



Annual Trustees Report 2021



TVTA Annual Report Index

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S.1 Chairman's report

The last 12 months continued to be a difficult time to operate a charity that relies heavily on volunteer input. Between fluctuating COVID restrictions, and large scale projects like the Reservoir Climb and the Support Scheme, a lot of time was taken up with developing the organisation as a whole, perhaps to the detriment of on the ground trail work. Thanks to the ongoing efforts of a few key board members and supporters we have managed to maintain a presence all the way through the year, albeit less visibly than perhaps wished for. That's not to say that we haven't achieved a lot over the last year, with the following highlights worth mentioning.

Wolves Area

First major harvesting engagement. Challenges around the area in terms of what was hoped for and what actually happened, but individual and group based dig day work has created a useful exit for the Wolves Trails.

Reservoir Climb

Huge kudos to EWS and Santa Cruz for funding this long planned piece of work, and to Pete Laing, CRC and FLS for enabling it to become reality. Great to acknowledge that not everything is, or should be, about the DH and Enduro trails, but we are keen to ensure that these projects do not distract us from our core work of trail management and sustainability. Aneela to report further.

PayDirt funding

Ongoing for another year, with thought required as to what we use the funding for, but has been a great collaboration with Santa Cruz to help us move the organisation and our visibility forward. Aneela to report further.

Website refresh

Thanks to Marc and Rachel for managing this, and hopefully sets us up longer term with a more bespoke platform that we can manage internally easily and quickly.

Reserve funds of £10k

Amazing financial position for a small and narrowly focused charity to be in, but important to recognise that some of this money is ring fenced and legacy funding. We will continue to seek corporate and specific funding for major projects, whilst using supporter funds to deliver our core aims of trail maintenance and sustainability. Ed to report further.

Dig Days and Trail Work, incl managed trails list

Whilst this year has been another awkward one to run dig days on a regular basis, we have plans to develop our volunteer leaders and improve and increase the number of dig days the organisation runs. Currently have 8 trails under our stewardship (3G, Big Baw, Community Service, Feed The Pony, Final Fling, Flat White, New Wolf and NYNY) with aim to add another 3 before the end of the year. Marc/Neil to report further.

Starting to work with under 18s

An area of work we looked at for a while before we were able to set up. A work in progress, with potential to grow this area and develop younger trail builders skills and knowledge, and a great way to engage younger riders into taking responsibility for the trails into the future.

Data Protection Policy and COVID Safe Working

Thanks to Fred for picking up these important areas of work, that whilst it's hard to get excited about, are nonetheless crucial to the development of TVTA as an organisation!

Trail Closures and Zoning

Ongoing difficulties in agreeing how and when and why trails in the area have been closed by FLS, but great to see that previously threatened trails have been able to stay open, and that trail builders seem to be generally taking heed of the zoning plan introduced last year.

Trail Sabotage

Important voice for the local riding community to present a united front and louder voice for issues around trail sabotage at Glentress at the start of year. After engagement with FLS and local police, and social media comms, this dropped away quickly and does not appear to have been a repeat issue.

Supporter Scheme

Launched at the end of May, we have had nearly 100 supporters sign up to the idea, bringing in a yearly total of around £3k. This is an amazing place to be, as we can now plan ahead and know that the core costs associated with TVTA can be covered as long as this number is maintained (not to say we don't want more supporters to join us!). Allows us to look at other externally funded projects, including any where match funding is required, whilst still being able to meet our core aims and values. Big thanks to Marc and Rachel for driving this forward, and Ed and Fred for supporting them.

TVTA Board

And then there were 5...! We are unfortunately saying goodbye to Chris, Rachel and Aneela after this meeting, but will hopefully still see them supporting TVTA on digs as well as through specific input to future projects. Big thanks to all of them for the time and effort they have put into TVTA. Going forward, we will be looking specifically at what gaps we have in the current board in terms of input and skills, and then advertising for new board members in the near future to try to ensure a well rounded board who are capable of keeping TVTA moving forward and increasing our reach and good work in the area. Fred to report further.

S.2 Financial Report and Annual Accounts

The TVTA financial year reported here runs from 1st March 2020 to 29th February 2021. This financial year saw a solid year of donations despite the lack of public dig activity due to COVID19 throughout the financial year. Despite the challenges of COVID19 we were delighted to still receive donations from individuals via the website/Stripe, Paypal/Trail Forks, Amazon Smile and the Kiltwalk in the 2020-21 financial year this totalled £803.08. This was added to generous unrestricted donations from **Chia Charge** Food (£2,000) and **Cotic Bikes** (£1000) who both nominated TVTA as one of their supported charities in 2020. **Santa Cruz bikes** contributed a further £9,816.48 of Pay Dirt funds, ring-fenced to pay for major trail upgrades on the Caberston (Golfie) multi-use path / climb to the reservoir, this was received ready to spend once project planning and approvals were finalised. This is added to the existing restricted funds held by the charity from 2019 from the **Enduro World Series** for the same purpose.

Expenses incurred directly related to our charitable activities totalled £1,519, the main items within this total being insurance premiums (£527), new tools purchased via DMBinS (£360) plus the website costs (£163). The remainder relates to dig day costs and vouchers to buy a coffee given to regular volunteers. Fees paid directly related to fundraising activity totalled (£15). Total expenses amounted to £1,519.

Our Surplus for the year 2020/21 (total receipts £13,620 less total expenses £1,519) amounted to £12,100; up from £10,099 in 2019/20. Adding in year end Paypal and bank balances, the Tweed Valley Trails Association posted total year-end funds of £28,178; up from £16,078 in the previous financial year.

Items to note post the financial year end include the new supporter scheme being launched boosting donations to the charity and all the restricted funds (plus some unrestricted funds) were spent on the Reservoir climb build.

*Donations and Grants Over £100 between March 2020 and February 2021**

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Cash Amount</i>	<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Santa Cruz Bikes</i>	<i>£9,816.48</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>Restricted for Caberston multi-use path/climb trail upgrade</i>
<i>Chia Charge Food</i>	<i>£2,000</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>Unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Cotic Bikes</i>	<i>£1,000</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>Unrestricted donation</i>

Donations and Grants Over £100pa post year end

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Cash Amount</i>	<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>Enduro World Series</i>	<i>£1,518.06</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Enduro World Series</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>New trail exit and gates built on behalf of TVTA by EWS at Caberston Farm. EWS in kind donation of £9.5k.</i>
<i>Innerhaven</i>	<i>£150</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Tweedlove</i>	<i>£150</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Glentress hotel</i>	<i>£20pm</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Regular unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Cleikum Mill</i>	<i>£12pm</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Regular unrestricted donation</i>
<i>Colin Urie</i>	<i>£10pm</i>	<i>2021-22</i>	<i>Regular unrestricted donation</i>

S.3 Organisation Structure & Governance

Structure chart

The TVTA Board comprises eight members and is currently set up as shown in the following structure chart:



Of the eight Board members, seven are formal charity trustees (per blue shading) so ensuring we have sufficient cover to make decisions should some members be unable to attend a meeting. The Board comprises trail builders, cycling industry figures, governance and accounting experts spanning a wide range of age and experience, representing the mountain bike riding community of the Tweed Valley. All Board members are volunteers and no personal expenses or attendance allowances have been paid during the year.

Board meetings

As at the end of October, the Board had met 10 times in 2021. Meetings have covered a wide range of topics including the Reservoir Climb project, our partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland, our Santa Cruz/PayDirt funding support, Dig Days, the impact of COVID-19 on our trail maintenance activity and our support for mountain biking events. All meetings are formally minuted.

We also created a number of working groups, most notably one that established the successful supporters' scheme that was launched earlier this year.

Board membership

Under the TVTA Constitution, all Board members and Trustees retire from their Board duties at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) but can, if they wish, stand for re-election. We have been advised that Chris Ball, Rachel Hunter and Aneela McKenna will be retiring from the Board at this time. As founding members of the TVTA, Chris and Aneela have made a massive contribution to the establishment of the TVTA as a significant voice for mountain biking in the Tweed Valley; we wish them all the best in the future and hope that we can continue to benefit from their insight and energy in the future. Rachel too leaves with our thanks having guided us through the successful introduction of our supporters scheme this year. Board elections will be held at the AGM.

S.4 Review of the Year:

Reservoir Climb project

In 2019, the TVTA began to have conversations about the need to improve the climb up to the reservoir on Caberston hill, also known as the Reservoir Climb.

The TVTA became increasingly aware of the erosion on the climb up to the Golfie trails. What was once a solid old right of way had been replaced by a boggy, swampy impassable section extending from its original width in the early 2000's to a muddy expanse into the trees (also known as the Bog of Doom!). This has meant that trail users have had to go into the trees themselves to get back onto the path higher up.

In Autumn 2019, Pete Laing was appointed as the project manager for this project. It was funded by Santa Cruz Pay Dirt and EWS. Pete created three different proposals for the climb, one which was a multi-user path. This was our preferred option, to give everyone access to the trails on the hill.

After a prolonged period of engagement with the landowner, Forest Land Scotland (due to Covid-19) we were able to start work on the hill in summer 2021. Contractor CRC was

appointed, who were also the team that led on the improvements made to Heartbreak Ridge trails in Ballater earlier this year.

The work was completed within six weeks once diggers were on site. They focused on using as much on site material as possible to blend into the landscape and to help keep a more natural feel for trail users.

We are very grateful to Santa Cruz Pay Dirt and EWS for their support in funding this work.

Supporters' scheme launch

In 2021 we set up a TVTA Supporters Scheme which went live in April this year. Donations coming in through this scheme (which we have aimed to make affordable) will be used to help cover our general running costs, Dig Days and project work. Our current supporter rates are:

- Adults £36 p.a. or £4 per month.
- Juniors (under 18s, with adult permission) £5 p.a.
- Families (2 adults and up to 3 children) £75 p.a.

Multiple platforms and website add-ons were investigated, including a very timely and kind offer from the Founder of GymFlow to help us get the scheme up and running on his platform. There was an array of pros and cons pertaining to each of the solutions, however the key differentiating feature from our requirements was the need to support Gift Aid. Gift Aid enables us to maximise the funds given to us by donors and supporters. Not only did Whitefuse natively support GiftAid, it supported all of our primary and most of our secondary requirements. On top of this, their pricing model was towards the most competitive. Whitefuse keeps us compliant with General Data Protection Regulations, processing supporters' payment and personal data and prompts Supporters to renew their subscription annually.

Initial promotion through social media and our revamped website resulted in a great response, with the majority of Supporters joining in the first month of the scheme opening.

As of the 2021 AGM our supporter rate is as follows:

- 86 Adult Supporters
- 5 Junior Supporters
- 5 Family Supporters comprising 15 people

The funds being received through this scheme (>£3000) have now reached a threshold to cover our basic operating costs making the TVTA sustainable without external grants/bursaries.

In addition to the Supporter scheme, we have also created the facility for people to make monthly or one-off donations instead of, or in addition, to becoming a Supporter.

- £827 received to date from a combination of one-off and recurring donations

In 2022 we will continue our drive to attract more Supporters by continuing to promote through social media, local businesses and presence at events. Campaigns for funding for specific projects may be an approach we adopt.

PayDirt / Santa Cruz funding

The TVTA was pleased to have been awarded funding from the Santa Cruz Pay Dirt initiative.

An application was made to the Pay Dirt Funding round in 2020 to deliver on projects that would enhance the trail network in the Tweed Valley. The TVTA was selected as a multi-year funder which means that funding will be awarded over three years. The project for the first year was the build of the Reservoir Clim in summer 2021. Santa Cruz featured the [story of the build](#) on their website with Aneela and Gordon telling the story of how this project came about.

The reservoir climb has received an overwhelmingly positive response from the local community. We are also very grateful for the support provided to us by Santa Cruz Pay Dirt.

The TVTA has been considering its project ideas for the remaining two years. This is likely to focus on upskilling trail leaders and further trail development. Our current model is not sustainable with only a few leaders available for dig days. Increasing the pool will enable us to do more dig days with volunteers.

Dig Days

Impacted by COVID restrictions, and also taking into consideration public perception, limited the number of public dig dates and number of people on each dig. As restrictions eased we have only been able to run 6 public dig days. Outside of the COVID related restrictions, a considerable limitation has been the time our qualified dig leaders have available outside of the day jobs and other commitments. This constraint we are working to overcome through training the qualified trail inspection and maintenance leaders to organise and lead TVTA digs.

Behind the scenes, an enormous amount of work has been done by the qualified trail inspection and maintenance leaders. From light maintenance on trails, armouring heavy wear areas with rock pitching, dealing with drainage (including shared use paths), etc. Over 30 additional digs have been logged by the qualified trail inspection and maintenance leaders.

We certified 9 qualified trail inspection and maintenance leaders for Outdoor First Aid through First Aid Borders to enable them to lead out public digs. Outdoor First Aid certification is valid for 3 years so the investment into this pays back over several years.

FLS Liaison report

Various issues around COVID, FLS staffing, time critical messaging, and general responsiveness have led to a very stop-start liaison this year, with only 1 formal meeting to date instead of 4 as per our working agreement. A proposed meeting in December will hopefully help us get back on track and understand the needs and wants from each organisation going forward, and allow TVTA to develop longer term plans with a better understanding of what support FLS can, and cannot, give the organisation.

Some key areas of discussion, agreement, and support over the last year have included;

- Good engagement from local FLS team to try to protect the Wolves area prior to harvesting (albeit the outcome wasn't quite what we hoped for!)

- Discussions around developing signage for TVTA managed trails, with the aim of expanding agreed design and content across Scotland to other trails managed by other TA's. This is currently still awaiting FLS agreement to proceed.
- Consistent and informative social media comms from TVTA to help FLS reach riders with important info such as trail closures due to forestry work, nesting birds, events, or, indeed, hill fires...!! Important aspect for FLS as they do not have localised comms available, only the national FB and Instagram pages.
- Several discussions around how to engage with event organisers to enable long term sustainability of trails that are used for events. This requires significant further discussion and agreement however, and we would really hope to have something solid in place prior to the 2022 race season. FLS have advised that they are working on a policy to be implemented nationally, but as yet we have not been asked to engage with this.
- Reservoir Climb Project - thanks to some intensive last minute work by local FLS staff, the project was able to be completed earlier this year as planned, even when some unexpected problems were raised through the FLS project license approval process.
- Initial discussion on a proposed joint project with DMBinS, FLS, Tweedlove and Peebles High School to work with young trail builders at Cademuir, developing their awareness of good/bad trail design as well as re-routing some key trail exits. We are awaiting further details from FLS as to how/when this project might proceed.

It should be acknowledged that unlike other Trail Associations in Scotland, FLS are the only land manager in the area that TVTA have an agreement with, given that 99% of trails lie on FLS managed land. Whilst this means that we don't have an array of land managers to liaise with, it should be acknowledged that we are always going to be reliant on FLS to enable us to move TVTA forward. This in itself presents issues, as anyone who has dealt officially with large organisations previously will understand. It is hoped that as we return to some sense of normality, so too will our relationship with FLS, and allow TVTA to plan effectively for the future to aid FLS in the management of the trail network in the Tweed Valley.

S.5 A massive shout out to all who support / volunteer/ help the TVTA

We would like to thank the wide range of people who have helped the TVTA in so many ways over the last year, from the trail builders and diggers to all those who've supported us financially - we simply couldn't have achieved what we have without your generous contributions and efforts.

During a year when life has been so unsettling and difficult for so many, we've been blown away by all your support - a massive thanks to you all!

We look forward to more digging, more riding and more building our great community over coming months.

S.6 The year in pictures - follows on the next pages....





