



Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council
 Email: office@hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk
 Website: www.hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk
 Telephone: 01273 833264

Village Centre
Trinity Road
Hurstpierpoint
West Sussex BN6 9UY

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT APPLICATION (please ensure you are using the correct form)

Please note that this application should be accompanied by a copy of the financial details of the requesting organisation. Where relevant we will need to see account details showing income, expenditure, and the level of balances. If annual accounts are not available, copies of the bank statements or receipts for expenditure should be enclosed.

1.	Name of Organisation	The Monday Group
2.	Name, Address and Status of Contact within the organisation.	Jim Redwood 6, Malthouse Way, Cooksbridge, BN7 3PT Monday Group committee member and fund raising lead
3.	Telephone number and Email Address	[REDACTED]
4.	Is the Organisation a Registered Charity? If yes, then please provide charity number	Yes, reg no: 1197847
5.	Amount of Grant Requested	£500
6.	For what purpose or project is the grant requested, and how does it align with our sustainability strategy? Please be as detailed as possible about how exactly the funds would be spent. If for a specific project, when would you anticipate that to complete/how long would the funds last? (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary).	To support the work of the Monday group maintaining and improving the rights of way network in your area for walkers. See attached information for further details.
7.	What will be the total cost of the project?	Our outgoings for 2023 (the latest year for which our accounts are available) were £27,284. We need to raise funds of this order to maintain our activities. The grant applied for would fund 2 or 3 new stiles or gates or about 10 stile repairs.
8.	If the total cost of the project is more than the grant, how will the residue be financed?	If we do not raise sufficient funds to cover our costs we would initially turn to our balances to fund continued activities. In the long run we would have to limit our activities.

9.	Have you applied for a grant for the same project to another organisation? Ifso, which organisation and how much?	We apply to a number of parish councils and grant-giving organisations, and we also receive contributions from landowners as well as ad hoc donations. At present we have no outstanding grant applications. Turner-Dumbrell Trust normally fund us in the sum of £1,500. See our annual report for 2023 for information and profile of a typical year for fundraising.
10.	Have financial details been enclosed with the grant application?	Our 2023 annual report includes our most recent statement of accounts and is attached with this application.
11.	Please list any other supporting documents that have been included.	Supplementary statement and Annual Report 2023

You may use a separate sheet of paper to submit any other information which you feel will support this application.

Signed Jim Redwood

Date 24/10/24

Please return this completed form, together with all relevant accompanying information to:

Office@hurstpierpoint-pc.gov.uk or via post:

Clerk to the Council

Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council

Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint

West Sussex, BN6 9UY

DATA PROTECTION

We take the protection of your personal data seriously. If you contact or communicate with us we may hold your contact and

other details. We will only use this information for the purposes of carrying out our Council business with you.

We will not pass your details to any other person or organisation without your express permission. We are registered with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office). For details of our full privacy notices please go to our website.

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Parish Council

Grant Application for Monday Group funding

The Monday Group

The Monday group is an organisation of volunteers who build and maintain stiles and other structures providing access for walkers on public rights of way, as well as working to keep them clear of obstructions and overgrowth. We work broadly in the area north of the Downs from Albourne to Ringmer, responding to requests from members of the public, landowners and local authorities. We were awarded the Kings Award for Voluntary Services in 2023 in recognition of the work we do.

We make our own stiles using Sussex green oak, which is attractive, traditional and durable. We have also invested in equipment to make our own timber gates, as part of our programme of installing self-closing or kissing gates where appropriate, to improve access to the countryside for all. Stiles and gates cost between £150-£250 each in materials. We are also constructing causeways to overcome intractable footpath surfaces, subject to financial support being available, as these structures tend to be more costly.

We are entirely dependant on the funds we raise for the work we do, and from donations. We have very few regular donors, so continued fund raising is essential to make sure that the benefits we provide can be maintained.

Our work in Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common

Your parish is at the heart of our area of activity. Over the period 2017-23, of the 37 parishes we have worked in, Hurstpierpoint was our second busiest parish (behind only Ditchling).

In 2024 to date, we have completed the following jobs in your parish:

New Bench	2
Clearance	4
New Causeway	2
New Gate	1
New Stile	1
Stile repair	8
Steps repair	1
Waymark repair	3
Total	22

Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common PC grant application

Our grant application is for a contribution towards our continued activities, based on the track record of our work in your area. The grant applied for, £500, would fund 2 or 3 stiles or gates, or about 10 stile repairs.

The attached report, for 2023 provides the most recent statement of accounts for our organisation. The information above demonstrates the strength of our presence in your parish, and the work we do, year on year, in and for your community. Furthermore, our work more generally is highly likely to benefit the many residents of your parish who walk beyond the parish boundaries in the surrounding countryside.

In terms of the objectives of your sustainability strategy:

- **Help nature to recover**

Encouraging active access to the countryside involves communities in the natural environment, and motivates them to value nature and support its recovery, often through other organisations such as Sussex Wildlife Trust, RSPB, National Trust etc. There is a strong association between walking in the countryside and membership and support for such groups. Also, by working to keep established footpaths in good order and accessible, damage to other parts of the local environment is reduced.

- **Reduce waste.**

We make most of the structures we install from Sussex Green Oak, and they are bespoke to the site to ensure materials are used efficiently. Old structures are either left to rot for wildlife, or in some cases, provide firewood, so little if any is not reused in some form.

- **Increase access to green spaces**

This is central to our work, which ensures the unique footpath network is as accessible as possible to all, to help people get out and enjoy our countryside

- **Reduce carbon emissions**

Walking is a zero carbon-emission activity, apart from the travel to/from walking destinations. Ensuring local footpath networks are open, accessible and well signposted encourages exploration of the local environment and reduces travel dependence.

- **Build resilience**

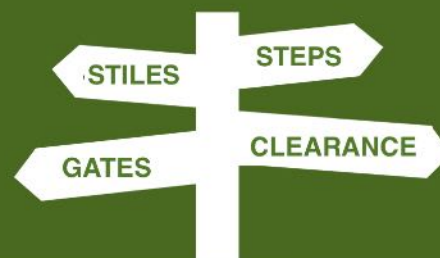
Helping people get out into the countryside provides motivation to keep fit and healthy and has significant long term health benefits. Keeping our footpath network open ensures it is used regularly which in turn leads to continued usage in the long term. Our unique common law footpath heritage has served us well for over a thousand years, and our work helps sustain them for future generations.

Jim Redwood
Monday Group
October 2024

The Monday Group

Voluntary rights of way workers in Sussex

A Charity registered in England No 1197847



Annual Report for year ending 31st December 2023.

Introduction

Another highly successful year for the Group !

Members have continued to turn out regularly, whatever the weather, so they must feel their volunteering is worthwhile. This is confirmed by the very active support received from the general public by way of reporting problems, plaudits for work done, and, of course, donations made. As noted below, wider recognition of the Group's contribution to the local communities comes from the (unexpected) receipt of the Kings Award for Voluntary Services. (KAVS).

The Committee and Trustees met 6 times during the year to conduct the official business of the Group. In doing so, the agenda items requiring action have been reduced by about two thirds, so we can increasingly focus on ensuring the Group continues to meet its objectives from a sound and sustainable basis. The Committee co-opted Martin Gilbert on as Team Leader of the new Tuesday Team and his contribution is much appreciated, as is that of the other Committee members who all participate in the running of the Group.

Special mention should be made of the Team Leaders who put so much work into organising the activities of their teams, in addition to their other tasks.

Annual Report for year ending 31st December 2023.

Group organisation in 2023

The Group's purpose has always been to preserve, maintain and protect Public Rights of Way, and other access routes in the countryside, for the benefit of walkers from the local community and visitors to the area in order to facilitate and encourage their use by all.

Members undertake a wide range of activities including the clearance of undergrowth, the maintenance and improvement of path surfaces, the making, installing and repairing of footpath "furniture" such as stiles, gates, and seating. Way-markers are also supplied and maintained to advertise the routes of the paths.

The initiative to facilitate access to the countryside for less mobile walkers whilst retaining control of stock, (consistent with the policies of most outdoor organisations, including the National Trust and the South Downs National Park Authority), by replacing stiles with gates (or gaps) continues. Paths suitable for the end-to-end removal of stiles, are being identified and several have been accomplished. Gates typically require significantly more maintenance than stiles during their life, so the regular surveying activities across the area incorporate inspections.

The Group has maintained its "Teams" structure working in a core area centred on Ditchling and expanding into nearby areas of East, Mid and West Sussex.



The three Construction teams, building and installing a wide variety of 'structures', each operate out of their own workshop, with the largest one being provided by The Order of St Augustine of the Mercy of Jesus at St Georges Park, Ditchling. The other two workshops are smaller, one being a domestic garage in Cooksbridge and the other, a share of a farm barn in Hurstpierpoint.

It should be noted that much of the work undertaken would be inaccessible without the 4WD transport services generously, and expertly, provided by John Shill and Don Johnson.

The Clearance team, with its sub-group, continues to take on tasks, large or small, across the core area. At times the undergrowth seems to

turn into overgrowth so they are active all year round. They also work regularly with the Turner Dumbrell Trust in keeping the local landmark of Lodge Hill clear and accessible.

During 2023, an additional Central team, working on Tuesdays and based at the St George's workshop, was established to make better use of the facilities there which have been expanded to include specialist machinery including a heavy duty mortiser, a bench saw and a mechanical plane. This has allowed research and experimentation in gate manufacture to achieve a reliable and cost effective design that retains the visual appeal of our traditional oak stiles.

Our activities in 2023

A total of 291 jobs were completed in 2023, a 20% increase on the previous year's total of 241.

The programme of gate replacement, partly funded by the Friends of the South Downs, is reflected in the increase in gate installations from 2 in 2022 to 12 in 2023.

Correspondingly, gate repairs are also up (from 4 to 11).

The increased capacity of the Clearance Team has increased the total completed clearance jobs from 51 to 68.

The increase in causeway completions (10 to 16) reflects our policy of improving intractable footpath surfaces where funding allows.

The Group worked in 25 parishes including some more easterly parishes where our work has previously been limited, such as Alciston, Arlington, Buxted and Laughton. This work usually arises from problems that have been reported through our website.

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Job Type	Number of jobs		Job Type	Number of jobs	
	2023	2022		2023	2022
New Stile	26	30	Gate Repair	11	4
New Gate	12	2	Stile Repair	74	86
New Causeway	16	10	Causeway Repair	13	12
New Waymark / Fingerpost	27	15	Stairway Repair	8	2
New Bench	8	4	Bench Repair	5	2
New Stairway	4	3	Waymark /Fingerpost Repair	16	13
New Planter	0	1	Stile Removal	2	4
Clearance	68	51	Other Work	1	2
			Totals	291	241

Parish	Number of jobs		Parish	Number of jobs		Parish	Number of jobs	
	2023	2022		2023	2022		2023	2022
Ditchling	64	42	Westmeston	6	20	Lindfield Rural	2	0
Chailey	29	10	Laughton	4	0	Horsted Keynes	1	0
East Chiltington	29	11	Little Horsted	4	0	St John Without	1	1
Hurstpierpoint	27	38	Streat	4	15	Glynde	0	2
Hassocks	26	26	Albourne	3	2	Newtimber	0	1
Plumpton	22	27	Alciston	3	0	Rodmell	0	6
Wivelsfield	19	11	Arlington	3	0	Shermanbury	0	2
Hamsey	10	6	Buxted	3	0	Twineham	0	3
Burgess Hill	8	3	C u c k f i e l d Rural	3	4	Withyham	0	1
Ringmer	8	4	C u c k f i e l d Urban	3	0	Total Jobs	291	241
Barcombe	6	6	Pycombe	3	0	Total Parishes	25	22
East Sussex	220	165	West Sussex	71	75	National Park	115	120

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Team Reports

MG Central

Brian Davies, Team Leader, writes:

2023 was another consistently good year for the Central team. The membership remained constant at seventeen – no one left and no new faces. This means that the team have further developed their skills and knowledge, enabling them to work even more independently in their sub-teams. Furthermore five of the central team are on the Management Committee.



About 75% of our time is spent on repairs - to signposts, steps, stiles (farmers and MG's), small bridges and causeways/boardwalks. The rest constitutes new constructions of these plus improving paths with Type 1 MOT. Major surfacing projects were undertaken, and are ongoing, between Lodge Hill and Oldland Windmill and in Scrase Valley Nature Reserve in Lindfield.

During the year the Friends of the South Downs pledged £5000 to pay for replacing stiles with, preferably wooden, kissing gates, in order to improve access. The first wooden kissing gates were made by members with the required carpentry skills. The was taken further by team members Martin Gilbert & Jon Wright who not only started a Tuesday group but also arranged to equip our workshop with the proper tools for making the gates. This enables gates to be made to any size or design at 1/2 the cost of a retail one. The Group have now made and installed 9 gates, all of them in attempts to make whole paths stile free.

My thanks also to David Bishop and Adrian White for searching Parishes for defects and sending in their findings of repairs needed.

We also repaired a community bench near the centre of Ditchling and renovated the information panel at Jacobs Post, an historic landmark in Ditchling Common, near St George's.

MG Clearance

Alan Hoare, Clearance Team Leader reports

2023 saw the 2022 split of the Clearance team into two separate working groups to accommodate additional volunteers, becoming normal practice, and only a small number of the larger 'jobs' saw the teams working together.

Steve Toomey who leads the second work group identified and managed much of their activities in 2023 however overall coordination of the two teams and ensuring work identified by the general public through the M.G. web site is undertaken, continues to be managed overall by Alan Hoare, alongside his management of the first work group.

One location that has the scope for the two groups to combine is the work done on Lodge Hill in Ditchling on behalf of the Turner Dumbrell Foundation (TDF). The Monday Group has been maintaining the main footpaths on Lodge Hill for many years and over the last two years the Trustees have asked for our help in the wider tasks of brush clearance and creation of temporary access paths to support the work they are engaged with, together with South Downs National Park Authority to establish a Habitat



Assessment and 5 year Ecological Management Plan for Lodge Hill (2024-2028). They look to see a restoration of habitats and hopefully a resurgence in wildlife over the next five years and the Monday Group are pleased to be in a position to help with this valuable project, centred in Ditchling, the traditional 'home' of the M.G. Much of this additional clearance work for Turner Dumbrell Foundation takes place during the winter period when the die back of grasses and brambles means there is less work required on clearing normal footpaths, so it fits well in the team's annual workload.

Clearance is the main work we can offer to new Monday Group volunteers and for the last two years we have seen a significant churn in the Clearance workforce as new volunteers join the two groups and in certain cases decide that it

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isn't for them and stop attending regularly. Whilst this is understandable, it does mean that management of the weekly jobs has become more challenging than in the past when we had a smaller but stable body of volunteers who had worked together for some time and with the exception of holidays and illness could be expected to turn up each week.

Taken together with what appears to be a growth in the demand for clearance work in new areas to the West towards Henfield, where the M.G. has not previously undertaken regular clearance work., and the very healthy interest shown through the web site from individuals who want to join the M.G., 2024 offers a number of challenges and opportunities for the Clearance teams to consider.

MG East

Jim Redwood, Committee representative for the team, writes:

Once more, the East team ranged far and wide over our area, with jobs in Albourne at the far West, and Arlington at the far East, taking in Buxted, Horsted Keynes, Little Horsted and Alciston and many other parishes in between. We started the year by completing the replacement of notice boards on Chailey Common for the Friends of Chailey Common, and our varied work continued with the first work the Monday Group has done for the Landmark Trust, at their estate around Laughton Place. Other firsts included work in Alciston and Arlington parishes, including a replacement stile on the Cuckmere Pilgrim's Way, photographed here with Chloe Burrell, Alciston, PC footpaths officer:



The Team have been engaged for extensive work on the East Sussex Golf Club course at Little Horsted, and also by Horsted Parish Council, who have commissioned bespoke, blacksmith-made kissing gates for installation across the parish.

We are a small team, ably led by Jim Edwards, who makes most of what we install. Our thanks go to him and also to John Shill for the expert and generous use of his Range Rover which gets us and our trailer and equipment where we need to be each week.

While the Monday Group as a whole mourned the loss of Harold Rowling our founder in 2023, his loss was particularly keenly felt by the East Group, as he was our team leader for a great many years. He attended and supervised work on site well into his nineties. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

MG West

John Card, Team Leader, writes:

The Monday Group West team, have had a busy 2023 across the area working for Burgess Hill and Hassocks Councils in particular. They have been asked to repair or replace a number of benches across Bedelands. In Danny they have erected benches as well as maintaining stiles and benches.

They have erected seven new benches and seats and repaired a further five; repaired one stile and one gate; replaced a squeeze stile; built a replacement bridge and carried out maintenance on local walkways. Some of this work has been in collaboration with the East Group which increased manpower for heavy jobs.

The team is already preparing a lot of work for Bedelands in 2024.

Communications and Technology

The Monday Group uses IT to support our operations in a variety of ways:

- The website advertises our activities and facilitates the public to contacting us and donating.
- The mobile phone also assists the public to contact us.
- "Dropbox" gives secure document sharing and long-term archives.
- Various Mondaygroup.org email accounts provide external communication channels.

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IT has been stable during 2023 with the exception of the website that has had ongoing reliability issues with the PayPal interface. As of February 2024, we have a revised donations page interfacing to a new PayPal account that supports Gift Aid adding 20% of value to qualifying donations.

The web site has been constantly updated to keep it current, including :

- Recent Work
- 2024 Calendar
- KAVS information
- A tribute to Harold Rowling

Membership

Active Membership has been increased slightly to 52 workers (2022 was 49) through the continued expansion of the two clearance teams and the creation of a small team focusing on gate production and using the Central workshop on a Tuesday morning.

The 'waiting list' of potential new members continues to receive regular additions through the web site and has increased to 17, of which 5 were in December (11 in 2022), however there has been a degree of 'churn' in membership of the Clearance teams during 2023 with new members being drawn from the waiting list, and consequently all the existing waiting list members first registered an interest in the last 12 months. Sadly, whilst we would love to offer anyone with an interest the opportunity to work with us on the Sussex rights of way, the truth is that expanding beyond the current numbers would require significant changes to the organisation and management of the Monday Group which we feel would change its nature significantly. Consequently we have decided to advise those with an interest in joining us that we will re-open the waiting list for new applicants once we have been able to accommodate some of those already on the list.

We offer guidance about other local environmental groups, typically operating under the management of Rangers employed by local authorities or Trusts.

The Group is grateful for the ongoing support of our 24 Retired Members (23 in 2022), sadly limited capacity at some meetings like the Christmas lunch arranged for us again in the refectory at St George's by Pat Kent precludes the inclusion of the retired group however we look forward to meeting up with many of them at our Annual General Meetings held at Westmeston Parish Hall.

Very sadly, in October, the founder of the Monday Group, and its leading light for over 50 years, Harold Rowling MBE passed away in his 101st year. Unfortunately we were not aware of the KAVS Award at the time but he would have been immensely proud of this culmination of his many achievements. At his request, there are no plans for a formal physical memorial to his achievements however we have published a tribute to the impact he has had on both the Monday Group and his other local communities on the Monday Group's website at : <https://mondaygroup.org/harold-rowling-and-the-monday-group/>



"His legacy is the enjoyment of countless walkers over the years (and for many years to come) of the paths the Monday Group continue to make accessible, the moments of wonder and exhilaration enjoyed by many in our beautiful countryside, and the secure future of our rights of way network, the envy of walkers from far and wide".

Unfortunately another Monday Group Centenarian: Tom Meekings, who only retired from active service in 2022, has had to go into care following a stroke earlier in 2023. Many of the Central Group will remember his painstaking guidance when assembling stiles and we all wish him well.

The Monday Group notes with sadness the passing of Tom Walker, a stalwart member of the East Group, who passed away in February of this year (2024). He is fondly remembered as a wonderful friend and colleague.

An Active Member of the Clearance Team, David Uzzaman, passed away suddenly this March. As the expert in the art of the Long Scythe, he encouraged other members to take up its use

The King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Early in 2023, we received a visit from the Lord Lieutenant's office in response to a nomination by Ditchling residents for the King's Award for Voluntary Service.



In October the Committee was advised that the Group was one of 262 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups from across the UK and Channel Islands to receive this prestigious award in 2023.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to benefit their communities. As the Queen's Award, It was created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and, following his accession, His Majesty The King emphasised his desire to continue the Award.

"Their work, along with others from across the UK, reminds us of all the ways fantastic volunteers are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them.

The award will be formally presented by the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex after the Group's AGM in April. This is a real and lasting recognition of the impact the Group makes to the local area and a sign of the appreciation of those local communities. It is something we are really proud to receive.

Plaudits

These are some of the comments received from appreciative walkers through our website in 2023:

"I am the Secretary of a Ramblers Group. We have just returned from a surprisingly dry holiday break staying in Thakeham. On several walks in the area we came across your beautiful gates and stiles that were remarkable and really made the experience very enjoyable.

Thank you very much for the excellent work that you do."

"Thank you for letting me know you have been out to Horsted Keynes to fix the stile. I did in fact go that way yesterday, and saw that someone had put something in place as a temporary fix. I have found a lovely 6 mile route from Ardingly round towards Horsted Keynes and plan to take other runners over there. It's good to know we won't be struggling the next time we go that way."



"Just wanted to say 'thank you' for Lenny's Path between Northease and Rodmell. I was walking part of the Ouse Valley Way today and Lenny's Path saved me having to dodge traffic on the C7. I assume Lenny's Path is new. I did the same walk last year and didn't notice it. Much appreciated, either way".

"Over many years I have had the pleasure of using many stiles on walks with your logo on them but now that I am restricted to casual strolls I was delighted this week to find seats erected by yourselves along Hammonds Ridge meadow. So beautifully placed that we could enjoy the wild life meadows. Thank you from a very grateful user."

"The donation came from the Hassocks Community Runners who held a quiz night to raise money specifically for the Monday group. We love to get out running around the local area and are so grateful for all the work your organisation does towards maintaining the footpaths and stiles to enable us to do this. We use the footpaths around Hassocks to walk the dogs and are so pleased with all of the wonderful work you do."

"I have just been told of your excellent work on the bridleway at Oldlands Mill. A bulletin about it has been sent to all our members and on their behalf I would very much like to thank you. We have noticed your good work for years as we walk the footpaths over to Ditchling daily with our dog. The improvement works through the woods between Oldland Mill and the top of Lodge Hill Lane are excellent."

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Accounts

Income

	2023		2022	
Source	Sum	Percentage	Sum	Percentage
Contributions for work done	£10,662	35%	£10,562	35%
Clubs & Other Organisations	£8,106	27%	£7,725	25%
Personal Donations	£6,379	21%	£6,358	21%
Parish Councils	£3,500	11%	£3,600	12%
Calendars	£1,054	3%	£1,012	3%
Other Sources	£616	2%	£340	1%
Memberships	£245	1%	£225	1%
Bird Boxes	£23	0%	£552	2%
Total	£30,585	100%	£30,374	100%

Income for 2023 was very similar to 2022 (£30,585 for 2023, £30,374 for 2022 with consistency across the individual sources.

Income for work done is similar over the two years (£10,662 - 2023, £10,562 - 2022), and also again the largest income category. Most of this category of work is for private owners or estates who value our work maintaining their stiles and gates durably and attractive. It also includes work for the Landmark Trust for the first time, replacing stiles on their estate at Laughton Place. Other dedicated funding includes the Lindfield Society for the Scrase Valley stream-side project and Wivelsfield PC for the refurbishment at Jacobs Post. This category of income includes our continued work with the South Downs Trust, in which we replace stiles with gates in the National Park, with the Trust funding the materials.



Our income also included donations in memoriam. This included £750 raised in memory of Nick Harwood, a local walker, and the Turner-Dumbrell Trust made a donation of £1,000 in memory of our founder Harold Rowling. The Ditchling Footpaths Association, also founded by Harold and historically the precursor to the Monday Group, has been dormant for several years and, on his passing, decided to wind itself up. The balance of their funds, nearly £80, was donated to the Group early in 2024

Organisations who funded us during the year include our regular benefactors, the Turner-Dumbrell Trust, as well as the Wates Family Trust, Hurstpierpoint Coop, Michael Bell Brand Communications, The Ramblers Association, Brighton and Hove Ramblers, Brighton and Hove Womens Running Group and the Lewes Footpaths Group. We are grateful to all.

The Ditchling Ball was once again a most generous benefactor, donating £1,500.

Thanks are due again to Nikki Chapman of Ditchling, who once more made and sold calendars with her own photographs, raising £1,054 for our funds.

We are also grateful to all the Parish Councils who supported us with grants, including from Ditchling Parish Council, Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks Parish Council, Westmeston Parish Council, Streat Parish Meeting, Chailey Parish Council and Plumpton Parish Council.

Total income from stile sponsorship in 2023 was £1,760 and included sponsorship for gates for the first time. This was a significant increase on 2022 (£1,157 for 2022).

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Although we are not due to make a Gift Aid claim yet, the appropriate declarations from private donors are being collected where practicable and the on-line donations system has been adapted to gather declarations from those donating through the website and PayPal.

Expenditure

	2023		2022	
Materials	£18,264	67%	£13,669	68%
Tools	£5,197	19%	£2,386	12%
Mileage	£1,128	4%	£1,435	7%
Overheads	£2,696	10%	£2,482	12%
Total	£27,284	100%	£19,972	100%

The largest part of our expenditure is on materials: wood, screws, nails etc. and we continue to use sustainable green oak for most of our work, with an average life of about 15 years depending on how wet the location is. The detailed machining needed to manufacture gates requires specific tools which struggle with the hardness of oak. Accordingly pressure treated softwood is the material of choice for gates at the moment.

The cost of oak for our standard stile has increased recently to £220, whilst the cost of wood for an average repair to a stile is about £50. Depending on dimensions, a kissing gate can cost up to £250 but this is significantly cheaper than commercially available alternatives of lesser quality. We use purpose designed decking timber on our causeways / boardwalks, with oak frames for longevity to make them less slippery in very muddy locations. A 10ft section costs around £120.

It should be noted that last year the Committee pledged £5,000 of our reserves to be spent on surfacing improvements; MOT and boardwalks. This has not yet been fully spent and we are continuing with the work to fulfil this commitment.

Overall expenditure in 2023 increased by 36% on 2022. This followed an increase of 10% from 2021 to 2022). This was partly driven by significant cost inflation in building materials, but also the additional materials purchased, due to higher output. The overall increase in expenditure also reflects a significant further investment in tools, (£2,386 in 2022 to £5,197 in 2023) including the mortiser and other machinery to support our new policy of gate making.

Please note that Year-on-Year variations, such as occasional stocking up, can cause significant increases to comparative figures . For instance, no polymer wood was purchased in 2022, but a single order was made in 2023 amounting to £771. Timber and hardcore costs were both up by a third from 2022 to 2023.

Memorial plaques were up, reflecting more sponsorship, but these costs are covered by the sponsorship donations.

Mileage costs were down in 2023 compared to 2022, but not by a significant margin. (£1,435 in 2022 to £1,128 in 2023).

Overall, once more, our overheads are consistently small. In fact, in 2023 90% of all our expenditure went on materials, tools and mileage, compared to 88% in 2022, and all of these costs are directly related to our work in the field. Our overheads in 2023 were just 10% of expenditure which is consistent with our policy of ensuring that the majority of the funds we receive are invested in improving paths and structures for walkers.

The overheads include the cost of insurance cover for the Group, transaction charges on PayPal donations, printing and stationery, web maintenance and the installation of an electricity meter at St Georges.

The Monday Group benefits significantly from the support of St George's Estate, Ditchling Common, through the generous arrangements for us to use a workshop and storage facilities on their estate, Lewes District Council also



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support us by providing rent free use of 2 garages in Cooksbridge for storage of a trailer and materials. Our West team also benefits from rent free use of a barn at Danworth Farm.

We are very grateful for this continuing support, but we continue to be prudent about future risks. For instance, Lewes District Council is currently consulting on proposals to develop the garage court in Cooksbridge where our garages are located. It is possible, therefore that alternative storage provision might have to be found at some time in the future. Our reserves policy below addresses this risk.

Reserves

We wish to build sufficient resilience into the Charity finances to allow for unforeseen expenditure or shortfalls in income on an ongoing basis.

Having considered the current reserves position and projected risks, the Committee and Trustees consider that it would be prudent to maintain a minimum unrestricted reserve of at least £25,000 to meet such eventualities. This figure will be reviewed annually.

At the discretion of the Committee and Trustees these reserves are invested in appropriate interest bearing accounts.

Plans for Future Periods

Looking to the future, we see that the initiative to make footpaths more accessible by removing stiles or replacing them with kissing gates along their entire length has already met with public approval. Several other paths suitable for such improvement have been identified and negotiations with the landowners are underway.

Driven by public demand and as a result of the increasing enclosure of footpaths leading to excessive wear, there is likely to be an increase in surfacing activity either by way of raised walkways or by infill with clean, approved materials.

To provide additional manufacturing capacity for gates, walkways and our traditional stiles, agreement has been reached to open the central workshops on Tuesdays as well as Mondays. This could also provide for an increase in surveying activity by which we are proactive in identifying opportunities for repair or improvement.



NOTE : The formal Annual Report and Accounts in Charities Commission format will be available on request or can be downloaded from the Charities Commission website later in 2024.