

ESSEX FIELD CLUB ANNUAL REPORT for 2022-23

General Introduction and Administration

While the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic continued to have some impact on the Club's activities this year, things were gradually opened up. The Natural History Show did not take place, but we held the Exhibition and Social in December. Council met 5 times in person. The EFC Spring Meeting and AGM went ahead on 14th March 2022 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre. Understanding that some members might still be wary of meeting in person, the Club's Annual Report, Accounts, Independent Examiner's Report and a voting form were sent to all members, by email or post, in early March. The AGM was attended by 33 people, and another 12 who were unable to attend on the day voted beforehand. Talks by Simon Taylor (the footpaths, bridleways and byways of Essex, their rules, monitoring and enforcement) and Yvonne Couch (My Menagerie: rearing shieldbugs and ladybirds) were enjoyed by all.

New Ordinary members of Council (and thus Trustees) were John Cooke and Rob Smith; many thanks to Jill Ireland and John Skinner, who stepped down this year.

The Essex Moth Group held their annual meeting in February 2023 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre.

Since September 2021, when the Essex Wildlife Trust decided to stop acting as a biological records centre, Essex Field Club/ Essex Recorders partnership have by default become the single biological and geological records centre for Essex.

Membership

As of 16/2/23 we have 296 members (18 Family, 9 Institutions, 3 Honorary), of which 249 have paid.

Meetings

Yvonne Couch led a field course on Ladybirds and Shieldbugs; Neil Harvey planned a field course on Plant Galls and Leaf Mines but this was cancelled due to lack of interest.

There were 13 general field meetings at EWT Cranham Marsh, Middlewick Ranges Local Wildlife Site, Lofts Farm, Laindon Common and New Hall Farm, 4 Fungi group meetings at Norsey Wood, Swan, Cygnet and Hankins Woods, Tiptree Heath and Fryerning Churchyard, and 4 moth trapping meetings took place in association with Colchester Natural History Society.

Green Centre Activities

After the closure of the Green Centre to the public from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the decision was made to open the Club's activities and displays to the public on the first Saturday of the month, starting from August 2022. The Office and Archive have been in regular use on Wednesdays by some Council members, and have been available for visits on a pre-booked basis.

Due to the main meeting rooms at the Green Centre being occupied by Twizzletops day nursery since 2020, we have had less space for our larger meetings, but on December 3rd 2022, we successfully held the Club's Exhibition and Social in the Green Centre, for the first

time since 2019. This was very popular, with 23 exhibitors and over 90 persons attending. Refreshments were provided, Essex Naturalists were given to members, there were 2 new memberships, and a number of people renewed their membership.

Publications

Essex Naturalist

The 2021/2022 Essex Naturalist comprised 280 pages with 32 articles and all colour illustrations. An excellent effort by editor Peter Harvey and the Editorial Team.

The EFC Newsletter

There were the usual 3 issues of the Newsletter, with colour illustrations and many interesting articles as well as wildlife updates, reports of some meetings that had taken place, and listings of forthcoming meetings. Many thanks to editor Peter Harvey and everyone who contributed articles.

Collections

Marion Cuming, widow of the late Nigel Cuming, offered his extensive collection of beetles and other invertebrates to the Club and in April 2022, with help from Adrian Knowles, it was transferred to the Green Centre. Yvonne Couch offered to catalogue the Hemiptera and is making good progress. Adrian has offered to catalogue the beetles and arrangements for this are in hand.

Beverley Pyner has donated Tim's bryophyte collection to the Club and Ken Adams arranged for its collection and delivered it to the Green Centre.

Graham Ekins is continuing his work in reviewing and cataloguing the avian taxidermy collection.

John Skinner continues to visit from time to time, continuing his programme of photographing the lichens.

In August an infestation of *Anthrenus* (carpet beetles) was discovered in some of the tropical invertebrate drawers. These drawers and surrounding drawers containing vulnerable material were frozen and the affected material is being cleaned up. During this process it was discovered that some of the wooden drawer bases had shrunk producing a gap between the base and side and this is the likely mode of entry for the beetles. These gaps have been sealed.

Among the visitors welcomed to view the collections and library were: Josh Childs, Basildon Council Biodiversity Officer; Helena Taylor, Co-ordinator for Essex Local Nature Partnership; Jes Dagley and Mark Iley, Essex Wildlife Trust.

Library and Archives

Dr. Roger Hewitt continued to use the library archive on a regular basis, producing articles for publications. The Green Centre has been open to the public, on the first Saturday of each month, since August. Our e-mail inquiry service has continued uninterrupted. Biographical queries were answered, and images supplied for research publication and display. Often researchers follow up online queries with a visit. We acted as a clearing house for book donations from several individuals. Some were added to our library while others were made available, for a donation, to members and guests at our December Exhibition and Social.

Maps, images and manuscripts were kindly donated to our library and archive. David Bain most kindly arranged for the transfer of photographs, manuscripts etc. from the collection of the late Mike Daniels. These have now been sorted and made available to enquirers. Jeff Saward kindly went through Graham Ward's extensive archive of Essex Rock and Mineral Society newsletters etc. Again, this is now available to researchers. Details of exchange journals and book reviews were submitted for publication in our newsletter and posted on our Facebook group council. Images from our archive including photographs, lantern slides and glass negatives have been shared on Facebook.

Website

At the end of January 2023 our Records database table contained 2,949,425 records for 14,603 species in a very wide variety of taxonomic groups. The maps on the Species Account pages are automatically updated with data uploaded to the database and these pages currently provide ecological and phenological information for 9,262 species from over 1,985,892 records. Logged-on County Recorders can add and update text on these pages and provide recorders with access to the details of the records behind the dots on the maps. Sawfly data were provided for a national sawfly conservation status review, the first phase of which has now been published. Aculeate Hymenoptera data has also been provided to BWARS (Bees, Wasps & Ants Recording Society) for a national status review.

Datasearch System

There are now 5,247,149 records for 15,109 species in database tables on our website, all for use by the on-line Datasearch System, which continues to provide comprehensive coverage of county records as an Essex Local Record Centre Service. As well as species data, we also provide information on sites relevant to nature conservation contained in national datasets, together with information on geological sites which are of county and local importance. We also now provide maps in the pdf report showing the Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) relevant to a search area and the corresponding LoWS citations. The LoWS data does not include Potential LoWS (sites identified as likely to qualify as a LoWS, but for which there was insufficient information available to confirm this at the time the LoWS review was undertaken) although this will soon be possible when the GIS polygon data and citations become available.

Since our Datasearch System is now the only source of desk study information to companies and ecological consultancies to support planning applications in the county, use of the system has increased substantially, and we had to register for VAT in mid February 2022. We have also provided a number of free datasearches to bodies such as Basildon Parks & Countryside Service, Buglife, Danbury Ridge Living Landscape Group, English Heritage Trust, Essex County Council country parks, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and Natural England.

The Essex Recorders partnership

Our data partners have provided data updates. Commercial use of the Datasearch System continues to provide income, all of which is used to support the Club, our partner county data-providing organisations and made available for grant applications which support recording in the county.

Following the Covid-19 lockdown period Steering Group meetings restarted in April and November 2022. At the autumn meeting a grant application from the Essex Bat Group for a Motus Wildlife Tracking System Project was unanimously approved. The Steering Group also approved a change to a pay-by-card at time of order only system, removing the substantial work needed to chase overdue and very overdue proforma invoices. This change took place on 1st December 2022, after several weeks warning.

The Essex Wildlife Trust and Place Services were invited to the Essex Recorders partnership Steering Group meeting held on 12 November where the background to the emerging Essex Local Nature Partnership (LNP) was explained and our involvement discussed. The LNP would revive a Local Sites Partnership to enable new Local Wildlife and Local Geology Sites to be ratified, and a key importance of the strategy would be in co-ordinating resources in the county, acting as a one-stop for effort and advice. Essex only has a year in which to submit a fully-consulted Plan, in order to obtain government approval. There will be a meeting in spring 2023 to look at the draft opportunities map for the county.

Planning

Even with our data from only a few visits in 2021, Natural England's Chief Scientist Directorate invertebrate specialist had stated the Local Wildlife Site **Middlewick Ranges** has merit in being considered as an extension of the existing SSSI. We have consistently made clear that the site warrants a Site of Special Scientific Interest designation and our very limited field meeting surveys have now recorded over 1,000 invertebrate species and demonstrated seven invertebrate Species Assemblages in favourable SSSI condition, yet astonishingly the examination process by the Inspectorate of the Colchester Borough Council Local Plan did not find any reason to exclude the site from its housing allocation.

Publicity

Essex Life Magazine

The Club continues to have articles published in Essex Life magazine. This option, which emerged in 2021, has settled on a 2-page spread format featuring a primary image with several smaller ones and around 500 words of text. Monthly submissions were made, although twice they were carried over to the following issue, the Editor citing lack of space. Topics in 2022 were: Winter Birds (Graham Ekins); Tree ID in Winter (Yvonne Couch); Slugs (Simon Taylor); Hoverflies (Roger Payne); My local patch – North Road burial ground, Westcliff (Roger Payne); Inside the Essex Field Club (Bill George); Grasshoppers and Bush Crickets (Yvonne Couch); Hadleigh Great Wood (Roger Payne); Nocturnal invertebrates (Daniel Blyton); and Plant Galls (Yvonne Couch). Essex Wildlife Trust have also now recommenced submissions.

Online Social Media

Facebook

The Club's Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/essexfieldclub>) continues to grow, now having 908 members, though most are not subscribing members of the Essex Field Club. Our Facebook page has 250 followers and 209 likes. Although it appears not as popular as the group, the page is set up for information purposes only and not designed to be interactive, unlike the group.

Twitter

The Club's Twitter account (@EssexFieldClub) has 414 followers, and is following 42

accounts. It is mainly used to publicise Club events and to share interesting wildlife tweets.

Finance

In 2022 the financial status of the Essex Field Club and Essex Recorders partnership became stronger with a large increase in income due to a large increase in Datasearch Reports and a smaller increase in expenditure..

Datasearch reports, our main income source, increased dramatically over 2022. There was a small increase in subscriptions consistent with the Club's stable membership. The Club is very grateful for all donations. Interest from bank accounts showed an apparent decline over the year owing, mainly, to a fixed term deposit account not reporting a balance until the end of term in 2023.

Several overheads showed small increases in line with general inflation but some changed significantly. We required extra help from our accountants to cope with VAT returns and this has led to increased legal and professional costs. Expenditure on room hire and catering increased, reflecting a return to real face to face meetings in 2022. Mapmate and Website costs increased because of significant software development needs. Postal disruption in December delayed important payments in particular those to the printer for the Essex Naturalist. Costs associated with the Green Centre were lower in 2022 owing to our ability to reclaim the VAT component of rent and broad band expenditure and also because the Club received some COVID rates relief. *Sundry* expenditure items were the purchase of six new display cabinets and a notice board.

Essex Recorders partnership funds are included in the accounts. These are income from data provision restricted for use to support the partnership. £10,000 is treated as partnership reserve, to support the data providers of the partnership and to make £25,000.00 available to provide grants for projects which support recording in the county. These are Restricted Funds in the accounts.

This Annual Report has been prepared with due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

ESSEX FIELD CLUB
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Income		31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Subscriptions	4,726.48	4,703.21	
Publications and postage	213.62	166.22	
Interest receivable	1,881.80	3,445.83	
Donations	1,999.83	2,424.40	
Data provision	120,227.50	73,975.68	
129,049.23		84,715.34	
Overheads			
Essex Naturalist	7,299.88	8,094.12	
Newsletters	4,553.78	3,334.64	
Postage and telephone	117.88	82.15	
Hire of halls	395.05	65.35	
Insurance	543.48	518.81	
Stationery and printing	43.93	34.90	
Accountancy Fees	1,500.00	1,620.00	
Legal and professional costs	700.00	-	
Mapmate	1,789.00	184.50	
Website	1,437.29	977.31	
Sundry	4,813.00	9,000.00	
EFC Centre	4,044.95	6,623.94	
Essex Recorders' partnership	38,598.44	34,829.50	
Catering	294.25	-	
66,130.93		65,365.22	
Surplus / Loss for year			
	62,918.30	19,350.12	
366,575.54		347,225.42	
Retained surplus b/wd			
	429,493.84	366,575.54	
Retained surplus c/wd			

ESSEX FIELD CLUB
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022
BALANCE SHEET

Current Assets	
Lloyds Term investment	31,000.00
Lloyds Business investment account	24,949.82
Lloyds Internet account	202,964.93
Lloyds Treasurer's account	(19,512.50)
Lloyds 32 day notice account	30,247.97
Cambridge & Counties Bank 2 yr	83,227.53
Hampshire Trust Bank 3 year	-
Hampshire Trust Bank 2 year	85,112.99
Cash	1.00
	30,678.87
	114,858.57
	1,635.15
	30,149.62
	83,227.53
	83,357.68
	-
	85,112.99
	1.00
	437,991.74
	368,845.44

Current liabilities	
Accruals	1,620.00
VAT	6,527.90
	1,920.00
	8,147.90
	1,920.00

Net assets	429,843.84	366,925.44
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Financed by capital funds		
Income and expenditure account	429,493.84	366,575.44
Museum fund	350.00	350.00
	429,843.84	366,925.44

Notes

Sundry payments for 2022 were for new display cabinets and notice board
Some funds of the Club are restricted
Income from Data Searches supports and funds projects of the Essex Recorders partnership

Treasurer R. Parsons
President W. George



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Essex Field Club

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2022

Charity no
(if any)

1113963

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2022**.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

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

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

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

02/03/2023

Name:

Mr Daniel Bradford

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

MAAT - Association of Accounting Technicians

Address:

36 Southernhay, Basildon, Essex SS14 1ET

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Restricted funds committed in 2022 EFC accounts:

£86,902.89

(£25,951.45 + £25,951.44 to be paid as 50% partner splits, £10,000 ERp core, £25,000.00 for grant applications)

2021 £71,797.91

2022 £86,902.89