

# ***Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society***



**Founded 1869**

**Registered charity 291604**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 01 JANUARY 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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## **CHARITY INFORMATION**

**Founded:** The Society was founded in 1869 and registered as a charity in 1985.

**Charity number:** 291604

**Governing document:** Constitution adopted on 4 March 1983 as amended on 22 March 1985, 16 March, 1999, 21 March 2006, 10 March 2015, 12 March 2019, 10 March 2020, 23 March 2021 and 22 March 2022

**How the charity is constituted:** Unincorporated charitable association

**Registered address:** 56 The Red House, Palace Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 1FA

**Independent Examiner:** Martyn Benstead, Stephenson Smart, Fakenham

**Bankers:** Barclays Bank PLC, St Stephen's Street, 5-7 Red Lion Street, Norwich, NR1 3QH

**Website:** [www.nnns.org.uk](http://www.nnns.org.uk)

**Email:** [membership@nnns.org.uk](mailto:membership@nnns.org.uk)

**Social media:** <https://www.facebook.com/NorfolkNats> and <https://twitter.com/NorfolkNats>

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT**

This report will be published on the Charity Commission's website, where reports from previous years may also be found.

### **Introduction**

The steady increase in membership, now around 720, has been most gratifying, especially in view of the announced rise in subscription to take place from April 2024. This increase has been necessary to ensure that the core activities of the Society are covered by regular income, allowing the generous legacies we have received to be used for additional research and publication purposes.

For one good reason or another, holders of important offices within the Society have announced that they are no longer able to continue, and concern had been expressed that without replacements we would struggle to provide for our members. The good news is that excellent candidates for these posts have come forward and agreed to stand at the next AGM. Although much has been done to improve the management of the Society there remain tasks to satisfy all aspects of sound charity governance and the work continues.

If management of the Society has caused some concern, its activities, outlined below have continued to be full and successful and I am very grateful to all who have contributed to these. A recent development is that the Liaison Committee, created a few years ago to facilitate cooperation with other organisations, now has the support of Council to review planning proposals that have significant adverse biodiversity impacts.

Sadly, two long-standing Vice-presidents, Roy Baker and Alec Bull, died in 2023. Their obituaries will appear in the 2023 Transactions.

*NNNS Chair - Tony Leech*

## Organisation

The key management personnel of the charity are the Trustees, and the Society has no staff. The Society relies heavily on the voluntary work of the Trustees and many other volunteers, who make a vital contribution to the Society and for which the NNNS Council is very grateful.

Trustees are elected by the membership at the AGM either annually (Officers) or for three-year terms (members with no specific office). Trustees are aided on Council by Vice Presidents. These are members who have made major contributions to the study of natural history and have previously given long service on Council. They are elected for life by the membership and give advice, however they are not Trustees and do not vote at meetings.

**Vice Presidents:** R.E. Baker (died 20 July 2023), A.L. Bull (died 8 August 2023), R. Hancy, A.G. Irwin, D.I. Richmond.

The Society President is nominated by Council to serve for one year and is a person who has made a significant contribution to the understanding of natural history.

**President until 28/03/23:** Dr Pam Taylor

**President from 28/03/23:** Tim Holt-Wilson

## Trustee names and responsibilities

The following individuals have held the position of Trustee during 2023.

| <b>Name</b>    | <b>Additional role (if any), with dates in brackets if the role changed during 2023</b> | <b>Date served as Trustee (if not whole year)</b> |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Tony Leech     | Chair<br>Publications Committee Chair                                                   |                                                   |
| John Hobbs     | Secretary                                                                               |                                                   |
| Francis Farrow | Assistant Secretary                                                                     |                                                   |
| Jim Froud      | Treasurer<br>Finance Committee Chair<br>Membership Secretary                            |                                                   |
| Tania Evanns   | Assistant Treasurer (until 28/3/23)<br>Finance Committee Secretary (until 28/3/23)      | Until 28/3/23                                     |
| Carl Chapman   | Liaison Committee Chair                                                                 |                                                   |
| Mark Collins   | Research Committee Chair                                                                |                                                   |
| Sarah Butler   | Events and Outreach Committee Chair                                                     |                                                   |
| Anne Edwards   | Events and Outreach Committee Secretary (from 28/3/23)                                  | From 28/3/23                                      |
| Jo Parmenter   | Publications Committee Secretary<br>Liaison Committee Secretary                         |                                                   |
| Janet Higgins  | Research Committee Secretary                                                            |                                                   |
| Debbie Ashton  |                                                                                         |                                                   |
| Allan Archer   |                                                                                         | From 28/3/23                                      |
| Sue Gale       |                                                                                         |                                                   |
| Alice Liddle   |                                                                                         | Until 28/3/23                                     |
| Sam Neal       |                                                                                         |                                                   |
| Tim Strudwick  |                                                                                         |                                                   |
| Joe Harkness   |                                                                                         | Until 28/3/23                                     |
| Rob Yaxley     |                                                                                         | From 28/3/23                                      |

## **Objectives and public benefit**

The objectives of the Society are:

*“To promote, organise, carry on and encourage education of the public and study and research for the advancement of knowledge in natural sciences and to protect endangered species”*

To furtherance of the above objects but not further or otherwise the Society may:

- Publish papers on the natural sciences, especially those relating to Norfolk.
- Encourage the exchange of information between naturalists by means of meetings and excursions.
- Protect endangered species by the collection of information, cooperative surveys, investigations and the dissemination of the useful results of such investigations.
- Do all such other lawful things as shall further the attainment of the above objects.

The Society was approved as a charity by the Charity Commission in 1985 in the category of “Environment/Conservation/Heritage”, and was deemed to benefit the general public as a Society that *“provides advocacy/advice/information/sponsors or undertakes research”*

In carrying out our activities this year the Trustees paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on providing public benefit.

Some of the key activities relating to these areas of public benefit in 2023 were:

- A series of meetings by a range of guest speakers and available free to all
- Completion of a three-year research programme at the newly created Broadland Country Park north of Norwich. The information gathered will be used to aid the conservation of individual species, assemblages and habitats, and also to inform a management plan that will benefit the area for both people and wildlife.
- Improved support for activities that introduce young people to wildlife.

## **Achievements and activities**

### **Events and Outreach**

A full programme of events, both indoor and outdoor, was provided with activities spread across the county. Our presence with exhibits at the Norwich Science Fair provided an opportunity to speak to a large number of young people.

The Education Sub-committee has held regular quarterly meetings to plan educational activities. Delivery of these to schools and families was spearheaded by Allan Archer, supported by a grant from the Society. Sarah Butler provided her Naturalist Training Garden for use by the Society.

The Society’s website, maintained by Jim Froud, is our principal online presence, containing a large range of information about the Society, details of forthcoming events, an online shop and an extensive catalogue of former publications and species guides available to download for free. Both the NNNS Twitter account and the NNNS Facebook page, each run by James Emerson, have over 1200 followers. In addition, the Norfolk Wildlife Facebook group, managed by Andy Musgrove and a small team of volunteers, has over 6100 followers making it another important place for members of the public to hear about the Society and benefit from the expertise of its members. All of these media have seen increased use through the year and I am grateful to all involved in running them.

*Events and Outreach Chair – Sarah Butler*

## Publications

**Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report:** The Reports for 2022 were published in time for the autumn half-term providing an increased opportunity for visitor sales. They were well-received and orders have been good. Barry Madden has taken over as editor and is preparing the 2023 Bird Report.

**Transactions:** The publication of Transactions was again delayed past the end of the year. However, it was 60% larger than the 2022 issue reflecting the amount of investigative work being carried out by members.

**Natterjack:** This quarterly bulletin not only brings items of wildlife interest to members but has replaced the programme card as a means of disseminating information about events. It also contains contact details for officers and county recorders. We are grateful to all contributors for their interesting short articles, notes and photographs and to Francis Farrow for editing and laying out the publication.

**Occasional Publications:** A further reprint of *Emma Turner: a life looking at birds* (James Parry) is planned as sales continue, including some from abroad. Manuscripts for *Cetaceans of Norfolk* (Carl Chapman) and *The Revd. MCH Bird: Gilbert White of the Broads* (James Parry) have been received and are being prepared for publication.

*Publications Committee Chair – Tony Leech*

## Research

The Research Committee plans and implements an annual programme, in line with the NNNS mission and objectives. Mark Collins continued as Chair, ably supported by Secretary Janet Higgins and a Committee of seven that met in February and October, in addition to supporting the 40 or so County Recorders and dozen Specialist Groups, fostering individual and joint investigations, keeping records of work and publishing results. The Society welcomed new County Recorders for butterflies, terrestrial Heteroptera, and psyllids.

Small grants were agreed by Council to support freshwater invertebrate identification, management of bird records and trialling of a new system for recording fish data in cooperation with anglers.

A County Recorders' Meeting was held in December at the John Innes Centre on the theme *Freshwaters: Recording Today for a Better Tomorrow*. A dozen excellent speakers attracted an 80-strong audience to look at the importance, protection, recovery and future of Norfolk's wetland landscape.

The Society's priority three-year project at Broadland Country Park, in partnership with Broadland District Council, saw the completion of the third and final year of research, steered by a Working Group that met five times. The Working Group welcomed the new Park Manager, Nigel Stannet and thanked Dave Weaver, Jules Kennelly and all at the Broadland District Council, who had made the project possible.

Highlights of the year included new data on deer and other mammals from camera traps and the reintroduction of 34 Silver-studded Blue butterflies from Buxton Heath, an event which attracted media interest. The park continues to reveal its secrets and, with over 2500 species recorded and verified, is clearly an important site for Norfolk's biodiversity. County Recorders and other experts will now begin to draw the data together with a view to publishing an authoritative report on the park, its ecological and lifestyle values, and its importance in the cause of nature recovery.

The Research Committee has agreed with Norfolk Wildlife Trust to conduct a biological survey of Sweet Briar Marshes in Norwich over the coming two years. The Scientific Coordinator will be Prof. David Harper.

*Research Committee Chair – Mark Collins*

## **Liaison**

The Liaison Committee fosters and maintains relationships with other Norfolk organisations with aims that overlap with ours. Increasingly, we are being approached to support objections to planning applications and are willing to provide wildlife information obtained by our members. Sometimes, more general support is requested and we need to consider carefully how appropriate this is. The biodiversity loss we are experiencing should remain at the top of any wildlife organisation's agenda and Council gave its support to a letter drafted by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in opposition to plans for the Norwich Western Link Road.

The Committee has played a significant role in promoting, jointly with NWT, the second Marine Conservation for Norfolk Action Group conference at Cley, and has supported the Cromer Green Space initiative. Amongst many links forged, it continues to play a part in the Cromer Green Spaces activities and the Norfolk Green Infrastructure Group (Norfolk County Council).

The long-standing arrangement by which representatives from a number of organisations were invited to Council meetings has been replaced by the distribution, to selected persons, of a summary of items discussed that could be of wider interest. The Liaison Committee has agreed to produce this.

Once again, my deep-felt thanks as chairman go to all members of the committee; as always, special mention must go to Jo Parmenter, the committee's secretary, who continues to support the Society in a way that is unparalleled.

*Liaison Committee Chair - Carl Chapman (to 17 January 2024)*

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### Summary

Full details of the Society's accounts can be found on following pages. The total cash balance of the Society on 31st December 2023 was £121,274.

We thank the outgoing Assistant Treasurer, Tania Chapman, who before April 2023 prepared reports from the Finance Committee to Council meetings, to which the Treasurer also reported budget monitoring, accounts status and membership trends.

### Reserves

One legacy was received in 2023 (none in 2022), from Philip Strachan in June. We also received two donations of £1000 from Tim Peet on behalf of the Sarnia Trust.

The Society's finances are well above the amount required to cover our planned spending. The Society has agreed a Reserves Policy which stated that we should maintain assets of one year's expenditure. The Finance Committee will continue to review this when annual budgets are set.

### Risk Management

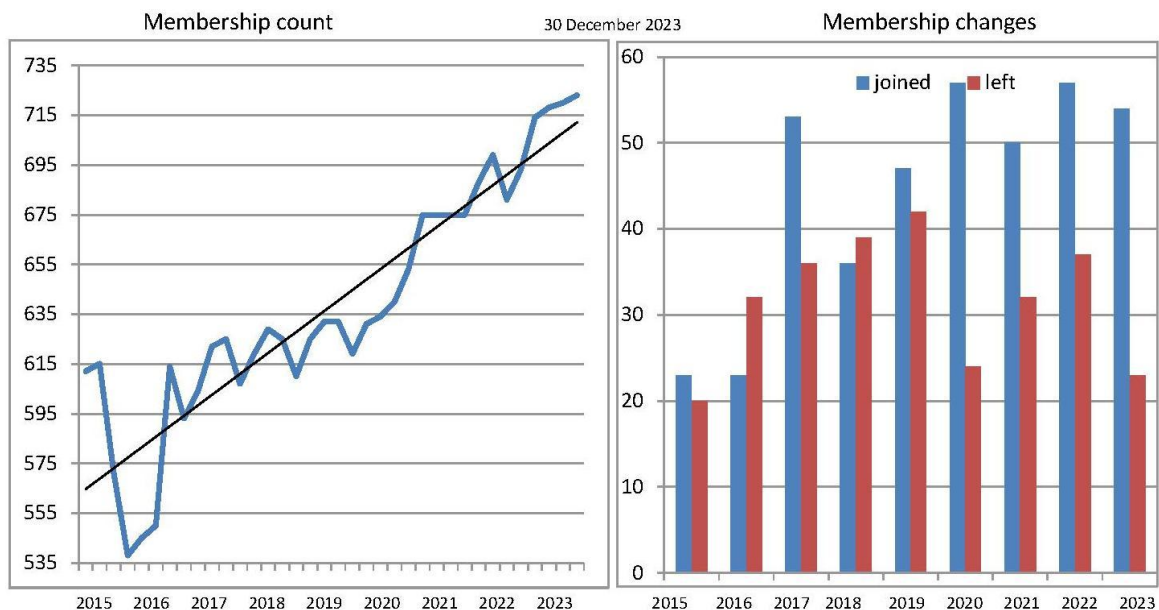
The Treasurer monitors all accounts at least weekly and is notified immediately of debits and larger receipts.

The Finance Committee met four times in 2023 to validate spending.

### Plans for the Future Period

Budgets agreed by Council ensure spending plans are aligned with the Society's aims and include a Publications Budget, an Education budget, and a revised Research Budget for continuing projects in 2024 and starting new initiatives.

### Membership growth



**Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society**

*Registered Charity 291604*

**1st January to 31st December 2023**

| <b>RECEIPTS</b>       |                                        | <b>2023</b>   | <b>2022</b>   |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Membership            | Subscription                           | 14,197        | 13,584        |
| Voluntary sources     | Legacies and Donations (Notes f and g) | 7,964         | 466           |
|                       | Grants                                 | 180           | 300           |
| Trading activities    | "Bird & Mammal Report"                 | 1,653         | 2,930         |
|                       | Sales of other publications            | 1,414         | 619           |
|                       | Workshop attendance fees               | 0             | 0             |
| Income from assets    | Interest                               | 1,257         | 686           |
| <b>Total receipts</b> |                                        | <b>26,666</b> | <b>18,585</b> |

| <b>PAYMENTS</b>           |                                        | <b>2023</b>   | <b>2022</b>   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Lectures & meetings       | Room hire / speakers' expenses         | 852           | 214           |
|                           | Workshops                              | 125           | 250           |
|                           | Programme card printing                | 0             | 29            |
|                           | Exhibitions and publicity              | 211           | 17            |
| Print & Post Publications | "Transactions 2022" (Note a)           | 3,654         | 4510          |
|                           | "Bird & Mammal Report"                 | 9,280         | 7235          |
|                           | Fees and postage of sales              | 418           | 997           |
|                           | "Occasional Publications" (Note b)     | 13            | 617           |
|                           | Quarterly "Natterjack", print and post | 6,689         | 4583          |
| Membership services       | Postage to members and website         | 486           | 689           |
| Research                  | Research projects (Note c)             | 3,329         | 989           |
|                           | Grants for Research                    | 0             | 161           |
| Education                 | Education (Note d)                     | 2,120         | 487           |
| Governance                | AGM expenses: print and post           | 196           | 654           |
|                           | Public liability insurance             | 811           | 723           |
|                           | 150th Anniversary Library              | 302           | 0             |
|                           | Miscellaneous                          | 501           | 59            |
| <b>Total payments</b>     |                                        | <b>28,988</b> | <b>22,212</b> |

**Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society**

*Registered Charity 291604*

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES in Calendar Year 2023**

| <b>Funds and Assets</b>     |                             | <b>2023</b>    | <b>2022</b>    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                             |                             | <b>£</b>       | <b>£</b>       |
| <b>Movement in funds</b>    | Start of year balance       | 123,596        | 127,223        |
|                             | Receipts                    | 26,666         | 18,585         |
|                             | Payments                    | 28,988         | 22,212         |
|                             | Surplus or deficit (Note e) | -2,322         | -3,627         |
| <b>End of year balance</b>  |                             | <b>121,274</b> | <b>123,596</b> |
| <b>Assets at period end</b> | <b>Represented by:</b>      |                |                |
|                             | Cash at Barclays            | 50,686         | 24,412         |
|                             | PayPal account              | 330            | 183            |
|                             | Teachers Saving A/c         | 70,257         | 99,000         |
|                             | <b>End of year balance</b>  | <b>121,274</b> | <b>123,596</b> |

**Notes**

- a) We expect to print, publish and post "Transactions 2023" early in 2024
- b) Other upcoming "Occasional Publications" are likely in 2024
- c) Even more Research spending will be carried over to 2024
- d) Education and Outreach will hopefully continue to grow.
- e) Our Reserves Policy requires us to maintain financial assets of one year's outgoings, which was £22,000. Expecting that there would be a shortfall in Spring 2023, at the end of 2022 a transfer of £30,000 from Savings to Barclays was scheduled, and the shortfall was avoided.
- f) We continue to gratefully acknowledge the Sarnia Trust in our printed publications, their donations (sent by Tim Peet in Guernsey) help to maintain high print quality.
- g) We are also grateful for the legacy sum of £5,000 - the bequest of the late Philip Strachan who died in October 2022. Plans for using this resource are under way.

*J Froud - Treasurer 18/02/2024*

DECLARATION



Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Anthony Robert Leech, Chairman

Date: 18 March 2024



# INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S UNQUALIFIED REPORT

## NORFOLK AND NORWICH NATURALISTS' SOCIETY REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 291604

### Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society ('the charity') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the summary of receipts and payments and the statement of assets and liabilities.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the accounts. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no audit opinion on the accounts and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

### Independent examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Martyn Benstead FCCA FMAAT  
Stephenson Smart (East Anglia) Limited  
10 Oak Street, Fakenham  
Norfolk  
NR21 9DY

