



## **Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23**

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*Creating a network of wilder, wetter, cleaner, and  
connected freshwater habitats*

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**Fig 1. In 2022-23 we completed the first stages of Building the Oxfordshire Freshwater Network, funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The picture shows the creation of new floodplain wetland mosaic habitat at Manor Farm in Buckinghamshire continuing our work to build the Freshwater Network in this area. On this site we are addressing one of our core aims which is to focus on the restoration of Historic Floodplains, a key component of the Freshwater Network. This is the floodplain of the R. Thame (the river itself is just out of view at top of the picture) and shows ponds in the winter of 2022-23. As water levels drop in the summer, the waterbodies that are linked in this winter picture (top left, top right) will separate out to form ponds and pools of varying sizes and depths, an approach which our work has shown maximises the variety of freshwater species on a site. Green Recovery Challenge Fund support also contributed to the creation of the Freshwater Network in the New Forest.**



## About Freshwater Habitats Trust

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Freshwater Habitats Trust was founded in 1988 (as Pond Action) to help ensure the future of our freshwater wildlife. We have now been working for over 35 years with many different people and organisations to protect the variety of life in freshwater - its biodiversity. We've discovered what makes freshwater habitats special, how best to protect them and above all tried to make a practical difference on the ground. Now we are starting to see some of our longest running plans come to fruition. And although the tide is far from turning for freshwater, which is still under severe threat, we are beginning to see both some good news stories, and much greater recognition of the importance of protecting life in freshwater.

Freshwater Habitats Trust is highly strategic, and we target our work where evidence suggests it will be most effective to help us achieve our aims. During 2022-23 we have continued to implement our organisation's strategy for 2021-2035 implementing our mission which is:

"Reversing the long decline of life in freshwater by creating a national network of healthy, unpolluted, interconnected freshwater landscapes which are wilder, wetter, cleaner and connected: the Freshwater Network".

Our vision is that in the Freshwater Network, rich freshwater and wetland habitats, clean water ponds, repaired rivers and rewilded floodplains will create a space where freshwater wildlife can thrive, and everyone will be able to benefit from a rich and natural freshwater environment. Our work in all areas from policy, practical projects, partnership, and outreach, to monitoring and research is always focused on helping us achieve this vision.

The steps we are focusing on to achieve our vision are to:

- **Protect the best.** Strengthen within and build out from existing freshwater biodiversity hotspots at both national and local levels. The Freshwater Network takes a 'protect first, repair second' approach to ensure that we don't lose what we have.
- **Use smaller waters and wetlands as ecological engineers.** About 80% of the freshwater environment is made up of smaller waters. They are a critical biodiversity resource that has been traditionally overlooked. The Freshwater Network focuses on small waters and wetlands because of their power to regenerate freshwater landscapes.
- **Treat freshwaters as a network of interconnected and interdependent habitats.** The majority of freshwater species (c.2/3rds) use multiple waterbody types in networks of habitats not just rivers or ponds or lakes or wetlands, and managing these waterbodies as a whole, as freshwater landscapes, is essential for effective biodiversity conservation.
- **Bring back clean water.** Clean water is vital for biodiversity. It is now a very scarce habitat and restoring it to the landscape is a critical step for freshwater protection.

## Overview

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2022/23 saw Freshwater Habitats Trust involved in a range of practical projects, both existing and new, important applied research and a continuing role in policy development. Our work featured in the public media and, both in Britain and internationally, the critical role of small waters – like ponds and small streams – gained more and more attention. Through the European Union funded PONDERFUL project we have been able to reinvigorate long-established contacts with freshwater scientists and practitioners in continental Europe which had stalled post-Brexit. The year saw continued rapid growth and we were employing 38 staff at the end of the year with income more than doubling compared to the 2021-22 financial year to £2.9 million.

Highlights of the year included the continued support for the Newt Conservation Partnership, to which we seconded 11 members of FHT staff. The partnership has now created or restored around 300 new high quality ponds for Great Crested Newts since its formation in 2017 as part of the NatureSpace District Licensing scheme. The partnership now covers 10 counties covering about 20% of England, and also holds national licences for Great Crested Newt habitat mitigation for Network Rail. With the scheme's managers NatureSpace Partnership and our colleagues in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation who co-direct the Newt Conservation Partnership work. The project is now making a major contribution to delivering a key aim of Freshwater Habitats Trust: using new pond creation to bring back clean water to the landscape.

Practically we continued work focused on Important Freshwater Landscape (IFLs) and Important Freshwater Areas, particularly the New Forest and Dorset Heaths IFL, the Oxford IFL, the Thames Basin IFL, The Brecks IFL and the Yorkshire Lowlands and Yorkshire Dales IFLs. Our wide-ranging work in the New Forest National Park, one of the UKs most important landscapes for freshwater biodiversity continued, and is providing a model for how to protect high quality freshwater habitats, especially the smaller waters which are a vital but often neglected part of water management. 2022-23 saw further implementation of work to create the Freshwater Network in the New Forest, particularly through the Blue Horizons project which we are undertaken in a close working partnership with the Environment Agency and New Forest National Park Authority. In Wales, we undertook a range of practical projects focussed on the R. Irfon and were pleased to be awarded an extension of this project.

Our research programmes continued through the Water Friendly Farming project, with increasing emphasis on the dissemination of the project research results, the PondNet eDNA survey for Great Crested Newts which reached its 9th year, making it, as far as we are aware, the longest running DNA based monitoring programme anywhere in the world. We continued collection of data for the PONDERFUL project using the Water Friendly Farming site and our long-running Pinkhill Meadow site as demonstration areas for the project. We published a report on the condition of farm ponds supported following survey work undertaken in 2021. Further research papers using our and others' pond data were also published with collaborators in various Universities, particularly focussing on small waters in collaboration with Professor Mary Kelly-Quinn in Ireland.

Building on the Water Friendly Farming project, we continued working on landscape level projects in a number of catchments with a particular focus on the New Forest, Oxfordshire and in the South Midlands from Buckinghamshire to Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. With Anglian Water we continued the Pitsford Water Friendly Farming project, a 5-year programme to



replicate and extend the results of Water Friendly Farming in the catchment of Anglian Water's Pitsford Reservoir in Northamptonshire, one of their major water supply sources. We also had a busy year working on the East-West Rail landscape freshwater biodiversity project (re-named North Bucks Resilience Project) and further development of the Freshwater Network programme prior to formal launch in 2023. We worked with a range of colleagues interested in small waters to establish the foundations for a new research programme on small waters in association with Defra and other government agencies.

There were a number of important policy development during the year for small waterbodies, not least the announcement by the Ramsar Convention of Resolution on the Conservation and management of Small Wetland which raises the profile internationally of small waters, including in the UK. With the appointment of Communications Manager Sarah Hoyle at the start of the year, we have begun to develop our communications activity much more systematically, including the preparing to relaunch our website in 2023.

## Our activities in 2022/23

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### 1. People, Ponds and Water project – legacy work

From 2015-2018, the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) supported the **People, Ponds and Water project** which allowed us to develop three strands of work which continue to play a central role in the organisation's activity (i) Gathering evidence on status and trends in freshwater habitats and species; (ii) Protecting the best freshwater habitats and (iii) Championing freshwater biodiversity, particularly by encouraging people to assess the extent of water pollution, and conversely the occurrence of clean water, with a special focus on smaller waters which often go unmonitored. **People, Ponds and Water** addressed these aims in three overlapping projects:

- PondNet
- Flagship Ponds
- Clean Water for Wildlife.
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Since 2018 our work on these three elements has continued to build on the legacy of the original NLHF-funded project.

**PondNet.** The aim of PondNet is to create a volunteer and professional survey network to collect statistically robust data to identify trends in pond quality and pond species, including uncommon plants and animals. With support from the Lottery survey methodologies were standardised and included environmental metrics; giving information to help explain the reasons for changes in biological quality, and ultimately help to guide the direction of freshwater policy and practice. As part of this project, working with Defra, Natural England and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust; Freshwater Habitats Trust established the world's first national eDNA monitoring programme for a protected species, the Great Crested Newt. 2022/23 saw the completion of an eighth year of survey, visiting the same ponds annually to build a picture of status and change of this species in terms of 1 km square and pond occupancy.



**Flagship Ponds.** This element of the People, Ponds and Water project saw the creation of a network of some of the most important, and highest quality, pond sites in England and Wales, known to support populations of species under threat. Although we did not raise new funds specifically for this project in 2022-23, we have aimed to continue engagement with Flagship Pond sites around the country including the New Forest, Dorset, on National Trust properties around England and Wales, in The Brecks, in Oxfordshire and in Yorkshire. We undertook new practical habitat creation and management at the Pinkhill Meadow Flagship site and continued survey work at Strensall Military Training Area and Skipwith National Nature Reserve Flagship sites.

**Clean Water for Wildlife.** The aim of this element of the original People, Ponds and Water project was to create a citizen science survey to raise awareness of the true extent of nutrient pollution, and identify clean water habitats in England and Wales, with the ultimate aim of helping to protect biodiversity. Nutrient pollution is invisible, so often doesn't seem 'real' to people. Using quick kits made it possible for people to easily 'see' pollution for the first time and we have continued to apply this approach in a range of our projects. In 2022/23 we have continued to apply the Clean Water for Wildlife concept running the **Testing the Water** project as part of the **Brecks and Fen Edge Landscape Project** funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. We also applied this approach working with local citizens in Oxford as part of the **Building Oxfordshire's Freshwater Network** and **Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife** projects. In many of our project we also use the Clean Water for Wildlife test kits to assess levels of nutrient pollution as part of preparatory work to develop new practical projects, such as the **River Ock Arable Farmers** project.

**Medicinal Leech Recovery Project.** Work during the People, Ponds and Water project identified the need for a specific project focussed on Medicinal Leech. Medicinal Leeches are a global conservation priority and listed under a raft of international legislation as needing protection. Preparation for this project began in 2019-20 and we successfully fundraised to provide the resources needed for this work. During 2022-23 we have continued (1) data collation to document and understand the decline of England's Medicinal Leeches; (2) developed an eDNA monitoring tool to allow wide volunteer engagement through surveys at sites across England; (3) collaborated with zoos to secure four populations through 'Ark collections' to provide a living gene bank in case of wild extinctions; (4) raise the profile of medicinal leeches through displays and events. This will culminate in a collaborative workshop in 2023/24 to define and initiate a suite of long-term conservation actions, engaging partners, land managers and key volunteers.

## **2. Work on ponds with Natural England**

During 2022-23 we have benefitted from the growing interest in ponds of the government agency Natural England. This is part of long-running joint working (Natural England originally proposed the development of the PondNet concept in 2010) and this is now bearing fruit in a variety of ways.

In addition to our Great Crested Newt conservation programme, which essentially was stimulated by the original Natural England PondNet programme which ran from 2010-2013, we ran three programmes with Natural England funding in 2022-23, and began the development of two new projects, further developing the survey and conservation of ponds.



Project work in 2022-23 with Natural England comprised:

- ***Citizen scientists assessing pond presence and priority***: During the year we completed a project on the development of a new web-based app to enable citizen scientists and professional ecologists to register ponds which qualify as Priority ponds. This included the development of a new metric which will predict the occurrence of Priority ponds from simple environment data. This is being rolled out in 2023-24.
- ***Defining and mapping pond irreplaceable habitat***. During the year we completed a short policy project for Natural England to identify examples of irreplaceable pond habitats (e.g. those formed by natural processes like glaciation and those with large floating mats of vegetation that take 10s or 100s of years to develop). The results from this project are now being incorporated into government policy (eg Biodiversity Net Gain programmes).
- ***Natural England agri-environment ponds project***. During summer 2021 with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology we undertook a national survey to assess the effect of agri-environment scheme payments for pond management on the condition of the managed ponds. Results from this survey were published in 2022-23 and showed that ponds were generally of higher quality when they were in agri-scheme compared to the ordinary countryside and that groundwater-fed ponds were generally of better quality than those fed by surface water. However, overall, the survey suggested that the main factor affecting pond quality was the occurrence of pond in a good quality landscape, rather than the effect of management. The results helpfully supported some of our existing expectations, not least the importance of the catchment in determining pond quality.
- During the year we began the preparation for two new projects with Natural England for 2023-24:
- ***Natural England eDNA project***: in this project we will be collecting eDNA and plant survey data from high quality ponds to complement work being undertaken by Natural England in a large national landscape survey, the England Ecosystem Survey. We expect this project to produce a large new national dataset describing the condition of England's ponds, updating the last national pond survey of 2007 undertaken in the Countryside Survey.
- ***NCEA Natural England pond count***: Natural England is undertaking a national count of ponds in the rural landscape in the England Ecosystem Survey, using survey methods which we developed during the Countryside Survey (date). During 2022-23 we developed and trialled a new web-based app which would allow citizen scientists to gather comparable data. In 2024-24, we will begin a two year programme to accurately assess the number of ponds in urban areas with a citizen-science count of ponds in the urban landscape. Combined these datasets will give us a revised figure for the number of ponds in England.

### 3. Work with the National Trust

During 2022-23, we continued to develop our joint working with the National Trust. The National Trust's 10 year strategy includes a number of ambitious targets for the ways in which it manages its land and delivers a healthy, beautiful, natural environment. To measure and track progress with this strategy a range of metrics and monitoring approaches are being developed – including the need to develop a monitoring strategy for the status of freshwaters across the National Trust estate. Working with the Trust we have undertaken a range of activities to support this process and deliver FHT aims, focusing especially on small water bodies: ponds and small streams. This has included ***Volunteer Clean Water surveys*** with rapid nutrient test kits, ***baseline surveys of National Trust streams and ponds across their estate*** and eDNA surveys of ***ornamental lakes***. These areas of work were severely cut back by the Covid-19

pandemic which reduced National Trust funding and access to volunteer engagement and we are now planning programmes to restart this work. Although the national survey and monitoring programme stalled post-Covid, we undertook a major habitat creation project with the National Trust at the Coleshill & Buscot Estate in 2022-23 (see '[Building Oxfordshire's Freshwater Network](#)' below) and also continued planning various activities at the policy level concerned with small waters.

#### 4. Environmental DNA

We continued survey using environmental DNA data for Great Crested Newts, and other groups, in a number of contexts during the year including:

- ***eDNA Network Rail (Southern Region) surveys***: surveys undertaken for Newt Conservation Partnership and NatureSpace establishing the foundations of the Network Rail national Great Crested Newt mitigation programme
- ***NatureSpace South Midlands, Hampshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire eDNA surveys***: eDNA surveys for NatureSpace were part of work to obtain the licenses for the Great Crested Newt District licensing programme in these counties. All of this work also contributes to our work to identify 'Priority ponds' as all Great Crested Newt ponds are automatically identified as Priority habitats, which are a priority for conservation.
- ***River Irton (Wales)***: for the River Irton project we undertook a survey of freshwater vertebrates and freshwater mussels using eDNA to establish whether eDNA could be used to obtain baseline information on the distribution of these groups at the landscape scale.
- ***The Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Project***: as part of the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers project we organised eDNA surveys for freshwater vertebrates, undertaken with volunteer citizen-scientists.

Our plans for a national monitoring network, focussing on smaller waters, capitalising on the use of eDNA in combination with traditional monitoring methods were put on hold as we worked towards the launch of Freshwater Network.

#### 5. Catchment management work

We have continued a range of work as the hosts of three catchments in the Catchment-based Approach (CaBA) programme, as well as catchment work in Wales and elsewhere:

- New Forest catchment (in partnership with the New Forest Park Authority)
- River Ock catchment
- River Thames catchment (in partnership with the River Thames Conservation Trust)
- River Irton catchment
- Other catchment projects

##### **New Forest catchment**

Our work in the New Forest centres around jointly hosting the New Forest Catchment Partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority. Funded by a Water Environment Improvement Fund grant from the Environment Agency, the Catchment Partnership is promoting the protection of freshwater biodiversity through a variety of projects. The partnership has been working together for more than a decade, and brings together a wide range of stakeholders and volunteers to share knowledge, raise awareness and deliver practical work.



During 2022-23 work in the New Forest has mainly focused around two long-running catchment projects **Blue Horizons** and **Wilder for Water** which both run until 2025. During 2022-23, the projects were supported by the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund, a partnership bid with the New Forest National Park Authority of which c.£400k was delivered by Freshwater Habitats Trust. Blue Horizons is developing a strategic ecological network for the freshwater environment in and around the New Forest, capitalising on opportunities at the boundary of the New Forest's protected area and adding value through cross-catchment partnership working. Wilder for Water seeks to raise awareness of the value of the New Forest's freshwaters with partners, local communities, businesses and visitors, as well as addressing impacts on locally important sites.

These projects expanded the work of the catchment partnership, effectively doubling the size of the team through recruitment of two new project officers. In total over 9000 visitors have been engaged in our core messages through 94 events and over 100 social media post including vlogs and blog. We have also worked at 45 sites with landowners, farmers, equine owners and businesses, continuing earlier Heritage Lottery support provided by the New Forest-wide 'Our Past, Our Future' programme which ran from 2015 to 2021.

### **River Ock catchment**

A range of activities were undertaken in the R. Ock catchment further laying the groundwork for a large scale habitat restoration and management programme working with farmers and landowners. Elsewhere in the catchment fen management work at Barrow Farm Fen SSSI continued along with work on Hinksey Heights Fen, a Local Wildlife site on the edge of Oxford. At Hinksey Heights long-term scrub and woodland development has led to considerable degradation of one of Oxfordshire's largest remaining valley peat deposits. Work on Hinksey Heights fen was mainly funded by the **Building Oxfordshire's Freshwater Network** Green Recovery Challenge Fund project (see below).

We completed further site visits to farmers with Environment Agency Water Environment Improvement Fund support and undertook practical works at several sites, including the **creation of a new floodplain wetland mosaic pond complex at Manor Farm, Garford**, also part of the **Building Oxfordshire's Freshwater Network** Green Recovery Challenge Fund project (see below). Working with local volunteers we laid the groundwork for the development of a **Curlew Monitoring Programme** which will start in 2023-24.

We launched with local farmers the **Ock Catchment Farmers Group** with support from the Thames Water Catchment Partnership Support Fund. Working with the group we made preparation for a bid to Defra in 2023-24 for Ock Catchment Farmer Cluster.

### **River Thame catchment**

We continued joint catchment management activities with the River Thame Conservation Trust of which the most important has been work to create a new wetland complex at Manor Farm Chearsley, on the floodplain of the Thame (see Figure 1 above).

During the year we made a proposal to the Defra – Natural England Nature-based Solutions carbon fund for further work to develop the ***Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network***, which included site in the R. Thame catchment. This work was planned for 2023-24.

### **Irfon Catchment Resilient Freshwater Habitats**

During 2022-23 we were finally able to make good progress on this project following serious delays in receiving our up-front payment from Welsh Government. First grant payments were finally made, roughly 2 years late, in March 2022. Progress on the ground improved the FHT Project Director and Project Officer were able to devote time to the project. We also took on local farmer to help with project practical implementation. Progress is now being made, moving forward with interventions on farms. Catchment modelling was commissioned from our long-term partners University of York, the citizen science survey of water quality and laboratory water quality sampling have now begun, and the Important Freshwater Areas study was drafted. We completed a large-scale baseline botanical survey of the catchments freshwater and wetland habitats in the summer of 2022, and hydrological monitoring equipment has been installed. Work continued in 2023-24 with a project extension awarded by the Welsh government until September 2023. During 2022-23 we were successful in obtain a new Wales Nature Network grant to continue work in the Irfon until 2025.

### **Other catchment projects**

Three further catchment projects running in 2022-23 were:

- ***North Buckinghamshire Freshwater Resilience Project.*** With funding linked to East West Rail (received via Buckinghamshire Council) this project aims to better understand the state of freshwaters across seven river catchments between Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. Initial work conducted during FY 2021/22 included: 1. Baseline wetland plant, amphibian and fish surveys at random stratified sample locations by habitat type. 2. A program of engagement with local landowners and stakeholders to scope potential for habitat improvements (biodiversity net gain) and Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions to help with localised flood risk. 3. Baseline modelling to inform NFM interventions carried out by University of York. This work is proceeding on schedule and we have now completed Phase 2 FY 2022/23 work which saw FHT deliver c.£100k of habitat and NFM work across the project area and undertake re-surveys at sampling locations. Further work is planned for 2023-24.
- ***Leck Catchment Natural Flood Management project.*** We continued work on the Leck catchment Natural Flood Management project, funded by Buckinghamshire Council. We expect this work to continue in 2023-24.
- ***Wootton Brook catchment Natural Flood Management and Freshwater Biodiversity project.*** With funding from the Environment Agency we continued a catchment Natural Flood Management and biodiversity project on the Wootton Brook, which runs into Northampton and sometime causes flooding there. The catchment is of strategic biological importance as it include part of the Yardley Chase MOD range which is an important area for freshwater wildlife.

## **6. Building the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network**

In developing the Freshwater Network concept, major funding for work to begin operationalising this concept in Oxfordshire came in 2022-23 with the award of a Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant of £680,000 to develop a new network of freshwater ponds, floodplain and fen habitats, and to develop the GroWet endangered water plant programme. The initial grant, part



of a national Covid recovery programme, ran for only 15 months and was completed in March 2023. We made a number of major steps forward in the course of this project including creating the floodplain wetland mosaic shown above in Figure 1, creating a new floodplain wetland mosaic at one of our longest established partnership project sites at the National Trust Coleshill and Buscot Estate and continuing fen management at various sites near Oxford.

The work is continuing in 2023-24 as part of the Natural England-funded Nature-based Solutions for climate change project. This project continues the work of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund project 'Building Oxfordshire Freshwater Network and expands this work to Buckinghamshire. It allows another years work on GroWet which has provided a great way to engage people directly and meaningfully with endangered water plant conservation.



**Fig 2.** In 2022-23 we completed the first stages of Building the Oxfordshire Freshwater Network, funded by the Government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The picture shows the creation of new floodplain wetland mosaic habitat at the National Trust Buscot and Coleshill Estate on the Oxfordshire-Wiltshire border. On this site we are addressing one of our core aims which is to focus on the restoration of Historic Floodplains, a key component of the Freshwater Network. This is the floodplain of the R. Cole where we first started practically assessing the benefits of river restoration in the mid-1990s, creating the sinuous river channel shown in the picture as part of an EU LIFE funded demonstration project.



## 7. Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife

The overall aims of the Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife project are to: (1) increase people's awareness of Oxford's exceptional freshwater environment; which contributes to Oxford and its surrounds being recognised as a nationally significant Important Freshwater Area (2) maximising the benefits of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme for freshwater biodiversity; and (3) engaging people in practical conservation of freshwater habitats and species. The project began in 2018 with funding from Thames Water and has been continued with a variety of funding sources, most recently from the Thames Water Hinksey Height fund, which is derived from an Enforcement Proceedings payment made by Thames Water following the pollution of the North Hinksey stream. Specifically the project aims to:

- ***Increase people's awareness of the importance of freshwater biodiversity in the Oxford area:*** The area centred on Oxford is a nationally critical region for freshwater biodiversity but most Oxford residents are unaware of this, although the city's meadows and river are much loved by residents and visitors. We have engaged with schools, community groups and individuals by involving them in eDNA and water quality testing and undertaking walks and talks to inform and raise public and local interest in the city's special freshwater wildlife.
- ***Create and manage freshwater habitats for protected species:*** We have been working to restore water levels in fens which have been drained, create new clean water ponds, and bring sites back into good condition through selective removal of scrub growth and management of wetland vegetation. This work is directly benefitting the protected species, and wetland habitats which are nationally threatened. We are providing detailed management plans for these sites to ensure sustainable management in the long term. During 2020 we undertook further work at Cutteslowe Meadows – which now supports introduced 'rescue' populations of four nationally endangered and threatened water plants: Fen Violet, Creeping Marshwort, Greater Water-parsnip and Tubular Water-dropwort.
- ***Survey and ex-situ conservation work for priority species, assessing water pollution and raising awareness of the importance of the Oxford area for these species:*** The project is helping to protect and increase populations of extremely rare and threatened water plants, including Biodiversity Action Plan aquatic plants. They are being cultivated by volunteers for introduction into new areas, enhancing the number and distribution of these vulnerable wetland plants and securing their future in Oxford.

Further work on the Saving Oxford's Wetland Wildlife project is being undertaken with the support of Thames Water's Hinksey Heights Fund, continuing into 2023-24.

## 8. Restoring Oxfordshire's SSSI Fens

This project aims to restore important alkaline fen habitats at four Oxfordshire SSSI fens which are currently in poor condition due to lack of management and water pollution and at other Local Wildlife site fens (eg Hinksey Heights, Chilswell Valley). Started in 2018, from 2021 onwards the project was incorporated into the Building Oxfordshire Freshwater Network project., and its subsequent implementation in the Building the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network. Work to restore Oxfordshire fens essentially comprises four main activities, which continued during 2022-23:

- ***Volunteer work parties:*** With the help of monthly volunteer work parties, mainly at Hinksey Heights and Coleshill Fen, we have been managing dense, unwanted, growth of Common Reed, which threaten to dominate the restoration areas.
- ***Baseline surveys:*** We undertook repeat surveys of wetland plants to provide the basis for assessing the success of the restoration work.



- **Practical management:** Management work was undertaken at three sites including Spartum and Middle Barton Fens SSSI - predominately scrub removal and tree felling.
- **Species translocation:** translocation of endangered fen and wetland plants as part of the restoration effort under the auspices of the GroWet project.

## 9. Water Friendly Farming

Water Friendly Farming is a large research demonstration project which started in 2010 where we, and our partners, including the Environment Agency, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, University of York and University of Sheffield are running one of the largest and longest running trials of the effectiveness of measures to protect the water environment from rural land management. The project is currently funded until 2027. During 2022-23 we continued field work to assess the effectiveness of the range of nature-based measures that have been introduced to protect and enhance freshwater in the landscape, especially focusing on streams. We also started the new Pitsford Water Friendly Farming project in the catchment of Pitsford Reservoir north of Northampton jointly with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water (see below). This project is replicating and extending the results of Water Friendly Farming over the next 5 years.

Water Friendly Farming is providing important evidence of the rapid benefits achieved from making clean water ponds, with very striking landscape wide gains in freshwater biodiversity – much more pronounced than is usually seen in catchment management projects. During 2022-23 we began work to produce the first papers on catchment modelling results, continued landscape wide assessment of the effects of land management measures on freshwater biodiversity, made more detailed investigations of the effectiveness of leaky dams and began wider dissemination of the projects results. Since December 2020, the site has also been a Demonstration Site for the EU Horizon 2020 funded PONDERFUL project.

## 10. Pitsford Water Friendly Farming

Pitsford Water Friendly Farming is a spin-off from the main Water Friendly Farming project with Anglian Water developing a second catchment research project based aiming to understand how we can enhance and protect the freshwater environment by using landscape wide mitigation measures. Baseline surveys of plants, invertebrates, water quality and flow were undertaken across the impact (Scaldwell) and control catchments (Walgrave) between 2020-22. We are currently developing and delivering a series of biodiversity and natural flood management measures across the impact catchment and preparing for the second half of the project in 2023-25.

## 11. Newt Conservation Partnership Great Crested Newt District Licensing scheme

The Newt Conservation Partnership (which started initially in 2017 as the South Midlands Newt Conservation Partnership) was established to create high quality aquatic and terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newts as part of new approaches to the mitigation of development impacts on Great Crested Newt populations. In this project we work closely with the NatureSpace Partnership to implement so-called District Licensing for Great Crested Newts where development impacts on newts are mitigated by funding new aquatic and terrestrial habitat creation away from the development sites. The Newt Conservation Partnership is currently

operating in 10 counties across the south and Midlands (Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire, East Sussex and Staffordshire). FHT is a key partner in this scheme, working with NatureSpace and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, as well as many landowning and management organisation and individuals.

The project is now Freshwater Habitats Trust largest single funded programme.

The scheme is not only benefiting Great Crested Newts, but also other freshwater and pond-associated wildlife, including priority species for conservation like the Common Toad.

## **12. Saving Nidderdale's Priority Ponds**

This project undertook a landscape-scale fresh water habitat survey, deliver training and events programme and raising awareness amongst the general public via a PR and citizen science campaign contributing to the long term protection of the AONBs priority ponds.

Surveys carried out by more than 60 Nidderdale AONB volunteers identified clean water in 84% of surveyed ponds, and increased our understanding of the distribution of protected amphibian species such as common toad and great crested newt. Records of protected species confirmed the presence of an additional 42 Priority Ponds, taking the total number for Nidderdale AONB to 80 Priority Ponds. However, the results from clean water testing indicate that Priority Ponds could constitute around 75% of all standing waterbodies in Nidderdale AONB, confirming its status one of the most Important Freshwater Landscapes in England & Wales.

Educational events catered for over 500 children from primary schools in Nidderdale AONB and across Yorkshire. Alongside other initiatives, these events helped to raise the profile of Freshwater Habitats Trust in the north of England. Press releases to an audience of an estimated 298k have supported key stages of the project, which raised the awareness of landowners and communities towards ponds and their wildlife.

The project is also kick starting a new partnership with the Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) and Nidderdale AONB. The funding allowed the appointment of a new member of FHT staff based in Nidderdale AONB's office.

We will continue to work with the Nidderdale AONB team, providing technical advice on the second phase of the project, which focusses on identifying strategic landowners where pond creation can take place in Wetland Opportunity Areas to create a connected landscape between Priority Ponds.

## **13. Testing the Waters: Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Citizen Science project**

Funded by a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for the Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers project, Testing the Water is a modest (£55k) citizen science project being undertaken as part of the larger (£2 million), multi-partner programme.

During 2022-23 we undertook a variety of citizen science engagement work focussed on the use of nutrient pollution test kits to identify areas of clean water in the landscape and eDNA testing to evaluate the distribution of freshwater vertebrates (amphibians, fish, mammals, birds).



Close to 1,000 waterbodies have been tested by over 330 volunteers giving a landscape scale picture of the condition of this Important Freshwater Landscape for freshwater biodiversity, and paving the way for targeted conservation action across the partnership in the next round of the project.

#### **14. Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF)**

NEIRF grant funding from Defra provided £88,374 for developing new funding mechanisms for habitat and species conservation which delivers outcomes of the Environment Act and 25 Year Environment Plan. The project, "Building a new investment model to use England's small waterbodies and wetlands to deliver 25YEP goals" runs until September 2023 and is a joint activity between NatureSpace, the Newt Conservation Partnership, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust and Freshwater Habitats Trust.

#### **15. PONDERFUL**

Freshwater Habitats Trust is part of a consortium that is running the EU Horizon 2020 project 'PONDERFUL', led by the University of Vic (Spain). The project's overarching aim is to develop improved methods for maximising the use of ponds and pondscapes in climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and the delivery of ecosystem services. PONDERFUL runs from December 2021 until November 2024.

During 2022-23 we undertook a wide variety of project promotion for the project (FHT leads the Workpackage 5 on 'Dissemination'), worked on various field data collection programmes, ran workshops on pond policy and contributed to the development of a manual of pond creation and management for Nature-based Solutions.

#### **16. Doddington Rewilding**

The Doddington Estate near Lincoln is beginning a rewilding programme and is working closely with Freshwater Habitats Trust and the River Restoration Centre to improve the estates water environment. The project builds on concepts developed during the Water Friendly Farming project and during 2022-23 we undertook baseline freshwater habitat surveys in preparation for the submission of a larger Heritage Lottery bid which was submitted in May 2023.

If the Lottery bid is successful, work will continue in 2023-25.

#### **17. European Pond Conservation Network**

Freshwater Habitats Trust helped found the European Pond Conservation Network in 2004 and has maintained a long connection with the network. During 2020 we helped plan the most recent European Pond Conservation Network conference which ran in May 2021. As part of the PONDERFUL project funding has been available to partner University College, London to continue supporting parts of the EPCN network. FHT is on the organising committee of EPCN and has worked closely with UCL to support EPCN activities.

## Plans for 2023-24

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During 2023-24 we plan to:

- Formally launch the Freshwater Network.
- Continue the major Europe-wide project PONDERFUL which is led by the University of Vic in Spain and involving a consortium of European pond conservation specialists.
- Continue practical projects in the Freshwater Network, particularly in the catchments of the River Thames, the New Forest and the Yorkshire Lowlands. The Freshwater Network aims to protect and link up freshwater biodiversity hotspots across the country. During the year we also hope to get a major funder on board for this next phase of freshwater biodiversity protection and recovery.
- Continue project buildings a 'halo' of high quality freshwater habitats around the New Forest, extending the area which has freshwaters of the quality seen in the open Forest at the heart of the National Park.
- Continue developing a new national small waters monitoring network and research centre, building on the foundations provided by PondNet.
- Complete the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the Great Crested Newt national eDNA monitoring programme and secure funds to complete a decade of survey in 24/25.
- Continue catchment projects which deliver benefits for freshwater biodiversity in England and Wales (with a focus on the New Forest, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and the South Midlands, R. Irfon in mid-Wales).
- Continue the Water Friendly Farming project which is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year; publish results of catchment studies that update the paper of Williams et al 2020, a major milestone in our work.
- Continue to create new terrestrial and pond habitat for Great Crested Newts in the South Midlands and extend to new counties in the South and the Midlands.
- Continue to promote and practically undertake new pond creation programmes, including planning a new phase of the Million Ponds Project.
- Publish, promote and make people aware of our work; now scheduled for publication in 2023, the long-awaited New Naturalist book 'Ponds, Pools and Puddles' (written by two of the Trusts senior staff) will help to make more people aware of the value of small waterbodies for freshwater biodiversity.
- Undertake an annual review of the 2021-2035 strategy that guides the first eight years of the work of Freshwater Habitats Trust.
- Continue to support the work of Newt Conservation Partnership with seconded staff.
- Upgrade management systems to reflect the needs of the growing organisation.



## Reference Details

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### **Board of Trustees:**

Professor Lorraine Maltby - Chair of Trustees (Retired 25 July 2023)  
Sonia Shah - Treasurer  
Keith Lawry – Chair of Trustees (Appointed 25 July 2023).  
Dr Edward Sykes  
Dr Mike Jeffries  
Debbie Tann (Resigned Feb 2023)

### **Company Secretary:**

Yingli Wei (Appointed 26/10/2021; Resigned 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023)  
Ruth Redding will be appointed Company Secretary on successful completion of 3 month probation review 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### **Senior Management Team:**

Professor Jeremy Biggs (CEO)  
Pete Case (Senior Project Officer)  
Dr Naomi Ewald (Director of Research and Development)  
Dr Pascale Nicolet (Technical Director and CEO to NCP)

### **Registered Office:**

Bury Knowle House,  
North Place, Headington,  
Oxford, OX3 9HY

### **Auditors:**

Wenn Townsend  
30 St Giles  
Oxford  
OX1 3LE

### **Bankers:**

HSBC Bank plc  
108 London Road,  
Headington,  
Oxford, OX3 9AP

Freshwater Habitats Trust is a registered charity, no. 1107708, and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, no. 5317683, at the above registered address.

## Structure, governance, and management

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Freshwater Habitats Trust is an incorporated charity established and governed under a Memorandum and Articles of Association completed in December 2004, under the name of Pond Conservation: The Water Habitats Trust. The Trust was entered onto the Register of Charities, Number 1107708, on 19th January 2005. It was registered as a Limited Company, Number 5317683, on 20th December 2004. Pond Conservation remained inactive until 1st April 2005, at which point it took over the charity "The Ponds Conservation Trust". It subsequently also took over the subsidiary company "The Ponds Conservation Trust: Policy & Research Ltd". The Trust's name was changed to Freshwater Habitats Trust in August 2013 and the Memorandum and Articles of Association were updated to reflect this in October 2013.

The Trust is administered by a Board of Trustees, currently consisting of eight members. The Senior Management Team (SMT) reports to the Trustee Board and manages staff and activities of the Trust under delegated authority from the Trustee Board. The financial management and fundraising strategy of the Trust are supervised by Trustees and SMT, reporting and making recommendations to the full board for implementation. The Trust currently provides an informal induction process for new Trustees. Prospective trustees are nominated for their professional experience and the match of their skills to the board's needs. They are approached by the Chair or an SMT member, the aims and activities of the Trust are explained to them, and they are provided with explanatory information and reports. They are invited to attend a board meeting to learn more of our work and procedures and when possible, to meet staff. On becoming a Trustee, they are provided with explanatory material on Trusteeship from the Charity Commission, and copies of the budget, recent accounts, and recent staff and board meeting minutes.

### Public Benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of Freshwater Habitats Trust meet with these criteria.

### Key Management Personnel Remuneration

All employees, including the Chief Executive and the key management personnel are covered by the same remuneration policy which is based on external benchmarking salary bands. The remuneration policy is approved by the board and subject to periodic review.

### Fundraising Standards Information

The charity does not engage in significant fundraising activities from the general public, with the bulk of income being project development by staff. Public donations are raised on a voluntary basis on the website, and with the occasional collection box at events, and are not material to the accounts. As a result, the charity does not use any professional fund-raiser or commercial participator, and is not bound by any voluntary regulatory scheme regarding its fund-raising. Such activities are monitored as required by trustees and senior management, and there were no complaints raised in the period, nor are direct approaches to individuals made as part of this process.



## **Objects**

- To advance public education in the conservation and ecology of ponds, wetlands, catchment systems and other water habitats.

- To promote for public benefit the conservation and creation of freshwater habitats and their wildlife, and their sustainable enjoyment by the public but not exclusively, through:

- (a) Promotion and conduct of active creation and conservation of freshwater habitats and their catchments.
- (b) Public education in the conservation and ecology of freshwater habitats and their catchments.
- (c) Promotion and conduct of research and the dissemination of useful results.
- (d) Advocacy to promote the conservation, creation, sustainable use and enhancement of freshwater habitats.

## **Mission statement**

Our mission to: Reverse the long decline of life in freshwater by creating a national network of healthy, unpolluted, interconnected freshwater landscapes which are wilder, wetter cleaner and connected: the Freshwater Network.

## **Risk management**

The Board of Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, those relating to the operations, reputation, business, and finance of Freshwater Habitats Trust. The Senior Management Team (SMT) assess and update the likelihood and impact of material risks on a risk management matrix, which is reviewed by the Board on a quarterly basis at Trustee meetings. Any significant changes are reported to Trustees as they arise. Health and Safety Procedures are reviewed annually on a rotational basis, with Health and Safety reports as standing items on Board, SMT and staff meeting agendas. Specific risk assessments are carried out for all new activities and field working sites. Health and Safety is a primary element of the staff induction system, and training is provided whenever appropriate.

## **Data Protection**

The Board of Trustees recognises the importance of protecting the personal information FHT collect and how this is handled within the organisation. Guidelines, Privacy Policies and Procedures are regularly reviewed, and Data Protection is a standing item at internal meetings.

## Financial review

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The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2023 is set out on page 28 of this report.

### Income

Freshwater Habitats Trust's total income increased in 2022/23 to £2,847k (2021/22: £1,323k).

Voluntary income of £1,651k (2021/22: £330k) comprised new and continuing grants including Green Recovery Fund HLF, GRCF NF, The Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network, Ponderful, River Irfon projects.

Charitable activities income of £1,195k is higher than the prior year (2021/22: £993k). This included Environment Agency Water Friendly Farming project (£25k), Pitsford (£225K), Newt Conservation Partnership (£484k), various eDNA projects (£194K) and EWR – North Bucks FRP (£93K).

### Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2022/23 is higher by 91% at £2,444k (2020/21: £1,282k) following the additional income. Staff costs including training and development is £1,036k, which is 42% of the total cost. Project cost is £1,273k, 52.1% of the total expenditure.

### Reserves position

Closing reserves of £1,034k are 63.6% higher than 2021/22 (£632k). This was due to an increase in contractual projects and funds held over relating to ongoing projects.

Restricted reserves increased by 398% at £331k (2021/22: £66.5k).

Unrestricted reserves increased by 24.3% to £703k (2021/22: £565.4k).

### Reserves policy

The Trustees have agreed to maintain sufficient unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of Freshwater Habitats Trust's operations and meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure. Trustees have agreed that this should be equivalent to at least 3 months' planned expenditure.

Total reserves of £1,034k (2021/22: £632k) are made up of;

- Restricted reserves, which increased by 398% to £331k (2021/22: £66.5k),
- Unrestricted reserved, which increased by 24.3% to £703k (2021/22: £565.4k).

The level of the unrestricted general reserves has provided some protection to the Charity and allows time to adjust to changing financial circumstances. This has limited the risk to service provision from operating deficits or an unexpected need for unbudgeted expenditure.



The Trustees have previously agreed as a reserves policy that unrestricted reserves should not fall below a level of approximately three months of costs, initially set at c£300k. It is anticipated that this value will be formally reviewed upwards in 2023-24 to reflect the current operating scale of the charity.

As at the 31st March 2023, free reserves held were £689k, which whilst above this historically set numerical threshold, is deemed to be in line with the overall policy in place.

In the opinion of the Trustees, this level of reserves continues to be required to provide working capital having considered the following factors:

- The Charity seeks to operate in a proactive manner, to make commitments in manpower (paid and voluntary) to support long term projects.
- To support restricted projects where final funding is not received until the project is complete.
- To support unfunded overhead costs not covered by funding.

The Trustees consider that it is appropriate for the Financial Statements to be prepared on a going concern basis as they believe that the current level of reserves at the date of signing will enable the Charity to survive any exceptional and unexpected circumstances. They will also ensure that the Charity can continue to be able to advise and support the preservation of Freshwater Habitats in the foreseeable future.

#### **Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

The trustees (who are also directors of Freshwater Habitats Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS102);
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**Principal risks and uncertainties and summary of plans and strategies for managing the risks**

The principal risks and uncertainties for the period in question are set out in the Risk Register, including financial, reputational, Health & Safety (including Covid-19) and our strategies for managing risks.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

**Approval**

The Trustees' Annual Report is approved by the Trustees of the Charity.

**Small Company Rules**

These accounts and this report have been prepared in accordance with the special provision of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 13th September 2023



**Keith Lawrey**



## **Freshwater Habitats Trust**

### **Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Freshwater Habitats Trust**

#### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Freshwater Habitats Trust ('the charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

#### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs(UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### **Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

## **Freshwater Habitats Trust**

### **Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Freshwater Habitats Trust (continued)**

#### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies exemption in preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and from preparing a Strategic Report.

#### **Responsibilities of trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 23, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Enquiry of management, those charged with governance and the entity's solicitors around actual and potential litigation and claims;
- Enquiry of entity staff in tax and compliance functions to identify any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- Reviewing financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- Performing audit work over the risk of management override of controls, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for bias.



## **Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Freshwater Habitats Trust (continued)**

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and its trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Benjamin Hayes FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)**  
**For and on behalf of Wenn Townsend**  
**Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor**  
**30 St Giles**  
**Oxford**  
**OX1 3LE**

**13th September 2023**

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31st March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
<b>Income from:</b>					
Grants and donations	2	14,823	1,635,726	1,650,549	330,032
Investments		1,275	-	1,275	51
Charitable activities	3	1,150,933	43,900	1,194,833	992,730
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,167,031</b>	<b>1,679,626</b>	<b>2,846,657</b>	<b>1,322,813</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	4	1,173	80	1,253	4,357
Charitable activities	5	1,012,416	1,430,775	2,443,191	1,277,154
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>1,013,589</b>	<b>1,430,855</b>	<b>2,444,444</b>	<b>1,281,511</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>153,442</b>	<b>248,771</b>	<b>402,213</b>	<b>41,203</b>
Transfers between funds	17	(15,806)	15,806	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>137,636</b>	<b>264,577</b>	<b>402,213</b>	<b>41,302</b>
<b>Fund balances at 1st April 2022</b>		<b>565,433</b>	<b>66,556</b>	<b>631,989</b>	<b>590,687</b>
<b>Fund balances at 31st March 2023</b>		<b>703,069</b>	<b>331,133</b>	<b>1,034,202</b>	<b>631,989</b>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the period.

The notes on pages 31 to 47 form part of these financial statements.

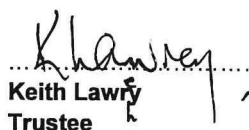


**Freshwater Habitats Trust**

**Balance Sheet  
as at 31st March 2023**

	Note	£	2023 £	£	2022 £
<b>Fixed Asset</b>					
Intangible assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible assets	11	13,924		2,745	
			13,924		2,745
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Stock	12	9,623		7,277	
Debtors	13	772,059		470,483	
Cash at bank and in hand		706,954		979,683	
<b>Total current assets</b>			1,488,636		1,457,443
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14		(468,358)		(828,199)
<b>Net current assets</b>			1,020,278		629,244
<b>Net assets</b>			1,034,202		631,989
<b>The funds of the charity</b>	17				
Restricted funds			331,133		66,556
Unrestricted funds			703,069		565,433
<b>Total charity funds</b>			1,034,202		631,989

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. These statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

  
 Keith Lawry  
 Trustee

**Company number: 05317683**

**The notes on pages 31 to 47 form part of these financial statements**

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31st March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Cash flow from operating activities:</b>		
Net cash provided by operating activities (below)	(260,912)	283,780
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	(13,092)	-
Interest income	1,275	51
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(11,816)</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in reporting period</b>	<b>(272,729)</b>	<b>283,832</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	979,683	695,851
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>706,954</b>	<b>979,683</b>
<b>Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities</b>		
Net income (as per the statement of financial activities)	402,213	41,302
Investment income	(1,275)	(51)
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation and amortisation charges	1,913	(1,480)
Increase/decrease in stocks	(2,346)	(1,075)
Increase/decrease in debtors	(301,576)	(312,049)
Increase/decrease in creditors	(359,841)	557,133
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(260,912)</b>	<b>283,780</b>
<b>Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and net debt</b>		
Bank current accounts	182,756	146,760
Bank deposit accounts	524,198	832,923
	<b>706,954</b>	<b>979,683</b>



## **Freshwater Habitats Trust**

### **Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023**

#### **General Information**

Freshwater Habitats Trust is a public benefit entity, a charity registered in England and Wales (registered charity number 05317683) and a company limited by guarantee (company number 1091708), registered in England.

The registered office and its principal place of business is Bury Knowle House, North Place, Headington, Oxford, OX3 9HY.

#### **1. Accounting policies**

##### **(a) Accounting convention**

###### **Basis and preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The charitable company is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and therefore the charity also prepared its financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in October 2019, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention, modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest pound.

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

##### **(b) Going concern**

The trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might cast significant doubt on the ability of the Trust to continue as a going concern. The trustees have made this assessment for a period of at least one year from the date of approval of the financial statements, and have considered the Trust's forecasts and projections. After making enquiries the trustees have concluded that there is a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Trust therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing its financial statements and there are no material uncertainties at the date of signing.

##### **(c) Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are those funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are those funds over which the trustees do not have full discretion concerning their use.

##### **(d) Income recognition**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

For donations to be recognised the charity will have been notified of the amounts and the settlement date in writing. If there are conditions attached to the donation and this requires a level of performance before entitlement can be obtained then income is deferred until those conditions are fully met or the fulfilment of those conditions is within the control of the charity and it is probable that they will be fulfilled.

## Freshwater Habitats Trust

### Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

#### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

##### (d) Incoming recognition (continued)

Donated facilities and donated professional services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over the item. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity. For example, the amount the charity would be willing to pay in the open market for such facilities and services. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure. No amount is included in the financial statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP. Further detail is given in the Trustees' Annual Report.

The charity receives government grants in respect of project funding. Income from government and other grants are recognised at fair value when the charity has entitlement after any performance conditions have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. If entitlement is not met then these amounts are deferred.

Investment income is earned through holding assets for investment purposes and includes bank interest. It is included when the amount can be measured reliably and recognised using the effective interest method as the charity's right to receive payment is established.

##### (e) Expenditure recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of raising funds
- Expenditure on charitable activities
- Other expenditure

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as an expense against the activity for which expenditure arose.

Grants payable to third parties are within the charitable objectives. Where unconditional grants are offered, this is accrued as soon as the recipient is notified of the grant, as this gives rise to a reasonable expectation that the recipient will receive the grants. Where grants are conditional relating to performance then the grant is only accrued when any unfulfilled conditions are outside of the control of the charity.

##### (f) Support costs allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs, administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include project management carried out at Headquarters. Where support costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

Fund-raising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

The analysis of these costs is included in note 6.

##### (g) Intangible and tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed assets are stated at cost (or deemed cost) less accumulated depreciation or amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Depreciation and amortisation are provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- Computers and software – 33% straight line
- Leasehold costs – depreciated over the period of the lease (5 years)
- Assets costing less than £1,000 are not capitalised and are included in expenditure



## Freshwater Habitats Trust

### Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

#### 1. Accounting policies (continued)

**(h) Stocks**

Stocks and work in progress are included at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

**(i) Foreign currency**

Transactions in foreign currencies are recorded at the exchange rate ruling at the date of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are retranslated at the balance sheet date. All exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activities.

**(j) Financial instruments**

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash at banks and in hand and short-term deposits with a maturity date of three months or less.

Debtors and creditors

Debtors and creditors receivable or payable within one year of the reporting date are carried at their transaction price. Debtors and creditors that are receivable or payable in more than one year and not subject to a market rate of interest are measured at the present value of the expected future receipts or payment discounted at a market rate of interest.

**(k) Impairment**

Assets not measured at fair value are reviewed for any indication that the asset may be impaired at each balance sheet date. If such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, or the asset's cash generating unit, is estimated and compared to the carrying amount. Where the carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount where the impairment loss is a revaluation decrease.

**(l) Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the charity has an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount can be reliably estimated.

**(m) Leases**

Rentals payable and receivable under operating leases are charged to the SoFA on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

**(n) Employee benefits**

When employees have rendered service to the charity, short-term employee benefits to which the employees are entitled are recognised at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid in exchange for that service.

The charity operates a defined contribution plan for the benefit of its employees. Contributions are expensed as they become payable.

**(o) Tax**

The charity is an exempt charity within the meaning of schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

**(p) Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement**

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. There are no significant estimates or judgements that have a material effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 2. Grants and donations - 2023

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	2023 £
<b>Project Activities</b>			
Bartley Water & Fletchwood WEIF (RR)	-	323	323
Brecks (RR)	-	6,618	6,618
CPAF New Forest Hosting (RR)	-	27,000	27,000
CPAF Ock Hosting (RR)	-	7,500	7,500
CPAF Thame Hosting (RR)	-	7,500	7,500
NF Blue Horizon (Halo) (RR)	-	29,122	29,122
NF Wilder for Water (Recreation) (RR)	-	30,593	30,593
Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford (RR)	-	636,198	636,198
Nidderdale (RR)	-	45,197	45,197
Ock Arable (III) WEIF (RR)	-	20,000	20,000
Ponderful H2020 (RR)	-	192,259	192,259
River Irfon (RR)	-	235,280	235,280
Saving Oxford Wetland Wildlife (RR)	-	5,275	5,275
GRCF NF (RR)	-	192,754	192,754
Ock – Catchment Partnership Support Fund	-	22,000	22,000
Thame – Catchment Partnership Support Fund	-	22,000	22,000
The Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network	-	101,107	101,107
Pitsford	-	30,000	30,000
WFF 21-27	-	25,000	25,000
NEIRF	1,676	-	1,676
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,676	1,635,726	1,637,402
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Other</b>			
Individual Donations	6,632	-	6,632
Support Scheme	6,515	-	6,515
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	13,147	-	13,147
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total grants and donations</b>	<hr/> <hr/> 14,823	<hr/> <hr/> 1,635,726	<hr/> <hr/> 1,650,549



# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 2. Grants and donations – 2022

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	2022 £
<b>Project Activities</b>			
Bartley Water & Fletchwood WEIF (RR)	-	74,960	74,960
Brecks (RR)	-	32,362	32,362
CPAF New Forest Hosting (RR)	-	27,000	27,000
CPAF Ock Hosting (RR)	-	7,500	7,500
CPAF Thame Hosting (RR)	-	7,500	7,500
NF Blue Horizon (Halo) (RR)	-	3,729	3,729
NF Wilder for Water (Recreation) (RR)	-	10,452	10,452
Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford (RR)	-	116,971	116,971
NF Catchments (RR)	-	3,889	3,889
Nidderdale (RR)	-	300	300
Ock Arable (III) WEIF (RR)	-	39,903	39,903
Ponderful H2020 (RR)	-	(95,000)	(95,000)
River Irfon (RR)	-	31,237	31,237
Saving Oxford Wetland Wildlife (RR)	-	41,430	41,430
Harcourt Hill, Oxfordshire Fens, TOE2 (RR)	-	4,384	4,384
Mid Thame Development Funding (RTCT) – Manor Farm	-	9,450	9,450
	-	316,068	316,068
<b>Other</b>			
Individual Donations	4,440	-	4,440
Support Scheme	8,913	-	8,913
Other	610	-	610
	13,964	316,068	330,032
<b>Total grants and donations</b>	<b>13,964</b>	<b>316,068</b>	<b>330,032</b>

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 3. Charitable activities

Year to 31st March 2023	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023
	£	£	£
Project activities	1,146,706	43,900	1,190,606
Corporate membership and sponsorship	4,227	-	4,227
	<u>1,150,933</u>	<u>43,900</u>	<u>1,194,833</u>
Year to 31st March 2022	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2022
	£	£	£
Project activities	989,250	-	989,250
Corporate membership and sponsorship	3,480	-	3,480
	<u>992,730</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>992,730</u>

### 4. Raising funds

Year to 31st March 2023	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023
	£	£	£
Support costs	1,173	80	1,253
	<u>1,173</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>1,253</u>
Year to 31st March 2022	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2022
	£	£	£
Support costs	4,357	-	4,357
	<u>4,357</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,357</u>



# Freshwater Habitats Trust6

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 5a. Cost of charitable activities including grants payable and activities undertaken directly by the charity

	2023 £	2022 £
Grants payable	42,827	3,750
Staff costs	810,131	543,901
Project activities	1,269,740	550,230
Support costs (see note 6)	320,493	179,273
	<u>2,443,191</u>	<u>1,277,154</u>

### 5b. Grants payable

	2023 £	2022 £
Project partners:		
Long Mead Foundation	24,350	-
River Thame Conservation Trust	18,477	3,750
	<u>42,827</u>	<u>3,750</u>

Long Mead Foundation – Project partner who undertook management and restoration of floodplain meadows that they own as part of the projects deliverable (Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford).

River Thame Conservation Trust – Project partner who undertook floodplain wetland habitat creation as part of the project (Thame – Catchment Support Fund, CPAF Thame hosting and Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford).

### 6. Support costs

Year to 31st March 2023	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £
Staff costs	139,970	88,528	228,499
Office running costs	71,349	2,732	74,081
Governance costs	8,230	-	8,230
Other	9,683	-	9,683
	<u>229,232</u>	<u>91,260</u>	<u>320,493</u>

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 6. Support costs (continued)

Year to 31st March 2022	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2022
	£	£	£
Staff costs	82,420	25,871	108,291
Office running costs	54,761	113	54,874
Governance costs	7,458	-	7,458
Other	8,650	-	8,650
	<u>153,289</u>	<u>25,984</u>	<u>179,273</u>

### 7. Net incoming resources

	2023 £	2022 £
Net incoming resources are stated after charging:		
Auditor's remuneration – statutory audit work	7,800	9,150
Depreciation on tangible assets	<u>1,913</u>	<u>446</u>

### 8. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

Two trustees received £271 reimbursement (2022: £Nil) in relation to travel expenses in the financial year and no trustees received any remuneration. Unrestricted donations from trustees were £Nil (2022: £Nil).



# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 9. Employees' remuneration

Total aggregate payroll costs of employees were:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	884,902	565,720
Social security	81,940	44,337
Pension costs	44,954	29,797
	<u>1,011,796</u>	<u>639,854</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year (2022: none).

Average number of employees:

	2023	2022
Project activities	32	19
Support	4	3
	<u>36</u>	<u>22</u>

Key management personnel include the trustees and senior management. The total employee benefits, including pension costs, of the charity's key management personnel were £271,376 (2022: £231,352).

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 10. Intangible fixed assets

	Software	Total
<b>Cost</b>		
At 1st April 2022	8,677	8,677
Additions	-	-
	<u>8,677</u>	<u>8,677</u>
At 31st March 2023	8,677	8,677
	<u>8,677</u>	<u>8,677</u>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 1st April 2022	8,677	8,677
Annual charge	-	-
	<u>8,677</u>	<u>8,677</u>
At 31st March 2023	8,677	8,677
	<u>8,677</u>	<u>8,677</u>
At 31st March 2022	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31st March 2023	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

### 11. Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold costs	Computers	Total
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1st April 2022	1,600	18,195	19,795
Additions	-	13,092	13,092
	<u>1,600</u>	<u>31,287</u>	<u>32,887</u>
At 31st March 2023	1,600	31,287	32,887
	<u>1,600</u>	<u>31,287</u>	<u>32,887</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 1st April 2022	686	16,364	17,050
Charge for the year	228	1,685	1,913
	<u>914</u>	<u>18,049</u>	<u>18,963</u>
At 31st March 2023	914	18,049	18,963
	<u>914</u>	<u>18,049</u>	<u>18,963</u>
<b>Net book value</b>			
At 31st March 2022	914	1,831	2,745
	<u>914</u>	<u>1,831</u>	<u>2,745</u>
At 31st March 2023	686	13,238	13,294
	<u>686</u>	<u>13,238</u>	<u>13,294</u>

### 12. Stocks

	2023 £	2022 £
Books	1,162	1,240
Kits for use and resale	8,461	6,037
	<u>9,623</u>	<u>7,277</u>
	<u>9,623</u>	<u>7,277</u>



# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 13. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Project debtors	419,067	285,424
Prepayments and accrued income	350,700	184,628
Other debtors	2,292	431
	<u>772,059</u>	<u>470,483</u>

### 14. Creditors falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Project creditors	133,097	119,368
Deferred income < one year	190,780	569,697
Accruals	63,469	34,811
Taxation and social security costs	79,722	103,073
Other creditors	1,290	1,250
	<u>468,358</u>	<u>828,199</u>

### 15. Deferred income

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1st April	569,697	119,148
Additions during the year	90,780	569,697
Amounts released to income	(469,697)	(119,148)
At 31st March	<u>190,780</u>	<u>569,697</u>

Income has been deferred to meet the recognition criteria under SORP for long term contract/grant funding received.

### 16. Operating lease commitments

As of 31st March 2023, the charity had the following commitments under non-cancellable operating leases.

	Land and buildings	
	2023 £	2022 £
Expire within one year	23,500	31,000
Expiry within two to five years	47,000	93,764
	<u>70,500</u>	<u>124,764</u>

The amount of non-cancellable operating lease payments recognised as an expense during the year was £27,930 (2022: £24,704).

## Freshwater Habitats Trust

### Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

#### 17. Analysis of funds – current year

	At 1st April 2022 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	At 31st March 2023 £
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Bartley Water & Fletchwood WEIF (RR)	242	323	323	-	242
Brecks (RR)	8,566	6,618	15,184	-	-
CPAF New Forest Hosting (RR)	12,271	27,000	25,979	-	13,292
CPAF Ock Hosting (RR)	(242)	7,500	7,803	-	(545)
CPAF Thame Hosting (RR)	1,138	7,500	7,802	-	836
GRCF NF (RR)	(23,034)	192,754	168,037	-	1,683
NF Blue Horizon (Halo) (RR)	(4,654)	29,714	24,891	-	169
NF Wilder for Water (Recreation) (RR)	(16,963)	31,496	12,921	-	1,612
Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford (RR)	(321)	643,648	637,949	-	5,378
Harcourt Hill, Oxfordshire Fens, TOE2 (RR)	(2,748)	-	-	2,748	-
Med Leech (RR)	16,176	1,266	1,746	-	15,696
Mid Thame Development Funding (RTCT)					
- Manor Farm	9,261	-	507	-	8,754
MPP Pond Fund (RR)	28,013	-	-	-	28,013
NF Catchments (RR)	6,399	-	306	11,760	17,853
Nidderdale (RR)	(13,495)	45,197	26,030	-	5,672
Ock Arable (III) WEIF (RR)	9,414	20,000	21,789	-	7,625
Ock – Catchment Partnership Support Fund	-	22,000	9,342		12,658
Pitsford (RR)	-	30,000	30,000		-
Policy Officer (RR)	(3,698)	-	1,795	3,698	(1,795)
Ponderful H2020 (RR)	6,859	192,259	67,000	-	132,118
River Irfon (RR)	-	235,280	193,350	-	41,930
Saving Oxford Wetland Wildlife (RR)	33,720	38,964	37,427	(2,748)	32,509
Thame - Catchment Partnership Support Fund	-	22,000	14,776	-	7,224
The Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire Freshwater Network	-	101,107	100,898	-	209
WEG Hatchett (RR)	(348)	-	-	348	-
WFF 21-27 (RR)	-	25,000	25,000	-	-
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<u>66,556</u>	<u>1,679,626</u>	<u>1,430,855</u>	<u>15,806</u>	<u>331,133</u>

Restricted funds consist of grants which have been made to Freshwater Habitats Trust which have yet to be fully completed and span over the year end. Transfer between funds into and out of restricted funds is either with the permission of the grant giver, or from Core to cover overspend, or to ring-fence surplus made on contracts to act as match-funds for future projects.

Please see the 'Our activities' section of the Trustees' Annual Report for descriptions and purposes of the restricted funds.

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 17. Analysis of funds – current year (continued)

	At 1st April 2022 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	At 31st March 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>					
Citizen Scientists assessing Pond presence and Priority	-	46,666	23,193	-	23,473
Defining and mapping pond	-	5,828	2,369	-	3,459
Doddington	-	6,675	4,788	-	1,887
eDNA Network Rail (Southern)	-	109,768	54,805	-	54,963
NSP Berks/Bucks e DNA	4,613	-	-	-	4,613
NSP Hampshire e DNA	2,453	-	-	-	2,453
NSP Network Rail East	14,338	-	1,162	-	13,176
NSP South Midlands e DNA	12,065	-	40,355	-	(28,290)
NSP Mapping and modelling	-	-	69	-	(69)
EWB – North Bucks FRP (UU)	18,511	-	17,937	-	574
Grove, Childrey & Lower Ock (UU)	1,127	-	55,013	-	(53,886)
Leck Catchment NFM	4,986	32,902	20,361	-	17,527
Market Harborough NFM	-	2,500	1,643	-	857
Natural England eDNA project	-	-	474	-	(474)
NE Agri Ponds	2,021	-	1,222	-	799
NECA	11,760	-	-	(11,760)	-
NEIRF	-	3,377	5,801	-	(2,424)
Newt Conservation Monitoring	(17)	29,774	26,848	-	2,909
Newt Conservation Practical Projects	5,297	230,459	195,359	-	40,397
Newt Conservation Admin	16,298	223,919	214,607	-	25,610
North Bucks Freshwater Resilience Project Phase II (EWB)	-	93,259	83,910	-	9,349
Pitsford	33,308	194,964	160,327	-	67,945
Pondnet e DNA	4,015	84,638	87,467	-	1,186
Publications	4,044	2,346	2,112	-	4,278
Thames Water Hinksey	(1,218)	-	190	-	(1,408)
WFF 21-27 (UU)	38,932	74,988	83,658	-	30,262
Wootton Brook (EA Anglian)	22,409	19,857	6,150	-	36,116
Misc contracts	(6,680)	5,404	10,417	-	(11,693)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>188,262</b>	<b>1,167,324</b>	<b>1,100,237</b>	<b>(11,760)</b>	<b>243,589</b>
<b>Core</b>	<b>377,171</b>	<b>(293)</b>	<b>(86,648)</b>	<b>(4,046)</b>	<b>459,480</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds + core</b>	<b>565,433</b>	<b>1,167,031</b>	<b>1,013,589</b>	<b>(15,806)</b>	<b>703,069</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>631,989</b>	<b>2,846,657</b>	<b>2,444,444</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,034,202</b>

Please see the 'Our activities' section of the Trustees' Annual Report for descriptions and purposes of the unrestricted funds.



# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 17. Analysis of funds (continued) – prior year

	At 1st April 2021 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	At 31st March 2022 £
<b>Restricted Funds</b>				
Bartley Water & Fletchwood WEIF (RR)	-	74,960	74,718	242
Brecks (RR)	-	32,362	23,796	8,566
CPAF New Forest Hosting (RR)	9,622	27,000	24,351	12,271
CPAF Ock Hosting (RR)	2,068	7,500	9,810	(242)
CPAF Thame Hosting (RR)	-	7,500	6,362	1,138
GRCF NF (RR)	-	-	23,034	(23,034)
NF Blue Horizon (Halo) (RR)	-	3,730	8,384	(4,654)
NF Wilder for Water (Recreation) (RR)	-	10,452	27,415	(16,963)
Green Recovery Fund HLF Oxford (RR)	-	116,971	117,292	(321)
Med Leech (RR)	20,923	-	4,747	16,176
MPP Pond Fund (RR)	28,031	-	18	28,013
NF Catchments (RR)	2,789	3,889	279	6,399
Nidderdale (RR)	-	300	13,795	(13,495)
Ock Arable (III) WEIF (RR)	-	39,903	30,489	9,414
Policy Officer (RR)	-	-	3,698	(3,698)
Ponderful H2020 (RR)	168,264	(95,000)	66,405	6,859
River Irfon (RR)	-	31,237	31,237	-
Saving Oxford Wetland Wildlife (RR)	331,414	41,430	39,124	33,720
Harcourt Hill, Oxfordshire Fens, TOE2 (RR)	-	4,384	7,132	(2,748)
WEG Hatchett (RR)	-	-	354	(354)
Mid Thame Development Funding (RTCT)				
- Manor Farm	-	9,450	189	9,261
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>263,112</b>	<b>316,068</b>	<b>512,623</b>	<b>66,556</b>

Restricted funds consist of grants which have been made to Freshwater Habitats Trust which have yet to be fully completed and span over the year end.

Please see the 'Our activities' section of the Trustees' Annual Report for descriptions and purposes of the restricted funds.

# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 17. Analysis of funds (continued) – prior year

	At 1st April 2021 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	At 31st March 2022 £
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>				
eDNA Network Rail (Southern)	-	609	609	-
EWB – North Bucks FRP (UU)	-	139,846	121,335	18,511
Grove, Childrey & Lower Ock (UU)	-	12,551	11,424	1,127
Leck Catchment NFM	-	12,852	17,105	(4,253)
Wootton Brook (EA Anglian)	-	53,025	30,616	22,409
NECA	2,849	11,725	2,814	11,760
NSP Berks/Bucks e DNA	-	21,469	16,856	4,613
NSP Hampshire e DNA	-	16,192	13,739	2,453
NSP Network Rail East	-	137,614	123,276	14,338
NSP South Midlands e DNA	-	53,434	41,369	12,065
Pondnet e DNA	4,015	21,886	21,886	4,015
Pitsford	-	130,475	97,167	33,308
NE Agri Ponds	-	40,056	38,035	2,021
WFF 21-25 (UU)	-	65,012	26,080	38,932
Newt Conservation Monitoring	-	20,017	20,034	(17)
Newt Conservation Practical Projects	-	135,863	130,566	5,297
Newt Conservation Admin	-	93,991	77,693	16,298
Publications	-	4,044	-	4,044
Thames Water Hinksey	-	-	1,218	(1,218)
Misc contracts	6,205	18,589	31,474	(6,680)
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>13,069</b>	<b>989,250</b>	<b>823,296</b>	<b>179,023</b>
 Core	 314,507	 17,495	 (54,408)	 386,410
<b>Total unrestricted funds + core</b>	<b>327,576</b>	<b>1,006,745</b>	<b>768,888</b>	<b>565,433</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>590,687</b>	<b>1,322,813</b>	<b>1,281,511</b>	<b>631,989</b>

Please see the 'Our activities' section of the Trustees' Annual Report for descriptions and purposes of the unrestricted funds.

## Freshwater Habitats Trust

### Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

#### 18. Analysis of net assets by funds

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Year to 31st March 2023</b>			
Fixed assets	13,924	-	13,924
Current assets	997,762	490,874	1,488,636
Current liabilities	(308,617)	(159,741)	(468,358)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets	703,069	331,133	1,034,202
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>Year to 31st March 2022</b>			
Fixed assets	2,745	-	2,745
Current assets	1,390,887	66,556	1,457,443
Current liabilities	(828,199)	-	(828,199)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net assets	565,443	66,556	631,989
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

#### 19. Related parties transactions

The CEO of the charity is one of the Directors of the Newt Conservation Partnership (NCP), a community benefit society, in an individual capacity. The CEO of NCP is one of the charity's technical directors and is seconded from the charity. The charity seconded staff to NCP and charges for staff time as well as a contribution towards overheads for this. As a result this entity is a related party and the charity is a sub-contractor of NCP. During the year, charges of £484,675 (2022: £250,870) were made by the charity to NCP. Debtors include an amount of £73,522 (2022: £26,435) payable by NCP to the charity.

There were no other related party transactions during the period (2022: none).



# Freshwater Habitats Trust

## Notes to the Financial Statements (continued) for the year ended 31st March 2023

### 20. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £
<b>Income from:</b>			
Grants and donations	13,964	316,068	330,032
Investments	51	-	51
Charitable activities	992,730	-	992,730
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,006,745</b>	<b>316,068</b>	<b>1,322,813</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds	4,357	-	4,357
Charitable activities	764,531	512,623	1,277,154
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>768,888</b>	<b>512,263</b>	<b>1,277,154</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>237,857</b>	<b>(196,555)</b>	<b>1,281,511</b>
Transfers between funds	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>237,857</b>	<b>(196,555)</b>	<b>41,302</b>
<b>Fund balances at 1st April 2021</b>	<b>327,576</b>	<b>263,111</b>	<b>590,687</b>
<b>Fund balances at 31st March 2022</b>	<b>565,433</b>	<b>66,556</b>	<b>631,989</b>