



TCV Strategic Report

with Supplementary Information
2020-2021

Connecting people and green spaces



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As for all of us throughout the world, the year under review in this annual report has been really challenging because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Like all UK charities we faced a number of difficult decisions in the light of diminished resources and constraints during lockdown conditions upon our ability to deliver our services to the communities we work with. Fortunately, with the help of the UK government's job retention scheme and the willingness of many of our partners to continue financing us we weathered the financial storm and indeed, as these audited accounts confirm, have emerged with our reserves intact and in a financially resilient state.

This is important, not just from the point of view of retaining our financial good health (as vital as that is) but of enabling us to confront the post pandemic world with confidence as we envisage and believe that green volunteering charities such as The Conservation Volunteers have a key role to play as we emerge from lockdowns and rebuild our lives. We see our role in a green recovery as critical in helping communities thrive through their continuing commitment to green spaces and assisting our volunteers to develop new skills and support their physical and mental health.

In that context, we undertook a thorough review of our work. Our new strategy retains our existing vision and mission and puts in place new strategic goals. These include giving more emphasis to involving all members of our local communities in our work. We will do our best to ensure that our volunteers come from all walks of life and that our approach to projects embraces the full diversity of the communities in which they are located. We also renewed our commitment to the many local community groups we support and have brought our funding for them 'in house' following the excellent work our fellow charity, the Chestnut Fund, has done over a great many years. I pay tribute to the work the Fund has done and the contribution that Chestnut Fund trustees have made during that time. We will build on this work with a new Chestnut Fund executive group distributing funds to community groups and on which two members of the former Chestnut Fund charity now sit. Our intention is to increase the numbers of community groups in our network and to increase our funding for them in the coming years.

Throughout the year we have focused on ensuring we use all our resources as effectively and as efficiently as possible. As examples, we have redesigned our central services which support our operational colleagues and taken the decision to relocate our main offices to smaller premises in Doncaster, enabling us to let out the whole of Sedum House, making a net positive financial contribution to our premises costs. And because the Board and its committees have met virtually throughout the year, we have saved on travelling and other Board expenses. We have learned the benefits of online meetings but missed the opportunities that face-to-face meetings give us of informal conversations outside of formal meeting schedules and the chances to meet more staff and visit projects. We intend in the future to blend online with face-to-face meetings.

That TCV has emerged so well from the pandemic is a tribute to the work of all our staff and the leadership of our CEO and his senior colleagues. We pay tribute to them all. I also pay tribute to the unstinting support of all my fellow Trustees but particularly to our Vice Chair, Simon Rennie, whose experience in conservation and in running charities has been immeasurably helpful in advising me and our CEO during this challenging year. Likewise, Neal Ransome, who chairs our Audit and Risk committee, and who brings a lifetime of professional experience in financing has been equally critical in ensuring that we have taken a sound approach to our funding and to managing the many risks before us. I thank them both for their help.

Prof ADH Crook CBE, Chair Board of Trustees



Welcome to The Conservation Volunteers' annual report for 2020-21 - a year like no other. My overriding memory from this most challenging of years will be the remarkable generosity, shown by so many people and organisations, in support of our cause.

Our volunteers came flooding back at the first, safe opportunity and, before that was possible, turned their hand to supporting their local communities by new means - some by collecting or distributing food, others by just keeping in touch with those who were becoming increasingly isolated. Our partners and funders demonstrated flexibility, understanding and patience as we adapted our operations to enable vital work to take place while keeping those involved safe. The experience of our Trustees and sub-committee members, who gave up more of their time than ever, was invaluable. Our President and Vice-Presidents continued to support us and promote our work to connect people and green spaces. Our employees went truly over and above - some by selflessly agreeing to go on temporary furlough, others by working harder than ever in the face of adversity, and most by doing both. And I must thank my Leadership Team colleagues - who stuck together, grappled with new challenges and faced up to tough decisions - for leading The Conservation Volunteers with such drive and determination.

Despite all the challenges that came our way, we were still able deliver a significant amount of activity on the ground: working with more than 51,000 people to transform over 900 green spaces; and growing the TCV Community Network to 1,586 independent local groups supporting 31,720 volunteers. As the Network grows, so will the number of applications to the Chestnut Fund and so, in March, we brought this previously independent fund in house. Building on the excellent work of its long-serving trustees (some of whom kindly continue to serve on our new grants panel) we are now providing the administrative support and resource it needs to meet this growing demand.

Thanks to the flexibility and support from our funders, the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the willingness of so many employees to go on temporary furlough, we were able to maintain our reserves around the upper limit of our reserves policy (a limit that was set before the pandemic and is now under review).

2020-21 was the final year of our strategy, Connecting People and Green Spaces, during the life of which we achieved much to be proud of across our strategic goals: Inspire more people to make a difference; Secure more support for our work; and Use our resources to deliver the greatest impact. Our new strategy for 2021-25 will build on this and see us:

- deliver, demonstrate and promote projects that deliver multiple outcomes for people and green spaces;
- do more to support and empower others to connect people and green spaces and deliver lasting outcomes for both; and
- support more diverse audiences to connect with green spaces.

Our vision remains one of healthier, happier communities for everyone. I hope that reading through the events of 2020-21 inspires you to support The Conservation Volunteers to achieve it.

Darren York, Chief Executive

APRIL

Connecting with nature at home

As the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear, we took a step that was unprecedented in our history – ceasing our volunteering programmes in late March. Throughout April, all but essential site maintenance and safety activities – conducted by our employees – stopped. We carried out a rapid strategic review into the threats and opportunities presented by the pandemic. This led to a 'reboot plan' that, later in the year, supported the resumption of selected volunteering activities adhering to the law, to government guidance, and to our newly introduced Covid-secure guidance. In order to protect our future, we reluctantly asked a large proportion of our employees to go on temporary furlough and we were incredibly grateful that every single member of the team we asked agreed. In time, volunteers and employees would join the national effort to support local communities – collecting and distributing food, checking in with the most isolated of our volunteers, and sharing ideas and resources to help people stay connected with nature at home.



MAY

Support for our growing Community Network

Green spaces became a crucial part of daily life for many of us during lockdown. Thanks to funding raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery, we extended our support to all our Community Network groups in Great Britain with free membership for the year. Thanks to players, this provided groups with support and guidance, funding information and discounts from trusted suppliers, allowing them to focus on protecting and caring for their local green spaces safely during challenging and uncertain times.



JUNE

Belfast volunteers recognised with Queen's Award

Our Belfast team of volunteers discovered that they had received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, known as the MBE for volunteer groups. The award gives recognition to volunteer groups and their outstanding work to benefit local communities. A few months later, TCV in Belfast held a ceremony to receive the award from the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast. It was a fantastic celebration of the team's projects, which include creating wildlife gardens, outdoor classrooms and food growing through our Green Gyms, supported by Public Health Agency.



JULY

TCV joins iconic ICAP Charity Day

We received the fantastic news that TCV would be part of the iconic celebrity fundraising event, ICAP Charity Day, allowing us to engage and educate 15,000 schoolchildren in the great outdoors. Through the ICAP Fruit Tree Initiative – From the Ground Up! – children would later plant fruit trees, encouraging an understand of nature and healthy eating. The virtual fundraising day took place in December and the interdealer broker raised and donated £3.6m from their revenues and commissions to charities around the world.



AUGUST

A hands-on approach to climate action

In Northern Ireland, we set up The Acorn Farm Project with support from The National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund, which helps UK communities to reduce their carbon footprint. This project supports 100 families in Derry/Londonderry and Strabane to tackle climate change hands-on by growing their own food and learning about how their food choices affect the environment.



SEPTEMBER

Collaborating on The Massive Get Together

TCV was part of The (inaugural) Massive Get Together, which saw 10 charities collaborate on an online fundraising event. The goal of the event was to respond to the impact of Covid-19 as critical funding and crucial fundraising events ceased, as well as highlight the essential support charities provide in crisis and beyond, and how they shape our society for the better. The evening was streamed live and comprised celebrity entertainment, prize draws and lots of laughs, all while raising more than £40,000 for good causes.



OCTOBER

Conservation during lockdown

As volunteering gradually resumed over the summer, we received a vital £140,800 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Emergency Fund. This supported the return of conservation groups from Hastings to Stirling thanks to National Lottery players. With parks and other green spaces proving so essential for so many people during lockdown, this helped us to keep sites open and safe, and minimised the disruption to important habitat creation and management.



NOVEMBER

We say goodbye to a friend of 35 years

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of friend and supporter, Lady Dufferin, who hosted and supported our tree nursery on the Clondeboye Estate for so many years. Together, we grew over 1.5 million native trees from seed. Lady Dufferin was a TCV Vice President for 30 years and strong advocate for biodiversity and environmental education.



DECEMBER

Largest mini urban forest in Europe planted

With 32,000 native trees, we planted the Forest of Thanks in Barking as a thank you to all the key front-line workers and NHS staff that have done so much for their communities during the pandemic. The forest was created using the Miyawaki method, which is designed to encourage tree growth that is up to 10 times faster than traditional methods, resulting in a plantation 30 times denser. The trees were donated by NatWest Group, who are a long-standing partner of ours with 30,000 of their employees volunteering with us since 2007, transforming over 200 community green spaces.



JANUARY

Another year of People's Postcode Lottery impact

2021 saw TCV pass a fantastic milestone – bringing the total funds awarded to us by the Postcode Green Trust to more than two million pounds since 2018, thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery. We invested the £550,000 awarded for 2021 to inspire more people to make a difference, secure more support for our work, use our resources to deliver the greatest impact, and provide WildSkills traineeships for young people.



FEBRUARY

Wates smashed virtual fundraising target

We've been Wates Group's Charity of the Year for two years running now and they never fail to impress with their incredible fundraising efforts. The pandemic might have halted their original plans this year, but that didn't stop them conjuring up a virtual pole-to-pole walk. More than 300 Wates Group employees covered a whopping 43,139 miles (almost twice around the globe!) and raised over £25k for people and green spaces.



MARCH

Supporting the future of Social Prescribing

To highlight the positive and significant impact social prescribing can have on people's health and wellbeing, we were thrilled to sponsor an award at the Social Prescribing Awards, together with the National Lottery. The Award for Best Community-Based Organisation in Social Prescribing was presented to Let's Grow Preston, who are a network of community gardens. The judges were impressed by their incredible achievement of distributing packages of fresh vegetables to 2,400 people a week during the pandemic.



Who we are

We are The Conservation Volunteers. We connect people and green spaces to deliver lasting outcomes for both.

We do this by bringing people together to create, improve and care for green spaces: from local parks and community gardens to Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; from school grounds and hospital grounds to waterways, wetlands and woodlands. We connect people to the green spaces that form a vital part of any healthy, happy community.

Our team of dedicated, passionate staff and volunteers work with communities across England, Northern Ireland and Scotland and, through our Community Network, we support local community groups across the UK.

OUR OUTCOMES AND HOW WE DELIVER THEM:



COMMUNITIES

Communities are stronger, working together to improve the places where people live and tackle the issues that matter to them.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

People improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, by being outdoors, active and connected with others.



LEARNING & SKILLS

People improve their confidence, skills and prospects, through learning inspired by the outdoors.



ENVIRONMENT

Green spaces are created, protected and improved, for nature and for people.

Over the following pages, you can read about examples of TCV's activities, each of which deliver one or more of the above outcomes.

Our impact

We transform over **1,400 green spaces** and deliver over **62,000 days of green space connections** through occasional volunteering, training courses, nature engagement and education sessions

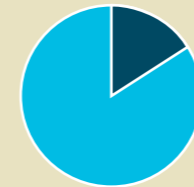
We deliver over **65,000 workdays**

Each year TCV works with **83,000 people**

We have **12,580 regular volunteers**

97% of our volunteers rate their experience as good (24%) or excellent (72%)!

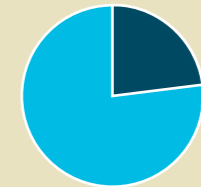
We represent diversity



16% of our registered volunteers have a disability



18% of our registered volunteers are from a BAME community



23% of our registered volunteers are in the top 20% most deprived UK areas

And our volunteers...



...are more connected to nature



...have learnt new skills



...feel more connected to their local community



...feel their wellbeing has improved

Over 1.5m carbon-busting trees through I Dig Trees



This was our sixth year of planting and distributing trees with OVO Energy through our *I Dig Trees* programme. We've now surpassed the 1,500,000 trees mark, plus over 2,600 community groups and volunteers have benefitted.

Our partners, OVO Energy, are an energy supplier with an aim to reach zero carbon. Trees planted through our programme absorb carbon dioxide, add to green space coverage that creates homes for nature, and bring communities together.

"We had a fantastic turnout of around 100 volunteers from our community. All 1000 trees were planted, forming a small copse, in just under 2 hours, a fantastic team effort. Thank you for the trees, I'm sure they will prosper and create a peaceful place where people can go to reflect."

WE ARE HALTON - COMMUNITY GROUP, LEEDS

Kickstarting an appreciation of nature and community

Outside is Fun is an exciting three-year project, supported by Natural England & Defra, working alongside 12 schools in South Yorkshire to make the local landscape a vital part of children's education.

The project is run by our South Yorkshire Community Woodlands team who manage former coalfield sites for people and for nature, in partnership with the Land Trust, and deliver a wide-ranging programme of community engagement.

Through Outside is Fun, our team deliver bespoke programmes of outdoor activity where children connect with their local natural environment and learn about the history of the place they call home.

The project is part of the larger Children & Nature Programme that is funded by the Department for Education as part of the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

"The quality of provision and resources is second to none and the preparation that goes into providing resources and communicating events and resources is exceptional. Overall I have been hugely impressed by the dedication of TCV staff and the enthusiasm and knowledge they bring to each session. Nothing is too much trouble and they go above and beyond to make things happen for the benefit of our young people and staff. Thank you. Our community is a better place thanks to your support!"

LAURA ATKINSON - HEAD OF SCHOOL, ST JOSEPH'S, ROTHERHAM



Healthy lifestyles in Birmingham communities



Health for Life is a community programme that has made a sustained difference to healthy lifestyles in local communities across Birmingham since 2012. It provides facilities and support to engage people in growing food, physical activity, healthy eating and cookery.

Funded by Mondelēz International, the programme supports *Change4Life*, the wellbeing campaign from Public Health England, and offers a range of opportunities to encourage families towards leading healthier lifestyles. We run community food growing spaces, supported by a healthy eating blog and the Facebook group 'Grow Well, Eat Well', which makes seasonal recipes and ideas accessible to more people digitally. TCV Green Gyms also feature in the programme, enhancing health and wellbeing through practical activities to create and care for green spaces.

The group participants benefit from the time spent outdoors, meeting other people, getting fresh air, and learning new skills. The produce grown at the community gardens can be taken home by the group to use or is distributed to food banks or community food cooking programs in the area. TCV also runs free cookery classes for the community to learn how to prepare a healthy meal.

"I would usually hesitate to join a new group due to mobility and mental health issues but every session is so welcoming and accessible and it really benefits my wellbeing. I've loved it!"

HEALTH FOR LIFE VOLUNTEER

Developing skills and confidence through Citizen Science

TCV's *Scotland Counts* project has been running for over ten years, supported by NatureScot along with partners including the Scottish Government, Forest and Land Scotland and SEPA. It uses Citizen Science to get people outdoors and develop new skills.

Scotland Counts supports school learning, with teacher training and factsheets, and helps marginalised groups, including people with disabilities and refugee families, to connect with nature and with others in their community.

"The Conservation Volunteers believe that our natural heritage is something for everyone to celebrate and enjoy. We aim to ensure that every individual and community in Scotland has the opportunity to develop skills and confidence to understand their local environment through Citizen Science."

**AMANDA MALCOLM
- TEAM LEADER, GLASGOW**



Strategic Report

OUR OUTCOMES AND HOW WE DELIVER THEM

Communities

Communities are stronger, working together to improve the places where people live and tackle the issues that matter to them.

We bring residents and other stakeholders together and provide them with the practical expertise, resources and training they need to engage in sustained civic action that makes a positive difference. We draw upon our expertise as a national organisation and take a local approach, working with people and communities to design solutions that meet local needs. Through the TCV Community Network, we connect nearly 1,600 independent local groups with each other and provide access to a package of support including health and safety advice, a dedicated website, access to competitively priced insurance, discounts on training and merchandise, funding information, access to grants and much more.

Environment

Green spaces are created, protected and improved, for nature and for people.

We deliver practical volunteering programmes, providing people with the transport, tools, equipment and project leadership they need to play an active role in creating, protecting and improving green spaces. We work on a wide range of wildlife habitats including woodlands, hedgerows, grassland, waterways and wetlands. We plant trees, from single specimens to new woodlands and hedgerows, providing homes for wildlife and improving climate and air quality. From boardwalks and dipping platforms to fences and footpaths, we provide access improvements and on-site interpretation that balances the needs of nature and people.

Health & Wellbeing

People improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, by being outdoors, active and connected with others.

A wide range of TCV activities provide opportunities to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing through physical activity and social interaction. Through our Green Gym programme, we provide an alternative to traditional gym or fitness activities. Green Gym is “group based physical activity with a purpose”, improving green spaces while enhancing health and wellbeing. The emphasis is very much on sustainable improvements to the health and wellbeing of those involved, while giving new purpose to their life and supporting the shared community environment.

Learning & Skills

People improve their confidence, skills and prospects, through learning inspired by the outdoors.

We deliver a wide range of learning and skills through programmes of non-accredited and accredited training courses. These include practical skills training, project leadership, health and safety, volunteer recruitment and evaluation, community engagement, species identification and first aid. We train volunteers, community groups and other organisations. Through our Community Network we support community groups with access to free conservation miniguides and practical safety resources, along with discounted conservation handbooks and training. We run a range of programmes that offer people a chance to learn more about their natural environment and take part in scientific research and surveying.

Examples of activities delivered this year, which each contributed to one or more of these outcomes, can be found throughout the preceding pages of this document.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

TCV reported a deficit of £338k (2020: surplus of £253k), resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and related restrictions on our activities in the year.

The charity closed the year with reserves of £3,720k (2020: £4,058), including unrestricted reserves of £1,808k (2020: £1,706k), representing 15 weeks of operational expenditure, which is marginally above the upper end of the range for reserves under our current reserves policy which is due for review in quarter 4, 2021-22.

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	Change £'000
Income			
Charitable activities	6,272	8,402	(2,130)
Coronavirus Job Retention Fund	769	-	769
Other trading activities	108	134	(26)
Donations and legacies	146	178	(32)
Investments	49	3	46
Other	7	42	(35)
Total income	7,351	8,759	(1,408)

Income decreased by £1,408k to £7,351k for the year as set out below.

In response to the pandemic and for the first time in its 60-year history, TCV suspended the majority of its activities with volunteers resulting in a £2,130k (25%) fall in core income from our health, conservation and community programmes.

Claims of £769k from the Coronavirus Job Retention Fund contributed significantly to the financial stability of TCV and retention of TCV employees during lockdown and through the subsequent easing of Government / Devolved Administration restrictions.

The reduction in income from other trading activities was driven by a reduction in tenant income from our Scotland office in Stirling due to tenants terminating their tenancies in response to the pandemic.

Overall donations and legacies income fell by £32k, driven in part by the reduction in charity of the year fundraising during the pandemic, after the highly successful Diamond Challenge in 2020. Overall donations from a range of different sources and campaigns increased from £48k to £89k in the year.

Investment income in 2021 related to the return on investment from our cash at bank holdings and a final disbursement of £40k received from the liquidation of TCV Employment & Training Services Limited, which was dissolved on 19 January 2021.

The fall in other income included a reduction in income from our Hollybush Café which was closed during the pandemic.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	Change £'000
Income	7,351	8,759	(1,408)
Expenditure:			
Charitable expenditure:			
Health, conservation and community	(6,197)	(7,067)	(870)
Training and employment	(101)	(116)	(15)
Support costs	(1,228)	(1,194)	34
Fundraising costs	(120)	(86)	34
Grants awarded	(43)	(43)	-
Total expenditure	(7,689)	(8,506)	(817)
Net unrestricted income	102	169	(67)
Net restricted expenditure	(440)	84	(525)
Total net (expenditure) /income	(338)	253	(591)

Expenditure decreased by £817k to £7,689k in the year as set out below.

The £870k reduction in charitable expenditure in the year arose predominantly from the reduction in TCV activity due to coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions.

Increases in support costs included the cost of restructuring the Finance Team, additional audit costs arising from the pandemic and costs associated with the development and roll-out of an electronic expense payment system.

Fundraising cost increases in 2021 arose from the investment in a dedicated fundraising role.

BALANCE SHEET

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Tangible fixed assets	1,512	1,478
Debtors	2,156	1,885
Cash and cash equivalents	1,875	2,720
Creditors	(1,624)	(1,486)
Net current assets	2,407	3,119
Provisions for liabilities	(199)	(539)
Net assets	3,720	4,058
Funds and reserves		
Restricted income funds	1,912	2,352
Unrestricted funds	1,808	1,706
Total funds	3,720	4,058

The net asset value decreased by £338k in the year (2020: £253k increase) with net assets of £3,720k at 31 March 2021 (2020: £4,058k).

A further provision was made in the year in relation to legal costs for an historic legal claim made against the Charity.

The Charity had a net cash outflow of £845k for the year (2020: £96k inflow) arising from the deficit for the year, and an overall fall in net current assets, as a result.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

2020/21 was the final year of our strategy: Connecting People and Green Spaces 2018-21, which was inevitably affected by the pandemic, although continued progress was made against our three strategic goals below, and related action plans, for the year:

Goal 1 - Inspire more people to make a difference:

- Make the TCV volunteer experience the best it can be
- Grow the TCV Community Network
- Develop more volunteer leaders

Goal 2 - Secure more support for our work:

- Capture and share our stories
- Refresh our resources
- Expand our external network

Goal 3 - Use our resources to deliver the greatest impact:

- Connect our people and champion best practice
- Evidence our impact
- Continuously improve our processes
- Develop and invest in our people

Despite the pandemic, TCV achieved a significant amount during 2020 (calendar year), working with 51k people (2019: 83k) and 3k volunteers (2019: 13k) delivering 31k volunteer workdays (2019: 65k) and transforming 919 green spaces (2019: 1,433). We also created a further 13k days of green space connections (2019: 63k) through occasional volunteering, training courses, nature engagement and education sessions.

Our volunteers reported; being more connected to nature (93%); having learnt new skills (91%), feeling more connected to their local community (81%); and feeling that their well-being had improved (93%).

We planted 50k trees, and distributed 339k trees for planting by community groups. We also planted 50k wildflower plugs.

We created, maintained and improved; 305km of footpaths, 245 hectares of woodland, and 136 hectares of wildflower meadows.

At the start of the pandemic the Trustees identified three key objectives for the charity; to protect the safety of staff, volunteers and other stakeholders; to ensure the survival of the Charity; and to ensure that the Charity emerges from the crisis in the best condition possible.

The primary objective during the pandemic has been to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers and other stakeholders, which has required significant and multiple changes to the approach taken by the charity to its work during the year, as set out in more detail in the principal risks and uncertainties section below.

The 2020 I Dig Trees programme, funded by OVO Energy and delivered by TCV, was the most successful programme to date with 370k trees allocated to 700 local community groups for planting and subsequent maintenance.

Working with our partners NatWest and Barking and Dagenham Council, TCV helped to deliver a 'Forest of Thanks' to recognise the incredible work of all those that went above and beyond during the pandemic. The Forest is a mini-urban forest of 32,000 trees in Dagenham, which is the largest **Miyawaki** project in Europe, providing enhanced carbon absorption, increased biodiversity, improved air quality and noise reduction.

Our Community Network grew to 1,586 members over the course of the year, representing 31,720 community volunteers.

We reviewed our Central Services teams during the year, making changes to our Finance, IT and Marketing teams and identifying further priority development projects for delivery into 2021/22.

Our TCV values and behavioural framework had a delayed launch in March 2021 due to the pandemic, after their initial development in 2019-20.

Funding for a fourth year from Postcode Green Trust, thanks to the players of People's Postcode Lottery, was key to enabling TCV to make several strategic investments across four key work streams:

1. Inspire more people to make a difference
2. Secure more support for our work
3. Use our resources to deliver the greatest impact
4. Responding to COVID-19

These investments enabled the growth in the TCV Community Network and support to members, including health and safety webinars in relation to volunteering post-UK lockdown. Further investment was made in the TCV marketing team, and despite one of the most challenging years, the charity celebrated the charity's work by holding the annual TCV Heroes Awards online

and through TCV involvement in two collaborative fundraising initiatives; The Massive Get Together, and ICAP Charity Day. Funding was also invested in Business Development Managers to secure additional funding for TCV's work, and in updating our online learning resource OLLIE, and specialist team development for our senior leadership team. Funding was also used to develop a model, with supporting data, to better understand and improve the impact of TCV's work, and to enable us to speak to our volunteers during the first UK-wide lockdown to understand how this had affected them, which informed how we supported their return to volunteering and improve our programmes.

Postcode Green Trust has continued to provide a flexible approach to their partnership with TCV during the pandemic, and their support to TCV could not have been improved during this period.

TCV continues to benefit from a broad pipeline of funding opportunities and strong partnerships with local and national organisations, providing financial resilience to the charity during the pandemic and into the future, notwithstanding the expected pressures to Government and Local Authority budgets in the coming years.

The charity is hopeful that both unrestricted and restricted funds will be maintained over the coming year, based on the latest 2021-22 forecast data.

The Trustees have reviewed forecasts to 31 March 2023 and based on those forecasts believe that the Charity will be able to meet its liabilities as they fall due. These forecasts have been prepared having regard to risks and sensitivities to anticipated financial performance, a review of actual performance compared to previous forecasts and consideration of financing facilities available. Mitigating actions available in the event of adverse circumstances or financial performance have also been considered.

Based on the information currently available in respect of the future, the Trustees consider that the Charity has the plans and resources to manage its business risks successfully. The Trustees have therefore prepared these financial statements on the going concern basis.

During the year the Trustees have refreshed the TCV strategy for the period 2021-25: 'For people and green spaces: a thriving network for everyone,' which will be implemented from 2021-22. The strategy responds to the challenging times in which we live including the climate and ecological emergency, the national mental health crisis, and increasing social isolation and inequalities. Our work is more relevant than ever in this context, and we have set three overarching goals that will drive our decision making to 2025, each with a specific pledge to demonstrate the scale of our ambition and make a clear commitment for change by 2025:

1. We will deliver, demonstrate and promote projects that deliver multiple outcomes for people and green spaces, with a pledge to grow our tree planting to 5 million trees by 2025
2. We will do more to support and empower others to connect people and green spaces and deliver

lasting outcomes for both, with a pledge to support a thriving UK-wide network of over 5,000 community organisations

3. We will support more diverse audiences to connect with green spaces, with a pledge that by 2025 the work we do, and those we work with, will increasingly reflect the make up of the communities we work in.

The charity is emerging from the pandemic with a renewed sense of the need and demand for our work, a positive outlook and a clear sense of purpose for the future, and a strong financial position.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Charity has appropriate systems of control for managing risk within the organisation. TCV's risk management process is designed to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to identify and mitigate risk and to provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss. TCV aims to identify the major risks to the organisation, ranking them based on both likelihood and impact. Major risks are considered when setting operational and strategic objectives and when approving significant grants and contracts.

The risk management process is managed throughout the business, with standards set and monitored by the Risk and Compliance Manager. The Leadership Team has Risk as a standing agenda item and The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) reviews the underlying management of risk within the organisation and the work of the Risk and Compliance Manager in monitoring performance and compliance. It then brings this to the attention of the Board on a quarterly basis. Risk management is embedded within the organisation to assess risk effectively and put appropriate controls and actions in place to mitigate risks to acceptable levels.

To avoid breaching the Board's risk appetite limits, strategic risks are given a quantified threshold and mitigating actions. Performance against these thresholds is monitored monthly by management. On an annual basis, the Audit and Risk Committee provides the Board of Trustees with a summary review of risk management issues for it to consider.

Covid-19

During the phased lifting of lockdowns and restrictions, and in response to the iterative guidance from The UK Government and the Northern Ireland and Scotland Devolved Administrations the Charity has gradually re-commenced its operational activities, when possible, with an emphasis placed on the safety of our employees and volunteers.

The broad approach taken by TCV from October 2020 has been to encourage working from home where possible, with a requirement for adherence to our latest Covid-19 Secure workplace health and safety guidance for work in a green space or in one of our offices, and travel to and from these locations. Self-isolation, medical care and testing have also been required in the event of any symptoms of Covid 19.

During the 3rd lockdown, the majority of activities

involving volunteers were paused due to the pressures on the health service and other critical infrastructure, notwithstanding an exemption allowing charities working outdoors to continue to operate. Our employees were engaged in support for the vulnerable and isolated during this period, in addition to planning for a phased return to work after this lockdown, working closely with funders and landowners.

The Leadership Team continued to meet regularly during 2020-21 to consider the iterative guidance from Westminster, and the devolved Northern Ireland and Scotland Administrations, and worked closely with Trustees to ensure continuing effective oversight and to make timely decisions as required.

Key areas of risk arising in the year were as follows:

Financial risk: including achievement of our financial plan, and being a resilient organisation

The 2020-21 strategic risk register tracked financial risk in relation to targets for income, net contribution to reserves and the cash position. The pandemic impacted negatively on the scale of TCV activities in the year and related income budgets, set before the pandemic, although this was mitigated through lower expenditure in the year, and under-pinned by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Enhanced cash management controls were maintained during the year to control expenditure and tightly manage our cash position which was maintained within budget setting targets during the year.

Core financial controls over income renewal and replacement of grants and contracts were further developed during the year with continued active engagement with budget holders to review financial performance and monitor income pipelines.

Operations and people: be a great place to work

The risk objective for operations and people in 2020-21 was to ensure that the Charity was a great place to work, with people and volunteer measures used to track progress, including survey results, employee turnover and organisational competence.

Training targets were not met during the year due to a significant number of our employees being on furlough. This has been an area of focus as employees return to work, with a number of approaches taken to delivery of training including the development of virtual refresher training.

Regular engagement with employees was maintained in a variety of ways including a weekly Chief Executive update, specific engagement around the various changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; employee surveys, all employee calls, and people cafes for informal employee engagement.

Reputation risk: including health and safety, safeguarding, information security and volunteer experiences

Whilst TCV has a strong background and track record in health and safety management and compliance, this

continued to be a key consideration during 2020-21 with multiple versions of the TCV COVID-19 Secure Guidance drafted and shared in a variety of media to ensure the safety, and health and wellbeing of our employees, volunteers and other stakeholders, in response to the changing landscape of guidance from the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

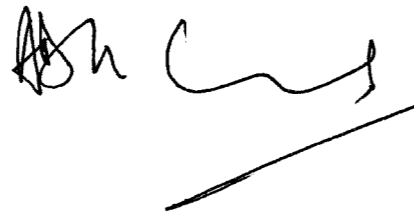
Our approach to preventing regulatory breaches remained important during the year with training, procedures and potential incidents relating to health & safety and safeguarding at the heart of this. We secured the Cyber Essentials certification in the year and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation in April 2021.

We continue to improve our approach to understand the experience of our volunteers in order to improve this over time, with an increase in digital approaches made during 2020-21.

Safeguarding remained a key priority for the organisation and we amended our arrangements to respond to different working arrangements. We adapted our face-to-face training requirements by

providing online training and evaluations indicated that this continued to meet the knowledge requirements of participants. Our regional safeguarding advisors met virtually over the year to ensure progress against our safeguarding priorities.

The Trustees have considered the major risks to which the Charity is exposed and satisfied themselves that systems or procedures are established in order to manage those risks appropriately, and that internal systems and procedures are developing in the light of new requirements and learning from the risk management process.



Anthony Crook
Chair of the Board of Trustees
13 September 2021

Trustees and advisors

PATRON

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG, KT Prince Philip was our Patron for many years and we much valued the occasions when he visited our projects and when he was able to join us for our annual staff awards ceremonies. We valued too the opportunities he gave us to brief him personally on our progress, including during meetings at the Palace.

We shall always be grateful for his personal commitment to conservation both here in the UK and worldwide, something where he was ahead of his time. That he supported our work gave us a real sense of the importance he attached to charities such as ours where we enable people from all walks of life to get 'stuck in' to undertake practical conservation work in their local communities.

He gave great service to our country and his practical commitment to so many important causes, including ours, will be his enduring legacy.

PRESIDENT

Sir Jonathon Porritt CBE

VICE PRESIDENTS

Sir David Attenborough OM, CH, CVO, CBE, FRS

Dr William Bird MBE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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John Mallalieu
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Simon Rennie MBE
Julie Royce
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Tilden Watson – Head of Education Market – Zurich UK

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Darren York

COMPANY SECRETARY

Justin Parfitt

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Debbie Adams *Operations Director – Scotland and Northern Ireland*
Alan Marchant *Operations Director – England South*
Fiona Richards *Operations Director – England North*
Douglas Palarm *Head of Partnerships, Fundraising and Marketing*
Justin Parfitt *Finance Director*
Mark Slater *Head of IT*
Anna Steed *Head of People Services (to 12 March 2021 – maternity leave)*
Mark Thompson *Interim Head of People Services (from 15 March 2021 – maternity cover)*

PRINCIPAL BANKER

NatWest Plc
12 High Street, Doncaster, DN1 1ED

STATUTORY AUDITOR

RSM UK Audit LLP
5th Floor, Central Square, 29 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 4DL

Company number: 00976410

Charity numbers:
261009 (England and Wales)
SC039302 (Scotland)
Registered office
Sedum House, Mallard Way,
Doncaster, DN4 8DB

Our Trustees

TONY CROOK, CBE

Tony Crook was Pro-Vice Chancellor of The University of Sheffield and is now Emeritus Professor of Town & Regional Planning. As well as chairing The Conservation Volunteers and the Construction Industry Council's Housing Panel; he is a lay Privy Council appointee to the Architects Registration Board, is a director of the Kensington & Chelsea TMO Residuary Board; and an Academy of Social Sciences council member. Former roles include: member of the board of the Royal Town Planning Institute (and former chair of Education Committee); Deputy Chair of Orbit Housing and of the Construction Industry Council; chair of Rotherham MBC governance review, chair of Shelter Trustee Board and of Sheffield Homes Ltd; and member of the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, the Lloyds Banking Group Housing Commission and the Housing Commission for Northern England. His research covers private rented housing and planning obligations. His latest book 'Planning Gain': (Wiley Blackwell) won the RTPI Research Excellence Award in 2016 and, jointly with Professor Christine Whitehead he won the Sir Peter Hall award in 2020 for research on land value capture. In 2004 he was elected, a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and was appointed CBE in the 2014 New Year Honours for services to housing.

TONY BURTON, CBE

Tony is Chair of the National Lottery Community Fund and chairs CPRE London and Wandle Valley Forum. He is a trustee of mySociety and a Director of London's environmental record centre, Greenspace Information for Greater London. Tony is Secretary of his local civic society in south London and convenes his local green spaces forum. Tony founded Civic Voice and has over 25 years' experience on the Executive Boards of charities including National Trust and CPRE. Tony also works on a wide range of community and environmental projects, including neighbourhood planning.

JOHN MALLALIEU

John is CEO of The Leeds United Foundation, which aims to use the power of sport to educate, motivate, inspire and support people throughout the local Leeds community. From a career in retail banking, John has held a range of senior leadership roles across Health and Social care delivery for public sector, private sector and third sector organisations. John holds a lay role with NHS Calderdale Clinical

Commissioning Group and across West Yorkshire and is also the Lay Chair of the Primary Medical Services Committee. John additionally chaired the Department of Work & Pensions Mental Health & Work Group for the Welfare Minister and is a member of the Psychological Wellbeing & Work Expert Advisory Group.

NEAL RANSOME

Neal qualified as a chartered accountant and corporate financier with PwC and as a partner led their Pharmaceutical & Healthcare Corporate Finance business. He was also Chief Operating Officer of PwC's Advisory Services division, and a member of the firm's Corporate Sustainability Governance Board. He left PwC in 2013 and is now a non-executive chairman and director of three investment trusts focused on healthcare and early stage companies. With a keen interest in environmental conservation, Neal is a former Trustee and Council Member of the RSPB. Neal has worked as a volunteer for the RSPB, the London Wildlife Trust and, more recently, TCV. He lives in London and is a fellow of the RSA.

SIMON RENNIE, MBE

Simon is the recently retired Chief Executive of the Central Scotland Green Network Trust and is a director of the Falkirk Community Trust. With a degree in forestry, Simon worked in private sector forestry abroad before returning to the UK in 1990. He has since worked in the charitable sector focusing on social inclusion and environmental justice.

JULIE ROYCE

Julie's career started in the private sector working for Unilever and a small award-winning marketing agency, before moving to the National Health Service in 1990. During this time Julie has held a range of senior management, training and marketing positions, most recently working for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), where she led a team working with national organisations in health and social care to help promote uptake of NICE guidelines and quality standards. Throughout her career Julie has been a keen volunteer in her local community in her spare time, and will continue to do so now that she has retired from NICE.

RICHARD STIFF

Richard's career has taken him from teacher in Bognor Regis to Chief Executive of Angus Council via Deputy Chief of Education Leeds, Executive Director of Children's Services and other posts in local government. Richard has extensive experience of working in rural and

urban environments in England and Scotland, and of public and private sector partnerships. Since retiring from Angus Council in May 2017, Richard works as an independent public sector consultant. He is a non-executive director of an NHS Foundation Trust and Chairman of a local authority owned CIC and of the board of governors at a tertiary college in North Yorkshire.

VANESSA QUIGG

Vanessa has worked in marketing and communications roles in publishing, the arts, and government, including positions at London's Southbank Centre and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and the UK Government's Scotland Office. She is currently Head of the Scottish Government's Social Content Hub, leading on social media strategy and content. Having first volunteered for environmental causes as a teenager at home in Northern Ireland, Vanessa was inspired to work with TCV by its mission to connect communities across the UK with their physical environment for the improvement and wellbeing of both.

ANDREW WALKER QC

Andrew is a practising barrister and arbitrator. He was appointed as Queen's Counsel in 2011. He was an elected member of the Bar Council of England and Wales for many years, eventually serving as its Vice-Chair (2017) and Chair (2018), following several years as Chair of its Ethics Committee. His areas of legal expertise include property and company law, and he continues to advise and act for a very wide range of clients across the country. In 2009, he was awarded the Bar Pro Bono Award for some of his free professional work with the homelessness charity, Shelter. He has been involved in the governance of a number of organisations, both charitable and non-charitable, and has a lifelong interest in conservation and the environment.

ROSSLYN STUART

Roslyn is a Chartered Town Planner whose career in statutory planning and regeneration has spanned local government, NDPBs, charitable organisations, private consultancies and an award-winning social enterprise. She has extensive experience of building effective and sustainable partnerships across professional, sectoral and operational boundaries. Roslyn has been an Academician of the Academy of Urbanism since 2011 and was Head of Profession and Director of Development and Professional Standards at the Royal Town Planning Institute. She currently serves as Independent Chair of a consortium of environmental organisations, as a non-executive director and volunteers with various local organisations.

As a charity we rely on the support of individuals and organisations that share our determination to address the challenges facing people and green spaces today.

We are proud to be supported by donors, local and national government, lotteries, private organisations, charities, trusts and landowners – all of whom are committed to our vision of healthier, happier communities for everyone.

Please get in touch for opportunities to support our valuable work.

Visit [tcv.org.uk/support](https://www.tcv.org.uk/support)

The Conservation Volunteers
Gresley House, Ten Pound Walk
Doncaster DN4 5HX
Telephone: 01302 388883
Email: information@tcv.org.uk
www.tcv.org.uk

