

# **Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields Community Interest Company**

## **Directors' Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 May 2023**



Birthday boy Andrew Terrett is wearing Armani, cake decoration by Jackie Terrett





Old Gentleman of the Copse January 2023



Wurzel Gummidge

***Photo credits for this report:*** Alison Barrett, Anita Breeze, Chris Kinchin-Smith, Peter McSweeney, Carlos Ordonez, Maurice Tennenhaus, Andrew Terrett, and Jackie Terrett

## **Introduction and Summary**

**The Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields CIC (FLHF)** was incorporated on 21 May 2020. Its subscribing Members comprise representatives of five local residents' and community associations. It was awarded a licence to occupy, manage and improve the 10.5 acres of Lyncombe Hill Fields by Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) on 1 September 2020.

This report, prepared by the Directors for the third Annual General Meeting, has the following sections:

- 1. Vision, Mission and Objectives**
- 2. Inputs and Outputs for the Year Ending 31 May 2023**
- 3. Events**
- 4. Outline Plans for the Year Ending 31 May 2024**
- 5. Financial Report for the Year Ending 31 May 2023**
- 6. Budget for the Year Ending 31 May 2024**

In summary, this report outlines how all of the CIC's objectives for 2022-23 have been achieved or exceeded. Furthermore, three significant new projects were completed (creation of Tiny Forest 3, creation of a Nursery for growing saplings from seed, and a major upgrading of our ability to capture and store rainwater), while we have also diversified our sources of funding. The report explains that after three years of very intensive activity, we wish to move towards a period of consolidation.

### **1. Vision, Mission and Objectives**

Our Vision is contained in the phrase, "Our Wild Hilltop Paradise"; our Mission is the more explicit, "to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of the land and maintain its wild nature whilst safeguarding public access".

### **2. Inputs and Outputs for the Year Ending 31 May 2023**

#### **The Volunteer Teams**

All visible tasks in the Fields are undertaken by the Maintenance team, as outlined below.

In addition, many hours of unseen work are undertaken by other volunteer teams. These comprise:

**Flora and Fauna:** This small team organises the Bird and Habitat surveys described further below, and provides expert guidance to the Directors and Maintenance teams.

**Website:** Our website is administered by our Website Manager, Peter Cooling. This has led to continuing improvements to the content and functionality of the website.

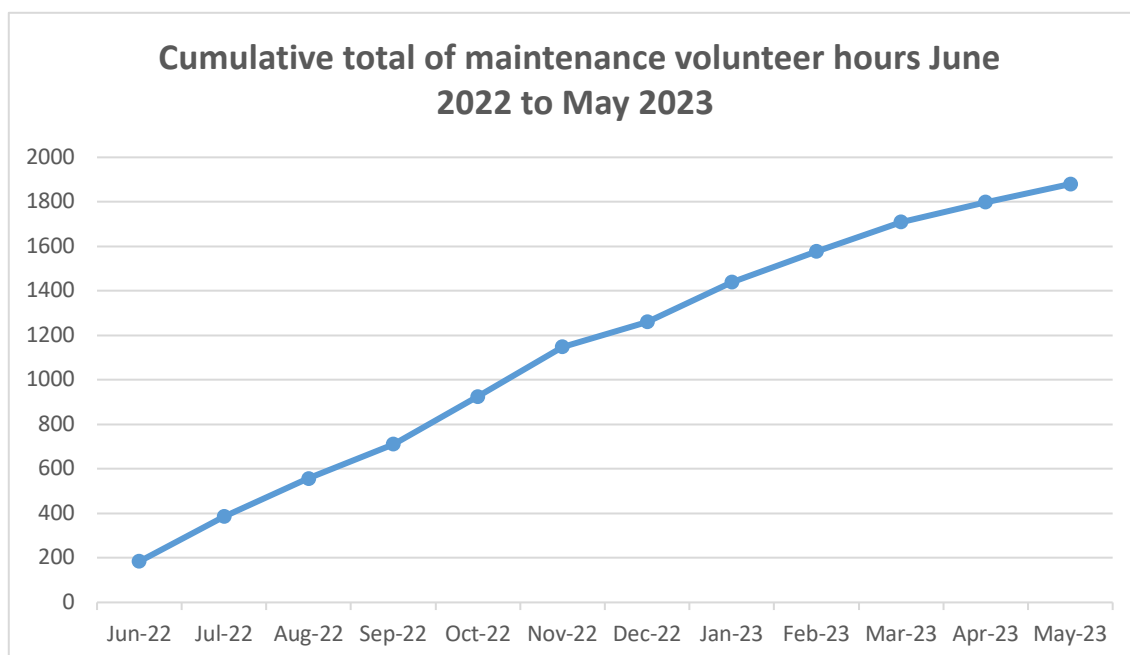
**Photos:** A Photos team continues with the task of selecting the very best photos each month, for the Website Gallery.

**Maps and Signs:** This team has been developed a second generation of 'Welcome' maps, now posted at each of the entrances to the Fields, along with information boards for each of the three Tiny Forests.

**Planning, Budgeting, Direction and Communication:** These activities are undertaken principally by the Directors. The publication of the Bulletin is now managed by Ruth Herrlinger.

## Maintenance

Our growing pool of volunteers is principally focused on maintenance tasks. Between 1 June 2022 and 31 May 2023, they contributed a total of 1880 hours to these tasks. This amounts to a monthly average of 156 hours over the 12-month period. This compares to 1963 hours in the previous period June 2021 to May 2022, a monthly average of 163 hours. The slight reduction in activity reflects the decision in April 2023 to limit volunteer sessions to Sundays only, but Wednesday sessions are still used for the busy summer period when mowing takes place.







The Copse, first fall of snow, March 2023



Kelly Kettle break March 2023

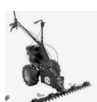
## ***What did these maintenance volunteers do?***



Shifted another 6 tonnes of 20mm stone to consolidate the designated footpaths. Drainage has been installed to stop erosion to the path in the North Field.



Cleared and dug over 125 sq. metres of scrub for Tiny Forest 3.



**Mowing and raking** The mowing regime is now well established - 4 acres of the meadows, with some areas cut twice.



**Planting saplings.** A total of 1670 native saplings were planted comprising 30 different native species for Tiny Forest 2 (60) and Tiny Forest 3 (450), with the remainder in the hedges along the boundary with Beechen Cliff School, the north of the Copse, and the northern/eastern hedgerows of the Inner Field. The following **species** (in alphabetical order) were planted: alder, beech, birch (sliver & downy), buckthorn, cherry (wild & bird), crab apple, dog rose, dogwood, elder, field maple, guelder rose, hawthorn, hazel, holly, hornbeam, small leaved lime, oak (common & sessile), wild privet, rowan, spindle, wayfaring tree, wild service tree, willow (crack, goat, grey, osier) wych elm and yew.



**The Inner Field as laboratory.** Following discussions amongst the volunteers it was agreed that no small plant introductions would take place anywhere other than in the Inner Field. This was because the area was identified as least likely to regenerate/re-wild naturally. Volunteers with the National Trust planted a large number of sites (each about the area of a dustbin lid) with hay rattle seed in October 2022. Black Medick, Oxeye Daisy, Harebell and Lady's Bedstraw (all raised from seed) were planted a week later. Year 1 children from Widcombe Infants planted cowslips in November 2022. Soon afterwards corporate volunteers planted wood anemones along with saplings. Bluebells and snowdrops were planted by year 2 Widcombe Infants in March 2023. By May 2023, much of the hay rattle had started to flower in the Inner Field.





**Tiny Forest 3 (TF3).** 450 trees were planted at the rate of approximately 4 per m<sup>2</sup>. This is the highest density of all of the three tiny forests (TF1 and TF2 were planted at 2.5 per m<sup>2</sup>). We will be comparing the growth rates of all 3 tiny forests.



Tiny Forest 3

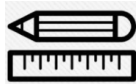


The spring and summer of 2022 saw both record temperatures and an extended drought. The water collector with a capacity of c. 250 litres near TF1 proved to be inadequate to the task. In addition, it became apparent that carrying 10l. watering cans any distance was a challenge. Luckily, TF1, in its second year, largely survived. TF2 was not watered but the very heavy mulching regime meant that very few saplings were lost.

It was decided that collecting much more water, with a better delivery system, was essential. After some research it was decided to install 4 **intermediate bulk containers** (IBCs), each with a capacity of just over 1000 litres. Each incorporates a frame to support a collector roof provided with a gutter/downpipe. They are sited to feed the 3 Tiny Forests and the tree Nursery. Guttering has also been attached to the tool store to feed a couple of water butts. A battery powered transfer pump is used to water the tiny forests and Nursery from the nearby water collectors.



An IBC water collector installed to serve the Nursery



**The progress of TF1 and TF2.** The height of the trees in TF1 was measured in March 2022 and TF2 in May 2022. We have decided to use these data as our baseline for future reports. An additional 60 saplings were planted in TF2. The whole site had mulch added on 2 occasions.



Tiny Forest 1: January 2021 (left), and June 2023 (right)





**Sapling Nursery.** The 9.6m x 4.8m site was prepared in the East Field to grow on tree saplings grown from locally sourced seeds supplied by **More Trees BANES**. We host one of a number of local nurseries developed in collaboration with More Trees.

The site was covered with cardboard, woodchip and grass cuttings in May 2022 and then cleared of perennial weeds prior to the construction of a raised bed structure. This work has now been completed and the first 550 baby saplings (oak, whitebeam, beech, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple and spindle) have been planted. The great majority will be moved to their final destinations in early 2024, with some staying with us to supplement previous plantings around the site.



Sapling Nursery site covered with hay in May 2022, and with planting in progress June 2023



### **Nest boxes and breeding survey**

We are now in the third year of monitoring breeding activities in our nest boxes. Five more boxes were added this winter, some with slightly larger holes that great tits can make use of. Some breeding activity has already been observed and we look forward to seeing progress. There are a number of natural woodpecker holes around the site and we annually see nuthatches using one.



**All kinds of bats** A small group of bat lovers made good use of the new bat detectors during summer, going out several times on warm, still evenings. Pipistrelles (as small as a thumb) and Noctules were identified.



**Watery habitat** Three very small shallow ponds were installed using a repurposed a paddling pool (pictured overleaf at night with a foxy visitor) and 2 central heating feeder tanks.



**Habitat Surveys** As the months roll on, we continue to observe and record plant and animal species, and are becoming more familiar with the various wildflower hotspots, on which we focus for particularly careful management. Our annual, spring cowslip flower count has shown that these lovely plants continue to thrive, with their numbers boosted by groups of planted flowers.



**Management Policies.** We now review our **Health and Safety, Risk Assessment, Equal Opportunities** and **Safeguarding**, and **Duke of Edinburgh Scheme** policies annually to reflect the work of FLHF.



**Management Changes.** Anita Breeze stood down as a Director with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 but she continues to be very much involved as a Site Leader, and with organising visits to the fields by children from both the Widcombe schools and the Paragon School. The CIC can operate with just two Directors (as was the case when Alan Langton moved from Bath) but a replacement third Director will be appointed in due course.

We recognise the importance of a succession strategy in order to safeguard the longer term benefits of our volunteers' activities, and for safe and effective operations. Associated with this we have reviewed how we operate when working on the fields, and how we develop



the roles and abilities of our volunteers. Our **Site Leaders** (increased this year from three to seven, including the Directors) take overall responsibility for each work session, whilst **Task Leaders** are appointed to manage individual tasks.

### **3. Events that took place this year**



July 2022 a half-day **scything event on the South Field**, led by one of the local **National Trust** Rangers was attended by 12 volunteers.



July 2022 **Rake Up and Grow** weeded the western hedge on the Inner Field.



September 2022, the annual **harvest festival** (for all our volunteers, their families and our key stakeholders) was again held in the Inner Field, to celebrate the end of the main summer mowing period and to thank everyone for their continuing support. There was a bring-and-share lunch with free bar. Musical entertainment was provided by local singer/songwriters **Patrick Roe** and **Paddy Doyle**.



October 2022, guided walk as part of **B&NES Climate and Bio-Diversity Festival**.



October 2022, Explanatory walk with **The Mayor and Mayoress of Bath**, with a follow up reception for our volunteers at The Guildhall in January 2023.



October 2022, about 30 sites each roughly the area of a dustbin lid where cleared in the Inner Field and planted with hay (yellow) rattle seeds by volunteers from **The National Trust** (sourced from their fields alongside Widcombe Hill). Many have emerged this spring.



November 2022, **250 cowslip plugs** were planted by 60 year 1 children from **Widcombe Infant School** on sites in the Inner Field.



November 2022, volunteers worked with **B&NES "Clean and Green Team"** to tidy up the area around the Greenway Lane gate.



November 2022, volunteers from **WSP Bristol**, planted wood anemones and saplings.



December 2022, around 20 volunteers enjoyed a **Christmas Dinner** at the Bear in Bear Flat, organised by Site Leader Dave Pegler.



January 2023, contractors for B&NES began felling one of the large beech trees on Beechen Cliff. What now remains is a pile of very substantial logs just inside the fence at the top of the North Field.



March 2023, **100 bluebell bulbs** and **100 snowdrop bulbs** were planted in the Copse by 60 year 2 children from **Widcombe Infants**.



March 2023, 60 year 5 children from **Widcombe Juniors** created nests and discovered the signs of spring.



March 2023, Chris and Maurice recorded a short piece about FLHF and its volunteers, with Helen Mark from **Radio 4** for inclusion in an episode of **Open Country**.



**Anti-social behaviour.** Other than the issue of the horse shelter (which we demolished last year) and dog fouling (largely eradicated with the installation of a waste bin and the use of fluorescent spray), the fields have, until recently, been relatively free of any wanton destruction. However, a number of issues have arisen this year. In October 2022 graffiti had to be cleaned from a section of wall at the foot of the East Field. The stock fence between the fields and Beechen Cliff School has been breached/pushed over in a number of places. Following this, the level of littering has increased and there has been extensive damage to newly planted saplings/tree guards and supporting canes. Two benches in the Copse have been uprooted and have been relocated. We have had to strengthen the fence with additional posts and barbed wire, a decision taken with great reluctance. There has been ongoing and productive dialogue with Beechen Cliff School (assisted by ward councillor Winston Duguid and Greenway! Chair Dan Lugsden), and a new section of fencing has now been installed by the school on their side of the boundary.



**Awards.** On a more positive note, in July 2022, we were awarded the highest category of 'Level 5, Outstanding' in the annual **Royal Horticultural Society** and **South West in Bloom** 'It's Your Neighbourhood' awards; and in November 2022 we were Highly Commended in the **B&NES Council Chair's Community Awards** for Volunteer Team of the Year.



#### 4. Outline Plans for the Year Ending 31 May 2024

These first 3 years of activity have not only gone very quickly, but developments have been rapid and extensive. In summary:

- Paths in the North, South and West Fields have been consolidated with 20mm demolition rubble. Our volunteers have laid 30 tonnes of this stone to date, with a further 6 tonnes now having been delivered.
- Approximately 4 acres were mowed and raked each year at least once. Some areas got a second autumn cut, dependent on growth patterns.
- We have been successful in getting support (in kind) to plant trees. A total of **3550 saplings** were provided over the first 3 winters. This comprised 950 saplings from **TCV/OVO Energy** in 2020, another 950 in 2021 and a further 700 in 2022. In addition we obtained 240 from the **Woodland Trust** and 730 from **EForest** in 2022.
- Three Tiny Forests have been planted. They are mulched with leaves, arisings from the mowing and wood chippings. A total of 1350 saplings have been planted in these three forests. Hedgerows along the western boundary with Beechen Cliff School, the northern side of the Copse, the northern boundary of the Inner Field and the eastern side of the South Field have been planted. This totals over 250 metres and comprises the remaining 2200 saplings.
- A tree Nursery has been established.
- Rainwater harvesting and storage systems have been provided for each of the tiny forests along with the Nursery.
- An information board in the South Field, information boards for each of the Tiny Forests, and maps at each of the entrances have been designed and built.

Looking to the future, **we envisage no significant new developments** for at least two years as we move into a phase of consolidation. This will be complemented by ongoing careful monitoring of the impact of our various interventions, and continuing maintenance activities. To allow for this we have remodelled our working week. The Sunday morning volunteer session will remain. Mowing will take place on Wednesday evenings in the summer months. There are no plans to continue with volunteer sessions on Wednesday mornings except on an ad-hoc basis.



## **5. Financial Report for the Year Ending 31 May 2023**

### **Financial Objectives**

In the company's third year of operations (2022-23), financial objectives were as follows:

- i. To maintain total income and total expenditure broadly in line with that achieved in 2021-22.
- ii. To maintain a tight balance between income and expenditure in order to avoid ever having a negative cash balance, while also so far as possible avoiding making profits that would be eligible for Corporation Tax.
- iii. To seek to diversify the sources of our funding away from reliance on the Residents' Associations and Bathscape, towards individual donations and other sources.

### **Summary of Financial Results**

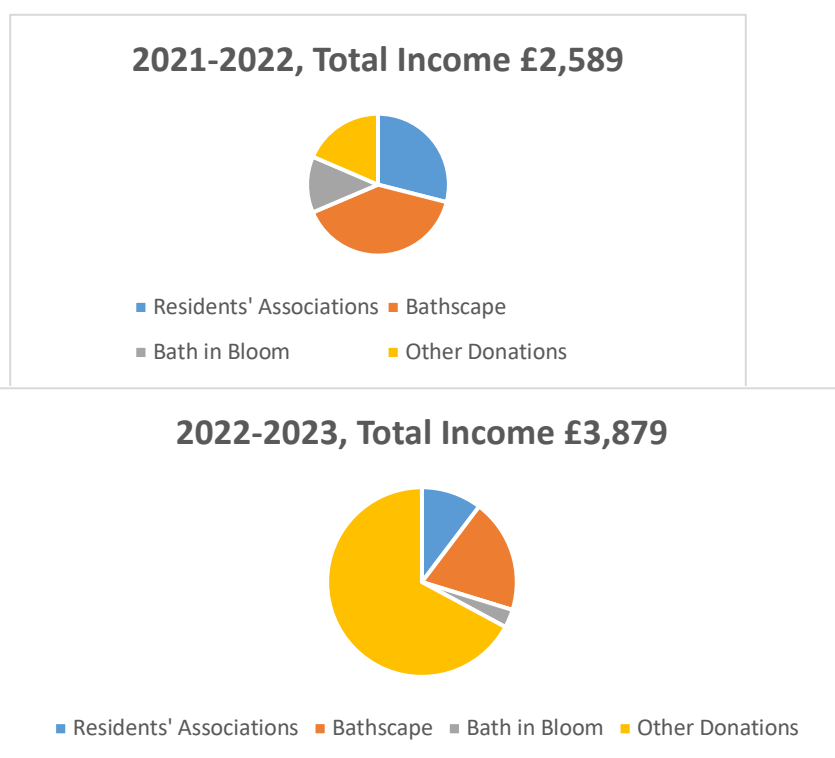
The Accounts of FLHF for the 2022-23 year are presented in the Appendix to this report, showing also a comparison with 2021-22. This Appendix comprises an Income and Expenditure Account in Table 1 and a Balance Sheet in Table 2. As in each of the two previous years, the Accounts have been subject to an independent examination by Mary Young of Widcombe Association, as noted by her signature on the second page of the Appendix and her initials on the other two pages.

The financial objectives (i) to (iii) above have all been achieved or exceeded as can be seen from this Appendix, and as follows:

- Total income in 2022-23 at £3,879 was up by almost 50% compared with £2,589 in 2021-22. This permitted total expenditure to rise to £3,842 from £2,608 in 2021-22, driven by specific projects and other investments in tools and equipment etc. (an overall increase of 47%).
- We have never to date had a negative bank balance.
- At the end of the financial year on 31 May 2023, our overall figure of total income minus total expenditure for the year was £37, so limiting our liability for Corporation Tax in the year to just £7.
- Our total funding from the Residents' Associations was reduced to £400 (almost all of this coming from Greenway Lane Social Committee), compared with a total of £750 in 2021-22 and £1,105 in 2020-21.
- Individual donations and associated Gift Aid received via Localgiving outstripped expectations by a large margin, at £1,218.
- Other new sources of income comprised £500 from the Raby Family Trust for operational expenditure, and £636 from Wessex Water for the rainwater harvesting project described on pages 7 and 8 above.

A graphical comparison of the make-up of FLHF income in the years ending 31 May 2022 and 31 May 2023 is shown on the next page.





### ***Graphical Comparison of Income Sources, Years Ending 31 May 2022 and 31 May 2023***

It is interesting to examine the details of the individual donations received via Localgiving. These comprised a total of 17 'once-off' donations (varying in size between £10 and £150), plus in addition two donors who pay £3 or £5 per month by direct debit. The gross total value of these donations was £1,246 including associated Gift Aid funding from those who are UK taxpayers. A total of £28 was deducted from this total by Localgiving as commission payments (i.e. around 2%), resulting in the net total received being £1,218. Of this, £174 (14%) was the net total of Gift Aid receipts.

Membership of Localgiving required an annual membership payment of £96 in April 2022. This increased to £180 for all members in April 2023. These sums are included in the Accounts as Administration Costs. The FLHF Directors' view is that the overall level of income to FLHF via Localgiving in 2022-23 has been a very valuable source of funding. It is difficult to judge however, what level of income will be achieved from individual donations in 2023-24 and in subsequent years.

## **6. Budget for the Year Ending 31 May 2024**

Our budget for 2023-24 (see the table on the next page) shows a reduction in demand of around 50% in the overall levels of both income and expenditure compared with 2022-23, reflecting our move towards consolidation compared with the major changes, projects and other investments undertaken in our first three years. The budget presented below assumes that there will be no significant new projects undertaken in 2023-24 apart from some continuing funding for footpath improvements by Bathscape, and for the purchase of plants and seeds funded by Bath in Bloom. We are assuming that if any new projects were to emerge during the year, these will be funded by specific grants from external sources.

The budget below also demonstrates that further reductions will be achieved for funding by the Residents' Associations, and that this will be more equitably shared compared with in 2022-23. The three donations of £65 have all now been agreed and invoiced. Agreement has also been reached with the Raby Family Trust, to increase their grant to fund operating expenses from £500 in 2022-23 to £600 in 2023-24, and this has now been received.

***FLHF Budget for the Year Ending 31 May 2024 (showing comparison with the Prior Year)***

	<b>2023-24 Budget</b>	<b>2022-23 Actual</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
<b>Income from Residents' Associations</b>		
Greenway!	£10	£10
Greenway Lane Social Committee	£65	£350
Widcombe Association	£65	£20
Bear Flat Association	£65	£20
<b>SubTotal</b>	<b>£205</b>	<b>£400</b>
<b>Other Grants and Donations</b>		
B&NES (Bathscape)	£350	£754
Bath in Bloom	£125	£121
Wessex Water	£0	£636
Raby Family Trust	£600	£500
Donations and Gift Aid via Localgiving	£600	£1,218
Other Sources	£120	£250
<b>SubTotal</b>	<b>£1,795</b>	<b>£3,479</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£2,000</b>	<b>£3,879</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Operating Costs</b>		
Company Registration Fees	£30	£28
Insurance	£200	£182
Administration Costs	£280	£264
Materials	£600	£1,525
Plants and Seeds	£130	£307
Fuel	£60	£46
Posters, Maps and Signs	£60	£222
Tools and Equipment	£250	£1,099
Other/ Contingency	£300	£169
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>£3,842</b>
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE BEFORE TAXATION</b>	<b>£90</b>	<b>£37</b>

The subscribing Members are asked to **note** and **comment on** this Annual Report.

# APPENDIX

## Formal Summary of the Accounts for 2022-23

### Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields Community Interest Company Accounts for the Period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023

(Showing Comparison with the Period 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022)

TABLE 1

#### Income and Expenditure Account

<u>Income</u>	2022/23	2021/22
<b>Residents' Associations' Donations:</b>		
Greenway!	£10	£35
Greenway Lane Social Committee	£350	£350
Widcombe Association	£20	£165
Bear Flat Association	£20	£200
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£400</b>	<b>£750</b>
<b>Other Grants and Donations:</b>		
B&NES (Bathscape)	£754	£1,026
Bath in Bloom	£121	£333
Wessex Water	£636	£0
Raby Trust	£500	£0
Donations and Gift Aid via Localgiving	£1,218	£0
Other Sources	£250	£480
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£3,479</b>	<b>£1,839</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£3,879</b>	<b>£2,589</b>
<u><b>Expenditure</b></u>		
Company Registration Fees	£28	£28
Insurance	£182	£182
Administration Costs	£264	£145
Materials	£1,525	£369
Plants and Seeds	£307	£400
Fuel	£46	£148
Maps and Signs	£222	£30
Tools and Equipment	£1,099	£1,188
Other	£169	£118
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£3,842</b>	<b>£2,608</b>
<b>Excess Income over Expenditure before Taxation</b>	<b>£37</b>	<b>-£19</b>
<b>Corporation Tax Due</b>	<b>£7</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Excess Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>-£19</b>

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**TABLE 2****Balance Sheet as at 31 May 2023 (Showing Comparison with 31 May 2022)**

	31 May 2023	31 May 2022
<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>		
Cash at Bank	£382	£533
Debtors	£0	£0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£382</b>	<b>£533</b>
<b><u>Liabilities:</u></b>		
Creditors	£327	£508
<b><u>Total Net Assets</u></b>	<b>£55</b>	<b>£25</b>
<b><u>Represented by:</u></b>		
Share Capital	£5	£5
Brought Forward	£20	£39
Excess Income Over Expenditure	£30	-£19
Carried Forward	£50	£20
<b>Total</b>	<b>£55</b>	<b>£25</b>

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

I have examined the accounting records and confirm that the accounts are in accordance with those records.

*M. E. Young*

MARY YOUNG

Date 27 June 2023

## Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields Community Interest Company (FLHF)

### Notes to the Accounts for the Period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023

- a) The Fields are operated under Licence from Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES). There have been no costs for which FLHF is liable to B&NES relating to the arrangement or operation of this Licence, and no rent is payable.
- b) There has been no remuneration of any kind for the Directors.
- c) A total of £1,511 of grants received from B&NES (Bathscape), Bath in Bloom and Wessex Water comprise sums for specific projects or equipment.
- d) Donations in Kind (such as saplings or small hand tools) have not been included in these Accounts.
- e) Purchases of Tools and Equipment are accounted for on a renewals basis.
- f) Insurance cover in this period has comprised £5 million of Employers' Liability Insurance, £5 million of Public Liability and Event Cover Insurance, and £500,000 of Professional Indemnity insurance.
- g) The £264 of Administration Costs relates to £84 of website-related costs, and £180 for a second annual membership subscription to the Localgiving membership network. Localgiving, established in 2008, is the only online fundraising platform that allows unregulated charities and community groups to benefit from Gift Aid. Further details can be found at <https://localgiving.org/>.
- h) The £169 of 'Other' expenditure relates principally to the cost of the volunteer event held in September 2022 to celebrate the end of the principal summer mowing period, and to thank the volunteers for all of their various inputs. Three individual donors provided the funds to pay for the costs of this event, via Localgiving.
- i) The £327 of Creditors comprises principally £312 for an order placed on 26<sup>th</sup> May for recycled crushed stone, required for path maintenance following receipt of a grant from Bathscape on this date awarded specifically for this work. It also includes provision for payment of £8 of Corporation Tax due in the year ending 31 May 2021 (which to date HMRC has not required to be paid), and £7 for payment of Corporation Tax due in the year ending 31 May 2023.

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