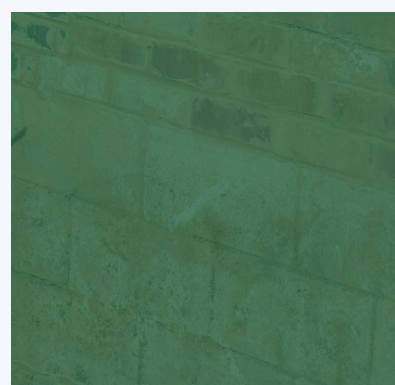
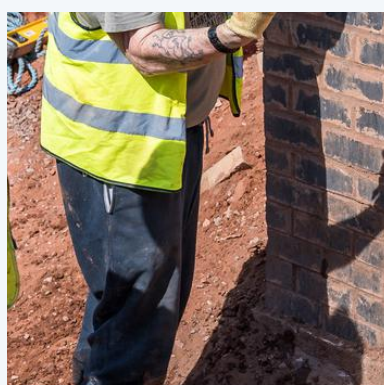


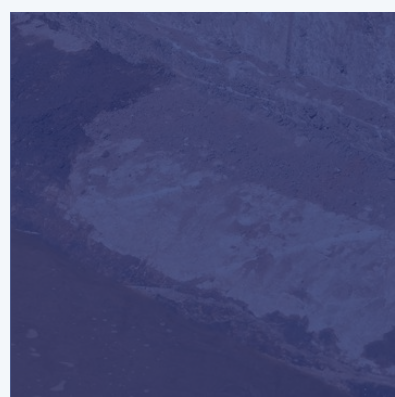


Lichfield & Hatherton
Canals Restoration Trust

Annual Report



2025



LHCRT at a glance

We are...

a volunteer-led charity restoring the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals and reconnecting them to the national waterway network.

We want to...

restore the canals to establish a navigable gateway to the Birmingham Canal Navigations, meanwhile creating a green and blue corridor for the benefit of our community.

We aim to provide the following benefits...

- a green and blue space for walkers, wheelers, runners, cyclists etc.
- sustainable habitats for diversifying wildlife, increasing biodiversity and carbon capture
- a navigable route for boaters
- economic benefits such as inward investment, tourism and new business for the wider community
- training and development opportunities for volunteers of all ages
- health and wellbeing for volunteers and the public.

These are the core public benefits in line with our charitable purpose.

We are run...

by a Board of Trustees who bring expertise in engineering, construction, planning, finance, marketing, land management and community engagement. They set out the strategies, projects and programmes, that will deliver the restoration. Trustee roles are voluntary and unpaid.

Volunteer groups work on construction and operations, green and grounds, marketing and events, land and property, and volunteer resources - helping us plan work, manage sites and make the most of our skills.

Construction and
operations strategy

Asset maintenance
strategy

Financial
strategy

Volunteer
strategy

Communications and
marketing strategy

Post-completion
strategy

Projects and
programmes

Site-specific
programmes

2025 at a glance

Financial headlines

£0.03m raised via marketing, events/appeals
£0.167m secured through The Big Give
£0.204m in unrestricted reserves

Volunteers

24,227 volunteer hours by
126 volunteers
Value = £1,001,370

Restoration

160m³ foundations
150m brick canal wall
40 gabion cages
3,580m³ spoil removed

Environment

400 hedging whips and
32 trees planted
2,598 volunteer hours

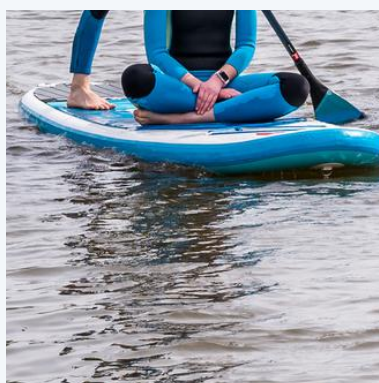
Membership

2,553 members
+110 net growth
£23,611 income



Marketing

5,944 new followers
19 public events
99k website views



Canal completed

3.5km completed
or under active construction
0.9km in water

Public benefit

All activities carried out during the year were in line with our charitable objectives and delivered clear public benefit, as outlined on page 2.

Chair's report

The Trust has enjoyed another successful year. We've reached several key milestones towards achieving our vision to rebuild, restore and reconnect the canals to the national network, creating a new gateway to the Birmingham Canal Navigations.

As an entirely volunteer-led local charity we're extremely proud of our hardworking teams who dedicate so much of their personal time to creating a valued legacy for the area. We can only make such great progress because of the continued support of our members, donors, funders, partners, ambassadors, patrons and sponsors. Together we've collaborated as Team LHCRT to establish precious green and blue spaces for the community to enjoy.



Restoration

The focus in 2025 has again been on the Lichfield Canal, where we have two active sites; Phase 1 at Tamworth Road east (aka The Narrows) and Phase 2 at Tamworth Road west (aka Gallows Wharf/Gallows Reach). Between them, 160m³ of concrete foundations were laid, 150m of brick retaining wall was built, 70m of reinforced concrete waterway wall was constructed, 40 more gabion cages were installed and 3,580m³ of excavated spoil was removed. By 30 November 2025, 3.5km of canal was complete or under active construction – with more converted to being complete this year - of which almost 0.9km is in water at Borrowcop Locks and Darnford Moors.

Environment

The development and maintenance of our green spaces is an important and integral aspect of the restoration. Our green and grounds team comprises adults, Duke of Edinburgh award students, Scouts and pupils from Queen's Croft School. Together they've planted 32 trees, 400 hedging whips and diligently cut back and disposed of huge swathes of brambles and gorse. Grass and wildflower seeds have also been scattered and countless weeds pulled.

Volunteers

We had 126 active mainstream volunteers this year who recorded 24,227 hours on Trust timesheets, equivalent to 3,274 days. Our youngest was aged 13 and our oldest 89. Over 12,293 hours were spent on construction, plant and health and safety, c2,598 on green and grounds work, 2,516 on events, marketing, sales and publicity with another 4,660 behind the scenes on finance, grant and planning applications, land acquisitions, meetings with stakeholders and all-important governance. Converting this freely given time into a notional monetary value represents a donation of over £1m in 2025.

We also hosted a Waterway Recovery Group and corporate volunteers; 34 sessions from numerous employers, totaling 237 people. Every contribution is hugely appreciated.

Membership

Our membership base continues to grow, and we ended 2025 with 2,553 who together contributed £23.6k from their subscriptions and accompanying donations. 38 of these are from overseas (more than in London) and five on the cut.

Our members are incredibly important to us as advocates and supporters. Their engagement through events, fundraising, social media and volunteering enables the Trust to make sound progress, increase visibility and strengthen sustainability. Some have invaluable connections with business, public and voluntary sector organisations as well as funders, influencers and decision makers.

Vice President, Patrons and Ambassadors

We're fortunate to have three high-profile individuals – Sir David Suchet CBE as our VP and patrons Chris Coburn MBE and Robbie Cumming, who have continued to support us by publicising our activities and campaigns. We welcomed two more ambassadors; canal content creator Nigel Hallam aka Narrowboat Nige in 2025, and canal trader Kat McCullough more recently in 2026. They join Stephen Court, Carl Knibb, Dr Roy McFarlane FRSL and Joss Musgrove-Knibb, who are all well placed to extend LHCRT's reach to a wider audience, thereby increasing our membership base and funding success.

Finance and funding

The Trust is responsible for the stewardship of net assets of over £0.985m, with income last year of £0.409m and expenditure of £0.211m. The finance portfolio includes responsibility for preparation of monthly management accounts, VAT and Gift Aid returns, accounting for all our income and spending, and liaison with external examiners. There's been significant work on grant applications and other fundraising by several of our trustees and officers; vital and substantial sources of income for the restoration. We're also grateful to those who remembered us in their will.

Communication, events, media and public relations

Thanks to our talented team, we've seen exceptional digital growth across all platforms - Facebook, Bluesky, Instagram, Linked In, Threads, TikTok, YouTube and X - to 27,345 followers. Our informative website at lhcr.org.uk had over 21,000 users and almost 100,000 views in 2025. Members continued to enjoy our quarterly magazine Cut Both Ways; available digitally and in hard copy.

The team also planned and delivered 19 diverse events, from the Lichfield 10k water station and Lichfield Cathedral Christmas tree festival to Eric's Easter Garden Party, Brownhills Canal Festival and Huddlesford Heritage Gathering.

We had 24 print or online articles published and 67 stories on our website, hosted several visits from MPs and councillors, delivered twelve talks to local groups and worked closely with public authority officials, developers and landowners.

Operational plan

With such big ambitions, we must have clear priorities. We're halfway through our 2025/26 Operational Plan comprising 100 actions, with over half either complete or having made sound progress. Another 24 were not due until 2026, with fourteen unfortunately having made little or no progress mainly due to the adverse impact of third parties. The current plan focuses on construction at Tamworth Road east and west whilst also working on our pipeline projects at Darnford Moors, Darnford Park, St John's Grange and Falkland Road to secure planning and technical consents. We're currently drafting the Operational Plan for 2027/28 and look forward to sharing progress with our stakeholders.

Recognition

Finally, we were delighted to be named Charity of the Year at the Lichfield and District Beacon Awards and, as a holder of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, to meet HM King Charles at an event in Lichfield Cathedral. This recognition belongs to every volunteer – past and present – who has and continues to contribute to this important project, building on the groundwork of our President Eric Wood and fellow founding members. Huge thanks to every single one.

Carole Mills



Restoration

Between December 2024 and November 2025, our volunteers delivered one of the most productive construction years in recent memory. Across Tamworth Road Narrows and Gallows Wharf/Reach our teams combined technical skill with sheer determination to move the Lichfield Canal closer to full restoration.

Progress at Tamworth Road Narrows and Gallows Reach

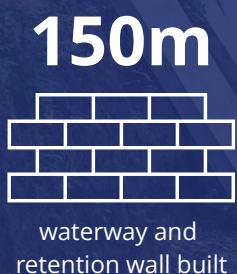
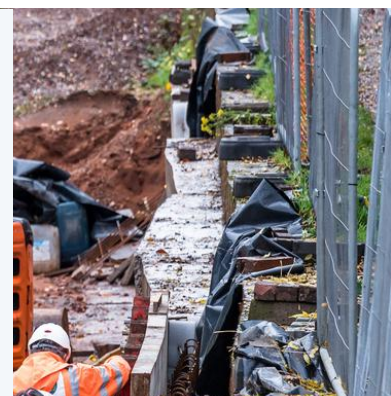
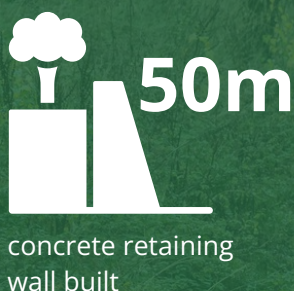
At Tamworth Road Narrows (phase 1) volunteers progressed the brickwork and concreting for the channel and towpath from old Lock 24 towards Cricket Lane. They reached the planned 30-metre stand-off point, which now awaits construction of the new culvert by Staffordshire County Council (SCC). SCC's delayed start meant that volunteers were able to continue working beyond the original end point, making more progress in this area than first anticipated. A huge 3,580m³ of material were removed for reuse, enough to fill more than 1,400 large skip containers, representing a commercial removal value of £125,300, achieved at no cost to the Trust thanks to careful coordination and goodwill from partners.

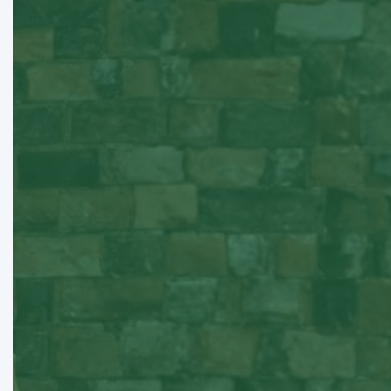
At Gallows Reach (phase 2: Tamworth Road west), construction started with reinforcement of the towpath wall, and work on the canal walls at Gallows Wharf.

Across both sites, volunteers laid 160m³ of concrete foundation, constructed 70 linear metres of reinforced concrete waterway wall (with help from the Waterway Recovery Group), built 150 linear metres of brick retaining buttress and canal wall, and filled 40 gabion cages at Tamworth Road Narrows to stabilise and shape the new channel.

Lift bridge

By the end of 2025, the new lift bridge, a key feature of Gallows Reach, was fully built, tested in the supplier's work yard and was almost ready for installation on site in 2026.





Construction (Design and Management) framework

A key development this year was our renewed emphasis on a robust Construction (Design and Management) framework, ensuring all works meet modern safety, planning and engineering standards. This strengthened approach has formalised risk management, clarified responsibilities, and improved coordination between design, planning and on-site delivery. Integral to this was the installation of 160 metres of safety fencing to ensure safe control of the sites, much of it generously donated following an online appeal.

Monthly Construction, Operations, Green and Grounds (COGG) meetings continued to run effectively throughout the year, supporting efficient coordination between construction, operations, governance and volunteer teams. Improved welfare provision also supported volunteer safety and wellbeing, with new Portaloos installed in December 2025 and a fundraising campaign in 2026 for new welfare cabins.

Overall impact

The combined effect of these achievements is genuinely significant: a reshaped channel, strengthened structures, and a corridor that is now visibly taking on the form of a working waterway. It remains work in progress, but the scale and quality of what volunteers delivered this year have pushed the project a long way towards the Trust's ambition of seeing water in the Tamworth Road section in 2027.

We ended 2025 with 890 metres of restored canal already in water, unchanged from 2024, but the progress made this year puts us in a strong position to bring much more of the canal into water between 2026 and 2028.

3.5km
canal completed
or under active
construction

0.9km
canal in water



Darnford Moors
Ecology Park

Environment

The Green and Grounds Team delivered another strong year of environmental care and habitat improvement across the Trust's sites, working through all seasons to keep towpaths, footpaths and green spaces safe, accessible and thriving. All of this was despite the ongoing environment trustee vacancy, showing excellent resilience and continuity by the team leader.

Habitat creation and planting

We continued to boost biodiversity along both restored and unrestored stretches of the canal. Volunteers planted 32 new trees and 400 hedging whips, filling gaps at Tamworth Road, Darnford Moors and other priority sites. These additions will mature into long-term habitats, strengthen natural screening, and support pollinators, birds and small mammals as the landscape develops.

The planting effort was strengthened by support from corporate volunteer groups and made possible through generous donations of free saplings from the Woodland Trust - plus a few rescued fruit trees salvaged from a local supermarket bin, now given a second life along the canal.

Seasonal vegetation management

The unusually vigorous growth of brambles, nettles and thistles during summer and early autumn required extensive cutting back, strimming and clearing. This work ensures that towpath and nature trail routes remained open and safe, and that young plants were not overwhelmed by competing vegetation.

Volunteers contributed a total of 2,598 hours of environmental and grounds-care work during the year - a remarkable commitment that continues to improve the ecological quality of the canal corridor and help it develop into a richer, more resilient habitat.



Volunteering

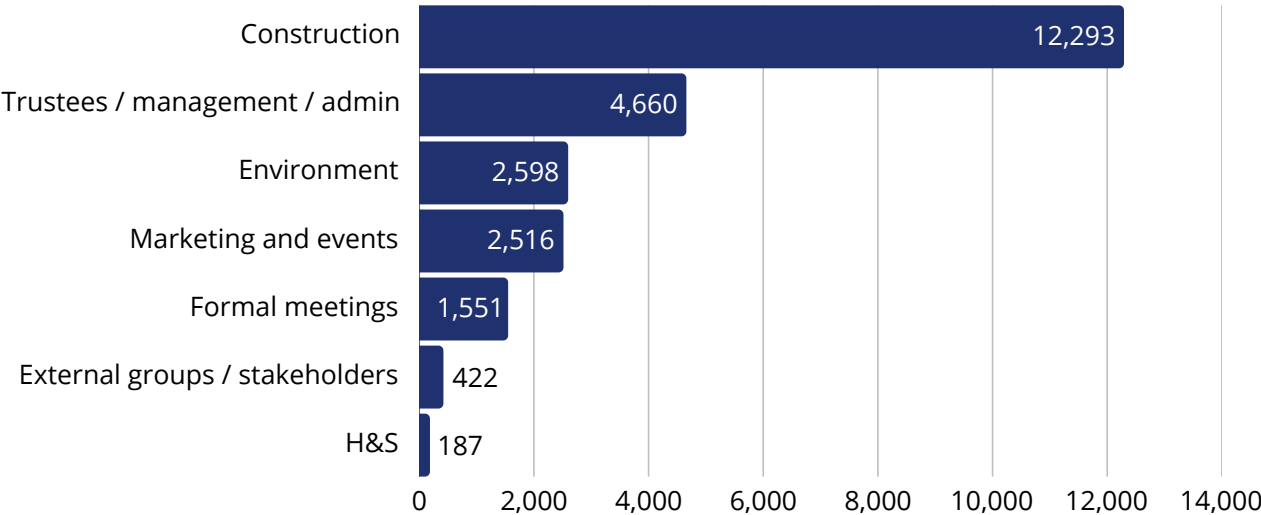
In 2025, 126 dedicated volunteers contributed an incredible 24,227 hours to the Trust, equivalent to 3,274 full days. Although we had fewer volunteers than in 2024, they donated 6,654 additional hours.

Their work spanned a range of vital areas, with over 12,293 hours focused on construction. 2,598 were devoted to green and grounds maintenance, while 2,516 went into events, marketing, sales, and publicity.

Behind the scenes, another 4,660 hours were spent on strategic and professional activities including finance, grant applications, planning, design, land acquisitions, marketing, stakeholder meetings and governance. We also had visits from 237 corporate volunteers, over 34 days.

In total, the collective effort represents over £1m worth of donated work time in 2025.

Volunteer hours by type of work



Volunteer hours
24,227
equivalent to £1m

CSR

34 days
237 people
1,123 hours



Total volunteers
126



Our teams

Our volunteers bring an impressive mix of talents, and many give their time across several activities. It's common to see members of the green and construction teams stepping in at events. Trustees also regularly balance strategic responsibilities with practical, on-site roles. This flexibility is one of our greatest strengths and keeps us moving forward. The totals above show how many volunteers were in each team or helped one for a particular activity, over the year.

Diversity

We don't yet hold accurate demographic data for our long-standing volunteers, but the 50 people who joined in 2025 give us a picture of who we are reaching. Most identified as white British, with a small number from Asian, mixed and other backgrounds, and a handful who preferred not to say. This is slightly lower than the district average but still a step in the right direction. The gender balance reflected our wider volunteer base, with thirty-three men and sixteen women joining us.

We also saw a healthy spread of ages. Thirteen of our new volunteers were aged 13-17 (completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering element), and another seven were aged 18-24. Adults continued to join us across all life stages, from people in their twenties to their seventies, including five over 75.

There's more to do to ensure we are fully inclusive and attract people from a wider range of backgrounds. Even so, those who joined us this year came from across the community and have already strengthened the Trust with fresh enthusiasm, new skills and diverse experience.

Award-winning volunteers

This year we were honoured to be named Charity of the Year at the Lichfield and District Beacon Awards, a recognition that reflects the dedication, skill and sheer hard work of our volunteers. The judges highlighted the Trust's community impact, the scale of progress achieved by volunteer teams, past and present, and the welcoming, inclusive culture that keeps people coming back. This award belongs to every volunteer, from regular site teams to visiting groups and behind-the-scenes supporters, whose commitment continues to drive the restoration forward.

Planning and technical

Progress in 2025

During 2025, significant progress was made on planning and technical approvals, with several key milestones completed.

At Tamworth Road east and Tamworth Road west, all planning-condition discharge documents were submitted to Lichfield District Council, and formally signed off, clearing the way for construction activity without further regulatory barriers.

Early-stage work also advanced at St John's Grange, where we carried out site investigations and topographical surveys to support the forthcoming planning application. Although the submission date has moved into 2026, the essential groundwork is now in place.

Progress continued at Falkland Road, where a topographical survey was undertaken, ensuring that preparatory work is complete and we're ready to move forward.

At Darnford Park, the discharge of planning conditions remains scheduled for 2025–26. This is dependent on technical approvals from National Highways for the A38 crossing and the availability of funding for technical studies and design.

Meanwhile, at Darnford Moors Ecology Park, we have positioned ourselves for future progress of the Darnford Lane culvert, by preparing for SCC Highways technical approval, which will be submitted once drawings are complete. These are being produced for us at no cost by Balfour Beatty Vinci as part of their corporate social responsibility programme.

At Darnford Moors Ecology Park, phase 5 construction is dependent on the return of land temporarily acquired for the currently paused HS2 project. We've continued to liaise with them and hope to secure the access needed to advance the restoration of the section between the lift bridge and lock 30.

Topographical surveys
completed at
2 sites



Planning
conditions
discharged



M6 Toll Aqueduct

Early enabling work on the M6 Toll aqueduct is underway to enable public access as part of a towpath route. Updated land-ownership information has now been secured for the adjacent area, providing the groundwork for future access and construction planning.

In parallel, we will start work to resubmit the previously approved but now-lapsed planning application, as part of the wider effort to open the aqueduct.

Positioning for 2026–2028 delivery

Together, these completed and advanced actions have required substantial behind-the-scenes technical work, all essential to unlocking future construction phases. They demonstrate steady, methodical progress through a complex planning landscape to enable the Trust to move into the next stages of delivery in 2026-2028.

Hatherton Canal

In line with the Operational Plan, no work was undertaken on this section in 2025, whilst we focus on the Lichfield Canal. We maintained oversight in order to progress when circumstances and conditions allow. We continued to liaise with both Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire Councils on planning protection for the route.

Land strategy

Using the updated land register as a foundation, we have begun shaping a new land-acquisition strategy to secure the parcels needed for future construction.

Although the strategy will be completed in 2026, the preparatory work this year ensures the Trust enters the next phase with a clear and informed approach.



Borrowcop Locks
Canal Park

Finance

Finance overview

Our finance pages summarise our financial position for the period 1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025. They are designed to give an accessible overview of how we manage our resources.

The full set of independently examined annual accounts is available on our website for anyone interested in exploring the figures in more depth.

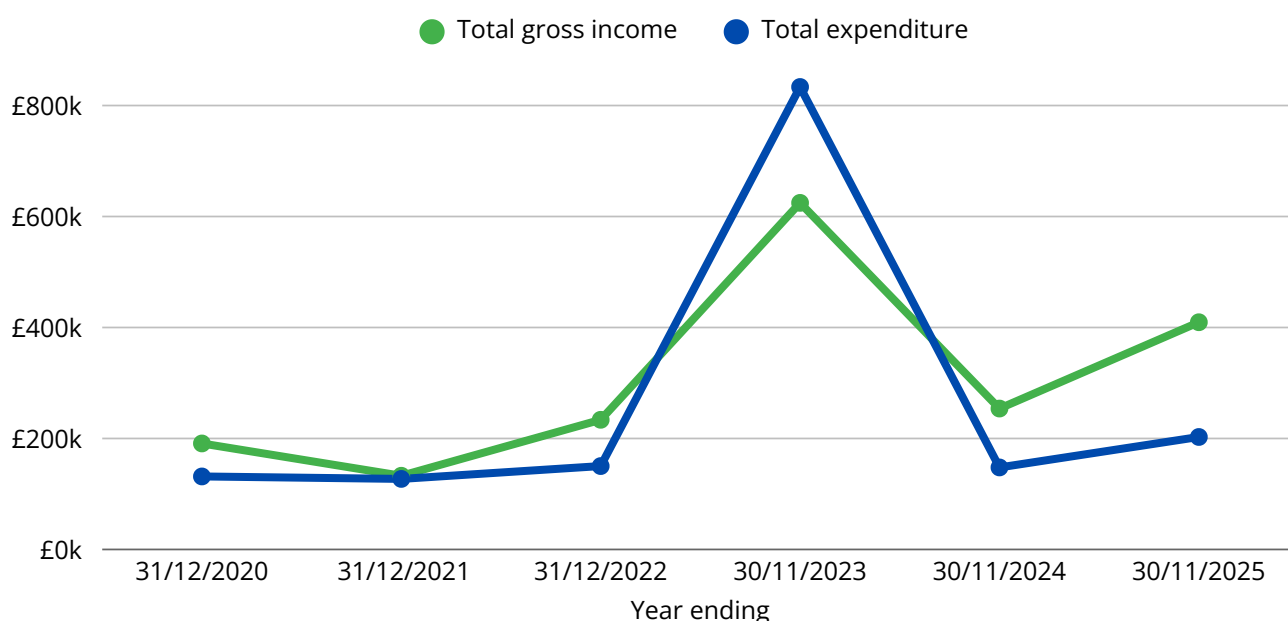
Restoration progress

The successful completion in 2023 of 550m Darnford Moors Ecology Park in water, largely funded by Biffa Award (clearly seen as a peak on the graph below), strengthened our reputation locally, regionally and nationally throughout 2024. This achievement inspired our Trustees and volunteer teams to aim just as high in 2025.

Alongside Tamworth Road on the southern edge of the city, the Lichfield Canal has seen several stages of restoration over recent years. Progress was slowed by COVID-related interruptions, planning conditions, funding constraints and, most significantly, the complex engineering required to remove the live surface-water drainage pipeline (AKA the Big Pipe) that has run through the canal channel since the 1960s. Removing this pipe will allow the canal to return to its original function, carrying water from a large catchment area and delivering environmental and public benefits close to rapidly expanding residential developments in South Lichfield.

It was disappointing that our detailed application to Biffa Award for £300,000 was declined in December 2024 due to high demand. However, in May 2025, we were encouraged that Lichfield District Council approved our application for £200,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the adjacent section. This support comes with milestone payments released in advance of each stage of progress at phase 2 - a welcome boost to our plans.

Income and expenditure 2020-2025



Balance sheet: fixed assets

Property

Our property holdings consist of two former lock-keepers' cottages at Ogley Junction. Ownership of these historic buildings adds an important heritage feature to the Trust's assets. They give us control of Lock No.1 at the summit of the 40-mile Wolverhampton water level into the Lichfield Canal at Ogley Junction and provide valuable rental income.

Cottages 271 and 272 were the last properties listed in the Birmingham Canal Navigations Company (BCN) register, originally acquired when the BCN took over the Wyrley & Essington Canal Company in 1840. They had been staff cottages since 1810 and were purchased by the Trust on the open market in 2006 and 2018.

Both are mortgaged to Charity Bank as tangible security for the loan noted on page 17. Their combined depreciated value of £409,265 represents an estimated hidden reserve of around £200,000 when compared with current market insurance values.



Land

Across the canal route, 18 areas of land have been donated to the Trust over many years by district and county councils, with a historic cost of £165,686. In addition, over the past 25 years, 12 further areas of land and structures have been built by or for LHCRT at an estimated historic cost of £4.5m. These are valuable assets that deliver long-term public benefit, although they cannot be realised financially due to their specific locations, such as roadways.



Plant

We purchased a used Doosan 14t excavator, partly funded through the sale of two smaller machines and the rest from the balance of our 2023 Big Give appeal. This followed the acquisition of a smaller excavator in 2024 and brought the total value of plant to £51.1k.



Balance sheet: assets and liabilities

Assets

Our wholly-owned Retail Trading Company made a profit of £2,594, which will be donated to the Trust within nine months of the year-end. It's treated as an asset owed to the charity until transferred.

We also hold several long-standing project-specific assets. The David Suchet Tunnel Vision Fund continues to receive donations towards the canal tunnel under the Lichfield to Birmingham railway embankment. Part of a legacy was temporarily used in 2023 to support Darnford Moors, and the remaining funds are expected once legal processes conclude.

Designated and restricted funds

Several funds continue to operate for land and property, plant, restoration work and governance requirements set by the Charity Commission. These designated and restricted funds are held for projected expenditure on specific projects or operational needs.

The Board continues to explore funding sources for tunnels under major roads along the Lichfield Canal route. Securing finance for these would significantly accelerate reconnection to the national inland waterways system.

A grant reserve of £34k remains available for work on the Summerhill section near the M6Toll aqueduct. The structure's 21st anniversary in 2025 prompted Midlands Expressway Ltd (MEL), now owned by Aleatica, a global infrastructure investment company, to nominate LHCRT as one of its three strategic charity partners. This brought £10k in both 2025 and 2026 to provide our volunteers with equipment, plant and fuel, not usually covered by other grants.

Cashflow reserves

The Charity Bank mortgage loan, secured against the Trust's two historic cottages, continues to act as an essential cashflow reserve. It provides the financial flexibility needed to meet high-value contract payments and manage VAT turnover in advance of receiving grant instalments and tax refunds, which are typically paid in arrears. This facility has been gradually reduced over several years using delayed project funds held on deposit, and remains a vital tool in managing cashflow during major restoration phases.

Reserves

Reserves enable us to continue our work without interruption, when income is delayed or unexpected costs arise. They help us manage day-to-day running costs, support planned restoration work and provide a buffer so volunteers and contractors can keep making progress.

At year-end, unrestricted reserves were £204.3k. The Board reviews this regularly to ensure it remains appropriate for the size of the Trust, the scale of our projects and the risks we manage.

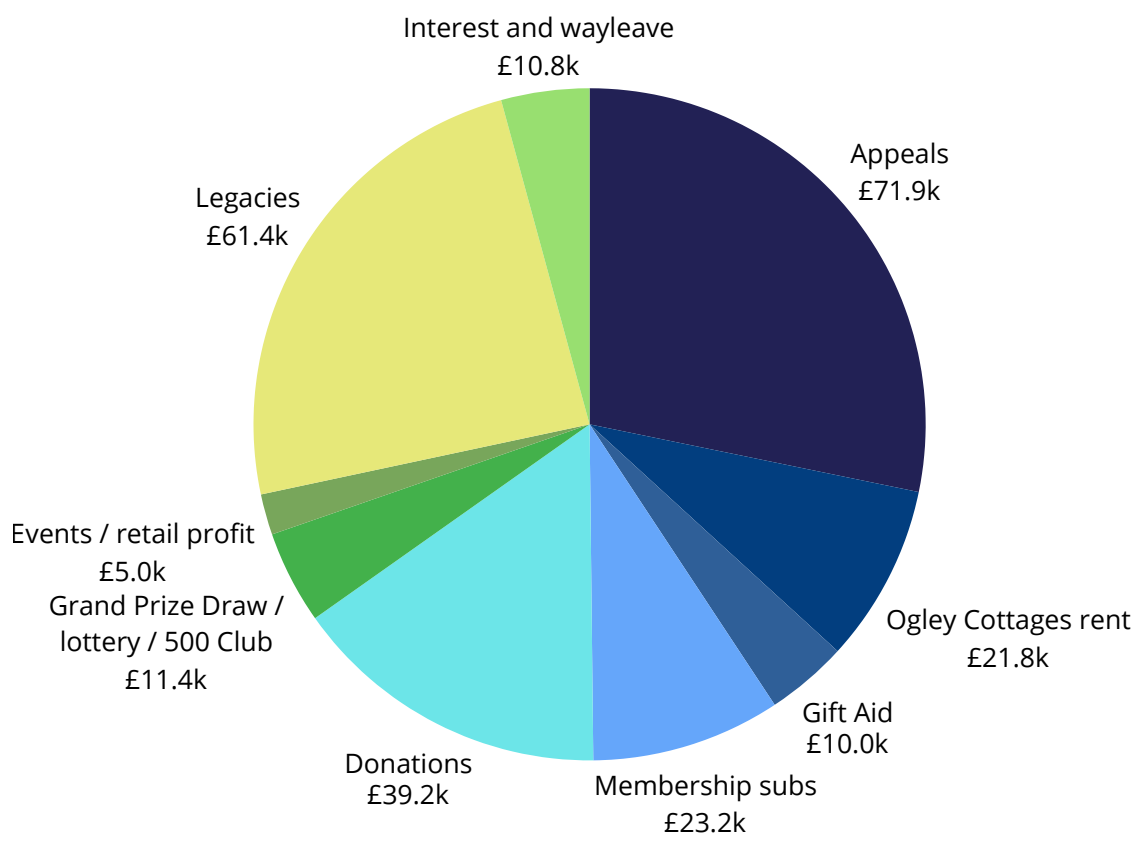


Assets
£1.6k

Unrestricted reserves
£204.3k



Income



Membership subscriptions

Subscriptions totalled £23,611. The 2024 increase brought us in line with similar groups across the UK, and did not reduce membership interest. Members also contributed £3,346 in voluntary donations, giving an average of payment of £17.70 per person.

Thanks to careful administration, the cost of servicing each member was £2.51 (16.8% of the basic subscription). This is due to increased use of email and central magazine mailing, and far fewer postal reminders as more members now pay by Direct Debit or receive reminders by email or text.

Donations

Donations continued to support our established funds, helped by promotion across a wide range of social media, across the world, and by contributions made independently or to specific appeals.

Marketing and retail

Marketing and Retail Trading generated £29,586 (2024: £25,038), a strong result despite the bi-annual Huddlesford Heritage Gathering being impacted by the dry summer, which prevented many floating traders and historic boats from reaching the site.

Fundraising

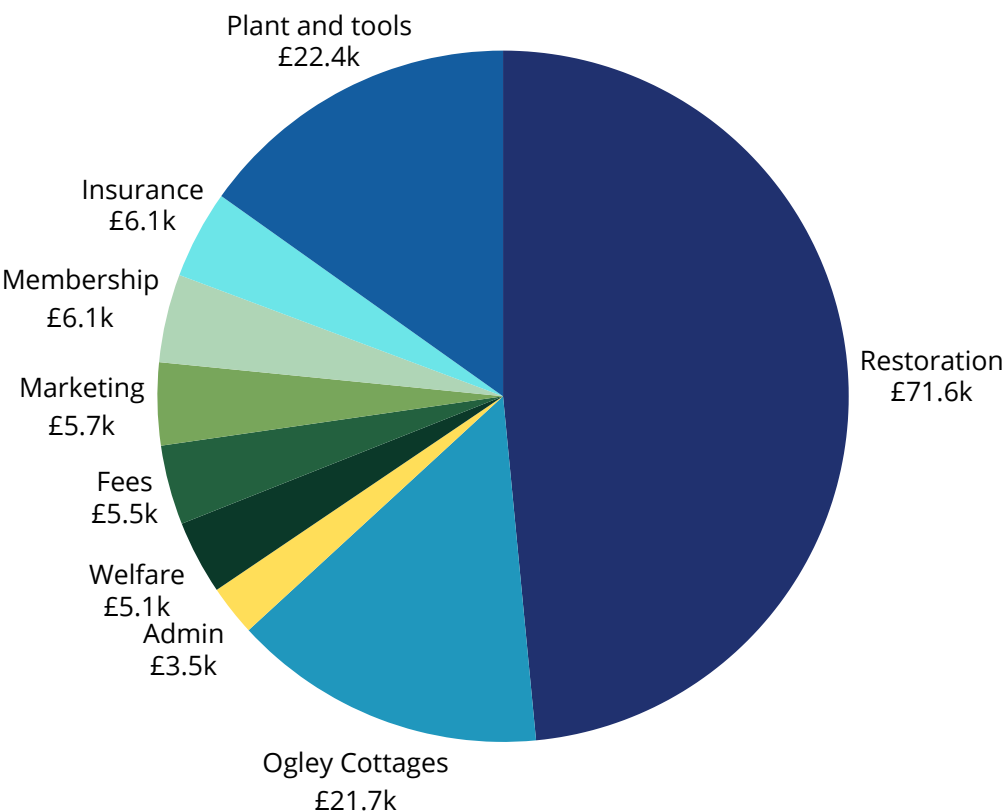
We follow the Fundraising Regulator’s Code and raise all funds through our volunteers or our Retail Trading Company. We do not use external agencies or cold-calling. We are grateful for the support received this year through memberships, donations, appeals, legacies and trading income, and we received no complaints.

Expenditure

Most of our spending, as usual, supported hands-on restoration work across the Lichfield Canal, with £71.6k invested directly in construction, materials and site progress. A further £22.4k was spent on plant, tools and equipment to keep volunteer teams working safely and efficiently.

We continued to maintain the Trust’s two historic Ogley Cottages, with £21.7k spent on essential upkeep. Insurance and membership services each accounted for £6.1k, while marketing activity totalled £5.7k, helping us reach new supporters across the UK and beyond. Fees, welfare and administration together represented a modest proportion of overall expenditure, reflecting our commitment to keeping overheads low and directing as much funding as possible into restoration. However, this will see a change in 2026 as we invest more in site welfare to look after our volunteer workforce.

We also kept the Hatherton Canal under review to enable any potential future opportunities for development, while the majority of practical work and grant-funded activity focused on the Lichfield Canal. Thanks to our own dedicated volunteers and visiting teams, substantial progress was made across several key sites.



2025 outcome

It’s been another very successful year, helped by strong funding support and low running costs thanks to our volunteers. Their skills, time and leadership, along with our DofE team, visiting corporate groups and free professional help, make an enormous difference to what we can achieve.

When converted to a standard value, our recorded volunteer hours for 2025 total £1,001,370. Since timesheet records began, volunteers have contributed work worth over £7 million. This is roughly equal to our entire cash turnover since 1990 demonstrating just how vital volunteering is to the progress of the canals.

Balance sheet

At 30 November 2025

		Notes	c/refs	2025			2024	
				Unrestricted	Restricted	Totals		
				£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets:								
Freehold Ogley Cottages 271 & 272, depreciated @ 2% pa		OC		409,265			420,636	
18 holdings at cost, not depreciated				165,686			165,686	
Plant and machinery > £1k per item, depreciated				84,812			51,140	
Investment in subsidiary company shares, plus assets below		SC		1,000			1,000	
						660,763		638,462
Current assets:								
Debtors								
Net assets available from subsidiary company, plus capital above		SC		2,271			1,612	
Net Group VAT payable				0			0	
Income due				0			0	
						2,271		1,612
Restricted funds on special deposit:								
Sir David Suchet Tunnel Vision, plus designated below		TV			30,200		23,488	
SIB Summerhill 2015 grant balance remaining		SIB			34,380		34,380	
Exceptional income for special uses					5,266		138,299	
Blears shared advance to clear house loan in legacy					(28,471)		(38,471)	
Land and Property Fund net of expenditure	1	LF			20,520		10,858	
Restoration and Plant Fund net of expenditure	1	RF			22,338		13,787	
2022 Big Give etc: Tamworth Road lift bridge fund payment					0		30,268	
2023 Big Give: excavator fund	2	RF			0		16,034	
2025 Big Give: Tamworth Road lock 24 fund costs					191,422		0	
Lord Lock 30 restoration deposit					10,000		10,000	
						285,655		238,643
Designated funds on deposit:								
Sir David Suchet Tunnel Vision - nominal, other uses		TV		63,000			63,000	
Land and Property Fund, Trust allocation		LF		10,000			10,000	
Restoration and Plant Fund, designated, net of expenditure		RF		15,000			15,000	
Cannock Council - Hatherton Canal water supply study balance				1,135			1,135	
500 Club Capital Fund - 50% of income in the year				3,240			1,608	
						92,375		90,743
Unrestricted funds:								
Trust funds for general purposes - see C/A below				111,971		111,971	(17,386)	(17,386)
LESS: Flagstone Group deposits	3	FG			(340,000)		(169,000)	
Total funds in Unity Trust deposit account	4			150,000			143,000	
Other bank accounts								
Unity Trust Bank current account	6			19,616			11,323	11,323
Funds in course of payment - Phase 2 Tamworth Rd. 2025 provision				(54,538)		(34,922)	0	
Charity Bank and Flagstone Group deposits (from above)	3	FG			340,000		169,000	
Total Trust operating funds	5			455,078			323,323	
Unity Trust Bank - marketing current account and in hand				299		299		686
Total assets before liabilities				832,757	285,655	1,118,411		964,083
Liabilities:								
SIB grant payments reserve		SIB			(34,380)	(34,380)		(34,380)
Loan reduction falling due within one year:								
Charity Bank Ltd - mortgage on Ogley Cottages		OC		(2,675)			(2,272)	
Loan outstanding after one year:								
Charity Bank Ltd - mortgage on Ogley Cottages		OC		(95,935)			(98,720)	
						(98,610)		(100,992)
TOTAL NET RESOURCES				734,147	251,275	985,421		828,711
RESERVES:								
Income & Expenditure Account						985,421		828,711

NOTES:

- These sums were donated
- Big Give excavator fund - 2004 figure is less purchases
- Flagstone Group deposits are included within various specified funds on deposit set out above as follows:

Investment	Rate %	Capital £	Interest £
Aldermore, 6m term 28.05.2025	4.10%	85,000	1,730
Nationwide, 6m term 07.07.2025	3.75%	85,000	1,607
Cambridge & Counties 12m term 25.04.2025	4.15%	85,000	1,607
Standard Chartered 12m term 23.09.2025	3.90%	85,000	3,315
Total deposits and interest on maturity		340,000	8,259

Cross references:	
FG	Flagstone Group
LF	Land and Property Fund
OC	Ogley Cottages
RF	Restoration Fund
SC	Subsidiary Company
SIB	Social Investment Business grant
TV	Tunnel Vision

- Flagstone Investment Management accrued deposit interest, after fees = £10,180 (£7,604 in 2024)
- Memorandum item - there is £150,000 in the Unity Trust Bank in 2025 (£143,000 2024)
- Memorandum item - Trust operating funds are: restricted and designated funds on deposit + unrestricted funds + other bank accounts - provisions
- Retail Trading Co. current account at Unity Trust Bank and due = £765 in 2025 (£323 in 2024)
- Retail Trading Co. stock of goods for sale at cost = £1,724 in 2025 (£1,670 in 2024)
- Cumulative Trust expenditure from start in 1990 to 2024 excluding notional value of work by volunteers = £5,178,514 @ 2025 (£4,827,441 @ 2024)
- 11 areas of donated land or canal structures built by or for LHCRT but having no realisable value = £4,413,963 @ 2025 (£4,413,963 @ 2024).
- Notional value of volunteer donated time: skilled labour @ £15/hr, management & home offices @ £150/hr = £1,001,370 in 2025 (£986,959 in 2024)

Income and Expenditure Account

1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025

	c/refs	2025		2024			
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Totals			
		£	£	£	£		
INCOME							
Membership subscriptions - excluding those via marketing	M	18,563		18,563	18,453		
Donations							
Received with subscriptions		4,287			3,004		
Other, excluding marketing collections		3,347			31,689		
				7,634	34,693		
Income generated by marketing and retail trading							
Brownhills Canal Festival - site bookings		1,850			1,847		
Huddlesford Heritage Gathering - bookings		4,877			806		
Membership subscriptions via website, shows and online platforms	M	5,048			4,763		
500 Club Capital Fund, 50% (net of prizes paid out)		1,617			1,581		
Grand Prize Draw		5,590			6,192		
Donations, sponsorship, advertisements and collections		4,638			4,574		
LDC Lottery benefit		3,696			3,663		
Net profit/(loss) from retail trading subsidiary company	P	2,271			1,612		
				29,587	25,038		
Rent, tax, interest, etc.							
Ogley Cottages rent	OC	21,720			21,765		
Gift Aid tax reclaim (other than specific funds)		5,524			9,956		
Bank and Flagstone deposit interest		11,937			10,778		
Wayleave for overhead electricity line poles at Darnford Moors		13			13		
				39,194	42,512		
SUB-TOTAL REGULAR INCOME				94,977	120,696		
Specific appeals and grants							
Land and Property Fund, including Gift Aid tax			3,610		1,293		
Restoration and Plant Fund, including Gift Aid tax			20,732		14,273		
Sir David Suchet Tunnel Vision Fund, including HMRC tax			6,712		6,335		
Big Give Campaign for lock 24 in May 2025			191,422				
Darnford Moors HS2 Community and Environment Fund					13,200		
Beaurs shared legacy advance for Aviva loan - part refund			10,000		(38,471)		
Special: Wesleyan, MEL; Tamworth Rd. Phase 2, lift Bridge			82,000		136,591		
SUB TOTAL SPECIFIC INCOME				314,476	133,222		
TOTAL INCOME				94,977	314,476	409,453	253,918
EXPENDITURE							
Restoration costs - Lichfield Canal							
Summerhill		0			0		
Tamworth Road - Gallows Wharf to lift bridge (excluding project below)		26,992			2,401		
Fosseway Heath - Falkland Road to Fosseway Lane		1,371			36,816		
Darnford Moors Ecology Park		0			4,868		
Volunteer welfare, health and safety		4,563			5,130		
Tools, plant, machinery and training		35,205			22,380		
			(68,131)		(71,595)		
Administrative costs							
Professional fees and costs		17,610			5,518		
Ogley Cottages costs, including insurance	OC	15,668			10,499		
Membership and magazine administration	M	6,619			6,144		
Direct cost of marketing activity, excluding 500 Club prizes	P	7,702			5,736		
General administration		4,349			3,513		
Insurance premium, excluding that for Ogley Cottages		3,352			6,111		
			(55,299)		(37,521)		
Project costs							
Tamworth Road Phase 1 - lock 25 to Cricket Lane		30,503			14,313		
Tamworth Road Phase 2 - London Rd to PROW path		48,763			0		
Darnford Moors Ecology Park HS2 CEF Grant		0			13,200		
			(79,266)		(27,513)		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				(202,696)	(136,629)		
NET EXPENDITURE BEFORE INTEREST AND DEPRECIATION				206,757	117,289		
Finance charge							
Interest paid on Charity Bank loan		8,110		(8,110)	(11,171)		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE				(210,806)	(147,803)		
NET FUNDS MOVEMENT ON TRUST ACTIVITIES							
Less: depreciation of property and plant in fixed assets on the Balance Sheet				198,647	106,118		
		(115,829)	314,476	(41,937)	(29,296)		
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR				156,710	76,822		
Retained surplus brought forward				828,711	751,889		
RETAINED SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD				985,421	828,711		

Cross references:	M	Membership	P	Marketing activity	OC	Ogley Cottages
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Lichfield Canal
Aqueduct
(M6 Toll road)

Membership

Growth

Our total number of members remained strong throughout 2025, closing the year at 2,553, a net increase of 110. This reflects steady growth, resilience, and the continued loyalty of long-standing supporters.

Retention

There were 57 member losses through resignation (16), bereavement (14), and unpaid or moved away (27). A dip in October was caused by a necessary adjustment to some members listed in the family category (counted as four people) to adult membership, as payments had not been updated following the 2024 subscription increase.

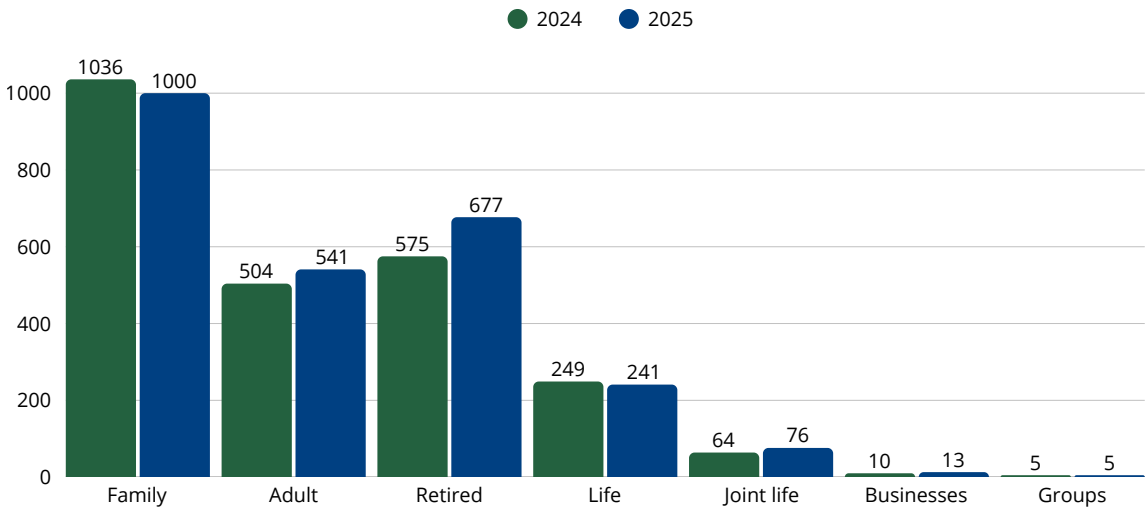
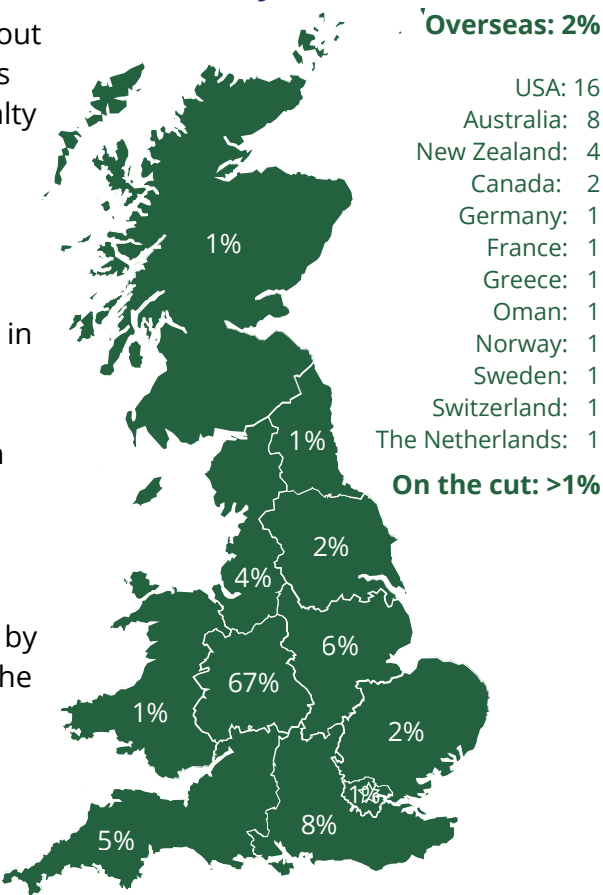
Income and financial stability

Subscriptions generated £23,611 in 2025, supplemented by £4,387 in donations. Monthly income averaged £1,950. The January 2024 subscription uplift continues to provide a strong baseline, with 2025 income consistently outperforming 2023 levels.

Categories

Whilst family numbers fell following the changes outlined above, this has been offset by an increase in adult subscriptions and continued organic growth. We also corrected our records so that joint life members are now counted as two, rather than one.

Members by location



Looking ahead to 2026

Priorities for the coming year include increasing automated renewals (currently 79%), building on successful incentive campaigns, and improving retention, especially among cheque-paying members who often need multiple reminders, which takes up valuable volunteer time and money.

Marketing

Despite another year of limited capacity, 2025 delivered some of LHCRT's strongest communications and marketing outcomes to date, and the results reflect the commitment of volunteers, partners and supporters across the Trust.

Digital engagement

Social media engagement saw exceptional growth in 2025, with a combined increase of 5,944 followers across all platforms. Facebook gained a massive 2,022 new followers and YouTube also had a huge growth of 2,529 subscribers. Our newest channel Bluesky reached 933 followers, and TikTok increased by 400, supported by repurposed content from Narrowboat Nige.

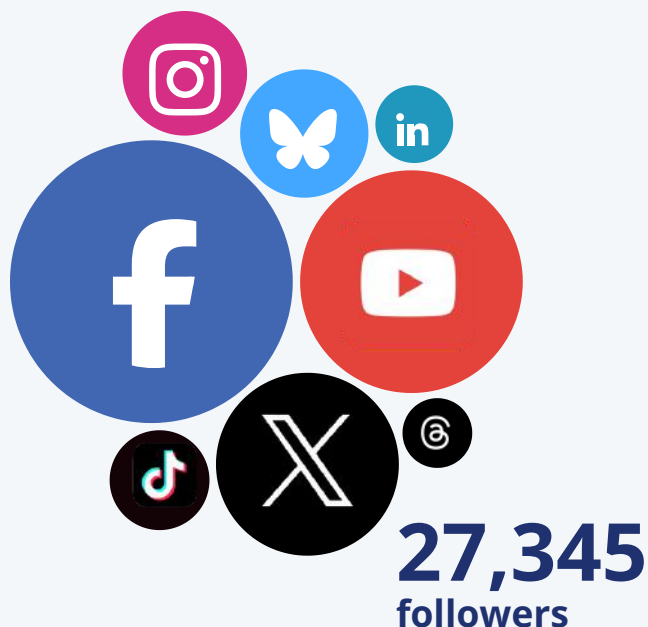
This visibility is vital for attracting new volunteers, members and donors, and for maintaining transparency about our work so people can stay connected to the restoration as it progresses. Many of the new donors who supported the Big Give appeal first discovered the Trust through our social media channels, highlighting the direct impact of our digital reach.

Website and online access

Website traffic also strengthened, with 21,086 active users during the year. Although total page views were slightly lower than 2024, 70% of visitors arrived via search or direct navigation - a strong indicator of brand recognition and supporter intent.

The website remains the Trust's central hub for information, with 67 news stories published during the year, providing transparent, accessible updates for supporters who prefer not to use social media. It continues to play a key role in membership sign-ups, volunteer applications, donations, event bookings and long-form restoration reporting.

Maintaining a clear, well-structured website is also essential for being found by search engines, helping new people discover the Trust and stay connected to the restoration as it progresses.



YouTube
Top video

100,098
views



5,944
new followers



Events and public engagement

The Trust attended or delivered 19 public-facing events during the year, eight others were cancelled due to volunteer shortages. Key events, including Eric's Garden Party, Brownhills Canal Festival and the Huddlesford Heritage Gathering, were well attended and successful, despite low canal water levels caused by the summer drought.

Stakeholder engagement remained sound, with visits from MPs and councillors and further requests pending. Trustees also delivered twelve talks to local groups, generating income of £735 and raising awareness of the restoration's progress and public benefits.

A particular highlight of the year was an invitation for us to meet His Majesty The King during his visit to Lichfield Cathedral. We were honoured to send four representatives to attend on behalf of the Trust.

Media and PR

PR activity exceeded expectations, with nine print articles, 25 online articles, and 67 news stories published on our website. Coverage included restoration milestones, volunteer achievements, environmental improvements and major funding announcements. This consistent visibility continues to strengthen the Trust's reputation with supporters, partners and funders, and is especially valuable for those who do not use social media or have online access. It ensures our work remains transparent, widely understood and accessible to the whole community.

Fundraising and appeals

The Big Give appeal was a major success, securing Champion funding and raising £167,000 including Gift Aid. This significantly exceeded the target set in the Operational Plan and provided a substantial boost to the Lock 24 project.

Marketing income remained strong overall, with the Grand Prize Draw, memberships, event bookings and donations contributing to £29,587 in gross income. These funds continue to play an important role in supporting restoration work, volunteer resources and public engagement.



Borrowcop Locks
Canal Park

Operational Plan

Each Operational Plan spans two years and sets out priority sites and activities for the period, which helps us focus and make tangible progress. The 2025/26 Plan had 100 actions with six themes.

Overall aim for 2025/26	To get as much of the Lichfield Canal into water as possible and do this in a logical, progressive way, extending out from Borrowcop Locks Canal Park and Darnford Moors, ultimately enabling us to secure a reconnection to Huddlesford Junction .
Priority construction sites 2025/26	1. Darnford Moors 2. Tamworth Road east of Cricket Lane 3. Tamworth Road west of Cricket Lane 4. St John's Grange 5. Falkland Road 6. Darnford Park
Key enabling and pipeline priorities	• Apply for/secure planning permissions/discharge conditions • Identify, apply for and raise sufficient funding • Define and secure volunteer resources • Hold and optimise monthly construction, operations, green and grounds planning meetings • Ensure good quality, empowered and proactive site leadership to make best use of our resources • Plan ahead for water

Priority themes		B	G	AG	A	AR	R	P	Total
A	Six priority sites		2					11	13
B	Priority enabling activities	9	7	1	3	4		4	28
C	Enabling - maintenance and communications	19	5	2	3			2	31
D	Pipeline priorities	2	1	1	2	3	7	7	23
E	Not doing	5							5
Total		35	15	4	8	7	7	24	100

At the end of 2025 (year one), 35 of the 100 actions were complete (blue) and 19 had made good progress (green or amber-green). There were seven red actions (no progress) and 15 amber or amber-red (little progress) - all with sound reasons for their status. Overall, 54 were either complete or underway at the turn of the year. As a volunteer-led organisation we were pleased with the outcome. Outstanding actions are carried forward into 2026 with progress already being made.

About us

The Board completed a formal effectiveness review in early 2026 using the Charity Governance Code 2025. It confirmed effective operation, with further best-practice improvements underway. Trustee attendance remained strong, contributing 7,312 hours (988 days) of volunteer time during the year.

Trustees



Carole Mills

Chair

Appointed 2021

A former CEO and CFO across five unitary councils, bringing extensive leadership, governance, organisational improvement and financial expertise. She has held senior roles in local government, health and other public services, and currently also serves as an NHS Non-Executive Director and Electoral Commissioner.



Colin Booker

Company Secretary and Vice Chair

Appointed 2021

A qualified management accountant and retired senior forensic accountant with HMRC, where he worked within criminal investigation, specialising in the analysis of complex financial cases. His experience includes regulatory compliance, evidence-based reporting and financial scrutiny.



Christine Howles

Communications/Marketing

Appointed 2016

Full-time communications lead in the Civil Service, with previous experience across the public sector in a range of infrastructure organisations including housing and utilities. Her career has spanned public relations, digital communications and public-facing engagement roles. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.



Derek Lord

Planning and Technical

Appointed 2019

A Chartered Civil Engineer specialising in road, rail, canal, drainage, sewerage and development infrastructure, with a career spanning both consultancy and the water industry. Now retired from senior roles in a major water company and engineering consultancies, he brings extensive experience in planning, technical design and infrastructure delivery.



Peter Hale

Volunteer Resources
Coopted 2026

A retired Chartered Railway Engineer with a long career in rail operations, safety management and major project delivery. His background includes extensive experience in operational planning and the development of safe working practices across complex transport environments.



Robert Brasher

Land and Property
Coopted 2026

A former Chartered Surveyor and commercial estates specialist with experience in land management, property negotiations and transactions, strategic estate development and stakeholder negotiation. His career includes senior roles across the commercial property sector.

NB. At the time of print; vacancies remain for Environment Trustee and IWA representative Trustee.

Trustees who resigned in 2025/26

We thank the following trustees who resigned or are due to retire during 2025 and 2026:



Jeff March

Land and Property
Resigned 2025



Chris Bailey

Construction and operations
Resigned 2026



Bob Williams

Finance and Funding
Resigned 2026

Trustee terms of office

The Trust's current Memorandum & Articles of Association (MAA) do not specify a maximum term of office for trustees. As part of the governance modernisation taking place in 2026, the updated MAA will introduce a formal expectation that trustees serving more than three consecutive terms will be subject to additional scrutiny and justification by the Board. This change reflects Charity Commission best practice and ensures that trustee appointments continue to support strong, effective and accountable governance.

About us

Patrons and ambassadors



President
Eric Wood

Co-founder of LHCRT in 1988. Our progress is built on his work and that of the original founding members and volunteers.



Vice President
Sir David Suchet CBE

Internationally renowned actor on stage and screen, and longstanding narrowboater, who has supported us since 2000.

Patrons

Our patrons lend their name to LHCRT and, because they are well known and influential, they're able to get media coverage, make useful connections and help bring in funding.



Chris Coburn MBE

Retired developer of environmentally sound boating products and restoration enthusiast.



Robbie Cumming

World-renowned narrowboater and filmmaker, star of TV's Canal Boat Diaries.

Ambassadors

Our ambassadors help to raise awareness of the Trust and encourage others to get involved.



Steve Court

Canal content creator



Carl Knibb

Artist



Nigel Hallam

Canal content creator



Kat McCullough

Canal trader



Dr Roy McFarlane FRSL

Poet, playwright.



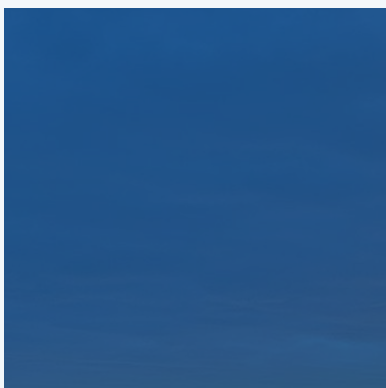
Joss Musgrove-Knibb

Author, poet, historian.

All these roles are voluntary and unpaid. We are immensely grateful to each of them for all they do in support of LHCRT.



Lichfield & Hatherton
Canals Restoration Trust



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