

Nyika-Vwaza News

The newsletter of the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

"working for the environment and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi"

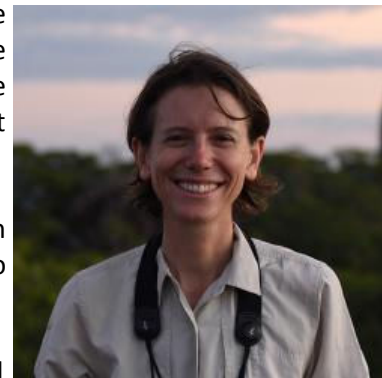


NVT Event in Spring 2024

At this time of year, we usually announce our speaker for the autumn event. We have found a most interesting person, Dr Claire Spottiswoode, to talk to us about the relationship between greater honeyguides and honey hunters, but she is not free to give a talk until next spring. Dr Spottiswoode is an evolutionary biologist from the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University.

You will remember that we recently funded George M'manga to carry out research on this very subject and his report will soon be available. We hope George will be able to send us a video to show at the event.

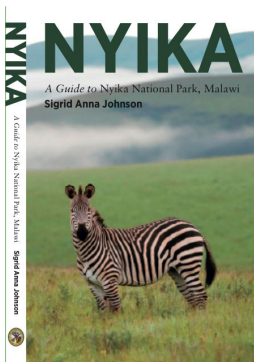
There will be plenty to inform and entertain you on this fascinating subject, but you will have to be patient. As soon as we have a date for our event in the spring, we will let you know. It will be held where we usually meet – The Union Jack Club near Waterloo Station.



Dr Claire Spottiswoode
© Dr Claire Spottiswoode

Nyika Guide available as pdf

An updated version of The Guide to the Nyika National Park is now downloadable as a pdf from our website: (www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org/uploads/Sig-Book-CC-04.07.23-PDF-version-indd-file.pdf). The guide is suitable for use on mobile phones, tablets and PCs.



The Nyika Guide
© Sigi Johnson

Sigrid Anna Johnson created the original guide with imagination, research and a lot of hard work. She said: *"I am very pleased that the guide is now on the website. When I agreed to update the original book, it was important to me that the new version be as accessible as possible to Malawians. Now, anyone with a phone has the information compiled by numerous Nyika researchers and experts, literally at their finger-tips. I hope that this access will lead to a whole new generation of young Malawians becoming invested in finding innovative approaches to meet the challenges that protected areas worldwide are facing in the 21st century."*

We are most grateful to Sigrid for her continued dedication to this guide and for making the guide freely available.

Hard copies of the guide are still available and can be ordered on the form at the end of this newsletter.

Donation of Guide Books to WESM

We have donated 135 paper version Nyika Guide books to the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi and encouraged them to distribute the books to schools and other bodies at the WESM branches in the country.

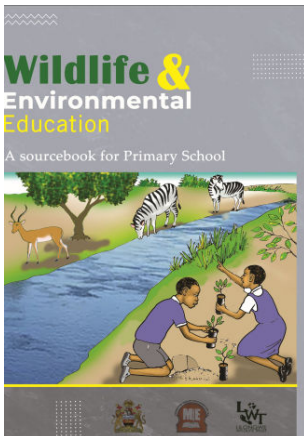
Conservation is on the school curriculum.

As we reported this spring, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust have built on the experience of their six-year environmental education programme, in the protected areas in the north of Malawi, by the significant achievement of getting Environmental Education integrated into the Malawi national primary school curriculum through development of a primary source book for Wildlife and the Environment. The first draft of the Wildlife and Environmental Sourcebook content and design has been completed, with £36,000 funding from NVT for 2022-23. This national programme was launched in December 2022 at an event with many important guests from education and conservation.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

NVT has committed £36,000 to supporting stage 2 during 2023-24, which involves printing of the workbook, training teachers to use it, and its distribution and roll-out to primary schools.



Cover of Source Book for Wildlife & Environmental Education
© LWT

Dorothy Tembo-Nhlema, Director of programmes at LWT told us: "From April to September this year we have been fast tracking the process of the source book, and now we have the first edition printed out for distribution and pre-testing to 16 schools across the six education divisions in the country, out of which six primary schools are from the previous three years' NVT project in the Northern region".

The Malawi Department of Forestry gave an enthusiastic welcome to the sourcebook at an event on 29 September, and has this message on its Facebook page:



Attending the Department of Forestry event are: Steve Matandika, MIE; Lonny Chirambo, Dept. Of Forestry; Davies Munthali, Dept. Of Forestry; Chifundo Dalireni, WESM; Maisa Kataya, DNPW; Moses Mailosi, MIE; Alex Chiumia, MIE; Rosario Soko, Ministry of Education Northern Division; Chipiliro Kumwenda, Ministry of Education Headquarters; Julius Malili, Ministry of Education Headquarters; Ausbin Masachi, Ministry of Education Headquarters; Andrew Nkomba, Central East Education Division; Christopher Ziba, DQAS; Joshua Munthali, MIE; Clement Manjaalera, LWT; Dorothy Tembo-Nhlema, LWT.
© Department of Forestry

In an exciting collaboration, the Department of Forestry has partnered with the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust to implement a unique programme focused on the distribution and orientation of data collectors for Wildlife and Environmental Education sourcebook for primary schools in the country. In her remarks, Senior Forestry Officer Lonny Chirambo said

the Department of Forestry recognises the vital role of education in protecting trees and forests for a sustainable future.

Chirambo said, "This comprehensive sourcebook will offer age-appropriate educational materials and activities to engage students and foster a sense of environmental stewardship".

On her part, the Director of Programs for Lilongwe Wildlife Trust, Dorothy Tembo, said the sourcebook aims to raise awareness and promote the importance of wildlife conservation and environmental education among primary school students in Malawi. "By joining forces, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust seeks to create a knowledgeable and environmentally conscious society that actively contributes to the preservation of wildlife and the protection of the environment," said Tembo.

The Quality Assurance Officer, in the Ministry of Education, Chipiliro Kumwenda commented that the source book is rich and, as much as we are targeting primary schools, the content could also be used for secondary schools.

The sourcebook will cover a wide range of topics, including Environment and Biodiversity, Forestry and People, and Wildlife and Forestry Crime."

At NVT UK, we are delighted to be involved in, and have the opportunity to support, such a ground-breaking environmental education programme.

The Happold Africa Fund

In February 2023 the Trust received a donation of £180,638 from the Happold Africa Fund. This fund was set up by Prof. David and Dr Meredith Happold, who have worked extensively in Malawi over many years and have published many papers and books. This very generous donation has enabled us to support the LWT Education Centre work and will be fundamental in future funding about which we are in discussion with the new park managers. As you will understand, it is taking time to get the use of this important contribution right and we will let you know once we have plans in place. We remain most grateful to Meri and David Happold.

Nyika-Vwaza Agreement Shapes a Sustainable Conservation and Community Future

On the 16th June 2023 the Malawi Government entered into a 20-year Co-Management Agreement (CMA) with the Peace Parks Foundation for the Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve. Under this CMA, management of the parks will be the responsibility of a Trust for all areas apart from Law Enforcement which will remain with DNPW.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

The next step is for a Trust to be set up in Malawi to oversee the CMA, hopefully by the end of 2023. The Trust will be managed by a board of 13 Trustees made up of four representatives from local government, Malawi Government appointees, and two PPF representatives. The Trust board will be responsible for strategy and approval of management plans – directly employed staff will be responsible for implementation.



*Signing of the CMA with left to right:
Seated: The Hon. Vera Kamtukule, Ministry of Tourism;
Werner Myburgh, CEO of PPF.
Standing: His Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwere,
President of Malawi; Joaquim Chissano, former president of
Mozambique and Vice-Chairman of PPF's board of directors
© Government of Malawi*

Good progress has been made with preparing General Management Plans, and the teams putting these together have been in contact with NVT to make use of the material we have collected over the last twenty years. The management plans will form the backbone of the Trust's strategy.

Funding for the Trust will be from the income of endowments, and from DNPW and other grants. The endowments will not be under the ownership or management of the Trust and will be held outside Malawi. Other funding will be directly to the Trust.

PPF have made good progress with funding for the endowment fund and at present it consists of the income from the Germany-based Legacy Landscape Fund (Funds €20m) and the Peace Park Foundation (Funds US\$ 20m).

In addition, grant funding has been sourced from KfW to fund a two-year transition period (€ 3.3m) and from the Dutch Lottery Fund (€2m) to fund law enforcement and rewilding the pine plantation areas. Other funding streams are being investigated, including Carbon Credits, and Biodiversity Credits (through Replanet).

This is a major development for DNPW and builds on PPF's involvement with Nyika over many years, including their involvement in establishing the Nyika Trans Frontier Conservation Area.

NVT is working with PPF and DNPW to identify projects it can assist with, focussing on the early stages of the Trust where extra resources will be needed.



Update on research studies

Each year, NVT UK funds research into conservation, environmental, or socio-economic issues that affect the Nyika National Park and the Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve. The intention is that the results inform plans for the management of the two areas.

Denham's Bustard on the Nyika Plateau

The planned research project to estimate the abundance of Denham's Bustard on the Nyika Plateau will not now take place this year, due to the heavy commitments of Erik Sandvig and Leejiah Dorward. By way of an explanation, we are happy to tell you that Leejiah has been appointed a lecturer at Bangor University, starting in January 2024. We do hope that the Denham's Bustard project will take place when he can fit it into his teaching schedule.

Status of Butterflies in the Vwaza Game Reserve

Beston Kambeta, an entomologist at the Malawi Department of Museums & Monuments, has completed the first stage of his research to assess the Conservation Status of Butterflies in the Vwaza Game Reserve. This took place just after the rainy season, which made travelling challenging and meant that butterflies were collected on an as-encountered basis, as opposed to from fixed transects.

The aims of the study were to check the butterfly species present in the area, to establish if endangered species are still present, and to create an exhibition collection for the museums.

Desk-top study, prior to his visit, provided a reference species list. Once on site, specimens that were easily

identified were recorded, with those more difficult to identify collected appropriately and taken back to the museum for reference.



Entomologist Kambeta, Asst Entomologist & Game Ranger (Mwandira).
© Beston Kambeta

50 species of butterfly were recorded in this first stage of the study. The true total will only be established once the second stage is carried out in the dry season in October 2023, when different species will be present.

In his interim report, Beston started to consider the probable health of the habitats, based on what butterflies had been found. He is now out in the field working on the second stage and the full report will be up on the NVT website once received and accepted.



Asst entomologist, Mwale, collecting butterfly from trap at Kazuni Camp
© Beston Kambeta

Study on Honey Hunting with Honeyguides

George M’anga has completed his final report, but must wait until his Master’s viva has taken place before he can submit it to go on the NVT website. From what he has told us in interim reports, it will be a fascinating read for both scientific and lay readers. As you will have seen from the start of this newsletter, honeyguides and honey hunters will be the subject of our next event, in spring 2024. We do hope that George will be able to contribute at the event, through pre-recorded video.



George on left with colleague from Nthalire.
© George M’anga

Invasive Alien Plant Species on Tropical Montane Evergreen Forests Patches of the Nyika Plateau.

A Word from Sopani Sichinga.

To NVT supporters and other interested parties!!



Sopani Sichinga
© Sopani Sichinga

Once again, it is an honour to have an award by NVT. As it was reported in the spring newsletter issue 36, this time around, my study covers *“Occurrence and Impacts of Invasive Alien Plant Species on Tropical Montane Evergreen Forest Patches of the Nyika Plateau”*. Having mentioned this, let me give a very brief update on the progress of the study so far.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

The study is yet to commence, as Nyika National Park, where the study will be done, was chosen to be a training site for the new recruits (DNPW rangers), and was fully booked for the past 4-5 months. This delayed my fieldwork, as there was no accommodation available.

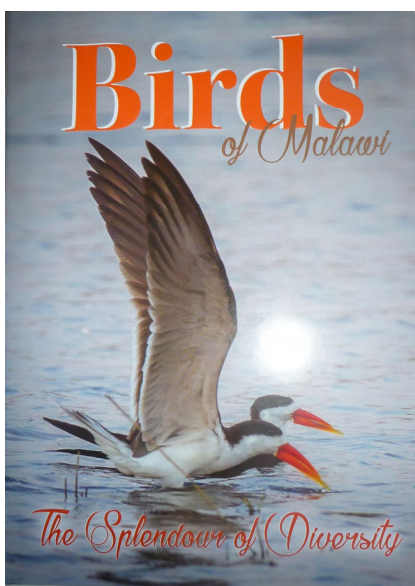
However, as this is the last month for the training, I can confirm that fieldwork will commence any day this month (of October) and I am hoping to give a fieldwork progress report by the end of December 2023, with final report to be completed by the end of February 2024.

Lastly, I urge all nature lovers and other well-wishers from all corners of the world to continue supporting NVT for the good work they are championing in conserving Nyika and Vwaza.

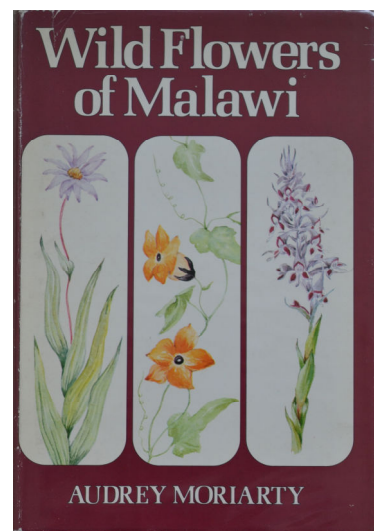
It is intended that the body of information, from the eight years that NVT has been commissioning research studies, will leave a legacy of an accessible record for future students in Malawi.

Legacy of information

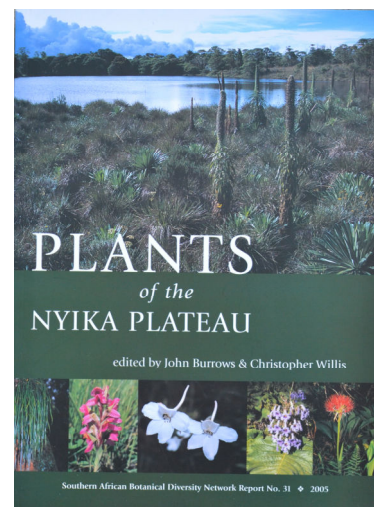
It is easy to forget just how much valuable information NVT UK has generated, coordinated and recorded since it was founded in 2004. We have already mentioned the research studies and the Guide to the Nyika National Park, but we must not forget that extensive flora and fauna lists for both Nyika and Vwaza are on our website, as is a full bibliography. You can also find back copies of our newsletters, way back to autumn 2005. Do check on our website to see what's there and enjoy reading and using the information you find.



Birds of Malawi, The Splendour of Diversity
By Bentley Palmer and John Wilson
© Bentley Palmer



Flowers of Malawi by Audrey Moriarty
© Audrey Moriarty



Plants of the Nyika Plateau
Edited by John Burrows & Christopher Willis
© John Burrows & Christopher Willis

Donations for new National Curriculum programme appreciated

You will have read in this newsletter that encouraging progress has been made with creating, producing and rolling out the Wildlife and Environmental source book for use in primary schools. Although we have the benefit of the Happold Africa Fund money, additional donations will help to extend our support of this initiative as well as the LWT Education Centre and for the research projects which will inform future management of the Nyika and Vwaza reserves. We still need your help. We are most grateful to all of you who have already made donations and hope that this newsletter will encourage others to support this important work. You can find a donation form at the end of this newsletter. Or donate online at:

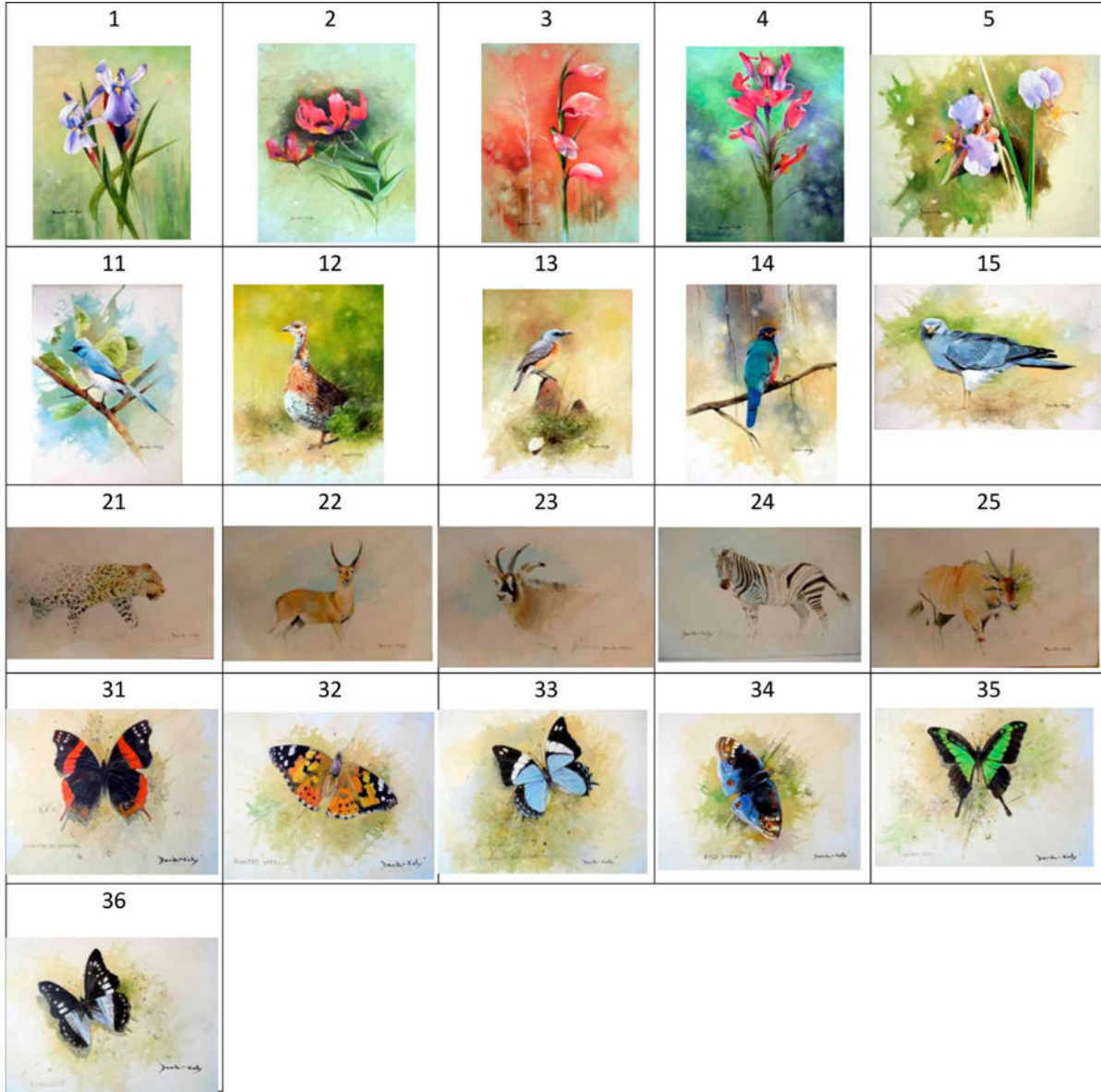
www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org

A very big 'thank you' for your support.

Greetings cards

The beautiful flora and fauna of Malawi cards, illustrated below, were painted by David Kelly for NVT. Each of the four packs (flowers, birds, animals and butterflies) contains five cards and costs £5.50 +P&P. The cards are 150mm x 105mm and are blank on the inside.

To order, please contact the NVT Secretary, indicating which pack, or packs, you wish to order by emailing email sec.nvt@gmail.com, or by post at 50 Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 4NA, UK.



Order Form for Guide to Nyika National Park

To order "Nyika – A Guide to the Nyika National Park, Malawi", payment can be made by £sterling cheque (made out to Nyika-Vwaza Trust), or direct to NVT's UK bank – see details below.

Prices:

UK: £20, incl. p&p, direct to the Trust's account at Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860

Overseas: direct to Lloyds Bank plc account (IBAN GB94LOYD30908944504860), account name The Nyika-Vwaza UK Trust, or by banker's draft) £28, including p&p.

We rely on donations to the Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust to fund our programmes, so please consider adding a donation to the amount you are paying for the guide.

Please complete the following:

I would like copies of the book, "Nyika – A Guide to the Nyika National Park, Malawi."

I would like to add a donation of £.....

I enclose my cheque for £.....

Or, I confirm that I have paid £.... direct to the

Trust account at Lloyds Bank plc, sort code 30-90-89, account number 44504860,

Or that I have paid £.....sterling by bankers draft,

Please use your last name as the reference.

Cheques must be in £sterling and drawn on a UK bank.

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other.....

Forename:.....

Surname:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

..... Postcode:.....

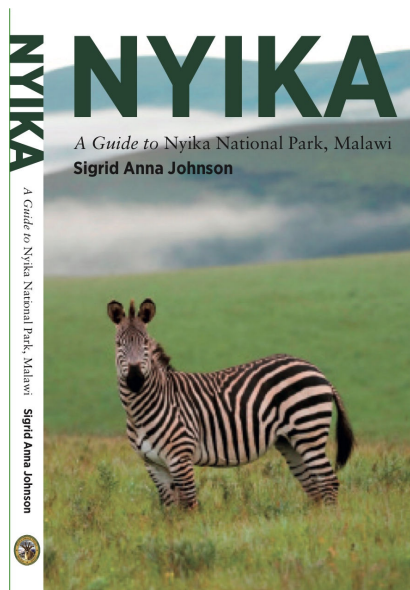
Email address:.....

Please return this completed form to:

Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust

50 Brewery Road

Woking, Surrey, GU21 4NA, UK



The Nyika Guide
© Sigi Johnson



The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust
Reg. charity no. 1105105

The Hon. Treasurer/Secretary
50 Brewery Road,
Woking,
Surrey.
GU21 4NA
Tel: +44 (0)1483 714130
Email: sec.nvt@gmail.com

Working for environmental and wildlife conservation in northern Malawi.

Email: info@nyika-vwaza-trust.org
Website: www.nyika-vwaza-trust.org



BANKER'S ORDER (for UK residents only)	Friends of the Nyika-Vwaza Trust Donation Form PLEASE PRINT YOUR DETAILS IN CAPITALS
<p>To:- Bank plc, (Please insert the name and address of your Bank in the space above)</p> <p>Please pay to Lloyds Bank plc, for the credit of The Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, Sort Code 30-90-89, account No. 44504860, the sum of:</p> <p>£ on (Please insert date above)</p> <p>and thereafter every month/quarter/six months/year <i>(delete as appropriate)</i> until cancelled by me in writing.</p> <p>Name of Account to be debited</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Account Number</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Please return this completed form to.- Hon. Treasurer, Nyika-Vwaza (UK) Trust, 50 Brewery Road, Woking, Surrey. GU214NA for registration and onward transmission to your Bank.</p> <p>Alternatively you may set up a standing order direct with your bank and advise us of your arrangement by email to sec.nvt@gmail.com.</p>	<p>Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other:</p> <p>Forenames:</p> <p>Surname:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Postcode:</p> <p>Telephone No.:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>I enclose a donation of: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Or: I have completed the Banker's Order Form. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made.</p> <p>In the past four years <input type="checkbox"/> Today <input type="checkbox"/> In future <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>(Please tick boxes you wish to apply)</i></p> <p>I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>