



# **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2024 TO 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2024**

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**Minutes of the 2024 AGM and the agenda for the 2025 AGM  
on March 11<sup>th</sup> are appended on pp.13-16.**

## 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:** c/o Stephenson Smart, 10 Oak Street, Fakenham, Norfolk, NR21 9DY

**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)

**Emails:** [secretary@nnns.org.uk](mailto:secretary@nnns.org.uk); [membership@nnns.org.uk](mailto:membership@nnns.org.uk)

**Social media:** <https://www.facebook.com/NorfolkNats>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/459920964112487/> (*Norfolk Wildlife*)

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

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

### Introduction

Despite fluctuations, the trend is for membership to rise. This is welcome news but brings with it extra demands on the many people who keep the Society running, not only its officers but the many who 'do things'. After a period of change, we do now have energetic and effective people to maintain this effort; I am grateful to them all – and am always pleased to hear from anyone else who feels they can contribute.

Following his unexpectedly rapid move north, John Hobbs was replaced as Secretary during the year by Rubyna Sheikh. After energising our research activities, Mark Collins resigned as Chair of the Research Committee and has been succeeded by Mark Welch. The year brought to an end the in-depth study of Broadland Country Park the results of which will be published in

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2025 and saw the start of a similar project at the Sweet Briar Marshes NWT reserve.

Ralph Wheeler has replaced Jim Froud as Treasurer and has pointed out that despite a currently healthy bank balance, the cost of financing core activities exceeds subscription income. In the longer term this is not sustainable and Council will be considering how to address this situation.

During the year Council has continued to establish the management policies required or recommended by the Charity Commission.

*Tony Leech*

## **Organisation**

The key management personnel of the charity are the Trustees; 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. 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 26/03/24: Pam Taylor

**President** from 26/03/24: Tim Holt-Wilson

## Trustees: names and responsibilities

<b>Name</b>	<b>Additional role (if any), with dates in brackets if the role changed during 2024</b>	<b>Date served as Trustee (if not whole year)</b>
Tony Leech	Chair Publications Committee Chair	
John Hobbs	Secretary	Until 26/3/2024
Rubyna Sheikh	Secretary	After 26/3/2024
Francis Farrow	Assistant Secretary	
Jim Froud	Treasurer (until 26/3/2024) Finance Committee Chair until 26/3/2024) Membership Secretary	
Ralph Wheeler	Treasurer (after 26/3/2024) Finance Committee Chair (after 26/3/2024)	After 26/3/2024
Graham Moates	Assistant Treasurer (after 26/3/2024)	After 26/3/2024
Carl Chapman	Liaison Committee Chair	*
Mark Collins	Research Committee Chair (until 26/3/2024)	Until 08/05/2024
Mark Welch	Research Committee Chair (after 26/3/2024)	After 26/3/2024
Sarah Butler	Events & Outreach Committee Chair	
Anne Edwards	Events & Outreach Committee Secretary	
Jo Parmenter	Publications Committee Secretary Liaison Committee Secretary	*
Janet Higgins	Research Committee Secretary	
Debbie Ashton		Until 26/3/2024
Allan Archer		
Sue Gale		
Vanessa Burley		After 26/3/2024
Sam Neal		
Tim Strudwick		Until 31/7/2024
Rob Yaxley		

\*These officers were not Trustees for a short period during 2024

## 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 2024 were:

- A series of meetings by a range of guest speakers and available free to all.
- Initiation of a two-year research programme at the Sweet Briar Marshes NWT Reserve. 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.
- Publication of books of historical interest available for purchase by non-members.
- Organisation of workshops open to non-members.

## **Events and Education**

**Events:** During 2024 we have organised six speaker meetings at Eaton Village Hall and twenty field events. Hans Watson organised an additional six meetings of the Photographic Group. These events provide opportunities to welcome non-members and get to know our naturalists better. I am grateful to all those who provide refreshments, arrange the hall and manage equipment.

**Workshops:** Three all-day workshops took place during the year to encourage, educate and help members to become enthusiastic naturalists, as well as to increase their connection with the Society. It is intended that the number of these should increase. Additional, more specialist, workshops are organised by the Research Committee.

**Representation:** The Committee considers requests to provide manned stands at events organised by others. These are usually of an educational nature and occasionally result in new members. This year we attended Norwich Science Festival, Mannington Bird Fair, NBIS Awards at The Forum, Gressenhall Apple Day and Gressenhall Earth Day.

**Education:** A newly invigorated Education Sub-committee has been examining how we can use our resources to educate young people about wildlife and the natural world. This will involve working with existing organisations. Allan Archer has developed his own educational programmes and continues to advise the Society.

**Social media:** James Emerson runs our Facebook and X (Twitter) accounts, which have over 1,400 followers. Council has recently agreed to replace the latter with a BlueSky account which already has over 600 followers and is growing rapidly. Our associated Norfolk Wildlife Facebook page, managed by Andy Musgrove and volunteers, has 7,000 members.

Thank you to everyone involved in these activities. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

*Sarah Butler, Chair Events and Education Committee*

## Publications

**Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report:** Published at the beginning of November, the 240pp Report was distributed to all members and enjoys significant sales online and through retail outlets. After 15 years as editor, Andy Stoddart has stepped down and the task taken on by Barry Madden.

**Transactions:** Despite intentions, the 2024 volume has again not been published in its title year but will be in the early part of the next year. The 148pp 2023 Transactions was distributed in March 2024 and contained ten articles and eleven wildlife reports under the editorship of James Emerson.

**Natterjack:** The 167<sup>th</sup> issue of this full-colour quarterly publication was distributed in November. Editor and designer Francis Farrow continues to meld the wide variety of contributions into an interesting and readable publication.

**Occasional Publications:** *Emma Turner: a life looking at birds* (James Parry) continues to enjoy widespread sales (mostly beyond Norfolk) and early in the year was reprinted. James Parry's second book, *The Revd. MCH Bird: Gilbert White of the Broads*, was launched at an event at Hickling Broad in May. The manuscript for *Norfolk's Whales and Whaling* (Carl Chapman) is complete and has been laid out; it will be printed in the early part of 2025.

*Tony Leech, Chair Publications Committee*

## Research

The Society's major recording project (2024-2026) at NWT Sweet Briar Marshes began in earnest on May 5<sup>th</sup> with an introductory visit by around 30 people, including county recorders and other naturalists. The NWT site manager is Matt Wickens, with whom David Harper plans the management and recording activities.

As part of the stakeholder consultation for the government's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) arising from the Environment Act 2021, NNNS has participated in several stakeholder meetings over the past year (Sam Neal

continued

Tim Holt-Wilson, Mark Welch). Sam, as the NBIS representative, has led on our contribution and provided timely updates to the committee on where LNRS is at. Our remit was to draw up a species long-list and subsequently evaluate the shortlist arising from it. NNNS's input on Norfolk habitats was key to drawing up this list (1600+ species) from which a shortlist of 164 species was compiled. A further list of 25 "Key Priority Species" comprised seven vertebrates, 10 invertebrates and eight plants. Finally, a list of 15 habitat flagship species (one for each habitat type) was drawn up, comprising 11 vertebrates (including five migratory birds), one invertebrate (Chalk Hill Blue) and three plants. The formal recommendations for the LNRS (Norfolk & Suffolk) will be submitted in March 2025.

Tim Holt-Wilson (NNNS President) and Carl Sayer (Geography Department, University College London), working with the owner Richard Evans, continued their studies of ghost ponds and related water bodies at Stonehouse Farm, West Harling (near Thetford). This site has around 40 pingo depressions. Tim and Carl have been involved in planning and advising on the restoration of these pingo ponds, selecting a subset for restoration. A visit by 11 NNNS members in early August was reported by Sarah Butler in *Natterjack* 167. There was a second visit by several county recorders in early October, prior to the start of the pond excavation phase. NNNS will follow up recording at this in 2025 and beyond to monitor the floral succession and the recolonization by fauna.

I am pleased to report that we have two new county recorders. Eleanor Morrison (Spiders) and Jake Stone (Woodlice); Jake already handles terrestrial molluscs.

The Research Committee is keen to increase the number of specialist workshops run each year. For 2025 there will be workshops on Wasps, Sawflies, Diptera, Mosquitoes with four more in preparation for the summer and autumn. The annual NNNS Recorders' and Members' meeting on the theme of *Citizen Science* will be held at the John Innes Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

*Mark Welch, Chair Research Committee*



## **Liaison**

The Liaison Committee has been busy maintaining relationships with other organisations that are aligned with the aims of our own. It is worth mentioning that we have achieved this at zero cost and have not incurred any expenditure from the Society's reserves. Once again, we have received information from members regarding land use within the county that was not sympathetic to wildlife. Sometimes it is inappropriate for the Society to become involved, but on each occasion a sensible approach to any relevant and appropriate action is taken. It is heartwarming that so many members of the public understand that our biodiversity is in freefall and realise that wildlife must be offered the full protection of the laws designed to protect it.

Strong relationships now exist between the Society and Cromer Green Spaces, the North-East Norfolk Bird Club, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the Norfolk Rivers Trust, with representatives from each of these organisations attending committee meetings. We are also privileged to have attended meetings with several ecologists that bring a wealth of knowledge to help with what can be complicated issues of protecting our wildlife. Once again, my deep-felt thanks as Chair go to all members of the committee; special mention must go to Sue Gale, the committee's secretary, who has supported me and the committee in producing agendas and minutes in a timely and accurate way.

*Carl Chapman, Chair Liaison Committee*

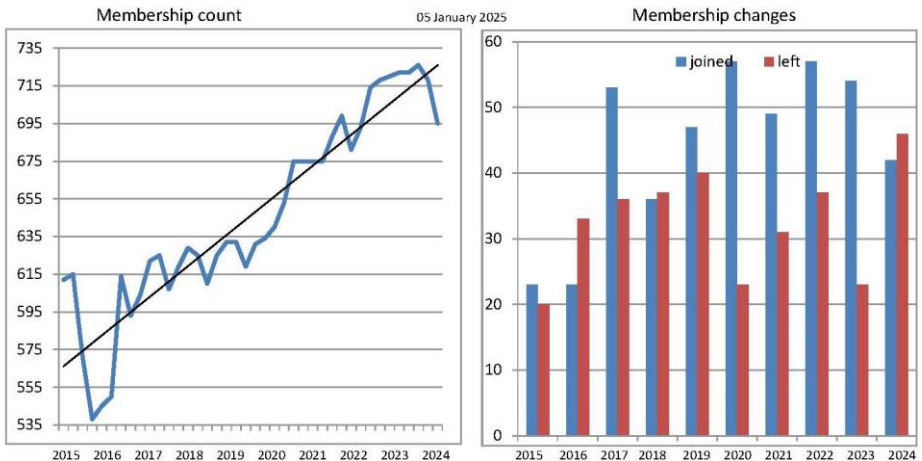
## Membership

The calendar year 2024 started with a membership of 722, but ended with 695, despite welcoming 39 new members; at times the net count reached over 730. Of those who left the Society, very few gave a reason. Most were removed as non-payers who had not responded to reminders; others spoke of ‘making economies’.

This year we raised the annual subscription to £25.00 and this may have contributed to the fall in membership - the full impact of the change on subscriptions should be clear in 2025.

Spending on Membership includes fees for website and software, stationary for labels, posting reminders and “welcome” packs to new members.

*Jim Froud, Membership Secretary*



## Financial review

**Summary:** Full details of the Society's accounts are shown on the following page. The overall deficit for the year primarily reflects the costs of the two Occasional Publications produced or reprinted in the year, partly funded by donations and legacies received in prior years, and increased publication and postage costs which were only partially funded by the increase in the subscription rate introduced in 2024. The society continues to be grateful to the Sarnia Trust whose donation of £3,000 in 2024 helped maintain the quality of our publications.

To increase returns, a savings account was opened with The Dudley Building Society with funds transferred from the Barclays operating account.

The Trustees continue to closely monitor the financial position of the Society recognising the balance between the reserves of the Society and the current shortfall of income to costs.

**Reserve policy:** The Society's Reserves policy states that a minimum of one years' expenditure should be maintained in cash reserves. The appropriateness of this policy is reviewed annually.

**Finance committee:** The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, is tasked with overseeing the Society's finances and updating Council on the financial health of the Society. The Finance committee met four times in 2024.

We thank Jim Froud who retired as Treasurer in March 2024 having served in this role for seven years.

**Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.** Registered Charity 291604

1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Voluntary sources	Subscriptions	16,404	14,197
	Legacies and Donations	3,118	7,964
	Grants	133	180
Trading activities	Sales of publications	1,835	3,067
	Workshops and other	350	-
Income from assets	Interest	1,616	1,257
<b>Total receipts</b>		<b>23,456</b>	<b>26,666</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Lectures & meetings	Room hire/speaker's expenses	1,293	852
	Workshops	221	125
	Exhibitions and publicity	-	211
Publications	Transactions 2023	4,791	3,654
	Bird and Mammal Report	7,694	9,280
	Fees and postage on sales	1,175	418
	Occasional Publications	5,930	13
	Natterjack – print and postage	6,860	6,689
Membership		538	486
Research		467	3,329
Education services		-	2,120
Governance	AGM expenses	231	196
	Insurance	874	811
	150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	-	302
	Miscellaneous	552	501
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>30,626</b>	<b>28,988</b>
<b>(Deficit) for the year</b>		<b>(7,170)</b>	<b>(2,322)</b>
<b>Assets brought forward 1 January</b>		<b>121,274</b>	<b>123,596</b>
<b>Assets 31 December</b>		<b>114,104</b>	<b>121,274</b>
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>			
	Cash at Barclays	16,579	50,687
	Teachers Savings account	71,873	70,257
	Dudley Building Society	25,000	-
	PayPal account	652	330
<b>Total year end assets</b>		<b>114,104</b>	<b>121,274</b>



Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.

Anthony Robert Leech, Chairman. Date: 19 February 2025