

# MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



## Annual Report & Accounts

APRIL 2006 - MARCH 2007



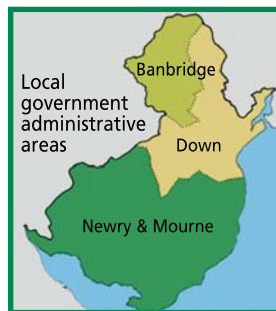
# The purpose of AONB designation

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



The Mountains of Mourne and the surrounding countryside and coast are renowned for their natural beauty. At the heart of the AONB is the range of mountains which gives the area its name and image. Although relatively small in area, the Mourne AONB combines the stunning scenery of mountains, with coast, farmed drumlin and hill country and a diverse range of habitats, evidenced by the range of international, European and national conservation designations.

Administratively the AONB is split across the three local government districts of Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne.



## What is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a precious landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it (NAAONB, 2003). The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order 1985 sets out the main purposes of an AONB:

- To conserve or enhance the natural beauty or amenities of the area.
- To conserve wildlife, historic objects or natural phenomena within the area
- To promote enjoyment by the public
- To provide or maintain public access to the area.



## Mission Statement

*'to sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne's communities'*



# Chairman's Report



I am delighted to present the Annual Report and Accounts of the Mourne Heritage Trust for April 2006 to March 2007, marking the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Trust as the management body for the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB. This report, therefore, provides an opportunity to reflect not just upon a year, but a decade, of 'Caring for Mourne'.

I am proud of what the Trust has achieved in that decade from relatively small beginnings, developing to a point where it provides the full range of environmental and visitor management services along with projects to promote sustainable development that are set out in this document as well as bringing in significant additional funding for the benefit of Mourne and its communities. While much has changed in the last ten years an important strand of continuity has been provided by the 10 Trustees who have been on this journey from the outset. To these colleagues and the many others too numerous to mention who have supported the work of the Trust over this time, go my sincere thanks. I also at this time remember those associated with the Trust who are no longer with us namely Board members John Ingram and Gerry Douglas who sadly passed away in recent years and whose knowledge and gentlemanly ways will be sadly missed.

However, while the year just passed has provided an opportunity to pause briefly and reflect back it has very much been one for looking to the future. The extensive consultation process on the proposed National Park in Mourne provided an opportunity for many to express views on issues affecting the area, as well as their hopes and fears for the future. I take great heart from the extent of participation in this process, which clearly demonstrated the special position that this area has in the hearts and minds of many locals, the people of Northern Ireland and visitors. Of course, there was a divergence of views expressed on how the area's future well being and that of the people who live here can best be achieved – but with that there was thorough and helpful exploration of the various issues that must be addressed.

Mourne Heritage Trust remains of the view that a National Park for Mourne is the best way forward – but this must be a model of national park that takes account of the particular needs and circumstances of this part of the world, which have now been very clearly articulated. While I am duly proud of the achievements of Mourne Heritage Trust over the past decade, it has been a period in which the pressures – economic, environmental and social – on the area have continued apace, particularly those related to the decline of traditional industries and ever increasing visitor numbers. After ten years it is clearer to me than ever that the Trust alone, as currently resourced,

cannot address the range of pressures, or take the opportunities, arising from the special qualities of this area. I look forward to the publication of the National Park Working Party's report on its consultation and the further consideration of how best to care for Mourne in the future.

The last year was also one of looking forward for Mourne Heritage Trust as an organisation. On the basis of wide ranging consultations the Trust formulated its Strategic Operational Plan for the period 2007-2010. Funding was secured from our majority core funder, Environment and Heritage Service, for the three year period of this plan, providing a degree of security for AONB management services in the area while longer term measures are considered. I would like on behalf of my Board to record our thanks to EHS and our other core funders, namely Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the District Councils of Banbridge, Down and Newry and Mourne, for their continued support, as well as thanking all those who have supported our project activity.

In so doing, however, it is also worth noting that the resources devoted to the management of the Mourne AONB continue to lag significantly behind similar prized landscapes in Great Britain and I would express the hope that in future we will see more substantial and, importantly, continuous and secure funding applied to the sustainable development of this prized environmental, economic and social asset.

While significant staff time was consumed during the past year by both National Park consultations and planning for the Trust's future, the organisation, of course, continued with the day to day businesses of 'Caring for Mourne'. Particular highlights include the first full year of operation of the Active Lifestyles Programme, providing outdoor recreation opportunities for people with special needs, the successful conclusion of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative, which injected £2.3 million in grant funding in to the area, the completion of a Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan, commencement of a Rural Heritage Project and the ongoing management of the Mourne Homesteads programme. I would like to thank my Board colleagues, the staff, our many volunteers and our supportive group of 'Friends of Mourne' for their continued dedication and hard work in these and other areas and commend to you this report in which you will find further detail of these achievements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Arthur Mitchell'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Arthur Mitchell, MBE

# The Role and Structure of the Mourne Heritage Trust

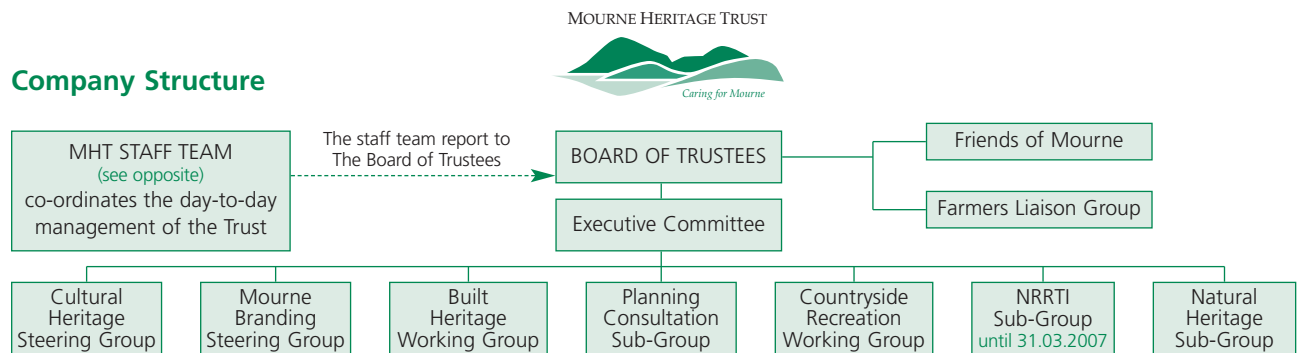
The Mourne Heritage Trust was established in 1997 following a review of visitor and environmental management in the Mourne AONB (Scott, 1994), undertaken on behalf of the Environment and Heritage Service and Northern Ireland Tourist Board. This report recommended a more strategic management model in the form of a Trust-based partnership.

The Trust's work has been organised across five key areas as follows:

- 1 Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection
- 2 Visitor Management and Visitor Services
- 3 Built and Cultural Heritage
- 4 Sustainable Tourism
- 5 Rural and Community Regeneration

The management of the Mourne Heritage Trust is co-ordinated by a staff team which reports to the Board of Trustees.

## Company Structure



## The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees met on nine separate occasions throughout the year and the Executive Committee on three occasions. There were a number of changes to the membership of the Board of Trustees throughout the year. The passing of Councillor John Ingram was regretted by his fellow trustees and staff. Mr John McGrillen and Councillor Jim Wells MLA left their positions on the board during the course of the year.

The trust was pleased to welcome Councillor Francis McDowell, Mr David Maginn, Mr Martin McMullan, Mr Sean Fitzpatrick and Mrs Elizabeth Ingram, restoring board membership to its full complement of twenty one.

The Board of Trustees represents a wide ranging partnership of interests – including local elected representatives, landowner, farming and community interests. This broad representation gives a valuable collective focus to the area, its issues and its needs and allows the Board of Trustees to give a co-strategic lead to the management of the AONB. The sectors board members primarily represent are set out in panel (right). In addition a number of members also have expertise and interests in other important areas including education, fishing, rural regeneration and local heritage.

## Annual General Meeting 2006

The Mourne Heritage Trust held its Annual General Meeting for 2005 – 2006 on Wednesday 27 September 2006, hosted by Newry and Mourne District Council – one of the Mourne Heritage Trusts' three local government partners. The AGM theme was 'Connecting People with their Heritage – Further Opportunities for Mourne' and the venue was the Harbour

### The Board of Trustees

Mr William Burns	Farming
Mrs Rosemary Chestnutt	Tourism Business
Cllr Martin Connolly	Newry & Mourne District Council
Cllr Seamus Doyle	Banbridge District Council
Mr Sean Fitzpatrick	Farming <i>appointed 27.01.2007</i>
Cllr Isaac Hanna	Newry & Mourne District Council
Ms Isabel Hood	Environment
Cllr Elizabeth Ingram	Banbridge District Council <i>appointed 19.02.2007</i>
Mr Patrick Kelly	Community (ROMAL)
Ms Maureen Killen	Community (ROMAL)
Mr Sean McCarthy	Community (ECDRN)
Cllr Francis McDowell	Down District Council <i>appointed 15.06.2006</i>
Mr Martin McMullan	Tourism/ Activity Business <i>appointed 15.06.2006</i>
Mr David Maginn	Tourism Business <i>appointed 27.09.2006</i>
Mr William John Martin	Community (ROMAL) <i>Company Secretary</i>
Dr Arthur Mitchell	Environment <i>Chairman</i>
Cllr Carmel O'Boyle	Down District Council
Mr Desmond Patterson	Vice Chair – Farming <i>Vice Chair</i>
Mr Jim Saunders	Treasurer – Environment <i>Treasurer</i>
Mr David Thompson	Environment
Mrs Jo Whatmough	Environment

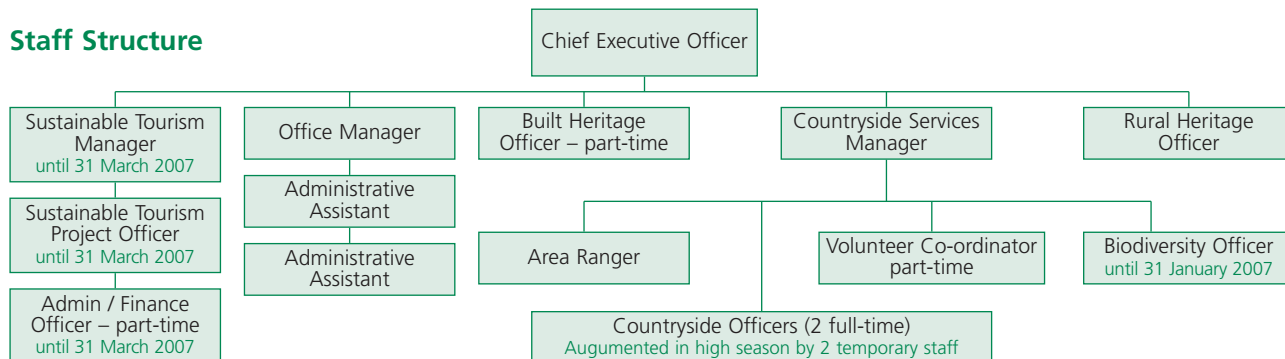
Inn, Annalong. Professor Patrick Murphy, Board member with the Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland and Mr Eddie McGrady MP were guest speakers.





# Mourne Heritage Trust Staff

## Staff Structure



## Staff Changes

There were a number of staff changes during this report period. Mr Barry Ferguson left the post of Countryside Services Manager in September 2006 to be replaced by Mr Matthew Bushby in January 2007 while in the same month Mrs Catherine Murphy's contract as Biodiversity Officer came to an end.

With the conclusion of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Programme on 31 March 2007 three staff members saw their work successfully completed – Mrs Camilla Fitzpatrick, Sustainable Tourism Manager, Mrs Mandy McAvoy, Sustainable Tourism Projects Officer and Mrs Alison Martin, NRTTI Administration/ Finance Officer (part-time).

The total number of separate posts (full and part-time) employed by the Trust in 2006/2007 was fifteen with three seasonal workers employed in the summer.

## Core Funding

Environment and Heritage Service	£ 154,202
Banbridge District Council	£ 21,577
Down District Council	£ 33,834
Newry & Mourne District Council	£ 20,000
Northern Ireland Tourist Board	£ 34,043

## Partnerships

The management of the AONB is also undertaken through a wide range of partnerships at all levels. These are just some of the forums and project steering groups the Trust led or contributed to during the year.

- Mourne Farmers' Liaison Group
- Countryside Recreation Working Group
- Cultural Heritage Steering Group
- Natural Heritage Sub Group
- Built Heritage Working Group
- Planning Consultation Sub Group
- Safer Mournes Partnership
- Mourne Sustainable Tourism Forum
- Mourne Biodiversity Forum
- Mourne Branding Forum
- Mourne National Park Working Party
- Northern Ireland Coastal Zone Forum
- Northern Ireland Environment Link
- Mourne/Cooley/Slieve Gullion Geopark Working Group
- Europarc Federation
- Europarc Charter for Sustainable Tourism Network

## Company Information

### Secretary

Mr W J Martin – Company Secretary

### Company Number

NI 32946

### Charity Registration Number

XR 23015

### Registered Office

87 Central Promenade  
Newcastle, Co. Down BT33 0HH

### Business Address

87 Central Promenade, Newcastle,  
Co. Down BT33 0HH

74 Head Road, Killeel, Co. Down BT34 4PU

### Auditors

Purdy Quinn  
*Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors*  
42 Greencastle Street, Killeel  
Co. Down BT34 4BH

### Bankers

Bank of Ireland Ltd  
19 Greencastle Street, Killeel  
Co. Down BT34 4BH

### Solicitors

McBurney & Co  
5 Church Square Banbridge  
Co. Down BT32 4AS

# Natural Environment Enhancement & Protection



Preserving and enhancing the rich natural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob was, as ever, a key element of Mourne Heritage Trust's activities, with a focus on involving a wide variety of organisations and individuals. The Trust was again greatly assisted by the Mourne Conservation Volunteers to make a vital and tangible impact on landscape and biodiversity.

Two key developments stand out this year. The first full year of the operation of the Trust's innovative Active Lifestyles project gave valuable outdoor experiences to groups and individuals with a range of special needs and also provided a Junior Ranger programme for 14-17 year olds.

The other great step forward was the completion and launch of a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the Mourne AONB. This comprehensive document gives local effect to the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, setting an agenda for action to preserve the valuable flora and fauna of the area. Mourne Heritage Trust will be working towards this agenda with key partner organisations. But equally important will be the activities of local communities. The Trust was delighted this year to attract funding for a Natural Heritage Outreach Project, focused on raising awareness of environmental issues among local groups and stimulating community based projects. This project is expected to commence in autumn 2007.

## Involving People in 'Caring for Mourne'

A total of thirty Mourne Conservation Volunteers events took place this year, with the Trust welcoming six new members. Twelve existing volunteers 'graduated' to Volunteer Ranger status, taking on extra activities under their own supervision having been trained by the Trust. As well as assisting with the volunteer activities listed elsewhere Volunteer Rangers initiated a year long project to create a mobile phone map for the Mourne Mountains to aid communication, particularly in the event of emergencies, and also assisted on the Trust's guided walks programme. Cumulatively the volunteer effort represented the equivalent of £13,600 worth of labour.

## Some Highlights of Volunteer Activities

- Annual native seed collection
- Planting of 3,000 native hazel and 600 native oak at Silent Valley Tree Nursery
- Maintenance on the Silent Valley Nature Trail
- Survey of rhododendron distribution at Bann River and Donard Wood.
- Construction and maintenance of stiles
- Assistance of guided walks
- Upland path erosion monitoring
- Litter lifts in the high Mourne
- Red squirrel survey
- Repair of dry stone walls on rights of ways

The Trust also undertook or advised on a number of school and community environmental projects, details of which are set out in the 'At a Glance' section. The Mourne Farmers Liaison Group continued to form an important link with the farming community, inputting to an independent audit of access issues in the Mourne and to the implementation of the land management plan for the Eastern Mourne Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

## Conservation, Learning and Health

The main focus of the Active Lifestyles project is to involve groups who may not normally have such opportunities in environmental activity. Through practical tasks participants gain a greater understanding of the natural environment, learn new skills and simply enjoy an outdoor experience – all contributing to improved health and quality of life.

The programme catered for groups from various centres including Ruby House, Down Lisburn Trust, Mourne Stimulus and Down District Volunteer Centre. Participants normally carried out tasks customised to their particular abilities / mobility at the Tree Nursery or Nature Trail, both in the Silent Valley. The nursery is an enclosed site, with wheelchair friendly paths and raised beds and potting areas.

Meanwhile the Youth Ranger programme provided an opportunity for seven young people to learn a range of skills, develop confidence in an outdoor environment and to earn a Youth Ranger Certificate in recognition of their commitment of one day per week for eight weeks during



### Photographs, clockwise from top:

- MCV painting stiles on Slieve Donard
- Active Lifestyles group at tree nursery
- Youth rangers navigation training
- Launch of the Silent Valley Nature Trail with Attical Primary School
- Feed the birds day with St Malachy's PS, Castlewellan
- Brian Black launching Biodiversity Action Plan with St Marys PS, Glasdrumman
- Chipping rhododendrons at Ben Crom
- Plant a tree at Biodiversity Plan launch







the school summer holidays. Youth Rangers received training and experience not only in hands on conservation work but also in navigation and environmental surveying.

### Taking a Lead on Biodiversity

The Silent Valley in the very heart of the Mourne provided an appropriate setting for the launch in January 2007 of the Mourne Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in front of over 60 invited guests. Well known environmentalist and television presenter Brian Black gave an inspiring address on the challenges facing the environment of Mourne. But even Brian would admit to being upstaged by the children of Saint Mary's Primary School, Glassdrumman who gave insightful accounts of what the wildlife and plants of the Mourne AONB mean to them.

An attractive summary document and promotional poster were produced to raise awareness of the natural assets of Mourne and Slieve Croob and provide an accessible overview of the actions identified as necessary for their enhancement. This followed the agreement with the Mourne Biodiversity Partnership and key stakeholders of a detailed Action Plan. Copies of the summary document can be downloaded from [www.mournelive.com](http://www.mournelive.com) or obtained from the Trust.

### Maintaining the Infrastructure

The Mourne Ranger service continued to provide environmental and visitor monitoring as well as liaison between landowners, recreational users and other stakeholders to resolve access related issues and address incidents of environmental damage.

Under the direction of the Ranger, the Trust's Countryside Team provided maintenance of the extensive visitor and access related infrastructure in the Mourne and Slieve Croob area encompassing:

- 19 car parks and amenity sites
- 44 public rights of way, green lanes and paths
- 7 way-marked cycle routes
- 64 stiles
- 60 Interpretative panels

This work continues to be done against a backdrop of rapidly increasing visitor numbers and facilities. Despite comprising only two permanent Countryside Officers (augmented by temporary staff in the peak summer period), the team also finds time to undertake some environmental projects and to carry out repairs to paths, walls etc. to address the impacts of recreational use.

### At a Glance Highlights

- 292 volunteer days in support of AONB management
- 596 individual work experience days through Active Lifestyles
- Completion of Mourne Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- 2 meetings of Mourne Farmers' Liaison Group
- Assessment of path erosion in upland areas
- Response to seventy public and council enquires concerning environmental damage, abandoned cars, vandalism, fires and fly tipping
- Co-ordination of support for the Mourne International Walking Festival
- Visits and field trips with primary schools in Kilkeel, Castlewellan, Hilltown, Kilbroney, Dundrum, Attical and Shimna Integrated College
- Provision of native trees to community based projects and local primary schools.
- Creation of a nature garden at Kilkeel Primary School
- Development of local nature reserve project at Kilbroney Park
- Successful funding applications for community environmental projects in Burrenbridge & Attical
- Advice to Newry & Mourne District Council and N.I. Housing Executive regarding native planting in Attical, Kilkeel, Burrenbridge, Ballaghbeg and Mourne View housing estates





# Visitor Management and Visitor Services

This year saw both significant improvement of and addition to the visitor infrastructure in the Mourne and Slieve Croob area, with the investment of £220,000 in two major projects alone. The Trust implemented a programme of enhancements at amenity sites and car parks across the AONB incorporating extensive landscaping and upgraded visitor facilities and information. The major new development was the Mourne Way, a long distance way-marked walking route through the foothills of the high Mournes from Newcastle to Rostrevor.

2006 / 2007 also saw the completion of the final phase of an extensive three year visitor survey. This facilitated the analysis of trends in visitor behaviours and perceptions and, in tandem with data from the Trust's electronic visitor counters, will provide a firm basis for planning, management and servicing of the ever increasing visitors to the Mourne AONB.

## Improving Visitor Amenities

A total of 13 sites were encompassed in the Mourne Heritage Trust Visitor Site Enhancement Programme. As well as improving the environment of these key sites and, in turn, visitor enjoyment, two specific aims of the project were deterring anti-social misuse through design features and improvement of access for people with disabilities. The greatest transformations took place at key flagship sites in each of the three local authority areas, namely Leitrim Lodge in Newry and Mourne, Slievenaslat / Play Rock in Down and Windy Gap in Banbridge.

## Monitoring and Planning for Visitor Management

The Trust's Visitor Survey involved no less than 1,250 visitors between June and September 2006 at 14 locations. A useful modification to previous years was to group

### Enhanced Amenity Sites

Banns Road	Carricklitle	Dolly's Brae
Dree Hill / Slieve Croob	Happy Valley	Hen Track (Sandbank Rd)
Leitrim Lodge	Lighthouse Road	Ott Track / Blue Quarry
Quarter Road	Trassey	Windy Gap
Slievenaslat / Play Rock		



#### Photographs, clockwise from top:

- Silent Valley reservoir
- Accessing the Mourne Way from Ott car park
- Countryside management – green lane maintenance
- Mountain heather
- Rocky coastline
- Carricklitle car park enhancement
- Summit of Slieve Donard
- View from Slieve Donard overlooking Dundrum Bay







the information across three broad areas namely Seaside Resort (e.g. Newcastle, Warrenpoint, Cranfield), Country Park (e.g. Tollymore, Castlewellan, Kilbroney) and Open Countryside (key access points to high Mournes and Slieve Croob). This facilitated analysis and allowed some useful conclusions to be drawn.

Work continued in this year to fully operationalise the Trust's network of electronic pedestrian and vehicle counters, addressing technical issues relating to flooding, exposure to high altitudes and even theft. With resolution of these issues the Trust has been able to produce ever more comprehensive and robust data. A summary of key information from the visitor survey and electronic counters can be seen in the boxes below.

### Visitor Survey Highlights

- Greatest proportion of day trippers occurs at seaside resorts (61%). Highest proportion of holiday makers in open countryside locations (47%), country parks most popular for weekenders
- Greater proportion of higher spending visitors in open countryside locations - 31% spending over £100 as opposed to 21% and 23% in seaside towns and country parks respectively
- Potential for further development of Warrenpoint as a gateway to the Mournes – 77% of visitors to open countryside also visit Newcastle only 18% also visit Warrenpoint
- Most popular activities undertaken: walking 83%, visiting towns / villages 57%, visiting bar / restaurant 51%, visiting beach / swimming 31%
- Improvements most commonly identified – more toilets, more family activities, more bins, more tea shops
- Only 3% feel area is a little or very overcrowded – suggests scope to absorb increased visitor numbers given appropriate management

### Walking the Mourne Way

2006 saw the completion of the Mourne Way, a scenic walking route stretching fully 25 miles from the Irish Sea at Newcastle, traversing the foot of the high Mournes and the Western Mournes to Slieve Martin at Rostrevor.

### Visitor Counter Highlights

<i>Counter type</i>	<i>Monthly Average</i>	<i>Total 2006</i>
Car Parks	6,293	75,516
Stiles - Low areas, at or along access points to the High Mournes	4,224	25,344
Stiles - High Mournes Counters	4,049	24,288
High + Low counters	7,344	49,632

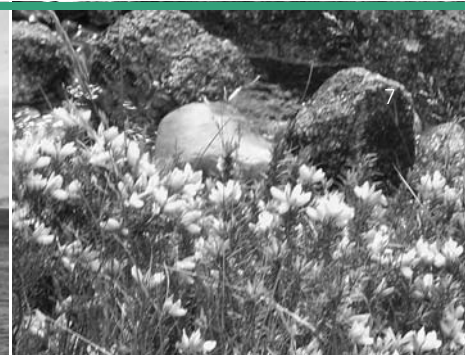
The Mourne Way project was implemented by Down and Newry and Mourne District Councils, with Mourne Heritage Trust involved in a supporting role every step of the way. As well as funding the development through the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative, the Trust provided advice and assistance on route design, implementation issues and gathered user feedback to identify modifications.

Earlier, in April 2006, the Trust celebrated the official opening by Katherine Bryan, Chief Executive of Water Service (now Northern Ireland Water) of the Silent Valley Nature Trail. This wheelchair friendly, one mile long, route follows an old railway line along the Kilkeel River in the heart of the Silent Valley Mountain Park. It gives users the chance to combine walking with experiencing many aspects of the natural environment.

The Trust's programme of summer and winter guided walks continued to be heavily subscribed, with 21 separate events introducing participants to the upland, lowland and coastal areas as well as providing basic navigational training.

### At a Glance Highlights

- 21 guided walks
- Launch of Silent Valley Nature Trail
- Maintenance of a network of electronic pedestrian and vehicle counters
- Analysis and reporting of visitor data.
- Upgrade of 13 car parks/ amenity sites across AONB
- 3rd Mourne AONB Visitor Survey.
- Facilitation of development of Mourne Way



# Built and Cultural Heritage

*Photographs, clockwise from right:*

- Launch day at Frank's Cottage, Moneyslane
- RSPB Environmental Planning Award
- 'Home and Dry' event – lime plastering
- Restored – Ronan's Cottage, Hilltown
- Restoration at Whitehill Road, Ballyward

Two programmes, one 'old' and one 'new', dominate a year of intense activity in this area of work. The groundbreaking Mourne Homesteads project moved close to its conclusion with renovation of four traditional cottages reaching practical completion. This project continued to collect the plaudits, including winning the Planning category in the RSPB 40th Anniversary Environmental Awards, presented at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. It also received a 'Mention', given to projects of cultural, social or economic benefit to the community, at the prestigious UK Civic Trust Awards at Blackpool's Winter Gardens.

2006 / 2007 also saw the commencement of the Mourne Rural Heritage Programme, a two year project funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation through the Rural Development Council. The project promotes rural regeneration through an improved understanding of shared culture and heritage. The recruitment of a project officer and programme of activity will greatly enhance the Trust's capacity to complement its work on the natural environment by interpreting the rich human and cultural heritage of Mourne and Slieve Croob.



## Homes and Heritage

Work was completed on three properties at Ballycoshone Road, Hilltown, Lowtown Road, Moneyslane and Whitehill Road, Leitrim, facilitating a successful launch event attended by more than 80 people. This provided an opportunity to showcase the properties in line with the aim of inspiring others through demonstrating what can be achieved in the renovation of traditional buildings.

A fourth property at Valley Road, Ballymartin was largely complete, while work had also substantially progressed at the scheme's final two properties at Dunaval, Kilkeel and Head Road, Annalong in line with a scheduled completion date of late Summer 2007.







In order to learn from this innovative programme and to look to the future, funding was secured for an independent external evaluation of the scheme. Agreement on terms of reference was achieved to allow this important exercise to be completed in autumn 2007.

### Preserving Traditional Skills

In September 2006 the Trust collaborated with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and Construction Industry Training Board on a 'Home and Dry Day'. Attended by over 60 people, including home owners, building trade and students, this event provided an opportunity to observe finished and in progress buildings. The day also included a question and answer session on traditional building restoration and demonstrations of traditional skills including dry stone walling, lime rendering and traditional joinery.

The Trust also facilitated the showcasing of completed Mourne Homesteads properties during European Heritage Open Days and continued to promote widely its *'Traditional Buildings in Ireland'* publication, almost 1000 copies of which had been distributed by the year end.

### Connecting People with their Heritage

Work commenced this year on a cultural heritage audit, the results of which will be presented in an online searchable database of heritage resources specific to the Mourne and Slieve Croob area. This will be a useful tool for the general public, visitors, tourism businesses and organisations with an interest in heritage and culture alike.

#### At a Glance Highlights

- Completion and launch of 3 Mourne Homesteads
- Significant progress towards renovation of a further 3 traditional buildings
- RSPB and Civic Trust Awards for Mourne Homesteads
- Securing funding for full independent evaluation of Mourne Homesteads Scheme
- 3 Built Heritage Working Group meetings
- Ongoing distribution of Homeowners Handbook and CD ROM giving a cumulative total of 950
- 'Home and Dry' building restoration and traditional skills demonstration event
- Recruitment of Rural Heritage Officer
- Formation of Mourne Cultural Heritage Group
- Development of template for Cultural Heritage Audit
- Development of concept and prototype for online Cultural Heritage Database
- Design of Heritage Walks programme

A Steering Group bringing together a wealth of expertise was established to advise on this project and made substantial progress towards developing a plan of action and a Cultural Heritage Interpretation Programme, utilising the information gathered through the audit. As a first step a series of themed 'Heritage Walks' was designed as a means to bring both walking opportunities and awareness of cultural heritage to a wider audience.



# Sustainable Tourism

The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRTI) in Mourne was successfully brought to a close on 31st March 2007 having made a significant contribution to the development of the tourism industry. This success was recognised in Mourne Heritage Trust projects receiving two of the six accolades at an NRRTI awards event in November 2006, namely Corbet Lough Fishery, promoted by Banbridge District Council and the Silent Valley Nature Trail, delivered by the Trust itself.

Activity in sustainable tourism though reached beyond NRRTI with the continued implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The Trust also began looking to the future, securing agreement among a number of partners – Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Councils and the Loughs Agency - to fund a Mourne Signature Project Tourism Development Action Plan to commence in May 2007. Through this initiative and, it is hoped, involvement in delivery of the sustainable tourism element of the new Rural Development Programme for Northern Ireland 2007-2013, the Trust will bring its experience to bear on building on the successes of the NRRTI programme.

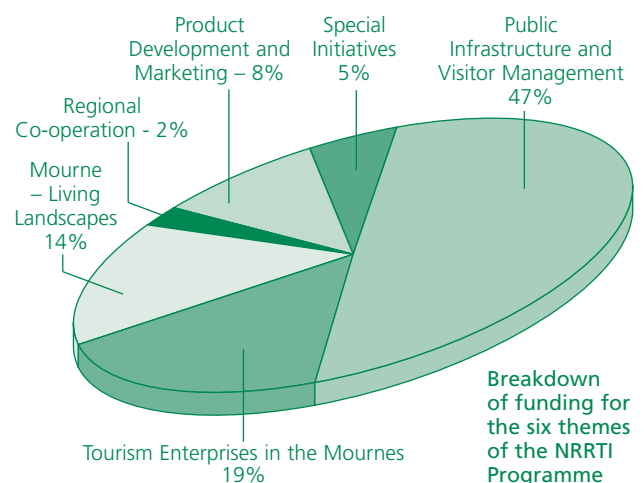
## Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative

At its completion the NRRTI programme had achieved a total spend of £2,373,000. This represented a highly creditable by 95.5% of the original commitment to MHT projects. This achievement was in part due to the Trust re-opening in June 2006 for applications to utilise slippage monies and assessing projects against tight timescales. All administrative issues were dealt with to the satisfaction of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, with significant time being devoted to post project evaluations.

Some of the key NRRTI projects brought to a successful conclusion have already been highlighted in this report and others include:

- Mourne Inns Programme - Successful launches of the Anglers Rest, Corbet and Turley's Bar, Lowtown.
- Mourne Events Programme - A total of 3 events were funded namely, Celtic Fusion International Music Festival, the Herring Gutters Festival in Newcastle and Banbridge Rural Events Festival.
- New and Existing Tourism Business Development - A number of projects in this category completed large capital projects including Soak Seaweed Baths, Newcastle (Northern Ireland's first such facility), Tory Bush Self Catering Cottages (provision of meeting facilities), Meelmore Lodge (provision of hostel accommodation) and the Highpoint Group, Castlewella (outdoor recreation centre comprising changing, meeting and other facilities).
- Tourism Training Programme – This training for tourism businesses covered topics including customer service, food hygiene, marketing, renewable energy as well as onsite support and mentoring.
- AONB Marketing Initiatives - The Trust facilitated, through Armagh Down Tourism, an Ireland-wide Mourne Marketing Campaign involving a suite of newspaper, radio, television and billboard advertisements across Ireland.

The chart below illustrates the breakdown of funding across the various themes of the NRRTI programme while further detail on projects funded can be found on page 12.



- Photographs, clockwise from top:*
- Mourne wall and the high Mournes
  - Environmental improvements at Burren
  - NRRTI Awards for Silent Valley Nature Trail
  - Minister David Cairns at launch of Blue Lough Activity Centre
  - Soak Seaweed Baths – Tourism Enterprise
  - Launch of Economic Impact Study with MHT, NITB and three local councils
  - Restored Lowtown Bar, Money's Lane
  - Special initiative – Queen's University, Belfast cottage in the Mournes







## Tourism into the Future

The Trust continued to add to its knowledge and management information base with the completion, in conjunction with NITB, of 'Tourism in Mourne Economic Impact Study'.

This exercise assessed the current extent and value of the tourism industry to the economy of the wider Mourne and Slieve Croob area as well as projecting the likely increase in the event of a national park designation.

### Value of Tourism in Mourne

- Tourism currently contributes some £72M to the local economies of Banbridge, Down and Newry and Mourne.
- The share attributed to the Mourne AONB, the study area, amounts to some £38M.
- Including knock-on benefits, a total of 3,300 jobs are dependent upon tourism in the wider area with the AONB's share of these amounting to 1,800.
- In the absence of designation, by 2020, the potential economic impact in the wider economy might grow to some £140M with the AONB accounting for £74M of this growth.
- With designation, a growth of £221M could be realised in the wider area with the AONB's share of this amounting to £118M.
- If indirect and induced impacts are included, tourism might account for 4,700 more jobs by 2020 under designation than would otherwise be the case.

*Extracted from 'Current and Potential Impact of Tourism in Mourne. Colin Buchanan August 2006.*



## A Sustainable Approach

Development and marketing of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism continued including production of a "Sustainable Tourism in Mourne" promotional leaflet and display panels to raise awareness of the principles of sustainable tourism.

The Trust also played a key role at the Europarc Charter Network conference in Strasbourg in June 2006 at which an outline agreement was reached with European partners on a mechanism for extending Charter accreditation to individual tourism businesses. Work in relation to the Charter is central to promoting Mourne as a flagship area for Northern Ireland and model of best practice in relation to natural resource based tourism.

A key element in retaining the Charter will be the Trust's Mourne Sustainable Tourism Forum which held its inaugural meeting this year, providing a channel for communication with the private sector regarding development of the Mourne Signature Project and sustainable tourism.



## Summary of the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (NRRTI) Programme - 72 Projects

Theme 1 – Public Infrastructure & Visitor Management			
Development of Gateway TICs (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Banbridge, Downpatrick &amp; Newcastle, Kilkeel, Newry</li> </ul>		
Visitor Interpretation Boards and Leaflets (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kilbroney, Cranfield, Geological Survey Northern Ireland – Interpretative Panels</li> <li>Mourne AONB Leaflet</li> <li>Bronte Interpretation</li> <li>Interpreting the Mournes – Public Art</li> </ul>		
Visitor Amenity Sites (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car Parks - Lighthouse Road, Annalong, Dree Hill, Kilfeaghan</li> <li>Visitor Facilities Upgrade – 13 car parks across area upgraded</li> <li>Amenity Upgrade – Cranfield Beach</li> </ul>		
Off Road Routes (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking Routes – Granite Trail, Mourne Way, Newry &amp; Mourne Access Corridors</li> <li>Cycling – Castlewellaan Forest Park Family Cycle Route</li> </ul>		
Activity Based Infrastructure Development (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angling Facilities – Corbet Lough, Ballylough Fishery, Hanna's Close Fishery</li> <li>Walking – Murlough Boardwalk, Hanna's Close Green Lanes, Slieve Donard Upland Footpath</li> <li>Sailing – Warrenpoint Breakwater</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £835,000.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £1,183,085.94</b>	<b>No of Projects: 28</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 47%</b>
Theme 2 – Tourism Enterprises in the Mournes			
Mourne Inns (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maghera Inn, Thierafurth Inn, Turley's Bar, Angler's Rest</li> </ul>		
Mourne Nature Cottages (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Trust</li> </ul>		
Activity Related Accommodation Provision (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fir Trees B&amp;B</li> </ul>		
Existing Tourism Activity Businesses (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YMCA Greenhill, Peak Discovery, Mount Pleasant Equestrian Centre, Bluelough Activity Centre</li> </ul>		
New Tourism Businesses (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soak Seaweed Baths</li> </ul>		
Activity Tasters (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – Walk/Talk/Pedal</li> </ul>		
Bunk Barn/Campsites (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meelmore Lodge</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £755,000.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £472,597.78</b>	<b>No of Projects: 13</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 19%</b>
Theme 3 – Mourne – Living Landscape			
Community/Activity Festivals (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dundrum All Ireland Busking Fest, Celtic Fusion Fringe (2003), Warrenpoint Comhaltas, Herring Gutters Festival, Celtic Fusion (04-06), Banbridge Rural Events, Mourne Triathlon, Gravity/Guts/Glory, Border Reivers Fest</li> </ul>		
Village Enhancements (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castlewellaan Upper Square, Finnis Environmental Improvement, Burren Environmental Improvement</li> </ul>		
Rural Heritage Audits / Interpretation (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annalong Community Development Association Signage, Places that Time Forgot, Castlewellaan Leaflet</li> </ul>		
Protect/Enhance Key Features (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castlewellaan Regeneration Ltd – Clump Restoration, MHT – Silent Valley Nature Trail</li> </ul>		
Visitor Monitoring (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – Visitor Monitoring Programme</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £550,000.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £340,486.25</b>	<b>No of Projects: 18</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 14%</b>
Theme 4 – Product Development and Marketing			
Training (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – Sustainable Tourism Training Programme</li> </ul>		
Mourne Web Site (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – www.mournelive.com</li> </ul>		
Local Branding/Packaging (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Armagh Down Tourism – Mournes Marketing Campaign</li> </ul>		
Green Charter Development (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – European Charter</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £180,000.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £191,482.10</b>	<b>No of Projects: 5</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 8%</b>
Theme 5 – Regional Co-Operation			
Link Mourne with established niche products elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – Green Accreditation Phases 1 and 2</li> </ul>		
Study Visits (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHT – Italian Study Visit, Farmer's Study Visit, Green Tourism Study Visit</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £100,000.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £55,296.07</b>	<b>No of Projects: 5</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 2%</b>
Theme 6 – Special Initiatives			
General (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tory Bush Conference/Activity Centre</li> <li>Queens University Belfast - Mourne Cottage</li> <li>Slieve Donard Hotel Waste Management</li> </ul>		
<b>Original Budget: £65,270.00</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure: £116,845.97</b>	<b>No of Projects: 3</b>	<b>Percentage of overall Budget: 5%</b>



# Creating awareness and promoting understanding



**Promoting awareness and appreciation of the special qualities of the Mourne area remained a key element of our services, with the interest raised by the proposed Mourne National Park consultations making for a particularly busy year on this front. As well as numerous enquires from interested parties and the general public, the Trust hosted a number of fact finding visits including former Minister David Cairns.**

An exciting development in the course of the year was the commencement of a project to raise awareness of the potential business, environmental and social benefits of the use of local products and of the Mourne image as a marketing tool.

## Informing

A media was enjoyed this year with almost 90 Mourne Heritage Trust / AONB related articles featuring in local, regional and national publications. Trustees and staff also featured on radio and television including:

- Features on Mourne Homesteads with BBC Radio Ulster 'Your Place and Mine' June 2006 and BBC Television Newline July 2006 - Willie John Martin (Board Member) and Martin Carey (CEO)
- Discussions on the proposed Mourne National Park on BBC Good Morning Ulster Radio (August 2006 and January 2007) and on BBC Television Newline (January 2007). Interviews were also given to a number of web based media on the National Park issue.
- Interview with BBC 'One Show' (UK wide) in August 2006 on Seaweed Baths in Newcastle.
- Advice and assistance to Ulster Television on features and locations for a programme entitled 'Ultimate Ulster', showcasing a number of locations in the Mourne area.

Our web profile continued to build with [www.mourne-](http://www.mourne-)

live.com achieving a total of 159,734 hits, almost doubling to 13,300 per month last year's average.

The Trust continued to promote and recruit Friends of Mourne throughout the year, with 170 individuals or businesses now registered. A successful 'Come and See Day' providing an opportunity for Friends of Mourne to visit a range of sites and projects was organised, with a chance to discuss issues impacting upon the area.

The Trust also continued to provide its AONB Visitor Information Point through in Newcastle, catering for approximately 2,000 enquiries and maintained its network of Tourist Information Points across the area.

## Influencing

Ensuring that the particular needs of Mourne were accounted for in key policy developments was a particular focus this year. The Trust provided detailed input to the Review of Environmental Governance in Northern Ireland, the draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Plan, Planning Policy Statement 14 and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Rural Housing Review and Strategy.

In November 2006, the Trust was delighted to host Mr David Cairns, then Minister for the Environment as well as Agriculture and Rural Development, giving a detailed presentation on its vision of the management needs of the Mourne and Slieve Croob area. Trust representatives also met with members of the Westminster Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in the course of their visit to the area. Other visitors who came to learn about, and from, Mourne included:

- Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Countryside Agency in England
- Council for Nature, Conservation and the Countryside
- Queen's University Belfast, Planning Department and Gibson Institute
- An Taisce (The National Trust for Ireland)
- European Network of Heritage Organisations
- Europarc Federation

*Photograph, top:* Visit to the Mournes by Minister David Cairns  
*Below:* Friends of Mourne 'Come and See' Day





The various sub-groups convened by the Trust, including Natural Heritage, Built Heritage Countryside Recreation and Farmers' Liaison Group continued to provide for communication between a wide range of statutory and non-statutory partners.

### Consulting

A one day consultation workshop was held in the Balmoral Hotel, Warrenpoint in January 2007, attended by over 70 community, statutory and private sector representatives along with local Councillors and MLAs. The Mayor or Chair of each of the three local Councils addressed the event which continued with a series of themed working groups which ensured that the Trust's new Strategic Operational Plan for 2007-2010 was fully reflective of current issues and concerns.

### Branding Mourne

The Mourne Branding Initiative was established to encourage the use and promotion of local produce, services and crafts, with a view to providing the basis for a Mourne brand. A Working Group comprising local food producers, service providers, tourism businesses and statutory authorities was established and generated significant momentum. Work involved a workshop led by a representative of the Fuchsia brand, an established and successful food

and tourism initiative in West Cork. Best practice was also gathered from a range of other areas leading to an agreed approach and action plan for an initial, awareness raising phase of the Mourne Branding Initiative.

Additional funding was secured from the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme for a training programme and for an expert scoping study assessing the potential for branding Mourne produce and services. By the year end a firm basis had been laid for a range of promotional events and activities.

### Proposed Mourne National Park

The Trust continued to contribute to the Mourne National Park Working Party by its Chair as a Member and its Chief Executive as an Observer. Trust representatives attended and contributed at almost all of the public, sectoral and other consultation meetings held by the Working Party in its consultation process between September 2006 and January 2007.

The Trust Board also conducted a special meeting with Working Party representatives and contributed a detailed written response to the consultation process, while Trust staff provided information to support consultants and other organisations involved in the extensive research and consultation process.





# Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2007

## Directors' Report

The Directors present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2007.

### Principal Activities and Review of the Business

The principal activity of the company continued to be that of the protection, conversation and enhancement of the environment, historic buildings and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, for the benefit of the general public.

### Results

The results for the year are set out on page 17.

### Fixed Assets

The significant changes in fixed assets during the year are explained in note 7 to the financial statements.

### Reference and Administration Information

Charity name: Mourne Heritage Trust Limited  
Charity registration number: XR 23015  
Company registration number: NI 32946

### Directors

The following directors have held office since 1 April 2006:

Mr William Burns	Mrs Rosemary Chestnutt
Mr Martin Connolly	Mr Bernard Davey ( <i>resigned 28.06.06</i> )
Mr Seamus Doyle	Mr Sean Fitzpatrick ( <i>appointed 21.01.07</i> )
Mr Isaac Hanna	Ms Isabel Hood
Mrs Elizabeth Ingram ( <i>appointed 19.02.07</i> )	
Mr John Ingram ( <i>deceased 28.06.06</i> )	Mr Patrick Kelly
Ms Maureen Killen	Mr David Maginn ( <i>appointed 27.09.06</i> )
Mr William John Martin	Mr Sean McCarthy
Mr Francis McDowell ( <i>appointed 05.06.06</i> )	
Mr John McGrillen ( <i>resigned 27.09.06</i> )	
Mr Martin McMullan ( <i>appointed 05.06.06</i> )	
Dr Arthur Mitchell	Mrs Carmel O' Boyle
Mr Desmond Patterson	Mr Jim Saunders
Mr David Thompson	Mr Jim Wells ( <i>resigned 05.06.06</i> )
Mrs Jo Whatmough	

### Directors' Interests

The company is a company limited by guarantee and so has no share capital, there are no directors' interests.

### Chief Executive Officer

Day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Martin Carey.

### Auditors, Bankers and Solicitors

The names and addresses of the auditors, bankers and solicitors are stated on the Company Information page.

### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by its Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association.

Trustees of Mourne Heritage Trust were originally appointed by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Council, Department of Environment, Environment and Heritage Service, Banbridge, Down and Newry and Mourne District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. In addition a number of other Mourne interests were appointed by the nominated Trustees after expressions of interest and nominations were sought by public advertisement and a selection procedure was carried out.

One third of the Board of Trustees retire from office each year at the Trust's AGM. The retiring Trustees are eligible for re-election. The Trust then fills the vacated office by electing a person thereto and in default the retiring Trustee shall, if offering himself for re-election, be deemed to have been elected.

Persons other than a retiring Trustee can be eligible for election if recommended by the Board of Trustees or by nomination submitted in writing 21 days before AGM by a member qualified to attend and vote at the meeting.

Voting if necessary is carried out by a membership panel, composed of accredited bodies and other Mourne Interests.

Trustees receive a thorough induction, including receipt of various key documents relating to the operation of the Trust and a briefing with the Chairman and Chief Executive.

The Organisation Structure of the Mourne Heritage Trust is shown in the diagram contained in the Annual Report.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate our exposure to the major risks.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Mourne Heritage Trust is the management body for the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, established in 1997, the Trust is a partnership of local and central government, local communities and key stakeholders. The aim of the Mourne Heritage Trust is as follows:

*'To sustain and enhance the environment, rural regeneration, cultural heritage and visitor opportunities of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contribute to the well-being of Mourne's communities'.*

The following are the strategic aims as set out in the Trust's Operational Plan 2004 -2007:

Performance Area 1:

#### Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection

'Safeguard and enhance the quality and diversity of the landscapes and biodiversity of the Mourne and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to manage and influence change appropriately'.

Performance Area 2:

#### Visitor Management and Visitor Services

'To provide and maintain opportunities for public enjoyment, education and recreation within the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB in ways which safeguard the environment and protect land management and community interests'.

Performance Area 3:

#### Built and Cultural Heritage

'To identify, promote, safeguard and enhance the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB'

Performance Area 4:

#### Sustainable Tourism

'To promote rural regeneration through the development of appropriate sustainable tourism initiatives in the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB, endeavouring to integrate with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Signature Project'.

Performance Area 5:

#### Creating Awareness and Promoting Understanding

'To create awareness and promote greater understanding of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB as a unique and special area to local regional national and international audiences'.

The Mourne Heritage Trust also fulfils its Mission statement by pursuing activities related to Rural and Community Regeneration and Strategic Management and Co-ordination.

Each key performance area is made up of core operations and priority projects. Core operations are provided from the Trusts on-going core funding, and largely reflect the Trust service level contracts with its core funders. Priority projects are complementary additional activities, which the Trust develops and seeks specific project funding for.

Key Core activities include Countryside Management in which the Trust maintains car parks, public rights of way, stiles, cycle routes, interpretative panels and undertakes weekly litter runs at visitor amenities. A Mourne Ranger Service is provided to monitor countryside access and promote positive links and understanding between landowners, local communities, visitors, business sectors and volunteers. Also important in core activity are visitor servicing through, among other things, a network of Tourism Information Points and the Mournelive website, an information service run from the Trust's Newcastle headquarters, and the development of sustainable tourism initiatives with local communities and tourism businesses.

### Key Priority Projects include:

**The Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative** - delivery of £2.5 million Peace II European funding in conjunction with DARD and EHS.

**The Mourne Homesteads Programme** - restoration of traditional rural dwellings together with awareness raising exhibitions and a range of traditional building skills courses.

**Biodiversity Programme** - production of a Biodiversity Strategy and action plan for the Mourne area to protect the wildlife it contains.

**Active Lifestyles Programme** - provision of a programme of volunteer activity with emphasis on youth and vulnerable adults.

**Rural Heritage Programme** - cultural heritage audit and action programme along with a Mourne Branding initiative to promote use of local products and services.

Key Objectives and detailed activities and targets in pursuit of these areas are set out in the Trust's Strategic Operational Plan for 2007-2010.

The Mourne Heritage Trust makes a significant use of volunteers in the course of undertaking charitable or income generating a wide range of activities. These include the Mourne Conservation Volunteers which offers people the chance to make a practical and worthwhile contribution to the conservation of the environment. There are quarterly programmes issued to the volunteers and advertised in our office and website. This is complemented by Volunteer Rangers, key volunteers who are committed to working at least 10 days per year and initiate and deliver volunteer events.

**ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

The Trust's main achievements in 2006-2007 are set out in detail in the accompanying Annual Report.

**FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The results for the year are set out on page 17.

The Mourne Heritage Trust accounts this year are showing a deficit of £55,181. This is due to a loan being obtained in order to make payments to the contractors of the properties for restoration under the Mourne Homesteads Scheme. The Trust obtained the loan from the Architectural Heritage Fund for the interim period between claims and receiving the owner's contribution.

The Core funders of the Mourne Heritage Trust are detailed below and the amounts they contributed for the year 2006/07:

- Banbridge District Council £21,577.00
- Down District Council £33,834.00
- Environment and Heritage Service £154,202.00
- Newry and Mourne Council £20,000.00
- Northern Ireland Tourism Board £34,043.00

Project Funders for the year 2006/2007 are as follows:

Mourne Homesteads Scheme funded by: Heritage Lottery Fund; Rural Development Council; Esmee Fairburn Foundation; Northern Housing Executive; Ulster Garden Villages Limited; Environment Heritage Service.

Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative funded by: Peace II delivered through the Northern Rural Development Programme.

Mourne Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership funded by: Environment and Heritage Service; Northern Ireland Water Service; Down District Council; Banbridge District Council.

Active Lifestyles Programme funded by: Big Lottery and Environment and Heritage Service.

Rural Heritage Programme funded by: Rural Development Council and Northern Ireland Regional Food Development Programme.

**PLANS**

In 2006/2007 MHT developed a new Strategic Operational Plan for 2007-2010 incorporating a review of its operations and extensive consultation. Copies of this document are available from [www.Mournelive.com](http://www.Mournelive.com) During 2007/08 MHT will begin to deliver the elements of its Operational Plan for the period 2007-2010.

**Auditors**

In accordance with Article 393 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, a resolution proposing that Purdy Quinn be reappointed as auditors of the company will be put to the Annual General Meeting on 26 September 2007.

**Directors' Responsibilities**

Company law requires the directors to prepare Financial Statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit and loss of the company for that period. In preparing those Financial Statements, the directors 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 company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Audit Information**


There is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

The directors have taken all the steps they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

**Small Company Exemptions**

Advantage has been taken in the preparation of the directors' report of the special exemptions applicable to small companies conferred by Part VIII of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

Approved by the board on 29 August 2007 and signed on its behalf by:

  
Director / Treasurer

**Auditors' Report**

We have audited the financial statements of Mourne Heritage Trust Limited for the year ended 31 March 2007 which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities, under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of investment properties and certain land and buildings, and the accounting policies set out on pages 5 and 6 therein.

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Article 243 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Respective responsibilities of the directors and auditors**

As described in the statement of directors responsibilities on page 16 the company's directors are responsible for the preparation of financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. We also report to you if, in our opinion, the directors' report is not consistent with the financial statements, if the company has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and transactions with the company is not disclosed.

We read the directors' report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatement within it.

**Basis of opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

We have undertaken the audit in accordance with the requirements of APB Ethical Standards including APB Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Small Entities, in the circumstances set out in note 18 to the financial statements.

**Opinion**

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice of the charitable company's state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2007 and of its profit incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure infor the year then ended; and the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.

  
29 August 2007  
**Purdy Quinn**  
Chartered Accountants  
& Registered Auditors  
42 Greencastle Street, Kilkeel BT34 4BH



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the Year ended 31 March 2007

	Notes	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2007 £	Total 2006 as restated £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
<b>Voluntary Income</b>					
Grants and donations		-	154,202	154,202	145,452
Donations		5,490	-	5,490	50
<b>Investment Income</b>					
			525	525	202
<b>Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities</b>					
Grants and donations		-	111,027	111,027	90,144
Sales Income		-	2,973	2,973	4,282
Friends of Mourne		-	580	580	915
Ranger Service		-	-	-	355
TCCF		-	-	-	186
NRRTI		103,117	-	103,117	83,748
Biodiversity Programme		26,499	-	26,499	27,926
EU Charter Implementation		2,009	-	2,009	-
Visitor Monitoring		26,770	-	26,770	10,000
Mourne Homesteads		364,008	-	364,008	360,367
Walk, Talk & Pedal		5,790	-	5,790	12,671
Sustainable Tourism Training		6,301	-	6,301	3,000
Green Tourism Study Visit		-	-	-	200
NITB Signature Project		12,500	-	12,500	13,383
Visitor Site Enhancements		147,471	-	147,471	132
EHS Interpretation Leaflet		-	-	-	6,468
Active Lifestyles		11,470	-	11,470	17,315
Mourne Rural Cultural Heritage Programme		19,914	-	19,914	-
<b>Other Incoming Resources</b>		-	677	677	2,859
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<u>731,339</u>	<u>269,984</u>	<u>1,001,323</u>	<u>779,655</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>					
Fundraising trading: costs of goods sold & other costs	2.2	-	5,048	5,048	5,916
Charitable Activities	2.1	794,983	219,648	1,014,631	782,836
Governance Costs	2.3	-	38,647	38,647	33,395
Other recognised (gains) & losses	2.4	-	(75)	(75)	-
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>		<u>794,983</u>	<u>263,268</u>	<u>1,058,251</u>	<u>822,147</u>
Net Incoming Resources before Transfers		(63,644)	6,716	(56,928)	(42,492)
<b>Transfers</b>					
Gross Transfers between Funds		(1,747)	1,747	-	-
Net Incoming / Outgoing Resources		(65,391)	8,463	(56,928)	(42,492)
<b>Balance brought forward at 1 April 2006</b>		<u>90,473</u>	<u>31,901</u>	<u>122,374</u>	<u>164,866</u>
<b>Balance brought forward at 31 March 2007</b>		<u>25,082</u>	<u>40,364</u>	<u>65,446</u>	<u>122,374</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the Year ended 31 March 2007

	Notes	2007 £	2006 as restated £
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>3</b>	1,000,798	779,453
Project and administrative expenses		(1,057,761)	(820,636)
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>4</b>	(56,963)	41,183
Other interest receivable and similar income	<b>5</b>	525	202
Interest payable and similar charges	<b>6</b>	(490)	(1,511)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>13</b>	<u>(56,928)</u>	<u>42,492</u>

The income and expenditure account has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations. There are no recognised gains or losses other than those passing through the income and expenditure account. The notes on pages 18 to 21 form part of the financial statements.

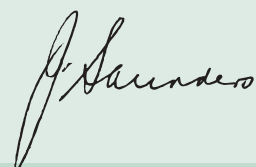
BALANCE SHEET for the Year ended 31 March 2007

		2007		2006
	Notes	£	£	as restated £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible assets	7		53,749	56,684
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Stock	8	2,447		3,406
Debtors & Repayments	9	190,171		90,655
Cash at bank and in hand		46,738		152,953
VAT		1,098		4,920
		<u>240,454</u>		<u>251,934</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	10	(228,757)		(186,244)
<b>Net current assets / (liabilities)</b>			<u>11,697</u>	<u>65,690</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			65,446	122,374
<b>Accruals and deferred income</b>	11		<u>65,446</u>	<u>122,374</u>
<b>Capital Reserves</b>				
Restricted Funds	13		25,058	90,473
Unrestricted Funds	13		<u>40,364</u>	<u>31,901</u>
	14		<u>65,446</u>	<u>122,374</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part VIII of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 .

These financial statements were approved by the members of the board on the 29th August 2007 and are signed on its behalf by:

 Chairman

 Director

The notes on pages 18 to 21 form part of the financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the Year ended 31 March 2007

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**1.1 Accounting convention**

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2005)", the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and with applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), which have been applied consistently.

The company has taken advantage of the exemption in Financial Reporting Standard No.1 from the requirement to produce a cashflow statement on the grounds that it is a small company.

**1.2 Incoming resources**

Turnover represents grants and donations from the government and other bodies, and sundry income from certain activities undertaken by the company.

**1.3 Resources expended and apportionment**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributable to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

**1.4 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Tangible fixed assets other than freehold land are stated at cost or valuation less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation,

less estimated residual value, of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Leasehold improvements
  - 5% per annum on a straight line basis
- Plant and Machinery
  - 15% per annum on a reducing balance basis
- Fixtures, fittings and equipment
  - 15% per annum on a reducing balance basis
- Motor Vehicles
  - 25% per annum on a reducing balance basis

**1.5 Stock**

Stock is valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

**1.6 Pensions**

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contributions payable by the company during the year in accordance with FRS17.

**1.7 Mourne Homesteads**

In order to preserve Built Heritage, the company runs a non-profit making programme call 'Mourne Homesteads' which restores abandoned traditional dwelling on beautifully-sited parts of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, thereby providing affordable and attractive homes for local people, while maintaining valuable historical resources and the character of the Mourne landscape. The buildings are selected according to a strict procedure with pre-determined selection criteria and the character of the Mourne landscape. The buildings are selected according to a strict procedure with pre-determined selection criteria.



The available grant-funding required to restore the buildings can only be accessed through this programme and is not directly available to the private owner. Therefore the company enters into an agreement with the owner, by which the company buys the property for a nominal value of £1 and restores the property with assistance from the available grant-funding. The company then sells the property back to the owner for an amount equivalent to the difference between the cost of restoration and the grant-funding received.

The company therefore acts as an intermediary, indirectly providing grant-funding for the restoration of suitable privately-owned properties which would not otherwise be available. In spite of legal title passing to the company, the economic substance of such a transaction is that the

company has not acquired any assets. The income from grants and from payments made by the property owners and the costs of restoration are therefore accounted for through the Statement of Financial Activities and the Income and Expenditure Account as incurred. This treatment is in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 5, "Reporting the substance of transactions".

### 1.8 Accumulated Funds

Unrestricted funds are funds that are expendable in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by the donors as to how they may be used.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the directors for specific purposes.

## 2. Resources expended

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2007	Total 2006 as restated
	£	£	£	£
<b>2.1 Charitable Expenditure</b>				
Staff costs	130,072	32,714	162,786	139,759
Friends of Mourne	-	349	349	809
Ranger	-	7,583	7,583	8,269
NRRTI	9,253	-	9,253	9,902
Mourne Homesteads	431,366	-	431,366	305,838
AONB Website	-	-	-	284
Italian Study Visit	-	-	-	2,077
Biodiversity Programme	2,076	-	2,076	3,364
Pilot Green Accrediation	4,035	-	4,035	5,660
Visitor Monitoring	11,299	-	11,299	28,070
Walk, Talk & Pedal	6,179	-	6,179	15,432
Visitor Site Enhancements	147,644	-	147,644	-
Farmers Study Visit	-	-	-	939
Tourism Training	6,437	-	6,437	7,729
Green Tourism	1,087	-	1,087	3,915
NITB Signature Project	15,158	-	15,158	6,639
Volunteer Co-ordinator	11,615	-	11,615	10,491
Silent Valley Nature Trail	2,503	-	2,503	33,807
AONB Leaflet	-	-	-	7,000
EHS Interpretation Leaflet	-	-	-	8,326
EU Charter Implementation	7,598	-	7,598	8,168
Mourne Rural Cultural Heritage Programme	8,661	-	8,661	-
	<u>794,983</u>	<u>40,646</u>	<u>835,629</u>	<u>606,478</u>
<b>Support costs</b>				
Staff costs	-	118,994	118,994	121,669
Motor and travel expenses	-	3,882	3,882	5,434
Professional fees	-	2,554	2,554	-
Insurance	-	4,285	4,285	1,481
Rentals	-	3,034	3,034	3,034
Office supplies	-	3,855	3,855	2,882
Training & workshops	-	7,481	7,481	2,813
Postage, telephone & electricity	-	8,982	8,982	7,943
Vehicle exps, equipment & tools	-	17,225	17,225	18,681
Interest payable	-	490	490	1,511
Other costs	-	-	-	2,067
Depreciation	-	8,220	8,220	8,843
	<u>-</u>	<u>179,002</u>	<u>179,002</u>	<u>176,358</u>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>2.2 Fundraising trading: costs of goods sold &amp; other costs</b>				
Advertising & Publications	-	5,048	5,048	5,916
Hospitality	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>5,048</u>	<u>5,048</u>	<u>5,916</u>

**2. Resources expended (continued)**

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2007	Total 2006 as restated
	£	£	£	£
<b>2.3 Governance costs</b>				
Staff costs	-	31,555	31,555	27,921
Director expenses	-	667	667	678
Office rentals & costs	-	810	810	755
Accounting & audit fees	-	3,300	3,300	1,821
Cost of meetings	-	250	250	296
Office supplies & printing	-	2,066	2,066	1,924
	-	38,647	38,647	33,395
	-	(75)	(75)	-
	-	(75)	(75)	-
<b>2.4 Other recognised gains/losses</b>				
Profit on disposal of an asset	-	(75)	(75)	-
	-	(75)	(75)	-

**3. Income**

The major source of core operating income is grants received from Department of the Environment – EHS. Other sources of core operating income include support grants from Banbridge District Council, Down District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Project funding is received from the Big Lottery Fund, DARD – EU Peace & Reconciliation programme (through SEUPB), EHS – Listed Buildings grant and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Rural Development Council.

**4. Operating Surplus/(Deficit)**

	2007 £	2006 £
Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:		
Loss/(Profit) on disposal of fixed assets	(75)	-
Depreciation of tangible assets	8,220	8,843
Auditors' remuneration	1,750	1,821

**5. Other Interest Receivable and Similar Income**

Bank interest	525	202
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**6. Interest Payable and Similar Charges**

Bank interest	490	1,511
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**7. Tangible Fixed Assets**

	Leasehold Improvements	Plant & Machinery	Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 April 2006	24,357	31,516	48,157	14,688	118,718
Additions	-	820	4,890	-	5,710
Disposals	-	(500)	-	-	(500)
At 31 March 2007	24,357	31,836	53,047	14,688	123,928
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2006	7,354	15,594	27,083	12,003	62,034
On Disposals	-	(75)	-	-	(75)
Charge for the year	1,218	2,436	3,895	671	8,220
At 31 March 2007	8,572	17,955	30,978	12,674	70,179
<b>Net Book Value</b>					
At 31 March 2007	15,785	13,881	22,069	2,014	53,749
At 31 March 2006	17,003	15,922	21,074	2,685	56,684

**8. Stocks**

	2007 £	2006 £
Finished goods and goods for resale	2,447	3,406



**9. Debtors**

	2007 £	2006 £
Other debtors	187,303	87,649
Prepayments and accrued income	2,868	3,006
	<u>190,171</u>	<u>90,655</u>

**10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	2007 £	2006 £
Bank loans and overdrafts	4,871	-
Loan – Architectural Heritage Fund	184,703	122,000
Trade creditors	4,541	62,246
Taxes and social security costs	-	-
Accruals and deferred income	34,642	1,998
	<u>228,757</u>	<u>186,244</u>

**11. Prior year adjustment**

The company changed its accounting policy to comply with SORP 2005. Previously capital grants were accounted for as accruals and deferred income, they are now accounted for through reserves.

**12. Pension Costs**

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the company to the fund and amounted to £21,127 (2006 – £24,717).

**13. Statement of movements on funds**

	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £
Balance at 1 April 2006	90,473	31,901
Retained surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(65,391)</u>	<u>8,463</u>
Balance at 31 March 2007	<u>25,082</u>	<u>40,364</u>

**14. Reconciliation of movements in funds**

	2007 £
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year - Restricted	(65,391)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year - Unrestricted	<u>8,463</u>
	<u>(56,928)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year	
Opening Funds - Restricted (as previously stated)	78,439
Prior year adjustment (note 11)	12,034
Opening Funds - Unrestricted	<u>31,901</u>
	<u>122,374</u>
Closing Funds - Restricted	25,082
Closing Funds - Unrestricted	<u>40,364</u>
	<u>65,446</u>

**15. Analysis of net assets between funds**

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2007 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2007 are represented by			
Tangible fixed assets	28,263	25,486	53,749
Current assets	217,219	23,235	240,454
Creditors: amount due within one year	<u>(220,400)</u>	<u>(8,357)</u>	<u>(228,757)</u>
Balance at 31 March 2007	<u>25,082</u>	<u>40,364</u>	<u>65,446</u>

**16. Contingent Liabilities**

The company has a liability to refund grant monies received by it should it fail to comply with the relevant conditions as set out in the letter of offer.

**17. Employees**

	2007 Number	2006 Number
The average monthly number of employees (including directors) during the year was:		
Permanent Staff	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>
	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>

**Employment Costs**

	£	£
		as restated
Wages & Salaries	272,418	246,647
Employers NIC	19,790	17,985
Other Pension costs	<u>21,127</u>	<u>24,717</u>
	<u>313,335</u>	<u>289,349</u>

**18. Auditors' Ethical Standards**

In common with many businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit returns to the tax authorities and assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

**19. Control**

The directors are the ultimate controlling party of the company.

**20. Related Parties**

Under the Built Heritage / Mourne Homesteads scheme described in Accounting Policy Note 1.7, the company had previously selected a property owned by one of the directors, Mr William John Martin. Mr Martin had no part in the selection process, and his property was selected according to the programmes' normal criteria. The projected costs for the restoration of this property were £141,991 with projected grand funding of £103,598, leaving an owners contribution of £38,393 to be paid by Mr Martin. At 31 March 2007, the restoration had cost £131,420 to date, grant funding of £84,841 had been received and Mr Martin had paid £38,393.

**21. Post Balance Sheet**

In the post balance sheet period, Mourne Heritage Trust Limited received correspondence from HMRC Charities restating part of the Trusts income as being within the scope of VAT. Consequentially VAT of £5,957 on this income has been provided for at the balance sheet date.

# Key Features of the Mourne and Slieve Croob AONB

## Date of Designation

Mourne was first designated as an AONB in 1966, and re-designated and extended to 57,000 hectares in 1986 to encompass the Mourne Mountains, Slieve Croob, their farmed foothills and coast.

## Extent & Administrative Areas

The Mourne AONB extends across 57,000 Hectares, divided between three local government districts namely Newry & Mourne (34,000 hectares) Down (13,700 hectares) and Banbridge (8,700 hectares).

## Population

The resident population is 50,000 (2001 census). There are 24 settlements, only 3 of which have a population over 5,000.

## Mountains

The Mourne AONB comprises 20,000 hectares of moorland & mountain, characterised by a hard granite core of twelve, closely grouped peaks, with Northern Ireland's highest mountain, Slieve Donard, rising 2796 feet/850 metres above sea level. To the North, Slieve Croob at 534 metres is linked to the main Mourne massif by the broken rocky hills of the Castlewella area.

## Coast

The Mourne AONB has 72 km of coastline. To the south, is Carlingford Lough, the only fjord and deep water lough on the east coast of Ireland; to the north the sandy beaches of Murlough National Nature Reserve; and in between the rocky coves and cliffs where the 'mountains sweep down to the sea.'

## Forest

There are 5,000 hectares of woodland and forest in the AONB, including the forest parks of Castlewella, Kilbroney and Tollymore as well as the ancient oak wood at Rostrevor.

## Reservoirs

The AONB has five reservoirs: Silent Valley, Ben Crom, Spelga Dam, Fofannybane and Lough Island Reavey.

## Geology

The Mourne are comparatively young mountains formed over 50 million years ago. Slieve Croob is part of the much older Newry granite complex. There are six designated geological sites in the AONB: Charley's Rock, Ben Crom, Bloody River, Diamond Rocks, Eagle Rock and Murlough Complex.

## A Living Landscape

The Mourne AONB contains approximately 29,000 hectares of farmland characterised by smallholdings, with close to 1500 farms averaging about 20 hectares. Upland areas are used extensively as shared grazing. Traditional farming shaped the landscape, including the distinctive 'patchwork' pattern of dry stone walls.

## Mourne Granite

Granite from the Mourne has been widely used as a building material, notably paving cities such as Liverpool, Belfast and London and also for millstones, lintels, window sills and door steps. Mourne granite has been found at the Megalithic site of Newgrange in County Meath, c. 3200 BC, now a World Heritage Site. Recently Mourne stonemasonry has been used in memorials for Princess Diana in Hyde Park, London and the British victims of '9/11' in New York.

## Historic Site Designations

There are 7 state care monuments, 60+ scheduled historic monuments and 414 historic monuments that are not yet statutorily protected.

## Public Rights of Way

There are 33.52 miles (53.95km) of public rights of way.

## Conservation Designations

Carlingford Lough is an international Ramsar site and a Special Protection Area (SPA) designated by the EU. Rostrevor Wood and Murlough are both National Nature Reserves and, with the Eastern Mourne, are recognised as EU Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There are many Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) and Areas of Scientific Interest.

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST  
is funded by



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