



Cotswolds
National
Landscape

Cotswolds Conservation Board Statement of Accounts

Financial year ending 31st March 2025

Cotswolds Conservation Board
Cotswold Business Centre
2 A P Ellis Road
Upper Rissington
Gloucestershire
GL54

www.cotswolds-nl.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 2025 the Board adopted a Management Plan for 2025-2030, which articulates its vision, its objectives and its policies for the management of the AONB. The key priorities are: (1) Informing, encouraging, and guiding efforts to ensure that the Cotswolds plays its part in both mitigating climate change whilst also adapting to its impacts, (2) Encouraging and supporting the recovery of nature across the Cotswolds - so that populations of wild species can flourish and successfully adapt to climate change by moving through the landscape, (3) Broadening engagement and improving access in the CNL so that a wider range of people can access the mental, physical and emotional benefits this brings and (4) Striving to ensure that all activities undertaken within the CNL and its setting conserve and enhance natural beauty and, in particular, the CNL's special qualities.

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 2024 by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance.

This Statement of Accounts summarises the Board's activities for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. 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 £4,154,349 (2023/24 £3,089,008) and gross income was £4,226,325 (2023/24 £3,673,043). Taken together, these items show a net surplus for the year of £71,976 (2023/24 surplus £584,035). The prior year's large net surplus was primarily due to National Highways Biodiversity project where £405k was in restricted reserve for landowners' payments over the next 30 years (currently £392k held in this reserve).

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet details the Board's financial position as at 31 March 2025, 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. A current Reserves Policy was adopted by the Board in February 2024 and reviewed by the Board in February 2025.

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.cotswolds-nl.org.uk.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2023/24			2024/25	
Net		Expenditure	Income	Net
£		£	£	£
495,878	Conservation of Natural Environment	2,213,395	(343,565)	1,869,829
189,470	Conservation of Cultural Heritage	490,801	(41,848)	448,953
283,843	Recreation Management and Transport	585,844	(151,447)	434,397
180,858	Promoting Understanding: Information Interpretation and Education	487,397	(163,784)	323,613
60,926	Volunteers	129,643	(7,177)	122,467
88,732	Forward Planning	90,939	(25,281)	65,658
209,769	Corporate Management and Administration	156,329	(11,622)	144,707
1,509,475	Net Cost of Services	4,154,349	(744,724)	3,382,694
(6,901)	Interest Receivable		(26,931)	(26,931)
1,502,574	Net Operating Total	4,154,349	(771,655)	3,382,694
(529,743)	DEFRA Contribution		(529,743)	(529,743)
-	DEFRA Capex / Revenue Uplift		(381,916)	(381,916)
(139,086)	Local Authority Contributions		(145,071)	(145,071)
(1,366,236)	DEFRA – Farming in Protected Landscapes		(2,143,548)	(2,143,548)

(51,543)	DEFRA – Removing Barriers		(254,391)	(254,391)
(2,086,608)	Total Financing		(3,454,670)	(3,454,670)
(584,035)	(Surplus) Deficit for the Year	4,154,349	(4,226,325)	(71,976)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

31 March 2024			31 March 2025
£		Note	£
-	Fixed Assets & Long-Term Investments	1	-
723,007	Debtors and Prepayments	3	509,103
91,529	Short Term Investments		1,870,326
-	Stock		-
1,461,339	Cash and Cash Equivalents		266,663
2,275,875	Current Assets		2,646,092
(966,740)	Creditors and Accruals	4	(1,278,285)
(64,348)	Receipts in Advance		(51,044)
(1,031,088)	Current Liabilities		(1,329,329)
1,244,787	Net Current Assets		1,316,763
1,244,787	Total Net Assets		1,316,763
	Financed by:		
1,007,816	Restricted Funds		960,162
157,650	Earmarked Reserves		277,900
79,321	General Fund		78,701
1,244,787	Total Reserves		1,316,763

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 six vehicles and one seed harvester in excess of this threshold with a total value of £144,429 (2023/24 - £101,739).

2. Income

The Board derived income from the following main sources:

Source	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£
DEFRA Grant	529,743	529,743
DEFRA Capex / Revenue Uplift	-	381,916
DEFRA – FIPL	1,366,236	2,143,548
DEFRA – Removing Barriers	51,343	254,391
Local Authority Contributions	139,266	145,071
Natural England	102,687	76,919
Thames Water	129,564	183,969
Severn Trent	60,000	46,630
British Mountaineering Council	-	41,000
National Grid – Landscapes Initiatives	496,747	-
National Highways - Biodiversity	643,943	114,578
Highways England – Dark Skies and DWS	7,480	99,504
National Landscapes Association – Gen Green	-	69,720
Groundwork UK	26,987	-
Ernest Cook Trust (OLO)	-	20,000
Interest earned	6,901	26,931
Other grants and earned income	112,146	92,404
Total	3,673,043	4,226,325

3. Debtors and Prepayments

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

Source	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£
National Highways - Biodiversity	590,108	-
Natural England – Cotswold Way	75,101	47,460
Prepayments	-	1,680
FiPL Grants – Claim 4	-	441,419
Other debtors	57,798	18,545
Total	723,006	509,104

- 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	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£
Local Authorities and Other Public Bodies	50,263	55,926
Farming in Protected Landscape grants	874,739	1,037,765
National Trust	31,126	118,831
Other	74,960	116,807
Total	1,031,088	1,329,329

5. Value Added Tax

The Board was not registered for Value Added Tax in 2024/25.

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 2024/25 are summarised in the table below:

Category	2023/24		2024/25	
	Allowances	Expenses	Allowances	Expenses
	£	£	£	£
Board Chair/Vice Chair	5,300	225	5,250	270
Executive/ Committee Members	4,263	167	4,725	71
Ordinary Members	10,488	935	9,642	2,579

Total	20,051	1,327	19,617	2,920
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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.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT)

An occupancy license was issued by GWT from May 2023 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:

- Kemerton Estate Partnership and Kemerton Conservation Board – (Matt Derby – Board Member of CCB and a Chairman of Kemerton) – a FiPL grant of £18,474 was paid to Kemerton Estate in FY24/25.

- Publica – (David Powell – Board Member of CCB and a non-executive Director of Publica) – CCB paid £8,220 to Publica for HR and administrative services in FY24/25.
- Southill Community Energy Community Benefit Society (SCECBS) and Sustainable Charlbury (SC) – (Liz Reason – Board Member of CCB and Board Member of SCECBS and Trustee of SC) – the SCECBS surpluses are distributed to its associated charity, SC. £15k was donated to CCB under the associated S106 agreement in FY24/25.
- Isabel Ross – Board Member of CCB – partner received £1,500 FiPL grant for tree planting.
- Anna Field – an employee of CCB – received £715 FiPL funds as a contractor and a FiPL grant of £4,366.
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) - Michèle Holden is a part-time employee of both organisations – rent of Premises paid £20,160 (FY2023/24 - £15,400) and a FiPL grant of £34,339 (FY2023/24 - £28,738 grant for a Removing Barriers in the Cotswolds Project) and £1,000 for the Local Nature Partnership. GWT paid £1,400 to CCB for work on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

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 (£)	2023/24 (Number of employees)	2024/25 (Number of employees)
0 – 5,000	2	3
5,000 - 10,000	0	0
10,000 - 15,000	6	0
15,000 - 20,000	0	2
20,000 - 25,000	3	4
25,000 - 30,000	2	2
30,000 - 35,000	4	7
35,000 - 40,000	0	0
40,000 - 45,000	2	3
45,000 - 50,000	0	2
50,000 - 55,000	3	1
55,000 - 60,000	3	1
60,000-65,000	1	4
65,000-70,000	0	2
100,000 - 105,000	1	0
Total	27	31

At the 31st March 2025 there were 23 whole time equivalent employees (31st March 2024: 22). 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 triannual 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 2025. The overall funding position remain positive and no changes to the existing contribution rates of 19.8% agreed under the 2025 valuation for the period of 3 years is proposed. New contributions from 2026-27 onwards will be assessed and agreed with the Gloucestershire Pension Fund.