

Annual Report of Council for 2025-26

General Introduction and Administration

The EFC Spring Meeting and AGM was held on 22nd March 2025 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre, Pitsea, and was attended by 36 members and 5 guests. Simon Taylor was re-elected as President, Peter Harvey as Vice-President and Treasurer, Yvonne Couch as General Secretary, Bill George as Librarian and Archivist, Martin Heywood as Collections and Library Officer, Michael Pannell as Membership Secretary, Fiona Hutchings as Publicity Officer, Rob Smith as Programme Secretary, and Marc Outten, John Cooke, Jim Silverstone and Simon Wood as Ordinary members of Council. Graham Ekins stood down as an Ordinary Member of Council; Johnnie Johnson and Christopher Harris were elected as new Ordinary Members of Council. The Editorial Representative (Peter Harvey) and Editorial Team were also re-elected.

During the AGM members agreed to change the charitable structure of the Club from an Unincorporated Association to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and Simon Taylor agreed to pursue this.

The AGM was accompanied by talks from Graham Ekins on establishing a wildflower lawn at his home in Boreham, and from John Buchanan about the new Chelmer and Blackwater Nature Reserve in the centre of Maldon.

The annual Exhibition and Social was held at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park on 6 December, attended by 27 exhibitors and 105 people overall.

Council met 5 times, all via Zoom; at the February 2026 meeting the decision to hold all future meetings via Zoom was confirmed.

The Essex Moth Group held their annual meeting on 28 February 2026 in the Cordite Room of the Wat Tyler Centre.

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

Membership

We currently have 192 paid-up memberships for 2026, made up of 162 Ordinary members, 3 Honorary members, 2 Institutional members, and 13 Family memberships. Including members who have not yet renewed from last year, the total membership recorded stands at 243.

Sadly, we lost a number of members during the past year, and at present we are not recruiting new members as quickly as we are losing them. Increasing membership therefore remains an important priority for the coming year

Meetings

General field meetings were held at Little Haven, Thundersley; Danbury Common; Heards Farm, Shenfield; Foxearth Meadows Nature Reserve on the river Stour; Coppins Farm, Alphamstone; Stow Maries Airfield; Tyler's Wood, Upminster; Ellis Green, Wimbish; and Hazeleigh Woods. Each site was visited 2-4 times between May and October 2025; in 3 cases in July the forecasted high temperature led to the meetings starting and finishing earlier.

The Fungus group held meetings in October and November at Hales Wood, Saffron Walden; Carver Airfield, Debden; RHS Hyde Hall; Swan and Cygnet Woods, Stock; Sandylay EWT, Great Leighs; Tiptree Heath; Mill Meadows, Billericay; EWT Phyllis Currie; Norsey Wood; and in a waxcap special at Fryerning Churchyard and Chelmsford Crematorium.

The Essex Moth Group held group mothing meetings between May and September at Aubrey Buxton EWT; Carver Airfield, Debden; Fingringhoe Wick; Tiptree Heath; Cymbeline Meadows. Colchester; Cudmore Grove Mersea; Warley Place; and Saffron Walden Museum.

Green Centre Activities

The Club's activity area and displays were open to the public on the first Saturday of each month. The office, collections 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) the Exhibition and Social was held at the Green Centre on Saturday 6 December 2025, with at least 105 persons attending. There were 3 tours of the collections and archives (about 18 people took part). Refreshments were provided, 50 Essex Naturalists were given to members, thus saving postage costs, there were 4 new members, 9 membership renewals, and donations (books, refreshments etc) totalled £278.50.

Publications

Essex Naturalist

The 2024/25 Essex Naturalist comprised 208 pages, with 26 articles in full colour illustrations. An excellent effort by editor Peter Harvey and the Editorial Team. Modern 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, all put together by the editor Yvonne Couch. Our latest Newsletters can be downloaded from the website by paid-up members, as well as the existing access to older issues through the searchable archive.

Collections

Alan Harman has donated some items to the Club including a Cook Troughton and Simms microscope, slide storage boxes and entomological storage boxes. Bob Cowlin has donated a large number of Essex badger records, mostly made between 1960 and 1990 and consisting of detailed sett records on Mammal Society recording forms, OS maps marked up with sett locations and a card index of setts. Yvonne Couch has catalogued the Club Hemiptera collection and the spreadsheet is available on the Club website. She has also catalogued the plant galls, fungal spore prints and is currently cataloguing the Carter Herbarium. Adrian Knowles continues to catalogue the Coleoptera in the Nigel Cuming Collection and has recently forwarded a third batch of records. He has now dealt with approximately 6000 specimens and estimates that he is about a third of the way through the task. At the newly opened Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre, Ian and Ros Mercer have set up a display telling the geological history of Purfleet. With the help of Bill George they have incorporated a number of specimens from the EFC collections which were discovered in or near Purfleet and these are now on long-term loan to the Centre. For some time there has been an issue with the heating in the archive resulting in the temperature being a few degrees warmer than its set value and causing the humidity to be too low. This has recently been fixed and the humidity is rising to a more acceptable value. Thanks are due to all those mentioned above for their varied contributions to the collections in the past year.

Library and Archives

Our library and archive, held at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea has been open to the public on the first Saturday of each month and, by appointment, on a Wednesday. Email enquiries have been 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 three were organised for the Annual Exhibition and Social. We continue to act as a clearing house for book donations. Some were added to our library while others were made available, for a donation, to members and guests every Saturday and also at our AGM and Exhibition and Social. Books, journals, maps, images and manuscripts were added to our library and archive. A large number of images from our archive including photographs, prints, lantern slides and glass negatives continue to be shared on Facebook and added to our website. Dr. Roger Hewitt continued to use the library archive on a weekly basis producing articles for publications. Details of exchange journals and other library and archive information were regularly posted on our Facebook group.

Datasearch System

At the end of January 2026 there were 6,951,038 records for 22,093 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 Local Wildlife Site and Local Geology Site information (sites ratified as qualifying to be at least of county importance). The datasearch reports include the searchable citations and also maps with the Local Wildlife and Geology Sites relevant to a wider search area. Potential Local Wildlife Sites are provided where the GIS polygon data and citations are available.

After unanimous agreement at the Autumn 2025 Essex Recorders partnership Steering Group meeting, the prices for commercial desk study orders were raised by 10%, the first price increase for over 5 years.

Free datasearch outputs were provided to several local resident groups, the Essex Wildlife Trust for several of their reserves, the University of East London to help inform an Adaptability of Forb Plant Species in Seed Mixes in the UK project and to Natural England to update their GCN Opportunity layers.

The inclusion of GIS outputs as part of the datasearch service remains on our development wish list.

Website

At the end of January 2026 our Records database table contained over 3,400,000 million records for 15,110 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 provide ecological and phenological information for 9,778 species from over 2,493,492 records and now also include the mammal data held by the Club and Slime Moulds. Logged-on members can now access their own records in the database through their My Stuff page and the My Records link. They can also download a species report pdf from the species account pages. Active recorders who submit their records can be given access to the details of the records behind the dots on the maps by request.

County Recorders can add and update the text for species and they can also generate an atlas for different taxonomic groups based on the record data that has been recorded.

The new online record submission facility on our website allows direct submission of records. After being initially trialled by members of the Essex Moth Group, this was later extended to all taxonomic groups. Guidance is provided by Verification Difficulty grades and notes for different groups, mostly based on NBN difficulty grades and records are verified by specialists. The advantage of the system is that verified records become immediately available for use on the species pages and in the county database. Different field options could be developed for different groups in discussion with the county recorders and other specialists.

A county map of Local Wildlife and Geology Sites is currently being developed on the website.

MapMate

The Club uses MapMate and Schemes software created by Teknica Ltd to automatically upload new and edited records from our own MapMate database to the Records table on the website and these data are used to populate the species pages where the taxonomic group has enough digitised records to make these useful. Our Records database table is also the main source of our own records used in the datasearch outputs. MapMate and the Schemes software enable our recording and website to effectively manage the very large amount of species data we maintain and to allow any changes to records to be easily accommodated. For this reason, we are keen to encourage its continued use by recorders, and can offer copies to members who currently do not use MapMate for their recording. Although any new software takes time to get used to, the use of MapMate should be quite straightforward and we can also offer support and training course sessions at the Green Centre to cover more advanced use. Moving forward MapMate should continue to work until at least Microsoft support for Windows 11 comes to an end, and there is no reason why this would not continue afterwards. Les Evans-Hill has now made TaxonLibrary updates straightforward, by users replacing their TaxonLibrary.mdb with an updated one made available on the <https://mapmate.info> website with instructions. Updates to date include Lepidoptera, spider checklist updates, aculeate Hymenoptera, Diptera and Thysanoptera (Thrips). Updates for the Coleoptera, Auchenorrhyncha, Heteroptera, terrestrial and freshwater Mollusca, and Isopoda (water- and woodlice) are in hand. Links to the MapMate Facebook page and update page are provided on the EFC website home page.

Essex Recorders partnership

Our data partners provide data updates and 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 a grant application was approved for a project to use the reliable and non-invasive bioacoustic analysis method for identifying populations of water frogs (*Pelophylax* spp.) in Essex.

Planning

When time and resources allow, we continue to provide input to planning applications in the county affecting sites of high nature conservation importance.

Publicity

Online Social Media:

Facebook

The Club's Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/essexfieldclub>) continues to grow slowly, now having 1326 members (up from 1,200 in 2024). The Facebook page is set up for information purposes only and is not designed to be interactive, unlike the group. The page has a predominantly UK based following (96.6%).

Instagram

An Instagram account has been set up which has the capacity to share content from the Facebook Page (the accounts are linked). The account has 103 followers and is following 265. So far, there have been 29 posts made.

Twitter

The Club's Twitter account (@EssexFieldClub) is not active due to access issues. It has 370 followers and is following 37 accounts.

Real World Publicity

The Exhibition and Social took place on 6 December 2025, attended by 105 people (up from 100 in 2024). There were 27 stalls and exhibitors.

A talk about the Essex Field Club has been given to EWT Havering. The talk to Colchester Cage Bird Society was cancelled by CCBS.

Other events attended include Saffron Walden Museum's birthday party, EWT north networking meeting, Sustainable Uttlesford networking meeting, and the Witham BioBlitz (in conjunction with EWT).

Publicity surrounding the finding of a Forester moth at Alphamstone– BBC breakfast, BBC radio stations 4, 5, 6, BBC Essex, BBC website, the iPaper, Halstead Gazette, Anglia Ruskin Facebook (Writtle College), BBC Essex Facebook, Yahoo.com (news), Gateway 97.8 Radio, The Cool Down (webpage), You Tube channel Mark 1333, Anglia Ruskin LinkedIn, Butterfly Conservation LinkedIn. There were many shares on the various social media posts.

Finance

In 2025 the financial status of the Essex Field Club remained strong.

We are very grateful for the many donations we receive from members and for a legacy of £5,000 from the estate of the late Sidney Gordon Letch.

The Datasearch System is our main income source, and has shown a large increase after three previous years at a lower level, which had already increased substantially after the Essex Wildlife Trust joined the partnership.

Essex Recorders partnership payments are included in the accounts.

Council agreed to a £1,000 donation to the Essex Wildlife Trust Wrabness Appeal, which was made in a way to enable match funding to raise it to £2,000.

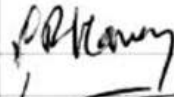

The income from data provision is restricted for use to support the partnership in line with the Terms of Reference agreed by the partners each year at the Spring Steering Group meeting. £10,000 is treated as partnership reserve and other funds are used to support the data providers of the partnership while some is available to provide grants for projects which

support recording in the county.

Interest on savings has shown a marked rise since the move of a large sum from the internet account into a 95-day Lloyds account paying significant interest in September 2024.

Our accountants continue to manage our quarterly VAT accounts, to prepare the year's accounts from the account information we provide and to ensure the accounts are independently examined.

<u>ESSEX FIELD CLUB</u>			
<u>YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025</u>			
<u>INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>			
		<u>31/12/2025</u>	<u>31/12/2024</u>
Income			
Subscriptions		3,952	3,806
Publications and postage		92	294
Interest receivable		10,721	13,285
Donations		6,172	2,947
Data provision		148,151	117,915
		169,088	138,247
Overheads			
Essex Naturalist		6,243	5,983
Newsletters		2,409	3,875
Postage and telephone		1,897	535
Hire of halls		364	149
Insurance		734	699
Accountancy fees		1,850	1,725
Legal and professional costs		1,400	2,563
Mapmate		-	189
Website		3,014	3,926
Sundry		42	113
EFC Centre		3,468	4,020
Essex Recorders partnership		41,594	43,118
EWT Wrabness Appeal (match funded to £2,000)		1,000	-
Catering		964	624
Bank and Paypal charges		2,518	1,974
		67,497	69,493
Surplus / (Loss) for year		101,591	68,754
Retained surplus bfwd		567,315	498,561
Retained surplus cfwd		668,906	567,315

ESSEX FIELD CLUB			
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025			
BALANCE SHEET			
Current Assets			
Lloyds Term investment	-	32,605	
Lloyds Fixed Term investment	95,000	-	
Lloyds Business investment account	25,685	25,469	
Lloyds Internet account	68,946	37,606	
Lloyds Treasurer's account	5,797	3,572	
Lloyds 32 day notice account	31,685	31,685	
Cambridge & Counties Bank 3 yr	89,611	89,611	
Hampshire Trust Bank 2 year	92,564	92,334	
Lloyds 95 day notice account	260,459	252,705	
Cash	1	1	
Debtors	9,382	9,108	
	679,130	574,695	
Fixed Assets			
IT Equipment	506	-	
Current liabilities			
Accruals	2,220	1,725	
VAT	7,654	5,305	
	10,380	7,030	
Net assets	669,256	567,665	
Financed by capital funds			
Income and expenditure account	668,906	567,315	
Museum fund	350	350	
	669,256	567,665	
Notes			
Some funds of the Club are restricted			
Income from Data Searches supports and funds projects of the Essex Recorders partnership			
	04/03/2026		P. Harvey
	04/03/2026		S. Taylor



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Essex Field Club

On accounts for the year
ended

31st December 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1113963

Set out on pages

1-2

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2025**

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:

04/03/2026

Name:

Daniel Bradford

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

MAAT – Association of Accounting Technicians

Address:

Jupiter Business Centre, Paycocke Road, Basildon, Essex SS14 3HX

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 2025 EFC accounts:

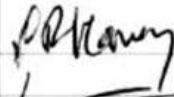

£106,006.25

(£35,503.13+ £35,503.12 to be paid as 50% partner splits, £10,000 ERp core, £25,000.00 for grant applications)

2024 £90,458.77

2025 £106,006.25

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<u>YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025</u>			
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On accounts for the year
ended

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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.

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Signed:

D Bradford

Date:

04/03/2026

Name:

Daniel Bradford

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

MAAT – Association of Accounting Technicians

Address:

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