

Lothians Conservation Volunteers



Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

1st April 2019 - 31st March 2020

The Lothians Conservation Volunteers (LCV) was founded in 1970 and has been a SCIO since February 2017. The Trustees are pleased to present their report of LCV's activities for the year ending 31st March, 2020 along with a financial review and financial statements in Receipts and Payments format accompanied by the report of our Independent Examiner.

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Charitable Aims

LCV exists:

- To advance environmental protection and improvement in the Lothians and elsewhere for the benefit of the environment and the public by doing practical work to create and maintain nature reserves and other sites of biological, scientific or environmental importance.
- To advance the education of the public in the principles and practice of environmental conservation by providing volunteering opportunities and training in practical conservation skills.

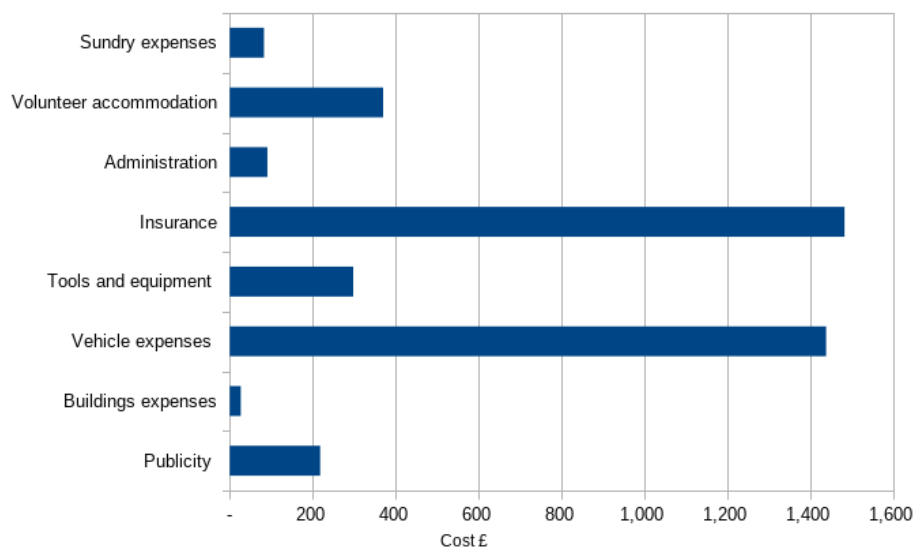
Affiliations

LCV is a member of the TCV Scotland Community Network (67142) and is affiliated with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. We are recognised by OSCR and the Inland Revenue as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC020384).

1 Charitable activities report

1.1 Spending

This year LCV has spent a total of £4,007 (2018/19: £6,019) in pursuit of its charitable aims. Almost all of this expenditure derives directly from LCV's practical activities and the facilities, such as buildings, needed to support them (£3615: Buildings / vehicles, Tools / equipment, Insurance and Accommodation, 90%). A further £218 (5%) relates to volunteer and client recruitment (Publicity and Training). Administrative costs account for £91 (2%) and the remaining £83 (2%) relates to sundry one-off expenses.



1.2 Practical activities

LCV works every Sunday and some Saturdays on activities that vary according to the season. We work for a range of clients, including conservation bodies, local councils, and other managers of land with conservation value. We pride ourselves on being able to provide skilled and committed volunteers.

This year LCV ran 50 (2018/19: 64) tasks for 17 (2018/19: 14) different clients at 33 (2018/19: 29) different sites and did 594 days of voluntary work (2018/19: 620) for conservation projects in Scotland.

We had an average of 9.5 volunteers on each task (2018/19: 9.1, 2017/18: 9.0, 2016/17: 9.5, 2015/16: 8.2). Despite comparable numbers of Saturday tasks to last year, this nevertheless shows a slight increase on the average in recent year. Our all-time high of 11.6 volunteers per tasks in 2006/7 is somewhat higher still, so we potentially have room to grow attendance further.

City of Edinburgh Council was our biggest client with 114.5 volunteer days, followed by Midlothian Council with 79 days and then Historic Environment Scotland with 71 days. We are delighted to welcome new clients such as the Edinburgh Shoreline Project and the return of tasks in West Lothian, including helping with peatland

restoration at Easter Inch Moss.

Please note that we cancelled 2 tasks (on the 22nd and 29th March 2020) due to the social distancing measures occasioned by the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak. This will have slightly reduced the number of volunteer days recorded and bus mileage but has had no meaningful impact on our activities this year. Obviously we expect that the outbreak will have a significant impact on our operations next year; this is discussed further in *The year ahead* on page 13.

We had two residential tasks, one for Scottish Wildlife Trust at Carsegowan Moss and one for Scottish Natural Heritage at Taynish. Both were successful.

| Sites | Date | Work Description | Days |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| City Of Edinburgh Council | | | |
| Corstorphine Hill | 24/11/2019 | Cutting salmonberry | 14 |
| | 15/12/2019 | Removing snowberry | 13 |
| | 05/01/2020 | Cutting salmonberry | 11 |
| | 12/01/2020 | Salmonberry removal | 12 |
| Blackford Glen | 12/05/2019 | Burning cut gorse | 11 |
| | 02/02/2020 | Cutting a fire break | 16 |
| Easter Craiglockhart Hill | 08/06/2019 | Pond maintenance | 5.5 |
| | 06/10/2019 | Cleaning pond | 7 |
| Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park | 07/04/2019 | Clearing litter | 12 |
| TOTAL | | | 101.5 |
| Midlothian Council | | | |
| Gore Glen | 02/01/2020 | Clearing broom and thinning trees | 11 |
| Penicuik to Dalkeith Walkway | 14/04/2019 | Tidy up | 7 |
| Rosewell walk/cycle path | 02/06/2019 | fence and balsam removal | 11 |
| Roslin Glen (MLC) | 19/10/2019 | meadow raking & scything | 8 |
| | 04/08/2019 | Vegetation removal | 9 |
| Springfield Mill | 05/10/2019 | Scything meadow | 7 |
| | 07/07/2019 | Removing thistles | 9 |
| Vogrie Country Park | 29/12/2019 | Pond clearance | 6 |
| | 29/09/2019 | Scything and raking meadow | 11 |
| TOTAL | | | 79 |
| Historic Environment Scotland | | | |

| Sites | Date | Work Description | Days |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Holyrood Park | 21/04/2019 | Wildflowers | 8 |
| | 28/04/2019 | planting wildflowers | 7 |
| | 09/06/2019 | Pulling up Himalayan Balsam | 10 |
| | 14/07/2019 | Removing Himalayan Balsam | 8 |
| | 11/08/2019 | Removing Himalayan Balsam | 11 |
| | 27/10/2019 | Creating a wildflower meadow | 14 |
| | 09/02/2020 | Cutting firebreaks | 13 |
| TOTAL | | | 71 |
| West Lothian Council | | | |
| Easter Inch Moss | 03/11/2019 | Tree and scrub removal | 8 |
| | 17/11/2019 | Clearing trees | 13 |
| | 31/12/2019 | Path clearance | 7 |
| Beechraigs Country Park | 25/01/2020 | Path work | 10 |
| | 26/01/2020 | Laying path | 8 |
| Greenrigg Community Woodland | 13/10/2019 | Tree maintenance | 11 |
| TOTAL | | | 57 |
| Scottish Wildlife Trust | | | |
| Carsegowan Moss | 21/02/2020 | Pulling trees from bog | 16 |
| Bawsinch | 20/10/2019 | Pond clearance | 10 |
| Red Moss | 08/09/2019 | Pulling regen from bog | 8 |
| Addiewell Bing | 06/07/2019 | Tree weeding | 5 |
| TOTAL | | | 39 |
| Gifford Community Woodland | | | |
| Gifford Community Woodland | 09/11/2019 | Rhododendron removal | 11 |
| | 19/01/2020 | Rhoddies | 10 |
| | 16/02/2020 | Rhododendron removal | 12 |
| | 01/03/2020 | Rhododendron control | 5 |
| TOTAL | | | 38 |
| Falkland Estate Trust (Centre for Stewardship) | | | |
| Falkland Estate | 21/07/2019 | Trimming Sitka | 8 |

| Sites | Date | Work Description | Days |
|------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------|
| | 28/07/2019 | Gorse removal | 6 |
| | 18/08/2019 | Cutting and burning gorse | 7 |
| | 22/12/2019 | Cutting Rhoddie | 8 |
| | 11/01/2020 | Clearing rhododendron | 8 |
| TOTAL | | | 37 |
| East Lothian Council | | | |
| Yellowcraigs | 30/06/2019 | Removing pirri-pirri | 7 |
| | 12/10/2019 | Clearing Sea Buckthorn | 6 |
| Gullane Bents | 22/09/2019 | Scything & raking meadows | 12 |
| Trapain Law | 25/08/2019 | Removing ragwort | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 35 |
| Scottish Natural Heritage | | | |
| Taynish NNR | 16/06/2019 | Controlling bracken and rhoddies | 32 |
| TOTAL | | | 32 |
| Edinburgh Foreshore Project | | | |
| Cramond Foreshore | 01/09/2019 | Creating a wildflower meadow | 13 |
| Joppa Links | 15/03/2020 | Removing turf | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 23 |
| Friends of Granton Castle Walled Garden | | | |
| Granton Castle Walled Garden | 10/11/2019 | Removing stumps and scrub | 10 |
| | 14/03/2020 | Posts, pathwork and planting | 8 |
| TOTAL | | | 18 |
| Portmoak Community Wood | | | |
| Portmoak Moss (Community Wood) | 15/09/2019 | Removing tree growth | 12 |
| TOTAL | | | 12 |
| Chris Boam | | | |
| Powmill Plantation | 08/03/2020 | Blackthorn control | 11 |
| TOTAL | | | 11 |
| Rosslyn Chapel Trust | | | |

| Sites | Date | Work Description | Days |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------------|------|
| Roslin Glen (RCT) | 19/05/2019 | Woodland management & duck race marshalling | 10.5 |
| TOTAL | | | 10 |
| Friends of the Hermitage of Braid | | | |
| Hermitage of Braid | 05/05/2019 | Burn clearance | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 10 |
| Friends of Leadburn Community Woodland | | | |
| Leadburn Community Woodland | 01/12/2019 | Path and boardwalk work | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 10 |
| David Long | | | |
| Spottiswoode | 08/12/2019 | Tree felling | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 10 |

1.3 The minibus and tool store

LCV runs a minibus that is used to transport tools and volunteers to work sites. The minibus is used exclusively for the purposes of the group, and in 2019/20 it was driven 2,780 miles (2018/19: 3,105) on task. The minibus is vital for our operation: it allows us to welcome volunteers who do not have their own transport, and gives us the means to transport bulky tools safely.

In order to avoid the increased running costs and unreliability of an aging minibus, it has been LCV's intention to replace our current 12-seat(+ rear tool-cage) Ford Transit at 10 years of age. This fell due at the end of 2019. However, we have postponed our planned replacement, initially because Ford ceased to supply Minibuses for much of 2019, and we also need to investigate garaging options now that all available minibuses are marginally larger than our current garage. The list price of a new L3 Transit is £41,550, although discounts of several £1000s are generally available. We also need to budget for seating/cage modifications (<£1000), seat covers (£500), livery (£300) and potential garage modifications (£10000). A cheaper bus option may be a custom conversion of a Peugeot Boxer Van by specialist coachbuilders, with estimated prices starting at £32,000 plus. This may be the preferred option as it gains an extra seat and may be rated under 3.5tons. We are now at the stage of commencing fundraising for these costs, which we will be able to match-fund from our Minibus Replacement designated fund.

The minibus is stored in a garage which LCV owns and maintains and which is adjacent to our tool store. LCV owns a wide variety of tools. One of the strengths of the group is that we can provide the client with volunteers who are fully equipped for the task. This year we spent £298 on new tools and equipment (£323 in 2018/19). We purchased additional loppers, saws, safety equipment and spares for existing tools.

The minibus garage contains a water supply. As a charity with a gross income

of less than £300,000 LCV is eligible for complete exemption from water supply charges. We have applied for this exemption every year since the current scheme came into force in 2014 though have never received confirmation of the exemption. This year Business Stream queried why our properties were not correctly listed on the valuation roll. The Lothians Valuations Joint Board corrected the issue with the valuation roll and for the first time we've received confirmation of our exemption from the water supply charges. Hopefully there will be no further issues in future years.

The correction of the valuation roll has exposed LCV to non-domestic rates charges on the two garages. As a charity we are eligible for relief of 80% of the rates demand (so called "mandatory rates relief").

LCV is also exempt from the remaining 20% of the rates as a result of the Small Business Bonus scheme¹.

Should the eligibility criteria for the Small Business Bonus scheme change and LCV become liable to pay 20% of the rates, we estimate that the combined charges for both the properties will be in the region of £240 a year. Though we do not expect the eligibility criteria to change in 2020/21 we will budget for such a change as a matter of prudence.

There is a remote possibility that rates may be backdated to the point where we became an SCIO (2017). If this situation arises we would expect to backdate the reliefs as well, so in the worst case scenario where only 80% relief is available LCV may potentially be exposed to a charge in the region of £720. In the unlikely event this occurs, we can cover the charge from our reserves.

Members On 31 March 2020 LCV had 123 members. Of these 6 were dormant members who had not been on task, but are still interested in LCV's activities and have requested continued membership. 4 were members who had not been out for more than a year and had been contacted to ask if they would like membership to continue but whose membership was likely to lapse. There were 106 active members who had been on a task during the year. Due to the change in membership structure associated with the change to SCIO status it is this number which is comparable to the totals from previous years (2018/19: 111, 2017/18: 93, 2016/17: 95, 2015/16: 95). We are happy with this level of membership as it is within our expected range of active members (100-120).

Leaders / Drivers LCV has recruited both new leaders and new drivers in the last year and had 14 volunteers active in these roles, with 9 active task leaders and 9 active drivers (some volunteers do both). LCV prefers to avoid asking individuals to lead or drive on multiple tasks per month and so we track the numbers of tasks lead or driven by individuals. This tracking information is given in the table below.

¹At present the key eligibility criterion for the Small Business Bonus Scheme is rateable value: as our properties have a combined rateable value of less than £15,000 we are eligible for 100% relief under the scheme

| | Leading | Driving | Either |
|------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| 12 or more tasks | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| 8 to 11 tasks | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 to 7 tasks | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 to 3 tasks | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 9 | 7 | 13 |

The averages for the last ten years are 9 active leaders and 7 active drivers (excluding those taking single tasks). Both leader and driver numbers are close to these averages but we are heavily reliant on a few key individuals leading and driving large numbers of tasks, exceeding the preferred threshold of one task per month.

The issue with drivers is particularly acute as 2 drivers in the past year have moved on, leaving us with only 5 drivers who have driven on more than one task. Driver availability remains a key challenge for LCV and we must take steps to improve the situation. Fortunately the numbers of active leaders are holding steady, though with changes in personnel.

Publicity and recruitment A total of 53 new volunteers (2018/19: 67) came on their first task with us during the year. The mean of new volunteer numbers in the past 10 years is also 53 and our member numbers are healthy so recruitment of new volunteers does not appear to be an issue at the moment.

Data from our “New Volunteer” forms suggest that 40% of this year’s new volunteers found LCV through internet sources including the website, Facebook and other social media. A further 25% of new volunteers found LCV through the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre, 28% by word of mouth and the remaining 7% through other, or unstated, sources. These figures are broadly in line with previous years.

We have again spent small amounts on advertising via Facebook as this has been effective in the past. Costs of this advertising are funded by an anonymous donation and capped at a maximum of £15 a month.

We are taking steps to reach new volunteers by use of social media.

Since March 16th, 2020 we have increased our Instagram following from 32 to 60. This is due to more effort being put into posting more regularly (we had 17 new posts in two months when before we posted 6 posts in 10 months). Due to SARS-CoV-2 we are unable to generate content around current tasks so alternatively we are focusing on nature related posts highlighting native plants. Once we are able to generate new content again, we hope to increase the follower count still further and thus expand LCV’s marketing reach.

We continue to use Facebook to engage with volunteers who use the platform. This has includes some limited spend on Facebook advertisements (£37), also reported in the total for publicity in section A.4. As volunteer numbers are on a high, we don’t feel it is necessary to spend more on advertising at the present time.

In 2019/20 the website received 11852 visits, corresponding to around 719 unique visitors per month (2018/19: 12770, 586). These figures are similar to 2018/19

with slightly more unique visitors per month. We believe this to be connected to high levels of interest in the site during January and February 2020. This might be a measurement error, or it might represent genuinely increased interest in LCV's activities. Unfortunately due to the coronavirus outbreak this cannot translate into increased attendance on tasks at the moment.

Interestingly the task programme is now our second most popular page after many years of being the most popular page. At the moment, most users now seem to be arriving at the site index and then navigating to other pages. We are not sure what this represents; possibly a change in browser pre-caching behaviour but since overall visitor numbers are holding up we are not concerned.

We also attend the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre's annual volunteer fair, most recently in July 2019. While the fair does not always result in direct recruitment the Volunteer Centre are an important source of recruits throughout the year. Accordingly it is worthwhile for LCV to be represented at the fair.

LCV 50th anniversary event 2020 is the 50th anniversary year of LCV. A successful celebratory event was held 10 years for LCV's 40th and two volunteers who organised that event were co-opted onto the LCV Committee in November 2019 to organise a similar 50th event. Arrangements had been put in place to hold this event in August 2020, however due to the coronavirus outbreak it was agreed with the Committee that the 50th celebration should be postponed until at least the summer of 2021. Whenever the event takes place we hope that many past and present volunteers will be able to get together for a social event and anniversary task to celebrate the past half century.

Volunteer retention We are experiencing a sustained level of volunteer interest and retention. In 2019/20, 21 new volunteers returned for a 2nd task (2018/19: 32) and 6 new volunteers returned four or more times (2018/19: 11). While this is a reduction on last year, since retention and volunteer numbers are healthy we are not concerned.

Training LCV aims to provide the training volunteers need to undertake tasks safely and in a skilled fashion. We had no training needs in 2019/20 and therefore no training has been conducted.

Income, fundraising and supporters LCV's income comes primarily from client charges. We are happy to note that we made a small surplus in 2019/20, due to a reduction in expenditure compared to 2018/19. Making a surplus is permissible as this allows us to partially fund long-term projects such as replacement of the minibus without relying entirely on fundraising.

Our volunteer and mileage charges were last increased in 2018/19 after many years without an increase. Given our healthy financial situation at present we saw no need to increase the charges further.

In addition to client income and several anonymous donations, LCV received support from Foundation Scotland in 2018/19. We are grateful to all our funders and donors.

In order to make the most of our donor income stream, we have registered with HMRC and intend to apply for Gift Aid where donors have supplied the requisite

paperwork. This will allow us to recover a certain amount of tax paid on the donations received in the past four years.

2 Achievements and impacts

LCV's charitable aims are:

- To advance environmental protection and improvement in the Lothians and elsewhere for the benefit of the environment and the public by doing practical work to create and maintain nature reserves and other sites of biological, scientific or environmental importance.
- To advance the education of the public in the principles and practice of environmental conservation by providing volunteering opportunities and training in practical conservation skills.

Through our activities we have enabled 594 days of practical work to be undertaken with associated benefits for the environment and for all members of the public who use the sites where we work. We have brought 106 people (our members) into direct contact with volunteering and educational opportunities and provided indirect access to these opportunities to many more people who investigated what we offer but did not volunteer in practice.

Through our other activities, we have carried out the publicity and recruitment efforts needed to find the volunteers needed to enable us to carry out our practical activities.

Administratively we have formed a plan of action to modify our garage to accommodate a new minibus and created a working group to support this fundraising effort.

3 Administrative information

Governance LCV is run by a committee of trustees who are usually elected at the Annual General Meeting in May. They serve for one year, and may then stand for re-election. In addition our constitution permits trustees to be appointed by resolution of the committee. The trustees for the 2019/20 financial year are:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Coordinator | William McSporrان |
| Task Organiser | Matt McCabe |
| Treasurer | David Nutter |
| Newsletter Editor | Aurelie Brousse |
| Transport Secretary | Debbie Tribak |
| Logistics | Jackie Howlett |
| Fundraising | Meryl Norris |
| Publicity | Laura Marsh |

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Minibus | Trevor Paterson |
| Tools Officer | Edith Lendák |
| Membership Secretary | Greg Parker |
| Training Officer | Peter Gilbert |
| Webmaster | David Nutter |
| Trustees | Katie Koehler (from 20/11/2019) Sarah McConachie (from 20/11/2019) Edel Sheridan (from 20/11/2019) |

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) The GDPR came into force on the 25th of May 2018 and LCV has made considerable efforts to ensure that our systems and record keeping are in line with the new requirements. We maintain a data asset register detailing how we store, process and protect personal information in the course of our work. In addition we have developed short privacy statements for our new volunteer forms, task sheet and website.

We have started a process to document the locations of all of LCV's records (paper and electronic) to help with the process of onboarding new trustees and to ensure that our records management is not reliant on the memories of our trustees.

Contact details

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Post | William McSporrán, Coordinator, 14 Orchard Place, Livingston, EH54 6RX |
| Registered address | 4 (2F1) Murieston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH11 2LH |
| Web | https://www.lcv.org.uk |
| E-mail | enquiries@lcv.org.uk |
| Bankers | Bank of Scotland, PO BOX 1000, BX2 1LB |

4 The year ahead

Last year we were seeking to:

- Attract more new volunteers
- Recruit more leaders and drivers
- Improve LCV's financial position
- Begin fundraising work on minibus

Our improved publicity and marketing continue to return dividends in volunteer numbers and our number of active members at 106 is on the high side of our

preferred range of 100-120. This sustained level of interest from members and a reduction in costs has allowed us to run a small surplus for the first time in several years.

While we have recruited an additional leader or two, we have also lost two drivers which is a problem. We will continue to work on this challenge in the forthcoming year.

Though no minibus fundraising has yet taken place, we have a working group established to do this and a clear plan of action for modifying the garage, including preparing the necessary documents and drawings to support the project. This will be taken forward in the next year.

In addition to the two challenges above, LCV will (along with much of the rest of the world) face issues caused by the measures taken to combat SARS-CoV-2. Most seriously, at the time of writing (April 2020) the social distancing measures mandated to combat the outbreak mean we are cancelling all our tasks two or three weeks ahead. This will continue to be necessary for the foreseeable future. This has two main consequences: loss of income and prevention of LCV from carrying out its charitable purposes. In the circumstances, there is little we are able to do.

Once we resume activities, the social distancing measures that are likely to be required will doubtless impact our finances by reducing the number of volunteers able to travel to tasks in our minibus. Once on task, we are confident that we can use safe systems of work that maintain social distancing, so the tasks themselves should not be greatly affected.

Fortunately, our reserves are in a healthy condition and LCV should be able to survive with a reduced income for at least the next 2 years. Nevertheless we should take steps to maximise the extra income we obtain from grants, donations/gift aid and interest on our bank account balances to allow us to continue to undertake our charitable purposes despite reduced task income.

4.1 The year ahead: December 2020 update

The predictions above regarding the 2020/21 year have been fairly accurate.

Our tasks were cancelled from Sunday March 22nd and resumed on July 19th in line with the lifting of the lockdown restrictions that affected us. Between September 13th and September 27th we had to cancel 3 more tasks due to changes in social distancing rules. Tasks resumed again between October 4th and December 20th. We are also not undertaking Saturday or residential tasks for the duration of the pandemic. The reason for this is the need to sanitise tools. With a week's delay between tasks it is likely that any residual virus will die before the next task. If we are running tasks on Saturday and Sunday we'd have to sanitise the bus and tools. This is not practicable.

At time of writing (December 30th, 2020) we've had to cancel 20 tasks out of 42 tasks so far in the 2020/21 financial year. In line with the reduction in tasks our income has been significantly reduced (approximately halved to date) but as LCV has healthy financial reserves and very low fixed costs we can survive for quite a while with reduced income. Minibus fundraising has also been suspended as nearly all grant giving bodies are looking to support pandemic-related projects so this is not an auspicious time.

A more immediate problem than financial issues may be that some of our long-term volunteers (who undertake duties such as a leading tasks and driving the bus) have been forced to disengage due to the pandemic. With luck this issue should be limited to the duration of the pandemic but we are seeking to train new people to undertake these tasks wherever possible just in case.

Numbers of other volunteers are holding up, even slightly increasing. We have been averaging 9.9 volunteers on tasks for the tasks to start December 2020. This is likely explained by people looking for outdoor activities they can do while other activities are forbidden and a certain amount of pent-up demand for

Social distancing rules and our own safe systems of work mean we cannot use the minibus at its full capacity at the moment. We are limited to a maximum of 4 unrelated volunteers (including leader and driver) in the bus with 1m social distancing. While our volunteer numbers are still good, we're less inclusive than we used to be as volunteers will need a car to attend some of our tasks.

Keeping up with the constant churn of legislation, guidance and the progress of the pandemic has been a significant drain on our trustees, often requiring meetings at short notice and very sudden changes to our task programme and methods of work.

5 Financial Review

This year has seen a surplus of £829 (2018/19: £554 deficit).

Our surplus is composed of a surplus on unrestricted funds of £829 (2018/19: £554 deficit).

Funds employed stand at £66,994 (2019: £68,636)² of which £5,348 (2019: £7,820) are restricted.

Despite the surplus, we have designated no further funds to our minibus replacement fund in this year as the value now stands at £27,820 and we are confident that this amount will allow us to effectively fund-raise for the replacement minibus when circumstances permit. Instead the surplus will remain in our unrestricted cash reserves as these are likely to be required in the next financial year due to the effects of SARS-CoV-2 on LCV's activities.

Once we have replaced the bus and LCV's activities have resumed we will use any surpluses in future years to rebuild the minibus replacement fund.

Our reserve development fund now stands at £597 and is expected to be entirely depleted by activities planned in the next financial year. As we have further designated funds that are not being spent, LCV will investigate redesignating some of these unspent funds in the next financial year to allow the reserve development activities to continue.

5.1 Notable events

Client fails to pay On the 17th and 24th February 2019 we undertook two tasks in the Borders. The tasks (planting and caging new trees and shrubs) had considerable conservation value but the client had not worked with LCV for some considerable

²Note this is the figure from section A.10 not the figure from section 8 which is affected by rounding up of our bank balances

time. Caution was therefore warranted and therefore before accepting the tasks in December 2018 the trustees decided to limit this client to two tasks maximum before payment was required, thus reducing the financial risk to LCV.

Regrettably this caution was warranted as the client did not pay for the two February 2019 tasks, despite several reminders, the most recent in May 2019. The value of the invoice for these works was £246.44, representing approximately 5.7% of our annual income. While the loss is an irritation we felt that pursuing this client for payment through the legal system was unlikely to be successful and would be a costly distraction from LCV's work.

After this incident we will not be working with this client again, and will exercise further caution when dealing with new or returning clients who are yet to demonstrate their trustworthiness.

SARS-CoV-2 The coronavirus outbreak started to affect LCV's activities at the end of the 2019/20 financial year. Our assessment of the likely impact in the next financial year is given in section 4.

5.2 Legacies

We have made no further payments from our small grants fund in this financial year. Given the difficulties in finding suitable recipients of grants from this fund and the problems of administrating the grants themselves, this fund is a candidate for reallocation of some or all of the remaining funds to the depleted reserve development fund.

5.3 Income

Income from tasks this year is £4,320 (2019: £4,502).

LCV did not apply for or receive any grants this year (2019: £534, 2018: £0, 2017: £700, 2016: £377, 2015: £1,061).

We do not expect grant income to make a large contribution to LCV running costs as long-term grants for running costs are (generally) no longer available. However, there are capital projects (minibus, tool shed modifications) we will need to undertake in the next year or two and grant income will form a critical part of these.

Subscription income was £4 this year (2019: £4, 2018: £12, 2017: £24, 2016: £32, 2015: £39). Paid subscription offers no benefits to our members beyond the newsletter, and the price of subscription is very close to the cost of production of the newsletter. The trend over the past few years has been for this income to fall as we move to electronic distribution of the newsletter. We are not concerned by this.

On the expenditure side, we have continued to minimise our day-to-day running costs wherever possible. We use our income from clients to cover only the running costs for which it is difficult to obtain grant funding, and this means that we can keep our costs to our clients as low as possible. To this end we sought improved quotes for buildings insurance and managed to reduce our insurance costs by around £70 this financial year.

The trustees have identified a number of designated funds to give clarity about our future financial planning. During the 2019/20 reporting period there are two funds which relate to our minibus, and four which relate to plans to spend a legacy which we received in 2014. Details of these funds are as follows:

- **Minibus replacement fund** This will part-fund the replacement of our minibus, which we expect to take place in the next year, circumstances permitting. By then, we aim to have built the fund up to cover a significant part of the cost of new minibus. Experience shows that it is much easier for us to raise grant funding for a new bus if we contribute a substantial fund of our own.
- **Minibus maintenance fund** This provides a reserve for large repair bills for the minibus, which we would expect to incur towards the end of its life. This year we made no charges to this fund.
- **Legacy funds** Colin McLean left an unrestricted £20,000 legacy to LCV in 2014/15. This fund was originally designated as four lots of £5000 as follows:
 - **Bawsinch fund** This fund was spent in its entirety before the start of this reporting year and stands at £0.
 - **Reserve Development fund** This fund exists to support projects on nature reserves. We spent £678 of this fund this year (2019: £1,104) to fund our accommodation and other expenses on the residential task at Carsegowan Moss³
The remaining balance is £597. In the forthcoming financial year we will look for ways to continue our residential activities without fully depleting this fund.
 - **Tree Related Projects fund** This fund will contribute to planting of trees, or other projects which enhance woodland cover / health. This fund still stands at £5,000 but we have recruited an additional trustee this year who is specifically tasked with finding ways to spend this money
 - **Small Grants fund** This fund will allow LCV to work with local organisations that couldn't otherwise afford projects or our services. To date £2,600 has been spent from this fund leaving £2,400. No further payments from this fund are anticipated at present.

At year end, designated funds stood at £38,671 in total (2019: £39,349)⁴

5.4 Risk management and reserves

The LCV Trustees carry out a regular review of the risks facing the group and of the impact, probability and possible mitigation of each risk. Financial risk is reviewed at each monthly committee meeting during presentation of the treasurer's report for that month.

³The expenditure is calculated from a direct cost of £370 for the accommodation at Loch Ken outdoor centre, £219.70 for mileage (338 miles at £0.65/mile) and £88 for volunteer workdays (2 days for 8 volunteers; 16 days at £5.50/day) for a total of £677.70

⁴Please note there was an error in the preceding years report where the year start value of £41,057 was quoted instead of the correct year end figure. LCV apologises for this oversight

LCV has a system of financial controls. These controls aim to give us reasonable (but not total) safeguards for our assets from unauthorised disposal or use.

Our investment policy has concentrated on maintaining the value of our saving by investing in low-risk interest-bearing deposit account. Regrettably the interest rate on this account has been falling for some time and now stands (as of April 2020) at 0.60%. Over the next year we should review the type of account we are using to store our funds to see if better interest rates are available.

LCV maintains financial reserves to enable us to recover from the loss of a major client or donor while still meeting commitments to our clients and volunteers. At most our task programme extends four months into the future, so we aim to retain general fund reserves representing around one third to one half of our annual income in the range £3,000—£4,000. We review this policy annually. At the year end our unrestricted reserves are £4,840 in surplus (2019: £3,334 in surplus, (2018: £2,181 in surplus). This amount is now slightly above the preferred range but since the lack of income due to SARS-CoV-2 means we will necessarily use some of these reserves over the next few months we shall not redesignate any of these funds at this stage.

6 Independent Examiner

We are grateful to Julia Loveland for carrying out an independent examination of our annual accounts this year.

Approved by the Trustees on 2021-01-12 and signed on their behalf by,

William McSporran, Coordinator

6.1 Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Lothians Conservation Volunteers

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2020, set out on pages 21 to 29.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the *Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005* and the *Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended)*. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the *Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006*. 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 seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

6.2 Independent Examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations have not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

[Details redacted for confidentiality]

7 Statement of receipts and payments

For the year ended 31 March 2020.

Receipts

| | | Restricted funds | Unrestricted funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Donations | A.2 | - | 185 | 185 | 131 |
| Legacies | | - | - | - | - |
| Grants | A.3 | - | - | - | 534 |
| Receipts from fund-raising activities | | - | - | - | - |
| Gross trading receipts | | - | 4,320 | 4,320 | 4,502 |
| Income from investments other than land and buildings | | - | 331 | 331 | 298 |
| Rent from land and buildings | | - | - | - | - |
| Receipts from other charitable activities | | - | - | - | - |
| Proceeds from social events | | - | - | - | - |
| Total receipts | | - | 4,836 | 4,836 | 5,465 |

Payments

| | | Restricted funds | Unrestricted funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Expenses for fund-raising activities | - | - | - | - | - |
| Gross trading payments | - | - | - | - | - |
| Investment management costs | - | - | - | - | - |
| Payments relating directly to charitable activities | A.4 | - | 4,007 | 4,007 | 6,019 |
| Grants and donations | A.5 | - | - | - | - |
| Governance costs | - | - | - | - | - |
| Independent examination | - | - | - | - | - |
| Preparation of annual accounts | - | - | - | - | - |
| Legal costs | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total payments | | - | 4,007 | 4,007 | 6,019 |
| Net receipts/(payments) | | - | 829 | 829 | (554) |
| Transfers to/(from) funds | | - | - | - | - |
| Surplus /(deficit) for year | | - | 829 | 829 | (554) |

8 Statement of balances

At 31 March 2020.

| | Note | Restricted funds £ | Unrestricted funds £ | Total 2020 £ | Total 2019 £ |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Cash funds | | | | | |
| Cash and bank balances at start of year | | 501 | 42,683 | 43,184 | 43,737 |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for year | | - | 829 | 829 | (554) |
| Cash and bank balances at end of year | | 501 | 43,512 | 44,013 | 43,184 |
| National Savings Investment Account | | | | 41,713 | 41,380 |
| Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account | | | | 2,301 | 1,804 |
| | | - | - | 44,013 | 43,184 |
| Other assets | | | | | |
| Minibus | A.6,A.7 | 1 | - | 1 | 2,473 |
| Buildings | | 4,846 | 18,133 | 22,979 | 22,979 |
| Tools | | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total other assets at end of year | | 4,847 | 18,134 | 22,981 | 25,453 |
| Total assets at end of year | | 5,348 | 61,646 | 66,994 | 68,637 |

Please note: the value of cash and bank balances in this table is £44,013 whereas the value of current assets given in section A.10 is £44,012. This is due to rounding up of our bank balances; the funds in the Treasurer's account at 31st March are £2300.82 and the Investment account £41,712.51 giving a total of £44,012.76 which rounds to £44,013.

This also has an effect on the total assets value for 2019; the figure given for 2019 in this table is £68,637 whilst in the table in section A.10 it's £68,636

LCV has no other investments or assets.

9 Liabilities

The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and accordingly any liabilities discussed below are not reflected in the statement of receipts and payments and statement of balances for the period. At present, LCV has no liabilities.

Approved by the Trustees on 2021-01-12 and signed on their behalf by,

David Nutter, Treasurer.

A Notes to the financial statements

At 31 March 2020

A.1 Accounting policies

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the *Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005* and the *Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended)*.

Income and expenditure All items are recognised in the year received or paid.

Depreciation The receipts and payments accounts do not show depreciation. However, the value of our minibus is reduced each year on a “straight line” basis to reflect the fact that it will have negligible value by the time it is 10 years old.

Our minibus is now in its tenth year of life and therefore depreciation is completed and it is valued at a nominal £1.

A.2 Donations received

| | | Restricted funds | Unrestricted funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|----------------------------|------|------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Subscriptions | | - | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Regular anonymous donation | | - | 180 | 180 | 97 |
| Other donations under £50 | | - | 1 | 1 | 30 |
| | | - | 185 | 185 | 131 |

A.3 Grants received

| | | Restricted funds | Unrestricted funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|----------------|------|------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Stafford Trust | | - | - | - | 534 |
| | | - | - | - | 534 |

A.4 Payments relating directly to charitable activities

| | | Restricted funds | Unrestricted funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|-------------------------|------|------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|
| | Note | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Publicity | - | | 218 | 218 | 231 |
| Buildings expenses | - | | 27 | 27 | 118 |
| Vehicle expenses | - | | 1,438 | 1,438 | 1,880 |
| Volunteer training | - | | - | - | 534 |
| Tools and equipment | - | | 298 | 298 | 323 |
| Insurance | - | | 1,483 | 1,483 | 1,514 |
| Administration | - | | 91 | 91 | 181 |
| Volunteer accommodation | - | | 370 | 370 | 553 |
| Sundry expenses | - | | 83 | 83 | 83 |
| SCIO Conversion | - | | - | - | 604 |
| | | - | 4,008 | 4,008 | 6,019 |

Publicity is classified as a charitable activity for various reasons including but not limited to: direct educational purposes: to target those who can use the information to further LCV's objectives; to encourage recipients to act in a manner to further LCV's objectives and to increase awareness of LCV's objectives.

A.5 Grants and Donations

LCV made no grants or donations in this reporting period. The reasons for this are discussed in the Financial Review on page 15

A.6 Fixed assets

Tools are effectively consumable items and are expensed in the year of purchase. Thereafter, they are considered to have a negligible residual value as reflected above. Buildings are not depreciated.

| | Minibus | Buildings | Tools | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|------------|------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Value at 1 April 2019 | 2,473 | 22,979 | 1 | 25,453 | 27,925 |
| Surplus (deficit) for year | (2,472) | - | - | (2,472) | (2,472) |
| Value at 31 March 2020 | 1 | 22,979 | 1 | 22,981 | 25,453 |

A.7 Restricted funds

| | Minibus | Training | Toolstore | Lane Repair | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|----------------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Balance at 1 April 2019 | 2,473 | 480 | 4,846 | 21 | 7,820 | 10,292 |
| Surplus (deficit) for year | (2,472) | - | - | - | (2,472) | (2,472) |
| Balance at 31 March 2020 | 1 | 480 | 4,846 | 21 | 5,348 | 7,820 |

Minibus and Tool Store Grants and donations to purchase these fixed assets.

Training Grants for training courses.

Lane repair unspent balance of donations from local householders for repairs to communal lane adjoining our garage.

A.8 Designated funds

| | Balance at 1st April 2019 | From other designated funds | (to) des- | From general funds | (to) | Balance at 31st March 2020 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|------|----------------------------|
| | £ | £ | | £ | | £ |
| Minibus replacement fund | 27,820 | - | - | - | - | 27,820 |
| Minibus maintenance fund | 2,854 | - | - | - | - | 2,854 |
| Reserve Development fund | 1,275 | - | - | (678) | - | 597 |
| Tree Planting fund | 5,000 | - | - | - | - | 5,000 |
| Small Grants fund | 2,400 | - | - | - | - | 2,400 |
| Total 2020 | 39,349 | - | - | (678) | - | 38,671 |
| Total 2019 | 41,057 | - | - | (1,708) | - | 39,349 |

Minibus replacement fund provision for replacement of our minibus in future

Minibus maintenance fund provision for repair of our bus as it ages.

The three remaining funds are for spending the legacy we received in 2013. The

transfer from the Reserve Development fund is the cost of accommodation and workdays for a number of residentials. These funds are discussed in the Financial Review on page 15.

A.9 General funds

| | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Balance at 1 April 2019 | 21,467 | 20,313 |
| Surplus (deficit) for year | 829 | (554) |
| Transfer from (to) designated funds | 678 | 1,708 |
| Balance at 31 March 2020 | 22,974 | 21,467 |

A.10 Analysis of assets between funds

| | Restricted funds | Designated funds | General funds | Total 2020 | Total 2019 |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Fixed assets | 4,847 | - | 18,134 | 22,981 | 25,452 |
| Current assets | 501 | 38,671 | 4,840 | 44,012 | 43,184 |
| | 5,348 | 38,671 | 22,974 | 66,993 | 68,636 |

A.11 Trustees remuneration and expenses

The members of the LCV Committee and persons connected to them did not receive any remuneration in 2020 (2019: nil) nor were they reimbursed for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as trustees. LCV has no employees.

A.12 Taxation

LCV is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity for taxation purposes. As our trading income is directly connected with our charitable purposes we do not believe a liability for corporation tax arises.

LCV is liable for non-domestic rates on its two properties but with 100% rates relief available: 80% from mandatory rates relief available and the remaining 20% via the Small Business Bonus Scheme

A.13 Water and sewerage charges

Under the Scottish Government's Water Charges and Sewerage Exemption Scheme charities with incomes under £300,000 do not need to pay water and sewerage charges provided that they apply for exemption annually. LCV has no sewerage connection and so no potential liability for sewerage charges. An application for the exemption from water charges was made on 30th January 2020.

The issue with the setup of our account with Business Stream and Scottish Water has now been resolved and we anticipate no further problems gaining this exemption in the future.