



REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1st JANUARY 2025 TO 31st DECEMBER 2025

CONTENTS

Charity Information	1
Trustees' Report	1
Introduction	1
Organisation	2
Trustee names and responsibilities	3
Objectives and public benefit	4
Achievements and activities (reports)	5
Financial Review	9
Statement of Financial Activities	11
Declaration	11

**Minutes of the 2025 AGM and the agenda for the 2026 AGM
on March 24th are appended on pp.12-15.**

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

Emails: secretary@nnns.org.uk; 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 Society's website, where reports from previous years may also be found.

Introduction

Two important, and time-consuming, developments have taken place this year although neither are likely to have been apparent to most members. That is good – members need to enjoy the benefits of membership and to contribute in their own way. The first of these has been the task of devising and updating the Policies required for the efficient and safe running of a charity like NNNS. This unexciting task has now been completed, thanks to the hard work of Rubyna Sheikh, Ralph Wheeler and others. The second has been the overhaul of our membership database referred to in the Membership Report presented below

I continue to be impressed with the expertise of those who research Norfolk's wildlife and their willingness to share this with others. Norfolk's band of County Recorders is one of the best for any county, as the Wildlife Reports in Transactions continue to demonstrate.

It is appropriate for a chairperson, especially a retiring one, to flag up potential problems ahead. Although united by an interest in the natural world, members join NNNS for many reasons; publications, events, support for their own studies, fellowship etc. Different members will experience just some of these but your Council has to keep all the plates spinning at the same time. That is getting more difficult, partly because good governance is, quite rightly, taking up more of our time and partly because many of our experienced officers have retired. It is getting more difficult to replace them and if there is any imminent peril ahead it will be due to this, not from a shortage of funds (despite the continuing need to carefully monitor our finances).

Tony Leech, NNNS Chair

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: F.J.L.Farrow, 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 11/03/25: N.W.Owens

President from 11/03/25: B.Garrod

Trustees: names and responsibilities

Name	Additional role (if any), with dates in brackets if the role changed during 2025	Date served as Trustee (if not whole year)
Tony Leech	Chair Publications Committee Chair	
Rubyna Sheikh	Secretary	
Francis Farrow	Assistant Secretary	Resigned 11/3/2025
Jim Froud	Membership Secretary	Resigned 11/3/2025
Ralph Wheeler	Treasurer Finance Committee Chair	
Graham Moates	Assistant Treasurer	
Carl Chapman	Liaison Committee Chair	
Mark Welch	Research Committee	
Sarah Butler	Events & Outreach Committee Chair	
Anne Edwards	Events & Outreach Committee Secretary	
Jo Parmenter	Publications Committee Secretary Liaison Committee Secretary	Resigned 20/10/2025
Janet Higgins	Research Committee Secretary	
Allan Archer		
Jeremy Bartlett		Elected 11/3/2025
Sue Gale		Resigned 14/10/2025
Vanessa Burley		
Nick Elsey		
Sam Neal		
Rob Yaxley		

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 2025 were:

- A series of meetings by a range of guest speakers and available to all.
- Continuation of a two-year research programme at the Sweet Briar Marshes NWT Reserve.
- Publication of a 220pp. report on the habitats and biodiversity of Broadland Country Park to inform the management plan that will benefit the area for both people and wildlife.
- Publication of *Whales and Whaling in Norfolk* (220pp), an account of all records of cetaceans in Norfolk.
- Publication of reports (total 360pp) on Norfolk wildlife.

- All publications are donated to national and local libraries and are available for purchase by non-members.
- Organisation of workshops open to non-members.

Events and Education

The Events and Education Committee is responsible for organising a wide range of activities, both for members and outreach. I am grateful to the large number of people who have made these possible.

Evening talks. Seven talks took place in 2025 following the usual format at Eaton Village Hall. Not all have been well attended and consideration is being given to ways in which this situation can be improved. The team that looks after house arrangements for these talks has done an excellent job.

Field meetings. The number of these has been substantially increased during 2025, with a total of 24 taking place. Some have been led by someone with particular knowledge, others have been of a more general nature. I thank all of those who have taken the lead. Attendance has been variable but the events have been enjoyed and appreciated by those who have participated.

I have invited the Society to participate in my Biodiversity Training Garden at Rougham to educate the public, especially children, in looking after Norfolk's biodiversity

Stand events. The Society is frequently invited to have a stand at events organised by others. These are primarily educational, aiming to engage visitors, often young families, with aspects of wildlife. They are manned by enthusiasts who bring appropriate specimens to talk about. These events also bring the Society's activities to a wider public and can attract new members. A more ambitious programme is planned for 2026, beginning with the Norwich Science Fair in February.

Workshops. These are typically whole-day events held at a venue with a workroom and appropriate surroundings. The two introductory workshops, on plant and fungus identification respectively were fully booked. The three skill-developing workshops, organised by Mark Welch were all entomological and enabled recorders to expand their interests or become more confident with identifications. Three workshops devised to help early-career professionals to develop identification skills were held in conjunction with the National Trust at Sheringham Park.

Social media. James Emerson runs our Facebook and BlueSky accounts, both of which have over 1400 followers. These accounts allow the Society to promote our events, projects and publications, as well as highlighting wildlife sightings and research carried out by naturalists and like-minded organisations within the county. The associated Norfolk Wildlife Facebook group, managed by Andy Musgrove and a small team of volunteers, continues to grow in popularity, with a current membership of 7700.

Education. The main role of the Education Sub-committee is to explore how the Society can encourage young people to become interested naturalists and to grow them to be the county recorders of the future. We first need to identify them and our stand events are helping. Now we are looking at ways in which we can further support them.

Allan Archer has continued working with us in educating youngsters about the natural world at schools, through his wildlife club and other activities.

Sarah Butler. Chair Events & Education Committee

Publications

Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report. Published at the end of October, the 240pp Report was distributed to all members and enjoys significant sales online and through retail outlets. We are grateful for the very hard work put into the publication by all who contribute, and to the photographers and artists who give their work without charge.

Transactions. The 2024 volume, edited by James Emerson, contained eight articles and eight reports on Norfolk wildlife. It was not published until May 2025 but steps have been taken to avoid repeating this production delay.

Natterjack. Our full-colour quarterly bulletin, edited and designed by Francis Farrow, continues to combine a wide variety of contributions into an interesting and readable publication. In order to reduce costs, printing is now done by an online company and distribution managed in-house.

Occasional Publications. Occasional Publication No. 20 *Norfolk's Whales and Whaling* (224pp) by Carl Chapman was distributed to members during the

year. *Emma Turner: a life looking at birds* (by James Parry) continues to enjoy widespread sales and a second reprint is contemplated.

Broadland Country Park Report. A 220pp. report, edited by Mark Collins, on the Society's three-year research project was published at the end of 2025 for distribution in early 2026.

Libraries. To ensure access to NNNS publications in the future, copies are sent to institutional libraries as a matter of course. Arrangements are being made for one of the Society's sets of publications, currently held in the Castle Museum, to be used to complete the runs held in the Norwich Central Library which were lost in the fire of 1994. Binding of the Secretary's set of publication has been brought up to date.

Tony Leech. Chair Publications Committee

Research

Recorders' and Members' Meeting – 15 March 2025: The theme for this meeting was 'Citizen Science', the involvement of non-professionals in collecting data. The meeting was attended by 55 members and included a poster and display session. Mark Welch introduced the event by emphasizing the significant shortfall in data coverage and professional capacity which is being addressed through Citizen Science. Five speakers covered topics which included the principles of organizing Citizen Science projects, work on the reintroduction of the Large Marsh Grasshopper, monitoring river water quality, sampling DNA for fungus identification and the use of bioacoustic methods for large-scale bat recording by the public.

It was clear from all the talks that citizen scientists make an essential contribution to these studies, providing coverage and sampling that cannot be met by professionals alone.

Secret Broads: At the invitation of Andrea Kelly (Broads Authority), four recording days were spent visiting rarely accessible sites at Horsey, Buttle Marsh, Horning Marsh and Common Fen. Another 15 sites are available to NNNS recorders to visit over the next three years. These 'secret Broads' sites can only be visited with permission from The Broads Authority; NNNS

members interested in recording at them should contact chair of the Research Committee.

Workshops: Three successful and well-attended identification workshops were run in May, June and September 2025 at Sheringham Park: Introduction to Diptera (Tim Hodge & Mark Welch), British Mosquitoes (Mark Welch) and Sawflies (Andy Musgrove).

Sweet Briar Marshes: This is a project to research and document the wildlife of a nature reserve within the Norwich city boundary. It has been managed jointly by the Society and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and ends on 30th April 2026 after a productive two years.

Astley Estate, Holt: The next two-year NNS recording/research project will be on the Astley Estate, at the centre of which is the famous Swanton Novers NNR. This project, coordinated by Mark Welch & Ash Murray, will focus on baseline recording of organisms in the area surrounding the NNR, covering 550 hectares. The work, by volunteers, will cover a much broader range of taxa, and in more detail, than professional surveys are contracted to do. This project is an opportunity for NNS to influence and shape a landscape-scale conservation project in north Norfolk, potentially covering thousands of hectares.

Broadland Country Park: The Nature of Broadland Country Park (Mark N. Collins Ed.), a 220 page report on the three-year project will be distributed to members in February 2026. An indoor meeting celebrating this substantial research achievement will be held at the John Innes Centre on 18 April 2026.

Dr Mark Welch. Chair, Research Committee

Liaison

The Liaison Committee continues to work with other organisations and individuals within the county to bring to the Society's notice matters of mutual interest. It also serves to inform others of the Society's activities and views in ways that may help them. These interactions have involved planning issues (working with Norfolk Wildlife Trust) and the organisation of community awards (working with Norfolk Biodiversity Information Services).

My thanks as chairperson go to all members of the Committee (as many as ten of whom have attended meetings) but special mention must go to Sue Gale, the committee's secretary, who has supported me in every endeavour to put the NNS at the forefront of wildlife monitoring and protection within Norfolk. However, Sue has moved away from Norfolk and we will be looking for someone to replace her wide knowledge and experience .

During the course of the year there has been an excellent exchange of information internally with the Research Committee, for which I am grateful to committee chair, Mark Welch.

Carl Chapman. Chair Liaison Committee

Membership

After taking on the role of Membership Secretary, I have worked with a member experienced in this field to restructure our membership database. This has revealed a significant number of members who failed to raise their subscription despite reminders. The decision has been taken to maintain their membership but to withhold publications until arrears have been paid. A more focussed effort to communicate with these members has resulted in a gradual restoration of full membership and at the end of 2025 this stood at 570. 40 new members joined in 2025.

I have undertaken to assist events organisers to provide notices and reminders to advertise events by email. Not all our members receive information online so this route can only supplement other means of advertising. Discussions are taking place on how notification of events can be improved.

It has become clear that the Society's website needs significant updating. Some out-of-date information has been removed and work is underway to develop an entirely new website. Council will have to address how this will be populated.

Hayley Strivens. 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 Occasional Publications which include the costs of *Norfolk's Whales and Whaling*,

published in 2025, and some costs incurred on the research report on Broadland Country Park that will be distributed in 2026. These costs are partly funded by donations and legacies received in prior years. The Society continues to be impacted by increased publication and postage costs and in 2025 the method of production for Natterjack was changed to reduce costs. The Society continues to be grateful to the Sarnia Trust whose donation of £1,000 in 2025 helped maintain the quality of our publications.

To improve returns the Teachers Savings account was closed in the year and funds were transferred to a savings account with The Dudley Building Society.

The Trustees continue to closely monitor the financial position of the Society.

Reserve policy. The Society's Reserves policy states that a minimum of one year's expenditure should be maintained in cash reserves. The appropriateness of this policy is reviewed annually recognising the balance between the reserves of the Society and the current shortfall of income to costs.

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 2025. I am very grateful for the support of the Committee, in particular that provided by the Secretary, Graham Moates.

Ralph Wheeler. Treasurer

The **Examiner's report** will be available by the date of the AGM and will be included with this Report on the Society's website.

		2025	2024
RECEIPTS		£	£
Voluntary sources	Subscriptions	17,041	16,404
	Legacies and Donations	1,021	3,118
	Grants	-	133
Trading activities	Sales of publications	2,691	1,835
	Workshops and other	254	350
Income from assets	Interest	834	1,616
Total receipts		21,841	23,456
EXPENDITURE			
Lectures & meetings	Room hire/speaker's expenses	728	1,293
	Workshops/events	427	221
Publications	Transactions 2024	4,507	4,791
	Bird and Mammal Report	7,714	7,694
	Fees and postage on sales	1,266	1,175
	Occasional Publications	7,781	5,930
	Natterjack – print and postage	4,486	6,860
Membership		99	538
Research		2,313	467
Governance	AGM expenses	95	231
	Insurance	958	874
	Miscellaneous	731	552
Total expenditure		31,105	30,626
(Deficit) for the year		(9,264)	(7,170)
Assets brought forward 1 January		114,104	121,274
Assets 31 December		104,840	114,104
REPRESENTED BY			
	Cash at Barclays	28,852	16,579
	Teachers Savings account	-	71,873
	Dudley Building Society	75,495	25,000
	PayPal account	493	652
Total year end assets		104,840	114,104



Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees.
 Anthony Robert Leech, Chairman. Date: 23 February 2026

Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society

Minutes of the 156th Annual General Meeting of the Society
held at 7.30pm on 11th March 2025
at St Andrew's Church Hall, Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich

DRAFT – FOR APPROVAL AT 2026 AGM

Chair: Tony Leech. **Treasurer:** Ralph Wheeler

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all members and counted 29 voting members; over the quorum of 25.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from John Butcher, Sarah Butler, Francis Farrow, Sue Gale, Janet Higgins, Tony Irwin, Meg Miller and Jo Parmenter.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 26th March 2024

The minutes of the last AGM were accepted as correct by the Chair, seconded by Nick Elsey and were unanimously approved.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes

No matters were raised.

5. Annual Report

The Chair presented the report and advised the following:

- A copy of the annual report had been circulated to the members for whom email addresses were held and requested that anyone on email who was not receiving information, to inform the Membership Secretary.
- There were two errors in the report: Nick Elsey was omitted as a Trustee and 'Followers' on Facebook were referred to as 'Members'. Both of these were corrected in the final version to be filed with the Charity Commission.
- The Research Committee will increase the number of workshops offered, as they have proved very popular. As well as introductory subjects, entomology will be offered at a higher level and four workshops are proposed for early-career professionals.
- Imminent publications include Whales and Whaling in Norfolk by Carl Chapman and the latest edition of Transactions.
- A new membership database and later this year, a new website, are projects undertaken by an IT professional at no cost to the Society.

Lastly, the sad news of the passing of Rex Hancy was announced by the Chair. Rex was, along with his wife Barbara, awarded the Sydney Long medal in 2007. His obituary, written by Nick Elsey, will be published in Transactions.

Before voting on the annual report, the Treasurer presented the Annual Accounts.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that the Examiner had approved the financial statement for 2024. Despite a £2500 increase in income compared to 2023, there is a deficit of £7000 and Council will continue to monitor this. The Society is grateful for all donations, particularly to the Sarnia Trust. The Treasurer thanked Jim Froud for his help throughout the year.

Following the presentation of the treasurer's report, the Chair proposed voting to accept the Annual Report, which was passed unanimously.

7. **President of the Society for 2025/26**

As the new President, Ben Garrod was introduced as Professor of Evolutionary Biology and Science Engagement at the University of East Anglia. He is an author and broadcaster, and actively involved with many conservation and education organisations.

8. **Election of Officers for 2025/26**

The Chair thanked retiring Officers Francis Farrow and Jim Froud for their long-term service to the Society. Francis had served on Council since the mid-1990s and had agreed to continue as editor of Natterjack. In view of his contribution to Norfolk's natural history, Francis has been elected as a Vice President by Council. Jim fulfilled many roles for a decade, managing membership services, sales and the website. Hayley Strivens will take over as Membership Secretary, an unelected post allowing attendance at Council meetings as a non-voting member.

All nominees were unopposed and the election of officers *en bloc* was passed unanimously.

Chair	Tony Leech
Secretary	Rubyna Sheikh
Treasurer	Ralph Wheeler
Assistant Treasurer	Graham Moates
Events & Outreach Committee Chair	Sarah Butler
Events & Outreach Committee Secretary	Anne Edwards
Finance Committee Chair	Ralph Wheeler
Finance Committee Secretary	Graham Moates
Liaison Committee Chair	Carl Chapman
Liaison Committee Secretary	Sue Gale
Publications Committee Chair	Tony Leech
Publications Committee Secretary	Jo Parmenter
Research Committee Chair	Mark Welch
Research Committee Secretary	Janet Higgins

9. Election of Council Members

The Chair proposed Jeremy Bartlett to serve as a member of Council until March 2028. He was elected unanimously.

10. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The re-appointment of **Martyn Benstead** of Stephenson Smart was passed *nem con*.

11. Any Other Business/questions from members

Andy Gardiner asked why the turnout for the Tuesday evening meetings was so low when the Society had such a high membership. Nick Elsey suggested that older members may not want to drive in the cold, wet and/or dark; a sentiment echoed by many in the hall. Jim Froud noted that the daytime field trips used to attract 12-24 participants and now, average six per event. The Chair assured the meeting that the Events Committee would consider how these numbers might be improved.

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:15pm.

As the invited speaker was unavailable, Ben Garrod entertained the audience with an impromptu insight into his early career experiences.

Signed: A. R. Leech, Chair.

Date:

Minutes prepared by Rubyna Sheikh, Secretary, 13/03/2025

Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society

AGENDA For the 157th Annual General Meeting of the Society

7.30pm on Tuesday 24th March 2026 at

St Andrew's Church Hall, 41 Church Lane, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6NW

1. **Welcome and count of voting members**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Minutes of the 156th AGM held on 11th March 2025**
4. **Matters arising from those minutes**
 - 4.1 Diminishing numbers at evening and field events
5. **Presentation of the Chair's report (Annual Report for 2025)**
6. **Additions to the Laws**
 - 6.1 To have the option to hold an AGM online
 - 6.2 To re-elect a Chair in exceptional circumstances
7. **Presentation of the Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2025**
8. **Presentation of the Council's nomination for President of the Society for 2026/27:** Simon Harrap
9. **Election of Officers for 2026/27**

Council offers the following nominations.

Chair	VACANT
Secretary	VACANT
Treasurer	Ralph Wheeler
Assistant Treasurer	VACANT
Events & Committee Chair	Sarah Butler
Events & Committee Secretary	VACANT
Finance Committee Chair	Ralph Wheeler
Finance Committee Secretary	VACANT
Liaison Committee Chair	Carl Chapman
Liaison Committee Secretary	VACANT
Publications Committee Chair	Tony Leech
Publications Committee Secretary	Jeremy Bartlett
Research Committee Chair	Rob Yaxley
Research Committee Secretary	Janet Higgins
10. **Election of Council Members to serve until March 2029.**

Council offers the following nominations, all of whom have agreed to stand.

 - Anne Edwards
 - Tim Hodge
 - Caroline Still
11. **Reappointment of Independent Examiner:** Martyn Benstead
12. **A.O.B. / Answers to any questions.** Members with questions are asked to submit them in advance if possible.

The post-AGM speaker will be Tony Leech, presenting **Decomposing in Norfolk.**