

## **Annual Report of Council for 2023-24**

### **General Introduction and Administration**

The EFC Spring Meeting and AGM was held on 25th March 2023 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre, and was attended by 33 members and 4 guests. New Ordinary members of Council (and thus Trustees) were Marc Outten and Jim Silverstone; James Lumbard took on the role of Programme Secretary. Members voted to accept the proposal by Council that our Rules be amended to allow Council meetings, Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings to be held in person, online, by telephone, or on a hybrid basis.

A talk by Sarah Brockless about the introduction of Eurasian Beavers *Castor fiber* at the Spains Hall Estate, their effects on biodiversity and on reducing flooding in nearby Finchingfield was enjoyed by all, and led to a lively discussion.

The Exhibition and Social was held in December 2023 at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park. Council met 4 times in person and once via Zoom.

The Essex Moth Group held their annual meeting in February 2024 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre.

Our current treasurer, Richard Parsons, will be retiring at the 2024 AGM; while we did find someone who it was hoped would replace Richard, this fell through in February 2024 and we expect to be without a treasurer at the 2024 AGM.

Essex Field Club/ Essex Recorders partnership continued to act as the single biological and geological records centre for Essex.

It has been recommended that the charitable status of the Essex Field Club should change from an Unincorporated Association Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation; this is being discussed and is ongoing.

### **Membership**

As of February 2024 we have 276 members, 223 of whom have paid.

### **Meetings**

Ken Adams led a moss, liverwort and fern survey with I.D. tuition in April at Norsey Wood. Yvonne Couch led a Ladybirds and Shieldbugs Field Course at RSPB Rainham Marshes in May. There were 12 general field meetings, at Middlewick Ranges, Ramsey Marsh, Wallasea Island and the Chelmer and Blackwater Nature Reserve in Maldon; 2 moth trapping events were organised jointly by the Essex Moth Group and Colchester Natural History Society; the Essex Fungi group held meetings at Norsey Wood, Tiptree Heath, woods around Stock, Mill Meadows and Galleywood Common, but as it was a poor year for fungi, 2 other fungi meetings were cancelled.

### **Green Centre Activities**

The Club's activity area and displays were open to the public on the first Saturday of each month. The Office and Archive were in regular use on Wednesdays by some Council members, and were available for visits on a pre-booked basis.

Using the foyer, display areas and part of the Carstairs Room (thanks to Twizzletops day nursery for access), we held the Exhibition and Social at the Green Centre on 2nd December 2023, with 18 exhibitors and over 60 persons attending. Refreshments were provided, 57

Essex Naturalists were given to members, thus saving postage, there was 1 new membership, and 6 people renewed their membership.

## **Publications**

### **Essex Naturalist**

The 2022/2023 Essex Naturalist comprised 220 pages with 24 articles and all colour illustrations. An excellent effort by editor Peter Harvey and the Editorial Team.

Many Essex Naturalists can now be downloaded by paid-up members from our website, as well as the existing access to older issues through the searchable archive.

### **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. Yvonne Couch took over from Peter Harvey as editor from the January 2024 issue. Peter had been editor for many years and is responsible for making it the excellent publication it is today.

Our latest Newsletters can now be downloaded from the website by paid-up members, as well as the existing access to older issues through the searchable archive.

## **Collections**

Graham Ekins has completed cataloguing and reviewing the avian taxidermy and is writing a report. Nigel Cuming collection: Yvonne Couch has completed her work on the Heteroptera and is making good progress on the Homoptera. Adrian Knowles is continuing to work on the Coleoptera and other groups as time permits.

Jane Gregory, sister of the late Martin Gregory, has been very helpful in sorting out and making available Martin's natural history collections and records. These are mostly of fungi and myxomycetes. We have also been given two decent microscopes and other equipment of use to the Club.

The family of the late David Turner has donated a number of London Clay fossils collected by David. Most are from Roxwell gravel pit.

Among the visitors we have welcomed to look around the collections and library are Frank Street and his team who manage the nature reserves and country parks in Basildon District; Basildon Golf Course Biodiversity Group; and Essex Wildlife Trust Conservation Evidence Team.

Thanks are due to all who have worked on the collections over the past year.

## **Library and Archives**

Our library and archive, held at The Green Centre, has been open to the public on the first Saturday of each month and, by appointment, on a Wednesday. Email enquiries are answered, and articles and images supplied as requested for research, publication, and display. Often researchers follow up online queries with a visit. Guided tours of the library, archive and collections are popular and two were organised for the Annual Exhibition and Social. 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 March AGM and December Exhibition and Social. Books, journals, maps, images and

manuscripts were added to our library and archive. Jane Gregory very kindly facilitated a major donation of books, manuscripts and ephemera from the collection of her late brother Martin Gregory. Work has continued on sorting out the recently donated collections of Mike Daniels and Graham Ward. Images from our archive including photographs, prints, lantern slides and glass negatives have been shared on Facebook and added to our website. Dr. Roger Hewitt continued to use the library and archive on a weekly basis, producing articles for publications. Details of exchange journals and book reviews were submitted for publication in our newsletter and posted on our Facebook group.

### **Datasearch System**

There are now 5,398,438 records for 15,308 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. The datasearch reports also include maps with the Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) relevant to a search area and the corresponding searchable LoWS citations. Potential Local Wildlife Sites will be provided when all the GIS polygon data and citations become available. With Council's agreement MapMate Ltd undertook work to substantially improve the provision of records in complex search areas.

A free Wethersfield Airfield datasearch report was provided for the local group fighting Government plans for the airfield and on request a report on the Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land Priority Habitat status of the Airfield based on three survey visits to the site in 2011 was also provided. We also provided a number of other free datasearches such as North Thames Estuary species data for Natural England and for three country parks in Havering.

Sawfly data was provided for a Phase 1 and 2 sawfly national status review, and aculeate Hymenoptera (bees, wasps and ants) data were provided to BWARS (Bees, Wasps & Ants Society) for a national status review. Macro-moth data up to and including 2022 was provided for a new Larger Moths of the London Area.

Water Vole and American Mink records for the overlap of 10km buffer of the GiGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London) and the Essex Field Club region were provided to GiGL for a London Water Vole Recovery Programme project looking to join up Water Vole conservation and American Mink control efforts across London.

Stag beetle records for the Parishes of Wormingford, Little Horkesley, Great Horkesley, Boxted, Langham, Dedham, Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley and Bradfield were provided to Suffolk Wildlife Trust to enable them to target the creation of suitable deadwood habitat to support this species in the Stour Valley.

### **Website**

At the end of January 2024 our Records database table contained 3,051,930 records for 14,727 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 9,317 species from over 2,068,709 records. Logged-on County Recorders can add and update text for these species and provide recorders with access to the details of the records behind the dots on the maps. Thanks to

recorders who have submitted fish records and Johnnie Johnson, our county recorder for fish, we now have species pages and maps for freshwater fish on the website using these initial available records.

Pages were added to the website to provide Bluelands Quarry “Purfleet on Thames” factsheets that can also be downloaded and also the QR code for this resource to be used on the notice board at Bluelands Quarry on the south side of the A1306 near the M25 roundabout.

### **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 to be made available for grant applications which support recording in the county.

At the spring Steering Group meeting two grant applications were approved. One was for funding to the Colchester Natural History Society towards the publication of their *Nature In North East Essex* journal. The other was to the Chelmer Blackwater Reserve Community Interest Company for mammal recording on the newly created Chelmer Blackwater Reserve. The project intends to involve the local community with observing and recording the wildlife on the Reserve and so encourage them to do the same in the wider environment.

The Essex Wildlife Trust and Place Services were invited to the Essex Recorders partnership Steering Group meetings held on 15 April and 4 November 2023 when various matters were discussed including the emerging Essex Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

### **Essex Local Nature Partnership**

Invertebrate assemblage quality data were provided to the Essex County Council in February 2023 for every monad (1km square) in the county to help inform the Local Nature Recovery Strategy opportunity map, as part of our contribution to the developing Essex Local Nature Partnership.

Two meetings of the revived Local Sites Partnership were held in September and November 2023, when recent reviews of Local Wildlife Sites in Uttlesford and Thurrock were ratified, with Maldon next on the agenda.

Our county recorders responded to a late call for input to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy requesting their expertise and advice to inform the species long list (and therefore the priorities list) for Essex. This is to help determine where the most appropriate spaces are for nature recovery in the county. We also provided county data for all species with relevant national conservation, rarity and Essex Red Data List status to inform the emerging Long List. A follow-up meeting in January explored this complex issue in more depth.

### **Planning**

When time and resources allow, we continue to provide input to planning applications in the county affecting sites of high nature conservation importance. Efforts to save the Middlewick Ranges Local Wildlife Site after its remarkable adoption by Colchester City Council in their Local Plan for housing development despite its well-known very high nature conservation value continue. Field meetings in 2023 have added to the evidence for its SSSI status and there has been lots of activity in response to a Colchester City Council Green Network and Waterways consultation, providing an opportunity to try and get Colchester City Council to remove Middlewick Ranges from the Local Plan for development and make the wider area a country park / nature reserve. These concerted efforts have been down to the Save Middlewick group, Essex

Ecology, Essex Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Colchester Natural History Society, Buglife, the eminent national expert Steven Falk and the Club.

## **Publicity**

### **Essex Life Magazine**

The Club continued to have articles published in Essex Life magazine until May 2023, but have now stopped doing so.

## **Online Social Media**

### **Facebook**

The Club's Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/essexfieldclub>) continues to grow, now having over 1,100 members, though most are not subscribing members of the Essex Field Club. Our Facebook page has 277 followers. 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 404 followers, and is following 42 accounts. It is mainly used to publicise Club events and to share interesting wildlife tweets.

## **Finance**

In 2023 the financial status of the Essex Field Club remained strong with income stable and a small decrease in expenditure.

Datasearch reports, still very much our main income source, declined slightly, not significantly, over 2023. There was a small decrease in subscription income more than balanced by an increase in donations, for which the Club is grateful. Interest on savings showed a marked rise in 2023.

Overall, overheads decreased in 2023. Essex Naturalist and Newsletter costs reflected the number of issues included in the year and the number of pages. Room hire fell in 2023, apparently because winter meetings were paid for in Dec 22 and Jan 24. Again, in 2023, we required extra help from our accountants. Mapmate and Website costs went down because no extra development expenses were incurred. *Sundry* expenditure items were the transfer of Nigel Cumings collection to the Green Centre and AGM speaker's fee.

Essex Recorders' partnership payments are included in the accounts, slightly higher in 2023 than in 2022. This is income from data provision restricted for use to support the partnership. £10,000 is treated as partnership reserve and other funds are used to support the data providers of the partnership while some is available to provide grants for projects which support recording in the county.

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

|   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>ESSEX FIELD CLUB</b>                 |                   |                   |
| <b>YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023</b>    |                   |                   |
| <b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</b> |                   |                   |
|   | <b>31/12/2023</b> | <b>31/12/2022</b> |
| <b>Income</b>                           |                   |                   |
| Subscriptions                           | 4,169.33          | 4,726.48          |
| Publications and postage                | 215.59            | 213.62            |
| Interest receivable                     | 3,580.46          | 1,881.80          |
| Donations                               | 2,444.27          | 1,999.83          |
| Data provision                          | 117,882.61        | 120,227.50        |
|   | <b>128,292.26</b> | <b>129,049.23</b> |
| <b>Overheads</b>                        |                   |                   |
| Essex Naturalist                        | 6,113.84          | 7,299.88          |
| Newsletters                             | 1,953.05          | 4,553.78          |
| Postage and telephone                   | 79.24             | 161.81            |
| Hire of halls                           | 258.00            | 395.05            |
| Insurance                               | 514.68            | 543.48            |
| Accountancy Fees                        | 1,725.00          | 1,500.00          |
| Legal and professional costs            | 1,400.00          | 700.00            |
| Mapmate                                 | 189.00            | 1,789.00          |
| Website                                 | 989.17            | 1,437.29          |
| Sundry                                  | 1,392.88          | 4,813.00          |
| EFC Centre                              | 3,777.58          | 4,044.95          |
| Essex Recorders partnership             | 39,989.06         | 38,598.44         |
| Catering                                | 843.13            | 294.25            |
|   | <b>59,224.63</b>  | <b>66,130.93</b>  |
| <b>Surplus / (Loss) for year</b>        | <b>69,067.63</b>  | <b>62,918.30</b>  |
| <b>Retained surplus bfwd</b>            | <b>429,493.84</b> | <b>366,575.54</b> |
| <b>Retained surplus cfwd</b>            | <b>498,561.47</b> | <b>429,493.84</b> |

**ESSEX FIELD CLUB****YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023****BALANCE SHEET****Current Assets**

|                                    |            |            |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Lloyds Term investment             | 31,615.33  | 31,000.00  |
| Lloyds Business investment account | 25,169.36  | 24,949.82  |
| Lloyds Internet account            | 249,166.69 | 184,665.05 |
| Lloyds Treasurer's account         | 1,735.34   | (1,212.62) |
| Lloyds 32 day notice account       | 30,899.87  | 30,247.97  |
| Cambridge & Counties Bank 2 yr     | 85,321.22  | 83,227.53  |
| Hampshire Trust Bank 2 year        | 85,112.99  | 85,112.99  |
| Cash                               | 1.00       | 1.00       |

**509,021.80 437,991.74****Current liabilities**

|          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Accruals | 1,725.00 | 1,620.00 |
| VAT      | 8,385.33 | 6,527.90 |

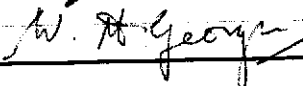
**10,110.33 8,147.90****Net assets****498,911.47 429,843.84****Financed by capital funds**

|                                |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Income and expenditure account | 498,561.47        | 429,493.84        |
| Museum fund                    | 350.00            | 350.00            |
|                                | <b>498,911.47</b> | <b>429,843.84</b> |

**Notes**

Some funds of the Club are restricted

Income from Data Searches supports and funds projects of the Essex Recorders partnership

 R.Parsons W.George



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

Essex Field Club

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1113963

Set out on pages

1-2

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I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2023**.

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:

*D Bradford*

Date:

11/03/2024

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 2023 EFC accounts:

**£92,503.81**

(£28,751.91 + £28,751.90 to be paid as 50% partner splits, £10,000 ERp core, £25,000.00 for grant applications)

2022 £86,902.89

2023 £92,503.81