rights on the 1965 Register of Common Land for register Unit CL20. It also manages Unit CL293 on which there are no grazing rights.

Conservation. The Trust undertakes conservation in accordance with its agreement with Natural England to preserve the natural environment of the Common. These activities have included:

- Grazing of the limestone grassland by sheep and cattle.
- Management of acid habitats, scrub and woodland.
- Conservation and monitoring of the flora and fauna.
- Maintenance of the archaeological and geological features.

[1] There are Lords of the Manor for Southam and Bishop's Cleeve.

Outdoor Recreation.

- The Trust seeks to promote physical health and mental well-being by enabling recreational use of the Common by myriad users including walkers, mobility scooter users, runners, cyclists, horse riders, dog walkers, golfers and kite flyers. Visitor numbers maintain their upward trend, suggesting that the benefits of outdoor recreation continue to be valued.
- The Trust also facilitates use of the Common for organised events including walking, running, cycling and orienteering. Many of these raise money for other charities. The Common is a favoured location for activities by local schools, youth groups and other not for profit organisations.

Education. The Trust was able to mount a full programme of events for families and adult groups on the Common, all of which were well-supported. We hosted several visits by school year groups and continued to offer educational input. Our social media informs a large number of mostly local people about the Common and its management.

Commercial. The following commercial activities have taken place:

- **Golf Course**. Cotswold Hub Company, the owners of the Golf Club, continue to improve the standard of the course and organised several high-profile events. The golf licence fee of £29,000 is an important contribution to the Trust's income.

- **Car Parking.** Cotswold Hub Company also collects the daily parking charges for both the Golf Club and Quarry car parks. The Trust's pro rata share of the fees, after deduction of costs, was £4,530.

- **Filming.** The Trust licenses use of the Common for commercial video and still photo-shoots. Two such events this year yielded £1,493.

- **Hacking Licences**. The Trust licences horse riders to use areas of the Common that are not public rights of way. This generated income of £1,812.

- **Professional Dog Walking.** The Trust issued licences to professional dog walkers, resulting in income of £1,185.

Contribution of Volunteers. Volunteers have significantly contributed to the work of the Charity as:

- **Work Parties.** Monthly volunteer work parties, under the direction of the Conservation Officer, are well attended and provide valuable practical support, particularly in clearance of scrub from areas that cannot be accessed with machinery and other tasks such as gate replacement and waymarking.

- **Grassland Monitors**. Monitoring volunteers were able to support the Conservation Officer in carrying out grassland condition assessment.

- **Events Volunteers.** Event volunteers supported the Community Engagement Officer in the delivery of family events throughout the year.

- **Voluntary Wardens**. Volunteer wardens continued to visit the Common regularly to assist the rangers by checking livestock and boundaries, picking up litter, reporting antisocial activities and engaging with visitors.

Achievements and Performance

Operations

Personnel. A Business Manager was engaged to support the Clerk in managing the Trust's day-to-day operations, which have grown in both scope and volume in recent years. The Trust also advertised for a Participation Officer to augment our community engagement work; this post was filled in May 2026.

Ranger Service. The Charity's ranger service has provided 7 day a week cover in order to manage livestock; carry out conservation work, maintain infrastructure; and engage with visitors.

Liaison with Emergency Services. During the year, the Rangers responded to a number of emergencies involving members of the public, often supporting the Police and Ambulance services to provide local knowledge and on-the-spot assistance. The Trust developed a very good relationship with the local Rural Crime Officer, although responding to frequent incidents of illegal motorbikes and e-bikes is a major challenge for both parties. Following a wildfire in the neighbouring Butterfly Reserve in July, we worked with Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to improve both our and their response planning, culminating in a training exercise for their senior leadership.

Health & Safety. Ongoing work to fully embed recording and monitoring of H&S processes into daily work practices is progressing well. This has included a review of the H&S Policy and Processes.

Grazing Rights. The Trust supports the traditional rights of commoners to graze stock on the Common by ensuring that the land is securely fenced (through an ongoing programme of boundary maintenance) and by monitoring sheep and lambs for signs of illness or injury.

Vehicles and Equipment. The increased funding in this and last financial years enabled the Trust to replace older- and troublesome – vehicles. The Ranger truck and All Terrain Vehicle were replaced during the year and as search for a replacement tractor began.

National Grid Visual Impact Provision in the Cotswolds. National Grid were developing plans to remove up to 20 pylons and around 7 kilometres of overhead high-voltage line from the landscape, replacing it with underground cables. The aim was to transform views along the Cotswold Way National Trail, as well as those from Belas Knap, the Winchcombe Way and Cleeve Common. The route crosses a narrow part of the Common, and so the Trust worked with National Grid to address access and conservation issues arising from this major project. However, by March we had learned that the project was unlikely to go ahead and it was formally cancelled in July 2026.

Conservation

Countryside Stewardship Agreement. The Trust continued to deliver its obligations under its Countryside Stewardship Agreement. The results from grassland monitoring show that the Common is still under-grazed in places when measured against the indicators of success but there are signs of improvement in some areas.

Cattle. The Trust's herd of cattle stood at between 21 and 29 Belted Galloways for the reporting period. The herd retained TB–free status throughout. The NoFence system of GPS-based virtual paddocks continues to be a great help in targeting areas for grazing whilst keeping the Common free of electric fencing.

Sheep. The Rangers provided support to two Commoners who exercised their rights to graze sheep on the Common and a local farmer who was invited to turn out sheep on the Common to boost grazing numbers. Water troughs for sheep were provided in view of the prolonged dry weather.

Heathland Management. Grazing and gorse cutting were carried out in the heathland parts of the Common to maintain open conditions for heather and other heathland plants. Areas of gorse were pulled out to create bare sandy soil to help with heather regeneration and the fencing around the heather area was replaced to prevent over-grazing by livestock.

Scrub Management. The Rangers, contracted specialists and volunteers undertook scrub clearance during the winter in line with the Countryside Stewardship Agreement. Follow-up work was done on previously cut areas to help return them to grassland.

Flora and Fauna.

- In contrast to the previous year 2025 was a very poor year for wildflowers due to hot weather and drought in spring and summer. However, the conditions were favourable for butterflies and invertebrates.
- Signs alerting visitors to the presence of ground-nesting birds, in particular skylarks were trialled in spring/summer and seemed to have a positive effect on dog-walker behaviour. We hope our bird survey data might show a recovery of skylarks in future.

Archaeology. Gloucestershire Archaeology carried out a further dig in May at the site of the old Grandstand on the original Cheltenham Racecourse, with permission from Natural England. Foundations were revealed and numerous small artifacts discovered. A further dig is planned in 2026.

Community Engagement

Accessible Trail. We opened the new ‘Tramper Trail’, a 2-mile-long route with stunning views for users of mobility scooters and other visitors with limited mobility. These visitors can also take advantage of a free-hire mobility scooter (a Tramper) through a partnership with Disability Together. The Tramper was used 35 times during the period, mostly in fine weather unsurprisingly. We have had enthusiastic feedback from users.

CCT Events.

- The Trust offered a full programme of 14 public events for adults and families, with most selling out. We had to postpone one event, stargazing - due to cloud cover. We tested a self-guided summer trail over May half term instead of a Trust led event. Although the uptake was low, those who completed it gave great feedback and seemed to enjoy it.

- We also ran a Foraging Walk in Wardens' Wood for the first time and, in partnership with the Cotswolds National Landscape, an event for families through the Friendship Cafe, which is based in Gloucester. This is a relationship we will continue to nurture, in the hope that families will gain confidence to access the Common themselves, though transport is difficult for many of these families.

- In July we mounted a photo and information display as part of the Bishops Cleeve Street Fair, for which CCT was one of the chosen beneficiary charities. This gave us the chance to explain to a wide range of local people why Cleeve Common is so special and what the Trust is doing to conserve it.

CCT Membership. Following launch of a membership scheme in July 2023, the number of members has stabilised at around 400. Membership is not only a valuable source of income for the Trust, but also a way of engaging more closely with local people who are regular visitors to the Common.

Memorial Programme. The Programme continues to be highly valued as a way of remembering loved ones. Unfortunately, the new Memorial Wall was damaged by cattle using it as a rubbing post. It will be restored in summer 2026.

Social Media & Communications. Our Facebook page now has over 6,400 followers, which generally brings good engagement with our posts. We make use of other local Facebook Groups to push out high importance news to reach an even larger (targeted) audience. Instagram followers also continue to grow and currently stand at 1,600. We still produce a seasonal e-newsletter which goes out to a self-selecting membership of around 350 people, and we continue to contribute to local Parish newsletters.

Financial Review

The Trustees met regularly to consider the Charity's activities in order to ensure that it was properly meeting its stated objectives and to consider ways in which it could improve its governance and outputs.

Funding

The principal sources of funding for the Charity for this period were:

- The Countryside Stewardship (CS) Agreement with Natural England, which came into effect on 1 January 2017 for a 10-year period. The CS Option Rate for unimproved grassland, which forms the majority of the Common, was increased very significantly in 2024, resulting in the Charity's overall income more than doubling. At the end of the 10-year period, we expect to move to the Environmental Land Managements Scheme (ELMS), but future rates are not known.
- Rural Payments Agency Delinked Payments (formerly the Basic Payment Scheme). This year's was reduced to 25% of the 2021 baseline amount.
- Licence fees from the Cotswold Hub Company for use of the Common for a golf course.
- Donations from individuals and organizations, including those made under the Memorial Programme and Membership of the Trust.

The total incoming resources to the Trust amounted to £309,885. Total expenditure amounted to £209,021. The value of investments held by the Trust fell by £31,533; however, this coincided with a sharp fall in financial markets due to the War in the Gulf and the fund value has since recovered.

Reserves

The Charity's reserves comprise net current assets (excluding restricted or designated funds) plus investment assets. We aim for the reserves to cover routine expenditure of the Charity for at least three years in order to continue its charitable and conservation activities should income fall short of expectations.

The balance regarded as free reserves as at 31 March 2026 was £721,120. In addition, the Charity held £92,000, designated by the Trustees for replacement of the tractor and flail collector later in 2026, and legal fees in connection with updating the Byelaws of the Common.

The primary purpose of the Charity is conservation which, by its very nature, is undertaken with a long-term view. Consequently, reserves need to be able to support activities into the medium term, in order to allow for any plans to be adjusted.

The level of reserves takes account of anticipated future income and its volatility, the environment, the risks faced by the Charity and the levels of known liabilities. The reserves are intended to provide for contingencies, to absorb setbacks, to mitigate risks and to be able to take advantage of change and opportunities.

The Trustees consider the financial position as at 31 March 2026 to be very sound.

Risk Management

The Trust maintains a risk register, which is reviewed regularly by the Board and Executive group. Mitigations are in place against the major risks. Our overall risk profile continues to improve, although we still carry significant risks on personnel and funding, where there is little scope for mitigation.

Personnel. The Trust has long been dependent on a few contracted workers in key roles. The risk level has been lowered through engagement in 2025 of a Business Manager to support the Clerk, and back-up for the regular Ranger team by bringing in additional contractors if necessary.

Finance. The following financial risks have been identified:

- **Grants.** There is much uncertainty at a national level as to the size of payments under ELMS. The greater number of stakeholders involved in managing common land adds complexity. While making the most of the augmented funding for 2024 and 2025, the Trustees anticipate a likely fall in grant income in the coming years, although to what extent is unknown.

- **Golf Course Income**. The long-term licence agreement for playing golf on the Common was a major step forward in securing a stable base income. The licence does, however, make provision for a break clause every 20 years from April 2026.

Health & Safety. Further progress has been made to embed a comprehensive H&S system, with risk assessments for standard tasks and a robust monitor and review process to ensure that the objectives set out in the top-level H&S policy are being met in practice. This work is ongoing.

Data Protection. Although the Trust holds only a minimal amount of personal information, rarely extending beyond individuals' contact details, Trustees are conscious of the requirements of GDPR and have appropriate safeguards in place. The wider issues of integrity and availability of information have been addressed through the use of cloud storage and careful control of access permissions.

Approved by the Trustees on 12 October 2026 and signed on their behalf by:

P A Robson

Colonel (Retired) P A Robson, Chairman

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees



Introduction

We have conducted an independent examination of the financial statements of Cleeve Common Trust for the year ended March 31, 2026. Our examination was limited to the procedures described in this report and does not constitute an audit.

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.
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Scope of the Examination

Our examination focused on the following key areas:

- Verification of income and expenditure for the year ended March 31, 2026.
- Compliance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Review of investments and property holdings, if applicable.

Examination Procedures

During our examination, we:

1. Reviewed the financial statements prepared by the charity’s finance team.
2. Tested a sample of income and expenditure transactions for accuracy and completeness.
3. Assessed the effectiveness of internal controls over financial reporting.
4. Reviewed bank statements, invoices, receipts, and other supporting documentation.
5. Examined prior year accounting documents for any significant financial changes.
6. Discussed the financials with key personnel responsible for financial matters.

Findings

Based on our examination, the following key findings were noted:

1. Income and Expenditure
    - The Charity's income for the year amounted to £309,885 primarily from grants, donations, and licensing activities.
    - Expenditure totalled £209,021, with the majority allocated to charity activities and expenses.
    - There was a deficit totalling £31,533 from CCLA listed investments in the investment account.
2. Internal Controls
    - Overall, internal controls related to financial transactions were found to be adequate.
    - There was a small element of miscoding but this is to be expected.
3. Compliance
    - The charity complied with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008.
    - All necessary filings and submissions were made to the Charity Commission within the required timeframes.
4. Investments and Property
    - Investments were inspected, and no issues of concern were identified.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In conclusion, our independent examination of Cleeve Common Trust financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2026, found no material misstatements.

We 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.

Signed:

Victoria Summersby

Accountant

12/06/2026

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2026

	2026	2025
Incoming Resources (note 4)		
Donations	15,750	24,105
Charitable activities	269,902	299,085
Bank interest received	7,332	2,877
Other income	16,901	5,774
	-	-
Total Incoming Resources	309,885	331,840
Resources Expended (note 5)		
Charitable activities	190,976	172,428
Charity management	18,045	12,926
Loss on disposal of asset		17
Total Resources Expended	209,021	185,371
Net movement in resources	100,864	146,470
Gains/(losses) on investments	(31,533)	(8,013)
Other income -Sales of capital items	6,707	
Deficit on revaluation of Livestock	(5,236)	
Surplus for the Financial year	70,802	138,457
Total funds brought forward	742,318	603,861
Total funds carried forward	**813,120**	**742,318**

The Total Funds carried forward at 31/03/2026 includes £92,000 of Designated Funds (see Note 2).

Balance Sheet 31 March 2026

Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	60,001	32,788
Investments	518,830	395,363
Total Fixed Assets	**578,831**	**428,151**
Current assets		
Livestock	15,646	20,882
Debtors	7,031	222,343
Cash at bank and in hand		
Current account	5,347	9,665
Deposit accounts	207,112	71,012
Cash	154	148
Total Current Assets	**235,289**	**324,051**
Current liabilities		
Creditors due within one year	1,001	9,884
Net current assets (liabilities)	234,288	314,167
Total assets less current liabilities	**813,120**	**742,318**
Represented by:		
Restricted funds	0	0
Unrestricted funds	813,120	742,318
Net funds	**813,120**	**742,318**

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026

1 Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting. The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities, the Charities Act and relevant accounting standards.

Change in Basis of Accounting. There has been no change to the accounting policies since last year.

Changes to Previous Accounts. No changes have been made to accounts for previous years.

Tangible Fixed Assets for use by Charity. These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and are shown on the balance sheet at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost of the fixed assets on a reducing balance basis at the rate of 25% per annum.

Listed Investments. Listed Investments are shown on the balance sheet at their mid-market value.

Livestock. Livestock are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Recognition of Incoming Resources. These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources
- the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Incoming Resources with Related Expenditure. Where incoming resources have related expenditure the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SoFA.

Grants and Donations. Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the charity has unconditional entitlement to the resources.

Investment Income. Investment income is included in the SoFA when receivable.

Liability Recognition. Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

2 Designated Funds Carried Forward

Purchase of tractor (Jun 2026) and Flail Collector (Sep 2026)	£72,000
Legal costs for updating Byelaws (expected in FY 2026-27)	£20,000
TOTAL	**£92.000**

3 Depreciation

£20,000 written off the cost of the fixed assets on a reducing balance basis at the rate of 25% per annum.

Asset	Charge in year
Vehicles	12,801
Machinery	4,616
Tools	443
Livestock Management	1,105
Office	318
Others	717
TOTAL	**£20,000**

4 Incoming Resources

		2026	2025
Donations	Individual donations	3,239	1,489
	Organisation donations	5,335	2,808
	Memorial programme	6,600	19,160
	Cheltenham Lottery	544	648
	Cash Donation Box	32	0
	TOTAL	**£15,750**	**£24,105**
Charitable activities	Countryside Stewardship	214,928	214,928
	Delinked payments (BPS)	4,919	10,247
	Council grant	1,050	4,238
	Capital Grant	0	18,407
	Golf course licence fees	29,000	28,000
	Wayleaves	54	54
	Media licences	1,493	2,000
	Horse riding licences	1,812	2,094
	Dog walking licences	1,185	1,430
	Gift Aid	3,375	4,938
	CCT Membership	10,406	10,760
	Charge for events	1,680	1,989
	TOTAL	**£269,902**	**£299,085**
Bank interest	Bank interest income	£7,332	2,877
Other income	Car parking fees	4,530	5,734
	Miscellaneous income	62	40
	Disability Together Fee	26	0
	Livestock Sales	12,283	0
	TOTAL	**£16,901**	**£5,774**

5 Expenditure

		2026	2025
Charitable activities	Staffing	105,024	97,620
	Professional consultancy	150	150
	Utilities	1,453	2,665
	Maintenance	31,669	15,771
	Vehicles running costs	20,418	11,401
	Livestock	5,192	7,777
	Projects	4,375	24,724
	Education and information	2,191	1,104
	Depreciation	20,002	10,933
	Miscellaneous	502	284
	Total	**£190,976**	**£172,428**
Charity management	Staffing	12,296	8,247
	Accountancy	1,890	1,140
	Insurance (non-vehicle)	1,751	1,548
	IT, phone and office	1,078	875
	Miscellaneous	1,030	1,115
	TOTAL	**£18,045**	**£12,926**

[End of report]