



Firstly, I would like to thank Trotton Parish Council for last years' generous grant of £250 as you will see from the attached accounts these grants are essential for the continued operation of the Midhurst Community Bus (MCB).

Operation of MCB - a summary

The Pandemic has resulted in a considerable disruption to the services of MyBus we were unable to operate during the lockdown periods and may of our passengers fall into the vulnerable category and have been very cautious about using all forms of transport. I am pleased to announce that since Christmas we have been operating a near normal service and numbers are slowly but steadily increasing.

The closure of the Barclays Bank has increased the demand for the monthly service to Petersfield.

The Todd Trust uses the bus on every Monday and most Thursday afternoons this has proved a very popular service over the past two years with several of our regular passengers transferring to this service as their deteriorating mobility has resulted in them not being able to use the regular service.

Volunteers' numbers have proved resilient despite several having had to step down for health reasons and we are currently seeking extra escorts.

The Trustees are currently reviewing the Bus service & timetable, the routes have been unchanged for many years, however, the Pandemic has altered the use of the bus and increasingly we are being used by the locals in our villages and the Trustees are looking at ways to improve the service.

Finances

The most recent accounts are attached for your information. In February 2021 a replacement bus was purchased, and we expect this to be in service until 2027 at which point I expect we will be looking at providing an all-electric replacement.

Most of our sponsors were unable to continue during the pandemic and we are currently looking for new sponsors.

It is therefore essential that grants from bodies such as yourselves are maintained and hopefully increased in order to maintain the current service.

The significant increase in Fuel Costs is a concern as currently there are no indications that our transport grants are to be increased to cover this extra cost.

The establishment of a Community Hub at the Midhurst Community Hospital site has been delayed because of the pandemic but I can let you know that the viability work associated with this project is ongoing and when this is complete a decision on the future should be made.

Please let me know if you require any further information, I am also happy to attend a Parish Council Meeting, if required, to discuss activities and future plans.

Best Wishes

Paul Mellings

Chairman Midhurst Community Bus

01730 816419

07783414568

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

- For the year ended -

31 MARCH 2022

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

TRUSTEES

P Mellings (Chairman)

A Mardle (Treasurer)

L Grocott

R Hill

G Jackson

REGISTERED OFFICE

Greens Court

West Street

Midhurst

West Sussex

GU29 9NQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

R Morrison

Chinthurst

June Lane

Midhurst

West Sussex

GU29 9EW

CHARITY NUMBER

1162657

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

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THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year to 31 March 2022. The financial statements comply with the current statutory requirements and with the requirements of the Constitution dated 14 July 2015, the Charity's governing document.

The Midhurst Community Bus (MCB) has been registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) (Registration Number 1162657).

OBJECTS OF MCB

As set out in the Constitution, the objects of MCB are to provide transport facilities in Midhurst, West Sussex, and its neighbourhood ("area of benefit") for people who have special need of such facilities because they are elderly, poor or disabled, people with young children or those living in isolated areas where there are no adequate public transport facilities.

In furtherance of the above but not further or otherwise, MCB has the following powers:

- (a) to borrow money and to charge the whole or any part of its property as security for the repayment of the money borrowed. The CIO must comply as appropriate with Sections 124 and 125 of the Charities Act 2011 if it wishes to mortgage land;
- (b) to buy, take on lease or in exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any property and to maintain and equip it for use;
- (c) to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any or all of the property belonging to the CIO. In exercising this power the CIO must comply as appropriate with sections 117 and 119-123 of the Charities Act 2011;
- (d) to employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the CIO. The CIO may employ or remunerate a Charity Trustee only to the extent that it is permitted to do so by clause 6 (Benefits and payments to Charity Trustees and connected persons) and provided it complies with the conditions of that clause;
- (e) to deposit or invest funds, employ a professional fund manager and arrange for the investments or other property of the CIO to be held in the name of a nominee in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as the trustees of a trust are permitted to do by the Trustee Act 2000.

THE TRUSTEES AND THEIR POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

During the period under review the Trustees of MCB have been;

Paul Mellings (Chairman)
Alain Mardle (Honorary Treasurer)
Lea Grocott
Rowena Hill
George Jackson

The Trustees met five times during the period.

The Trustees have established a General Purposes Committee to manage the day-to-day activities of the MCB.

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES – CONTINUED

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Over the period of this report the principal activity of MCB has been the operation of the Midhurst Yellow Bus (MYBus) in Midhurst and the surrounding villages. During the period restrictions caused by the pandemic meant that MYBus had to suspend or restrict its normal services. This included its work with the Sir Geoffrey Todd Trust on provision of a shopping service for individuals with mobility challenges. Full bus operations restarted in August but passenger numbers have been low as people have been reluctant to travel.

The outings started in September with trips to take passengers to Petersfield so that they can visit a bank. It is hoped that the outing programme will expand over the coming year.

West Sussex County Council has continued to pay the concessionary fares at the pre lockdown levels, which provided essential revenue.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to our Volunteers without which we would not be able to provide the services that we do.

FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Largely thanks to the generous sponsorship of local organisations and business, and the support of parish and town councils, together with West Sussex County Council, the period reported on in the Financial Statements has been a positive one for MCB.

RESERVES POLICY

It is the policy of MCB that unrestricted net current assets (debtors & prepayments, plus cash at bank, less current liabilities) which have not been designated for a specific purpose should be maintained at a level equivalent to six months' forecast expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue MCB's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The coming months continue to bring a large amount of uncertainty.

The trustees believe that existing sources of income will continue to suffer. The economic downturn is having an impact on sponsorship and donations. It is not known whether West Sussex County Council will continue to provide the annual operating grant.

The transfers of funds between Unrestricted funds, Designated and Restricted funds are:

Net current assets for Unrestricted funds are £5,078, this being six months' forecast expenditure (Forecast annual running expenses excluding depreciation are £10,000).

The balance carried forward on the Contingency fund is £7,500 which represents a reserve to cover potential additional costs and decrease in income over the coming months as there is still a lot of uncertainty.

£1,500 has been transferred to the Vehicle Replacement Reserve fund which now stands at £25,500.

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONTINUED)

RISK FACTORS

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the association is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:-

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Trustees are satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission.

P Mellings
By Order of the Trustees

Date: xxxxxx 2022

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 5 to 11.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:-

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

R Morrison
Chinthurst
June Lane
Midhurst
West Sussex
GU29 9EW

Dated: 2022

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:	1.3					
Donations & legacies		3,662	0	0	3,662	31,723
Charitable activities		4,740	0	0	4,740	4,516
Other trading activities		1,800	0	0	1,800	0
Investment income		<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>198</u>
	2	<u>10,225</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,225</u>	<u>36,437</u>
Expenditure on:	1.4					
Charitable activities	3	<u>20,767</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>20,767</u>	<u>12,964</u>
Net incoming (outgoing) resources for the year before transfers		(10,542)	0	0	(10,542)	23,473
Transfers between funds	8	<u>(1,500)</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net incoming (outgoing) resources for the year		(12,042)	1,500	0	(10,542)	23,473
Fund balances brought forward		<u>55,165</u>	<u>31,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>86,665</u>	<u>63,192</u>
Fund balances carried forward	8	<u>43,123</u>	<u>33,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>76,123</u>	<u>86,665</u>

The notes on pages 7 to 11 form part of these financial statements

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS	5	38,045	50,727
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	6	2,161	8,911
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>36,217</u>	<u>27,334</u>
		38,378	36,245
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	7	<u>(300)</u>	<u>(307)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>38,078</u>	<u>35,938</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		76,123	86,665
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after one year		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>76,123</u>	<u>86,665</u>
REPRESENTED BY:			
Unrestricted funds:			
General fund		43,123	55,165
Designated fund		33,000	31,500
Restricted funds		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total funds	8	<u>76,123</u>	<u>86,665</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on xxxxxx 2022 and signed on their behalf by:-

P Mellings
Chairman

The notes on pages 7 to 11 form part of these financial statements

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 Basis of Accounting

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and with the Charities Act 2011.

1.2 Funds

MCB reviews incoming resources to determine whether any funds should be treated as restricted. Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in Note 10.

The Trustees have the power to set unrestricted funds aside for specific purposes. These funds are known as designated funds. The purposes and uses of the designated funds are set out in Note 8.

1.3 Income

Donations, legacies, grants and similar income are accounted for on a receipts basis.

Income from operating activities in furtherance of the objects of the charity are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Investment income represents interest on bank deposits and is accounted for on a receipts basis.

1.4 Expenditure

Direct charitable expenditure represents the running costs of the vehicle and the costs of administration of MCB. This is accounted for on an accruals basis.

1.5 Unpaid Trustees & Volunteers

The Trustees are unpaid in their capacity as Trustees. Neither this, nor the value of contributions by volunteers, is reflected within the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.6 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Motor vehicles - over seven years on a writing-down basis

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

2. INCOME

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Donations & legacies:				
Donations, grants & sponsorship	1,145	0	1,145	29,204
Legacy	0	0	0	0
Memberships	17	0	17	19
Revenue support grant	2,500	0	2,500	2,500
Amortisation of loan	0	0	0	0
	<u>3,662</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,662</u>	<u>31,723</u>
Charitable activities:				
Fares (including concessions)	<u>4,740</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,740</u>	<u>4,516</u>
Other trading activities:				
Fund-raising	400	0	400	0
Hirings	1,400	0	1,400	0
	<u>1,800</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,800</u>	<u>0</u>
Investment income:				
Interest on bank deposits	<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>198</u>
Total income	<u>10,225</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,225</u>	<u>36,437</u>

Major sources of income for the year include:

Revenue support grant of £2,500 from West Sussex County Council.

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

3. EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Charitable activities:				
Vehicle running expenses	4,970	0	4,970	3,190
Vehicle depreciation	12,682	0	12,682	4,140
Loss on sale of vehicle	0		0	4,230
Telephone	283	0	283	283
Print, post & stationery	19	0	19	0
Marketing	1,353	0	1,353	240
Professional fees	460	0	460	570
Sundry expenses	1,000	0	1,000	212
Training	0	0	0	74
Total expenditure	<u>20,767</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>20,767</u>	<u>12,964</u>

4. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year MCB reimbursed 4 (2021 – 4) trustees a total of £1,343 (2021 - £816) for expenses incurred on behalf of MCB.

Goodale Mardle Limited, a company of which A Mardle is a director and shareholder, charged MCB £300 (2021 - £300) for professional services provided to MCB. This is permitted by the Constitution.

5. FIXED ASSETS

	Total £
Cost:	
At 1 April 2021	50,727
Additions	0
Disposals	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>50,727</u>
Depreciation:	
At 1 April 2021	0
Charge for the year	12,682
Disposals	<u>0</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>12,682</u>
Net book value:	
At 31 March 2022	<u>38,045</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>50,727</u>

THE MIDHURST COMMUNITY BUS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6. DEBTORS

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	0	0
VAT repayable	221	7,124
Prepayments & other debtors	<u>1,940</u>	<u>1,787</u>
	<u>2,161</u>	<u>8,911</u>

7. CREDITORS – amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	0	7
Other creditors	0	0
Accruals	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
	<u>300</u>	<u>307</u>

8. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
General fund	55,165	10,225	(20,767)	(1,500)	43,123
Designated funds:					
Vehicle replacement reserve	24,000	0	0	1,500	25,500
Contingency fund	7,500	0	0	0	7,500
Restricted funds:					
Vehicle replacement grants	0	0	0	0	0
Total funds	<u>86,665</u>	<u>10,225</u>	<u>(20,767)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>76,123</u>



I am writing on behalf of ERA - Eco Rother Action, to ask if your Parish Council might consider sponsoring a project we are very keen to get on with?

Earthwatch is a reputable organisation who have set up and administer Freshwater Watch. Under this scheme they train members of community groups, and others, to go out and test the health of their local rivers. As we know that the Riven Rother is often edged by land that is farmed intensively, and we also know there is an issue with untreated waste water, sewage, ending up in our rivers, this would seem to be a worthwhile endeavour for us to be involved in. More information can be found at <https://earthwatch.org.uk/get-involved/freshwater-watch> , but, in outline, we would be deciding upon 3 spots along the river to return to monthly (or in between were we to be advised that some difference had been noted in the river) to record the turbidity, the nitrate and phosphate content, as well as recording surrounding vegetation, water flow etc.

Our records are formally recorded on their online system but we would also be making them easily available on our website, ecorotheraction.org . We know there are some who like to wild swim in the Rother, we also know that water is extracted for human use further down this water system – any insight into the health of the river would give valuable information. It would also allow locals to argue from a position of knowledge when tackling any issues in the future.

ERA has volunteers ready to train and carry out this work.

Now to the minor detail of the costs . . .

Initial training and set up costs would be around £400, with an annual renewal of £200 plus supplies, which we estimate will be around £60pa. So far ERA has raised £360 towards these costs.

Ideally we are hoping that local parish councils for whom river quality is relevant will commit to an annual contribution for as long as ERA continues to do this work, or as long as that PC considers the work worthwhile and relevant to them. We would also be very interested to know of any other sources of funding that might be available and that you are aware of.

ERA is also aware of another river monitoring scheme <https://www.riverflies.org/rp-riverfly-monitoring-initiative> which is aimed at anglers but must also provide some insight into the general health of the river. We are taking advice on both schemes but the Freshwater Watch one would seem to be more appropriate and so it is this one that we are seeking pledges towards the costs, as outlined above.

Thank you for considering the above.

Veronica

Veronica Carter

Chair, Eco Rother Action



Trotton Common / SWT liaison

Update for parish council – May 2022 meeting

I summarise the interaction I have had with Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) on behalf of the Parish Council.

The first discussions were with the SWT Chief Executive in July 2021. This was to establish the framework within which we were working. This is set out in the extract below from the SWT:

- The Trust will engage with, respect and recognise the rights of the local community and commoners specifically through the Parish Council and its representative.

We are doing this through the mechanism of the management committee. We had our first management committee meeting for some time recently, which unfortunately Trotton PC did not attend. There were two representatives from Iping and Stedham PC present, who were very positive and found the time useful.

- This management forum is not merely a sop (i.e. a thing of no great value given or done as a concession to appease someone whose concerns are not being met or given due regard).

Following this I met with the officer handling the local commons Steve Webster (Reserve Manager) and reiterated our desire to work with the SWT to help achieve their aims whilst recognising and respecting the views and rights of local people. Whilst the SWT owns and runs the commons they do come with historic rights of open access (not restricted to footpaths) and specific commoner rights. These rights supersede that of the SWT and must be respected. It was noted the fencing was contentious when erected and accordingly had various conditions or 'understandings' attached.

There have followed various interactions with the Reserve Manager covering the following headings:

1. Commoners' rights

SWT wish to ban commoner Neil Ryder from cutting wood on the commons, and cite his use of a chain saw as being the reason. SWT advised this was due to their insurance liability as Mr Ryder has not been trained by the SWT to use a chain saw.

SWT were reminded that commoners rights have been in existence for a considerable time and cannot be over ridden by SWT. He has a right to cut with no specific description on how this be done.

It was suggested that Mr Ryder grant an absolute indemnity to SWT which would remove any risk or liability.

SWT have advised that is not something they wish to consider. No further suggestions or response has been received.

2. Vandalism

The Reserve Manager has noted multiple instances of vandalism.

On further enquiry this appears to relate predominantly to gates and specifically to damaged bolts. Having looked at these myself I suggested that it was not vandalism but merely due to the design of the gate mechanism where the force leveraged onto the 'stop' bolts bends them. It would appear clear there is no vandalism.

The Reserve Manager also reports much vandalism to signs. On further investigation it appears these signs are specifically the ones put up warning of cattle present and therefore the need to shut gates. It is noted that during this time there were no cattle present for several months.

Whilst no one condones vandalism I reminded them of the original commitment of the SWT (when fencing the common) to ensure gates stayed open unless required for the minimal periods that cattle were present. This was to facilitate rightful and continued easy access by riders (avoiding unnecessary dismounts) and walkers. SWT closing gates and erecting signs for months when there were no cattle perhaps 'encouraged' riders to correct the position.

Further, I noted a tendency by SWT to erect multiple signs across the common which did seem unnecessary. The commons are primarily a managed wild area with open access, not a public park. In other words do we really have to have signs branding everything - spend the money on wildlife instead.

The same applies to man made sculptures to enhance the wild area (!).

There were specific concerns of vandalism of the gates fronting the A272. Again on personal inspection I did not see any evidence of vandalism and now understand that it was down to a rotten gate post.

3. Commons management committee.

There has yet to be a date confirmed for a meeting, with Covid cited as the main delay.

In summary, I will endeavour to encourage local interaction with the SWT. However it does feel very much like they see this as a 'them versus us' relationship and despite attempts they do not really want any outside input (or interference as they see it) with their aims.

Happy to change tack/raise anything the PC feels appropriate.

Best regards

Stuart Webster