BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Report and Financial Statements

Year ended: 31st March 2026

Charity No: 1176351

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2026

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31st March 2026. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the accounts and comply with the Charity's Constitution.

Objectives and activities for the public benefit

The purposes of the Trust are :

1. To further or benefit the residents of the parish of Benenden in the county of Kent and the neighbourhood, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents. In furtherance of these objects but not otherwise, the Trustees shall have power to establish or secure the establishment of community centres and to maintain or manage or co-operate with any statutory authority in the maintenance and management of such centres for activities promoted by the charity in furtherance of the above objects.

2. To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Benenden in the county of Kent and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants.

Benenden Village Trust – Organisation and Governance

The Benenden Village Trust was registered with the Charity Commission on 18th December 2017 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and with the Registered No. 1176351.

Office: Benenden Village Hall, The Street, Benenden, TN17 4DE

Independent Examiner of Accounts: Manningtons Chartered Accountants, 39 High Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EE

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc, Longer House, High Street, Rye TN31 7JL

Manager of the Trust: Caroline Levett

The Trustees during the year were: Kent Barker; Simon Brown; Tom Dawlings; Martin Dickson (chairman); Peta Grant; Julie Lewis; Sally Ann Marks; Chris Parkinson; Mike Taylor; Paul Tolhurst.
BVT thanks them for their hard work on behalf of the Trust over many years.

Review of Activities during the past year

The year 2025-26 has been one of consolidation for Benenden Village Trust after several years of intense activity during which the Trust undertook a comprehensive review of its operations.

Work in the preceding years included a review of its charitable purpose and the nature of its financial reserves, made in conjunction with the Charity Commission; the start of a major strategy review, which is expected to conclude in the 2026-27 financial year; the opening of discussions with tenants of its properties over new leases; strenuous efforts to get its worrying financial position into a healthier balance; and actions to make Benenden Village Hall a more attractive venue for users.

All this hard work has paid dividends over the past financial year, with the trust benefitting from greater clarity of purpose, a much clearer eye on strategic goals, a much improved year-end financial position and significant year-on-year growth in hours hired at the village hall and its financial contribution.

However, none of this gives grounds for complacency. The trust still faces some major challenges, most notably financial, since a great deal of the year's improvement in cash flow stems from generous support from Benenden Parish Council and other donors. It has also been a benign 12 months in which there has been an unusually small outlay on repairs to the trust's properties, notably St George's Hall.

The trust remains hostage to unexpected large costs resulting from the elderly nature of our two main buildings, Benenden Village Hall and St George's, which have incurred very large repair and replacement costs in recent years, which we see no sign of diminishing.

Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members of the Benenden and Iden Green community who have volunteered to help BVT in various ways during the year, whether aiding its finances or contributing to the general well-being of the parish, and to our staff members who work so hard to ensure the quality of the trust's operations. They are Caroline Levett, the BVT Manager; John Betts, manager of Benenden Village Hall; and Jen Gurr, the hall cleaner.

Finance

In the year to March 31 2026 BVT recorded total income of £102,823, against total expenditure of £77,724, a surplus of £25,099. This compared with income of £115,541 and expenditure of £105,142 in the previous year, a surplus of £10,399.

Substantial contributions to both surpluses were due to grants from Benenden Parish Council and other donors. Nevertheless, the 2025-26 increase in the surplus was encouragingly positive. The trust ended the year with cash balances of £56,881, against £31,784 in 2024-25.

On the income side, positives included a £3,944 year-on-year rise in takings from the hire of Benenden village hall, to £41,924. Fundraising by the trust was up substantially thanks to a series of very successful film nights in the village hall, while there was also a modest rise in rental income from tenants of BVT properties.

Expenditure in 2025-26 was sharply lower than the previous year - partly due to grants related to the village hall and recreation ground, and also lower than expected maintenance costs at St George's Hall. Running costs dropped sharply, from £23,780 in 2024-2025 to £18,049, helped by a policy of restricting spending to the absolutely necessary and seeking savings wherever possible. Expenditure at the village hall dropped particularly sharply, from £61,888 the previous year to £43,812.

The trust's permanent endowment reserves, held in the COIF Charities Investment Fund, produced an income stream of £22,305 during the year, helping bolster the cash holdings. The 2024-25 figures are not directly comparable, given BVT's shift in our permanent endowment holdings during that year from the accumulation section of the COIF fund, where dividend income is reinvested, to the income section, where it is distributed.

At the year end, BVT's investment in the income section of the fund - comprising all the trust's permanent endowment - was valued at £694,384, a steep fall from the valuation of £759,099 a year earlier. BVT's funds in the accumulation section - comprising reserves the trust has liberty to spend - also fell to £23,074 from £24,558.

The poor investment performance over the past year was due partly to market volatility and global political upheaval, but also to poor performance by COIF's fund managers relative to their peers. For many years COIF performed well against other funds but its under-performance has now persisted for over 18 months, leading BVT to start a formal examination of whether it would be in the trust's best interests to move from CCLA, the fund manager responsible for COIF, to a better performing rival.

The trust is also in the process of drawing up a formal investment policy, which is good practice and which the Charity Commission expects charities to have in place.

Benenden Village Hall

The Village Hall contributed income of £41,924 during the year, an increase of £3,944 on the previous year. This was achieved through increased usage and an increase in hire charges.

While a number of regular hirers were lost to the hall during the year, there was also a healthy number of new arrivals. Regular hirers accounted for over two thirds of total income, while other hirers and ad hoc bookings accounted for the remainder. Total hours of hire rose by 236 in the year to 2,317.5, compared to 2,081.5 in 2024/25. At the year-end trustees thanked John Betts, the hall manager, for his diligence and energy which had contributed a great deal to this positive outcome.

During the year the lighting outside the hall was upgraded, while at year-end work was under way for a major improvement of lighting inside the hall, with old, flickering fluorescent lights replaced by modern, brighter, dimmable LEDs.

Potholes in the hall car park were filled in during the year. The trust also set up a working group to examine how to better manage the use of the car park, which is reserved primarily for hall users. However, use by other drivers, not connected to the hall, can create severe congestion and health and safety issues at some times of the day. Lack of spaces can force hall users to park elsewhere. Overuse of the car park also leads to faster deterioration of its surface, and more potholes, with the burden of repairs falling wholly on BVT.

The adjoining Benenden recreation ground had to undergo major works along its north boundary during the year when it was discovered that many of the trees lining the boundary were suffering from honey fungus. which can destroy the roots of many trees and perennial plants.

The affected trees had to be removed, along with the stumps and roots, and destroyed. The area was then left fallow to ensure the fungus has nothing to feed on and died. Only four of the trees discovered on the North side remained in good health: a crab apple, a cherry and two oaks. The dead trees will be replaced with new saplings in due course.

At year-end preparations were under way to replace parts of the rubber safety mulch on the Benenden children's playground, where hard use and encroaching grass had damaged the surface. BVT is indebted to the Parish Council for earmarking a £6,300 grant to cover the playground maintenance, and also to the Benenden Bonfire Society for a £1,000 grant towards this work.

The Parish Council also funded the improvements in the interior village hall lighting with a grant of £4,320 and the removal of the fungus-affected trees on the recreation ground, saving BVT nearly £5,000. In addition, it undertook in 2024-25 to finance the maintenance of the Benenden recreation ground and that at Iden Green for five years, saving BVT approximately £6,000 a year, and made a £5,000 contribution to the village hall's new boiler.

During the year the trust opened discussions with the Benenden Bowls Club, which occupies land owned by BVT to the south of the village hall, about a new lease to replace a 60-year one that expired in 2017.

Fund Raising

Fund raising has become an important part of BVT's activities over the past two years, with a particular focus on film nights in the village hall. Thanks to the initiative of trustee Paul Tolhurst, we held a very successful initial film night in 2024-25 and followed this up in 2025-26 with two more: a showing in April of the iconic 1960s film *The Italian Job* and in December of the western *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.* Together they raised a net £3,048 to support modernisation and improvements to the village hall, up from £1,016 the previous year.

St George's Hall

Window and plumbing repairs were required at the Hall during the year, though maintenance costs were thankfully lower than in many previous years. Indeed, as 2026-27 began, BVT was braced to face major repairs to leaks in the roof around a chimney stack.

During the year BVT negotiated a new lease with St George's Club, a tenant in the building, which came into effect in December 2025. At year-end the trust was also in talks with a second tenant, Benenden Pre-School, which was planning to move to a new home, but might wish to extend its expiring lease at St George's in case of delays.

Strategy Review

A major running theme in the trust's thinking over the past three years has been a review of strategy begun in the autumn of 2023 at a time of deep financial worry and uncertainty over the direction of the charity.

The review's initial findings were that the trust was asset rich, but cash poor; that its finances needed to be brought back into balance; and that BVT's highest priority, core assets - in terms of fulfilling its charitable purpose - were Benenden Village Hall, the Iden Green Pavilion, and the recreation grounds and playgrounds at both locations.

At year-end the review was still ongoing, due to financial and legal complications which have prevented trustees from moving on to final, actionable decision-making. But those issues were resolved during the year, and trustees now expect to conclude the review in the autumn of 2026-27, with implications for the future of its non-core assets.

Trustees' responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for preparing a Trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures that must be disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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 that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

Approved by the Trustees on ………………………………………… and signed on their behalf by:

Martin Dickson (Chairman of Trustees)

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Benenden Village Trust (the Trust) for the year ended 31st March 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act;
   or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

R Walsh FCCA Date:
Manningtons, Chartered Accountants
39 High Street
Battle, East Sussex TN33 0EE

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2026

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Permanent Endowment £	Recoupment Fund £	Total 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Incoming Resources						
Income from Charitable Activities						
Rental income		26,665	-	-	26,665	23,425
Hall income		41,924	-	-	41,924	37,980
Income from Generated Funds						
Investment Income	2	344	22,305	-	22,649	11,048
Grants, donations, legacies and and similar Income		10,550	-	-	10,550	8,088
Total Incoming Resources		79,483	22,305	-	101,788	80,541
Resources Expended						
Charitable Activities	3	76,952	-	-	76,952	102,997
Governance Costs	4	-	-	-	-	1,500
Total Resources Expended		76,952	-	-	76,952	104,497
Net Income/(Expenditure) Before Investment Gains/(Losses)		2,531	22,305	-	24,836	(23,956)
Transfer between funds	5	22,305	(22,305)	-	-	-
Transfer of recoupment fund to permanent Endownment		-	-	-	-	-
Net Gains/(Losses) on Investments		(1,389)	(64,716)	-	(66,105)	(32,104)
Net Movement in Funds		23,447	(64,716)	-	(41,269)	(56,060)
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total Funds Brought Forward		55,801	759,099	-	814,900	870,960
Total Funds Carried Forward		79,248	694,383	-	773,631	814,900

The notes on Pages 10 to 13 form part of these Financial Statements.

BENENDEN VILLAGE TRUST

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31ST MARCH 2026

	Notes	2026 £	2026 £	2025 £	2025 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	6		787		1,050
Investments	7		717,458		783,563
			718,245		784,613
Current Assets					
Debtors and prepayments		-		-	
Barclays bank accounts		11,098		22,773	
Barclays deposit account		45,788		9,013	
Cash in hand		-		-	
		56,886		31,787	
Current Liabilities					
due within one year	8	1,500		1,500	
Net current assets			55,386		30,287
Net Assets			773,631		814,900
Funds	9				
Unrestricted Funds			79,248		55,801
Permanent Endowment Fund			694,383		759,099
Recoupment Fund			-		-
Total Charity Funds			773,631		814,900

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on
and signed on its behalf by

……………………………………………. Trustee
Date:

The notes on Pages 8 to 11 form part of these Financial Statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of preparation of accounts

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Benenden Village Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

1.2 Grants receivable, donations and similar incoming resources

Grants, donations and similar incoming resources are included in the year when received.

1.3 Investment income, rental and hire charges

Income from investment, rental and hire charges is included in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which it is receivable.

1.4 Resources expended

Resources expended are included on an accruals basis and include Value Added Tax which cannot be recovered.

1.5 Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity are stated at cost less depreciation.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Fittings and equipment 25% written down value.

1.6 Fixed Asset Investments

Fixed asset investments are included at closing mid-market value at the balance sheet date. Realised gains and losses on investments are calculated as the difference between sale proceeds and their market value at the start of the year or their subsequent cost, and are charged or credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period of disposal.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

1.7 Governance costs

Expenditure on governance costs of the charity includes all expenditure not directly related to the charitable activity or fundraising ventures.

1.8 Funds

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Funds are restricted where the amounts received have a specified purpose.

2. Investment income

	Unrestricted Fund	Permanent Endowment	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£
Charities investment fund	-	-	-	2
Dividends/Income from CCLA	-	22,305	22,305	10,954
Interest on deposits	344	-	344	92
	344	22,305	22,649	11,048

The Charities investment fund and dividend income received have been treated as Permanent Endowment income and then transferred to unrestricted funds in the Statement of Financial activities to fund operations. Further detail can be found in the Trustees report.

3. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Fund	Permanent Endowment	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£
Running costs	18,049	-	18,049	21,440
St. Georges	10,120	-	10,120	13,225
Iden Green	1,023	-	1,023	2,754
Village Hall expenses	42,700	-	42,700	61,888
Playgrounds	1,657	-	1,657	1,078
Recreation ground	958	-	958	2,417
Fundraising	2,182	-	2,182	-
Depreciation	263	-	263	195
	76,952	-	76,952	102,997

The Charity had on average 3 employees (2025 - 3). Included above are total salaries of £45,833 (2025: £44,542) and pension contributions of £254 (2025: £248).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

4. Governance costs

	Unrestricted	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£	£
Independent examiner's fee	1,500	1,500	1,500
	1,500	1,500	1,500

Trustees are not remunerated and no expenses were paid to them in the period.

5. Transfer between funds

	Unrestricted Fund	Permanent Endowment fund	Total 2026 £	Total 2025 £
Transfer between funds	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

During the year the dividend income from the permanent endowment fund has been transferred to the unrestricted fund to fund day to day operations. See Trustees Report for more information.

6. Fixed assets

	Freehold Properties	Fittings and Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Written Down value			
At 1st April 2025	-	7,864	7,864
Additions	-	-	-
At 31st March 2026	-	7,864	7,864
Depreciation			
At 1st April 2025	-	6,814	6,814
Charge for the year	-	263	263
At 31st March 2026	-	7,077	7,077
Net book values			
At 31st March 2026	-	787	787
At 31st March 2025	-	1,050 #	1,050

The Trustees have decided not to have the open market value of the properties assessed and that, as there was no consideration paid for them, they are shown at nil cost/value.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

7. Fixed Asset Investments

	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£
Valuation at 31 March 2025	783,563	850,668
Withdrawals	-	(35,000)
Revaluation - Unrestricted Fund	(1,389)	20,286
Revaluation - Permanent Endowment	(64,716)	(52,390)
Revaluation - Recoupment Fund		(1)
Net book value at 31 March 2026	717,458	783,563

The Charity's permanent endowment investments consist of income units in the Charities Official Investment Fund, whilst it's unrestricted investments are invested in Accumulation units of the same fund. During 2024-25 the permanent endowment funds were moved from the Accumulation section to the Income section.

8. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income (Unrestricted)	1,500	1,500
	1,500	1,500

9. Funds

	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£
Unrestricted Funds	79,248	55,801.
Permanent Endowment Fund	694,383	759,099.
Recoupment Fund	-	-
	773,631	814,900.

Permanent Endowment Funds form part of the charity's permanent charitable assets and only income produced by them can be used to fund operations.

Recoupment Funds form a section of the permanent endowment, being funds built up over 47 years to recoup the cost of building Benenden Village Hall. During the year to 31st March 2025 the Recoupment fund was incorporated into the permenent endowment fund figures.

10. Net Assets By Fund

	Unrestricted Fund	Permanent Endowment	Recoupn Fund	Total 2026	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	23,862	694,383	-	718,245	784,613
Current Assets	56,886	-	-	56,886	31,787
Current Liabilities	1,500	-	-	1,500	1,500
	79,248	694,383	-	773,631	814,900