

# Clean Rivers Trust

Registered Charity No: 1037414

# Annual Report And Accounts 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

(1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 - 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

73 Sir Harrys Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2UX

**Information.**

This report is the legal annual report and accounts of Clean Rivers Trust, as lodged with, and submitted to the Charity Commission. Registered Charity Number 1037414. The Charity is based at 73 Sir Harrys Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2UX UK. Phone 0121 440 8046.

Founded 1990.

This document is produced and published using environmentally sustainable materials.

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**Legal and Administrative Information.**

**Trustees;** Rodney Gilmour, Peter Jones OBE, Laura Bishop, Lawrence van Kampen Brooks, Paul Southby, Dr Sally Little and Dr Matt Johnson.

**Director:** Professor Harvey Wood Dip AD, MA, PhD, FRSA, FRGS, FGS, FLS, LSDC

**Trust Address:** 73 Sir Harrys Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2UX

**Phone:** 0121 440 8046

**Web Site:** [www.cleanriverstrust.co.uk](http://www.cleanriverstrust.co.uk)

**Bankers.**

Barclays Bank plc, Market Place, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

Santander, Market Place, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

**Solicitors.**

BrowneJacobson LLP, Mowbray House, Castle Meadow Road, Nottingham NG2 1BJ

**Meetings.**

The Trustees convened four times in the financial period 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**Policies.**

The Trust reviews its policies on a regular basis.

**Current Policies:**

COMPLAINTS POLICY  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY  
EMPLOYMENT POLICY  
VOLUNTEERING POLICY  
DISCRIMINATION POLICY  
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY  
SAFEGUARDING POLICY  
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**Policies being developed:**

Banking and Investment  
Value for Money Projects  
Stakeholder  
Education

## **Directors Report.**

The past year has been busy, we have been involved in projects from the Highlands of Scotland to near the southern tip of Cornwall, from western Wales to Norfolk in the east. The issues we have had to contend have been diverse: low flows and abstraction, oxygen depletion and fish deaths, pollutions including minewater, silts, contaminated land, chemicals, and road runoff.

The last year has seen the quality of river water rise in the public consciousness, combined stormwater overflows that appear to run for far longer than they need, illnesses from swimming in rivers, industrial discharges that are not consented on a scale not seen since the 1980s and much besides.

## **Main Activities.**

In Scotland we have been looking at the problems of low flows along most of the River Spey and in the upper reaches at times no flows at all due to the abstraction of water to generate hydroelectric supplies for industry in the Fort William area. The low flows have been responsible for one major salmon and sea trout mortality event with more than fifty fish dying in one day over a short stretch of the river. The answers to this problem are straight forward but the implementation will take time as the issues of employment, alternative 'green' electricity supply to the area and negotiations with industry may be protracted. Another major abstraction for hydroelectricity is taken from lower down the river and also raises concerns at times of low rainfall and low flow. The water from both abstractions do not get returned to the catchment and in the case of the second abstraction increases flow into another catchment.

The harbour at Whitehaven in Cumberland is fed by three streams that are culverted beneath the town itself. One of these culverted becks is now the conduit for acidic minewater that has stained the harbour and its water ochre red and has driven much sea life that was present out except an alien species of tube worm which is driving many of the yachts and other boats away from the harbour. We have offered answers to the Coal Authority, Environment Agency, and the Harbour Commissioners a short and long-term solution to the pollution and we are working with local boat owners and other local people to bring the situation under control as rapidly as possible. It was a year this last November since the pollution first took place and thousands of litres per hour of polluted water are entering the harbour. The Solway Marine Nature Reserve is just beyond the harbour entrance and that is also being affected by the iron and other metals that are flowing out of the harbour and into the Solway Estuary.

Just outside Chester is an old clay pit that has been filled with acidic tars from the nearby oil refining industry. The site was used in the 1960s and was meant to solidify. Instead, it is seeping out of the banks of the filled void and flowing into the headwaters of the River Gowy., an important eel river. The Environment Agency are trying to come to an accommodation with the 'polluters' and have been since their formation in 1996. We have offered to carry out a trial of a solution we have demonstrated in Derbyshire on a

similar material which the Environment Agency find satisfactory and inexpensive. This offer has yet to be accepted.

The River Glaven is a small chalk stream river that flows out into the North Sea via Blakeney on the north Norfolk coast. It is a river that is popular with the Rivers Trust, and other sea trout enthusiasts who are trying to encourage their return and there are<sup>i</sup> several specialist groups who are rewilding parts of its length. Our involvement has come about due to the installation of the electrical connector from a major offshore wind farm that is linked to the north Norfolk coast and travels across the upper Glaven catchment. Initial works saw large volumes of mud and silts enter the river's head waters. Many interested locals feared the silts were damaging the habitat of white clawed crayfish and other aquatic life.

Our long-term acid tar project in Derbyshire is coming to the end of its 5<sup>th</sup> year. We have demonstrated that the use of spent mushroom compost planted with willows and poplars can encourage naturally occurring bacteria to neutralise acidity from pH 0 to pH 6.8. The tars themselves have been broken down to a form of soil with earthworms present to a depth of 3 – 4 metres. The surface where nothing lived or even passed over the surface is now home to Great Crested newts, toads, wood mice, snails, and slugs. Grass snakes have been found, birds nested, and deer have entered, browsing some of the willows flat, though they have regrown.

The water in the acid lake on the site is now pH 7, when we started it was pH 3. We have found an increase in dragonfly species and increasing numbers of other lava including Alder fly. We have installed limestone gabions to stop further acid entering from another tar pit that has yet to be remediated. There is still much work to do, both at the tar pits and lake in the coming years.

The most difficult problem has been a return of vandalism after four years of no problems. Recently people have emptied a gabion by the lake and thrown the limestone rocks into it. Worse has occurred on the acid tar pit where many of the willow trees have been uprooted and broken by young people with quad bikes. To get at the site on their machines the vehicles have been driven at the 8-foot-high, strong fences and broken through. We have installed two trail cameras, but these have been discovered and removed. The police say there is little they can do as the site is too isolated.

In south Wales the Trust has been advising local groups contending with old, pre 1978 landfill sites that have a cocktail of contaminants discharging from them and entering local streams. Our involvement has been based on methods of managing leachate as well as how best to work with Natural Resources Wales, local authorities, and ways the sites may be economically remediated. In England one site in Shropshire is linked to this work; an important hill fort (Sutton Walls) that was used in the 1960s and 1970s for dumping PCBs which were interred in the middle of the ancient monument. There is great concern expressed by local people who have been told not to use their wells for watering plants or vegetables. The River Lugg, (a tributary of the troubled River Wye) close by is also at risk from the plume of contamination.

In early summer we had a large number of telephone calls and emails from concerned members of the public from the West Midlands telling us of perceived pollution and fish deaths. We investigated all those that have been brought to our attention and ensured that the Environment Agency had been made aware. In June and July most of those contacting us talked of fish mortalities on the Rivers Cole and Anchor along with other reports of fish with breathing difficulties. We met with several of those who contacted us and saw the problems first hand. All these events were brought about by oxygen sags in the rivers. These events can take place when there are thunderstorms in an area. Sudden changes in atmospheric pressure can lead to drops in oxygen present in rivers. It is a natural occurrence but for those witnessing fish struggling to breath can be traumatic. the Environment Agency installed pumps to reoxygenate the water at several points.

In Devon and Cornwall, we have continued our work on minewater treatment methods. This area of work has been a core area of expertise developed over more than thirty years. We have been working with new mines being planned for lithium and copper/tin extraction. It has been a new experience for the Trust to look towards planning for the care of the environment prior to any threat.

On the River Wye we have been putting forward ideas of how farms might minimise nutrient run off. We have made design plans for wetlands available along with other methods of managing chicken farm waste. It has been gratifying to find that there is a gradual move in the area to look at better nutrient management.

### **Other Areas of Activity.**

- The Trust has engaged with various bodies, local authorities, and developers to encourage the use of heat from the water in the many abandoned mines that are beneath much of Britain. The benefits are many and might include low-cost heat for areas of fuel poverty and allow new methods of managing water in abandoned coalfields.
- The bacteria and fungi that have been discovered at the tar pit in Derbyshire are continuing to be studied at the University of Nottingham. The various samples have found a range of environmental benefits. Many forms of difficult plastics are now found to be destroyed by these growths without damage to the environment, whilst some bacteria are found to support others or fungi to cope with and flourish in otherwise dangerous environments.
- Support for the ongoing archaeological investigations regarding water management in winter during the last siege of Newark (1645-46). This is now possibly linked to an engineered floating meadow system of irrigation of grasslands that was likely to have been developed in the 1500s. Research into modern versions may prove to be useful carbon sequestration sites.
- Mine wastes and spoil heaps are a problem for several rivers and stream across the country, particularly metalliferous mining areas where there may be many problems including that of acidic leaching. We have been consulted by several organisations regarding such problems this year.

- Dams, tailings dams and agricultural and other reservoirs have featured in several requests for information and guidance.
- The Trust has had several requests for guidance regarding the River Thames and some of its tributaries from Twickenham to the Essex Marshes. These have varied from whether sewage might be treated at certain treatment works and the waters recycled through north London drinking water reservoirs, to the water quality and upkeep of the River Roding. Also, what wastes were historically dumped on parts of the marshland in Essex adjacent to the Thames.
- Flood defences, flood protection and suitable barriers are a growing area of interest for individuals and parish councils. We have looked at several areas of the country where requests for information have been made. Several requests have been steered towards the Environment Agency, along with suggestions for alternative flood defence methods such as leaky dams..

Clean Rivers Trust find we have an increasing roll supporting people who have been affected by pollution. The distress that people feel when they witness fish in distress or water that is foul. The importance of rivers, streams, and brooks to much of the population is profound. Many people feel cut off from knowledge that answers their concerns and questions. Since Covid it has become clear how important local waters are to the populations' health; physical and mental. We answer everyone who contacts us.

Harvey Wood.  
Director

1<sup>st</sup> December 2023

## **Report of the Trustees.**

The Trustees of Clean Rivers Trust are pleased to present their report on the management of the charity for the last year (2022 to 2023). The activities of the Trust over the last

year are outlined in the Directors Report. The Trustees met formerly four times in the last year but other involvement by individual trustees is much more frequent.

The objects of the Trust being ‘to advance the education of the public by research and dissemination of any findings regarding the care of inland and estuarine waters and to benefit the environment of rivers and inland waters by the research and the implementation of such research findings. The Trustees ensure that the works that have been undertaken are in line with the registered aims and objectives of the Trust. The Clean Rivers Trust was founded as an organisation in 1990 and is governed by a Deed of Trust registered with the Charity Commission in 1994.

The Trustees are mindful that the Trust needs to demonstrate public benefit, ensuring funds received are used for the purposes that they are intended. The Trustees have adopted policies that are intended to ensure all works carried out are always both ethical and honest and regularly reviews them. The Trust does not lobby on behalf of any political, commercial, or ideological entity and has never done so.

The Trustees are pleased to report that the Trust continues to receive support from a wide range of experts and is able to call on specialists from most water, energy, engineering, mineral/mining, and conservation disciplines.

A continuous audit of the Trustees abilities demonstrates it to be satisfactory and all areas of governance are represented by the composition of the body. The accounting is conducted according to directions of and as outlined by the Charity Commission. The Trustees are aware of the need for a wide base of expertise and talent within the management structure of the organisation and function as Trustees of the Trust. Those who are at present Trustees all have expertise in areas that are of considerable worth to Clean Rivers Trust and do not just function as a body for meetings.

The Trusts bankers have carried out due diligence checks on the charity’s funding and our probity. This was a long and tedious exercise but was concluded satisfactorily.

The finances of the Trust continued to be adequate over this last year which has allowed research and other activities which have been reported on in the Directors Report. The Trust has not spent any funds outside the UK in the last year.

5<sup>th</sup> December 2023



## Accounts.

The following section contain the receipts and payments accounts of Clean Rivers Trust, as set out by the Charity Commission in their letter of September 2015.

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>		
Unrestricted Grants and Donations	32,028	44,000
Restricted Grants and Donations	10,000	32,200
Fees	0	0
<b>Gross income</b>	<b>42,028</b>	<b>76,200</b>
Sales of assets/investments	0	0
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>42,028</b>	<b>76,200</b>

	2023	2022
	£	£
<b>Payments</b>		
Rent/utilities/insurance	12,020	10,950
Travel	4,300	4,790
Books/Library	220	2,782
Research	(Totals £33,864	£53,689)
• Laboratory costs	4,680	4,260
• Field Work	8,180	8,850
• Education	4,497	4,547
• Materials	1,180	7,080
• Health and Safety	809	2,239
• Equipment	1,521	1,842
• Research Assistance	12,997	24,871
Accounting/bookkeeping	405	405
Memberships	540	780
Bank Charges	120	112
Web/internet site	550	550
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>52,019</b>	<b>74,058</b>
Purchases of assets/investments	0	0
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>52,019</b>	<b>74,058</b>

2023

2022

	£	£
<b>Cash funds at end of year</b>		
In bank 1 <sup>st</sup> December	18,735	28,726
Restricted Funds	0	0
Unrestricted Funds	18,735	28,726
<b>Total available for Trust Purposes.</b>	<b>18,735</b>	<b>28,726</b>
Research expenses due to the Trust under agreement with funder	0	0
Research fees due to Trust	0	0
Outstanding moneys owed by Trust	0	0

**Notes:**

- Most receipts of funding were unrestricted. Those funds that were restricted being for works in Derbyshire, and Devon which were duly ring-fenced.
- There are no investment assets, nor were any investments sold or purchased during this accounting year.
- No funds were used for projects outside the UK.
- No funds have been received from outside the UK.
- Research costs included the operation of the trust's own laboratory, commercial laboratory analysis of water and other samples, health and safety arrangements, procurement of samples, growing media, tools, and other related items.
- The library: valuation of books being a difficult subject today due to the availability of many texts on-line.

## **Independent Examiners Report.**

To the Trustees of Clean Rivers Trust (Charity Registration Number 1037414).

This is the fourth year that I have examined the accounts of Clean Rivers Trust.

The accounts and report for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023; set out on pages 9 – 12 of the Annual Report and Accounts of Clean Rivers Trust.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 Trust’s accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### **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 which gives me cause to raise any issue.

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

Howard Dodds

Examiner

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023

# **Appendices.**

## **I**

### **Funders and Acknowledgements.**

The following persons and organisations have contributed to the Trust to enable its work to develop. Each donor is thanked by letter or e mail, whichever is the preferred method of communication. Some organisations who contributed to Clean Rivers Trust over the last financial year wished to remain anonymous, others included the Frognal Trust, The Henry Hoare Charitable Trust, the Sir John and Lady Amory Charitable Trust, Limoges Trust, the Anson Charitable Trust, The Chapman Charitable Trust, The Fort Foundation, Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust, the Gladys Wightwick Charitable Trust, The Owen Family Trust, David Ure Memorial Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust, The Percy Lee Charitable Trust, Trust, Marsh Charitable Trust, William Dean Trust, John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust, GJW Turner Trust, GMC Trust, Hetherington Trust, and The Harbinson Trust.

The Trust acknowledges the support in time and practical assistance to the following people and organisations; Eur Ing Victor A Johnson, Nathan Coop, Sophie Annable, Hugh Price, Severn Trent Services, the Coal Authority, Shaun Walters, Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Natural England, and many others who have given their time and expertise.

## **II**

### **Library.**

The library continues to be of importance to both the organisation and outside researchers alike. It holds reports dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and its comprehensive river related documents from the 1990s produced by the National Rivers Authority and Environment Agency are amongst the most complete available.

The Trust continues to welcome researchers to the library by appointment.

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