

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1126122

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [06652160](#)

Registered 2008-10-01

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Activities

Objects: 3.1 TO ADVANCE EDUCATION THROUGH THE PROMOTION AND CONDUCT OF ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH FOR THE PURPOSES OF UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND TO DISSEMINATE THE RESULTS OF SUCH RESEARCH; AND 3.2 THE ADVANCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATION.

Activities: Our aim is to establish long-term experimental sites for ecological research to increase understanding of the biological effects of climate change and other environmental changes.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE NATIONAL
- Ireland
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£157,340	£144,817	-	-
2023-12-31	£83,096	£109,901	-	-
2022-12-31	£89,459	£97,608	-	-
2021-12-31	£46,208	£76,209	-	-
2020-12-31	£153,522	£88,284	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
JEREMY ROBIN BISCOE TALLOWIN	Chair	
David Andrew Stone		2020-05-13
Dr ALISON JANE BIRKETT BSC, MSC		2018-07-24
Dr Carly Joanne STEvens		2016-07-06
Dr Ciara Marie Dwyer		2025-01-30
Dr Jeffrey Graham Duckett		2021-07-22
Dr Kadmiel Maseyk		2019-06-27
Dr Keith Walter Thomas Goulding		2014-01-02
Dr ROBIN DAVID BUXTON MBE		
Dr Stewart Jonathon Clarke		2021-01-01
PROFESSOR JONATHAN WENDELL SILVERTOWN		
Professor Bridget Anne Emmett		2019-06-27
Professor Kenneth Thompson		2020-05-13

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1126122

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06652160 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1126122



Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements Year Ended 31st December 2024

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
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ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

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ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees

for the year ended 31 December 2024

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Ecological Continuity Trust

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) continues to be the only organisation working to safeguard the future of the UK's strategic network of long-term ecological experiments (LTEs). Many ecological processes operate over timescales of decades. As the effects of environmental change on ecosystems are often slow to emerge, long-term studies are essential to characterise and understand these changes.

LTEs involve experimental manipulation combined with monitoring and these have been the focus of the ECT since its establishment in 2008. LTEs provide greater insight into how ecosystems are likely to respond to environmental changes than monitoring alone. An experimental approach allows researchers to investigate cause and effect, to test the effectiveness of management regimes and to manipulate environmental variables beyond those currently prevailing, allowing the investigation of future scenarios. Long-term ecological experiments provide a unique platform for such studies, investigating the effects of, and interactions between environmental changes, such as air pollution, grazing management, and climate change on ecosystems. LTEs allow us to understand and predict future scenarios for ecosystems in the face of environmental change. They are 'time machines' enabling us both to look backwards to see where we have come from, and forwards to see where we might be heading. The role that LTEs play in enabling society to understand and mitigate (where possible) the consequences of climate change on ecosystems is now more important than ever.

During 2024, the ECT continued to develop the landscape-scale project that was initiated in 2023, in close collaboration with the British Ecological Society (BES). This is now formally titled *Resilient Landscapes and Seas for Nature, People and Climate*. The vision is to enable the creation of large-scale land, freshwater, coastal and marine systems which deliver a more sustainable and resilient future for nature, people and climate. The aim of the project is to build a more cohesive community around landscape-scale transformation in partnership with the principal policy and non-governmental organisations within the UK. The landscape-scale project embraces support for selected long-term monitoring studies (LTMs), such as the Environmental Change Network sites, and the creation of LTE/LTM hubs to add significant scale values to the scientific outputs of LTEs. For the ECT, this landscape-scale project is *additional* to its existing primary mission to support the UK's existing LTE network.

Amongst many deliverables, this partnership should increase societal understanding of the values and need for long-term ecological studies and thus broaden the User Group community. It should also enhance public perception of the importance of the ECT as a charity requiring funds and donations.

New Three-year Strategic Plan

Recent fundraising success has enabled the ECT to produce a new Strategic Plan this year. Covering the period 2024 -2026, the Plan sets out the following three key goals for the next three years:

1. Advance LTE science to widen its relevance to the most pressing problems facing the UK's ecosystems.
2. Enhance the communication of LTE science to the widest possible scientific and public audience.
3. Improve the long-term archiving and preservation of LTE datasets, materials and samples.

The new Strategic Plan is available in both hardcopy and on the ECT's website at:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>.

Overall Purpose of the ECT

To ensure that the ecological evidence available to inform land management decisions is supported by studies that are conducted over a long enough time to:

- include representative and extreme weather conditions;
- allow for ecological processes that operate slowly - sometimes over decades;
- capture infrequent stochastic events such as epidemic disease or severe drought.

Specific Objectives of the ECT

1. Support the integrity and maintenance of existing long-term ecological experimental platforms (LTEs) and new research initiatives that make use of these LTEs.
2. Maintain a register of LTEs and add new LTEs that emerge.
3. Facilitate the establishment of a landscape-scale project network to guide best practice and long-term monitoring of ecological changes and processes to provide sustainability metrics.
4. Facilitate the establishment of new LTEs and monitoring (LTM) studies as LTE/LTM research hubs within landscape-scale initiatives where the scientific need is identified, and enable their use by a wide variety of researchers.
5. Build a network of LTE/LTM users and stakeholders (the User Group) to promote and integrate knowledge exchange and innovative scientific and practical outputs from LTEs/LTMs.

6. Help place experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking and sustainable land use, leading to environmental and social well-being.
7. Communicate the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs to a wide audience of stakeholders beyond the ecological research community.

The ECT's Key Roles

1. **Finance** – brokering linked major funding, especially for repair, replacement or new experimental facilities on LTEs; providing a stopgap in emergencies for existing LTEs; funding LTE data archiving; funding LTE interpretation boards and outreach material for wider society; awarding small grants to facilitate the use of LTEs by the ecological community and to contribute to essential maintenance/repair work at LTEs.
2. **Advocacy and Engagement with Science Policy** - championing the case for LTEs/LTMs in the ecological research community, with Government/Research Councils and within host institutions; building partnerships with organisations in the scientific and conservation sectors, to help put experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking, sustainable land management and education.
3. **Moral Support** – supporting researchers and trying to ensure continuity of leadership (succession planning) and institutional support for existing LTEs/LTMs; providing a web-based resource promoting our sites for use as research platforms by the wider community.
4. **Intellectual** – identifying research gaps in the LTE network and advocating the filling of these gaps; maintaining a network of key stakeholders.
5. **Communication** – explaining the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs by harnessing new digital technologies such as webinars and virtual reality and developing impact case studies.

Activities and Achievements - How the Public Benefitted

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. In 2024, our activities to forward our public benefit were as follows:

Safeguard and Support the UK's Resource of LTEs

This remains the ECT's primary mission.

At 31 December 2024, the ECT national register of currently active LTEs was 37 experiments across 38 different sites covering all four countries of the UK. During 2024, a second LTE in Northern Ireland was added to the register - the AFBI Loughgall agroforestry LTE, now in its fourth decade of continuous operation. A map showing all the currently active LTEs on the register is available on our website at:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/sites>

During 2024, ECT worked hard behind the scenes to assist with succession planning at two LTEs whose lead researchers were approaching retirement. New research leaders and teams have now been installed for the Wicken Fen Vision LTE in Cambridgeshire and the Lady Park Wood LTE in Gloucestershire, which have been running for 18 years and 81 years respectively.

Communicating the ECT Mission to Society

The importance and value of long-term field ecology to society was promoted significantly by our Executive Director and our dedicated part-time Communications Officer, mainly through published articles and digital platforms. Our social media presence grew steadily and by the end of 2024 we registered 1938 followers on X (formerly Twitter) and 286 on Instagram. By 31 December 2024 we also garnered 406 LinkedIn followers, 110 subscribers on YouTube and established two new social media accounts on the Threads and Bluesky platforms, achieving 227 and 70 followers respectively. Our Communications Officer issued regular updates, invitations to events, links to interesting articles and the latest news to all our social media followers. The Charity is maintaining a watching brief on current changes in social media platforms to help ensure that we can follow where our audience is going and understand its thinking.

Two new interpretation boards were funded and installed by ECT this year, at Palace Leas LTE at Newcastle University's Cockle Park Experimental Farm, and at the Lena Ward plots at Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve in Oxfordshire. The board content was prepared by our Communications Officer and the design contracted to Landmark Ltd. These boards provide context and understanding for visitors to the experiments and include QR codes linking directly to the ECT website. An information leaflet for the Glen Finglas LTE in Scotland was also produced in partnership with the Woodland Trust for the public to take away from the welcome cabin at the entrance to the glen. Other boards are planned and are in various stages of drafting and design.

The ECT produced a new 6½-minute [docushort film](#) on LTEs and ECT's role in supporting/championing them. This film was launched at the *NewScientist Live* event in London in October – the first time ECT has participated in this event – at which our work was showcased to 25,000 visitors over three days from our exhibition stand. This film has received widespread acclaim both for its quality and its message to society on the value of long-term ecological experiments, and can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the link above.

In partnership with Rothamsted Research, ECT produced its fourth Virtual Reality (VR) tour of an LTE this year, filming in 360 degrees at the North Wyke Farm Platform in Devon in July. The completed VR experience for North Wyke was launched via our VR headsets at the BES2024 Annual Meeting in Liverpool in December. Earlier in the year at the *NewScientist Live* event referenced above, we showcased all our three previous VR tours of LTEs to the 25,000 visitors attending the three-day event, and also to delegates visiting our stand at the annual BIFOR conference held in Birmingham in June.

In partnership with the Royal Society of Biology (RSB) and Rothamsted Research, ECT hosted a spring visit to the Park Grass LTE for 25 RSB members. Feedback from those attending was very positive and the value of this classic long-term experiment was clearly appreciated by a delegate who prepared a [blog article](#) on the visit for the ECT website.

In partnership with Natural England and Loughborough University, ECT organised an event including a speaker programme for the 50th anniversary celebration of the Ainsdale Dune Slacks long-term grazing experiment in West Lancashire, with 40 invited guests on 3 October. The role of

the ECT in this celebratory event highlighted the importance of the charity as a *unique* champion of LTEs. An article relating the proceedings of the event has been published in the latest issue of the *Sand Dune & Shingle Network* newsletter with links on the ECT website.

Provision of Small Grants to LTEs

A new strategic partnership was established in 2024 with the Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust (RWOT) who have agreed (under a formal MoU) to co-fund ECT's small grants scheme with up to £3k per annum for the next five years (2024-2028).

The ECT issued **eight** small grants in 2024 to different LTEs on our register to enhance their value to society. These were:

£3543 to Catalina Estrada at Imperial College for refurbishment of plot fencing at the Nash's Field experiment (second instalment).

£3000 co-funded by RWOT to Andreas Heinemeyer at the University of York for consumables related to the comparative analysis of peat cores from the Moor House Hard Hill LTE.

£3000 co-funded by RWOT to Nina Overtoom at the University of York towards the costs of equipment maintenance/replacement at the Cors Fochno climate change LTE in mid-Wales.

£2404 to Rob Graham at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) for maintenance of the Tulloch Agroecology LTE.

£2038 to Robin Pakeman at the James Hutton Institute for plot fencing maintenance costs at the Glen Finglas LTE in Scotland.

£3000 co-funded by RWOT to Alex Armstrong at the University of Birmingham gas flux analyser repairs at the BIFoR-FACE LTE in Staffordshire.

£3000 co-funded by RWOT to Elena Arrigoni at RBG Kew for maintenance work at the re-purposed Thursley Common experiment (APRI project) in Surrey.

£750 to Fanni Tanka (PhD student) at Loughborough University for travel and consumables to carry out PhD-related research at the Ainsdale Dune Slacks LTE in west Lancashire.

The demand for the ECT's small grants surpassed its dedicated continuity fund budget by July of this reporting year, and the scheme was therefore closed temporarily to new applications for the remainder of 2024.

Resilient Landscapes and Seas Initiative

In close partnership with the British Ecological Society (BES), we hosted an invitation-only stakeholders/policy workshop on landscape-scale transformation and restoration and living laboratories at the BES headquarters in London on 25 January 2024. 40 of the UK's major landowners/NGOs/policy organisations attended the workshop. The following overall vision emerged from this workshop: "*To enable the creation of large-scale land, freshwater and coastal/marine systems which deliver a more sustainable and resilient future for our climate, people and nature.*" A detailed report of proceedings is available on the ECT website at:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/s/Second-Landscapes-Workshop-25-January-FINAL-REPORT.pdf>

The ECT hosted a very successful exhibition stand at the BES-led *Resilient Landscapes* science symposium held at the University of Birmingham on 24-25 June 2024 under the auspices of the developing landscapes partnership. The symposium attracted over 170 delegates representing the majority of the UK's environmental policymakers, NGOs and large landowners/managers who are involved with or have an interest in landscape-scale initiatives. ECT's VR tour of a landscape-scale LTE (Plynlimon Catchments) was made available to delegates from our stand.

The ECT will play a key role in 2025 in helping to properly establish this landscape-scale initiative with a secretariat including staff to support meetings and events coordination.

Promoting the Value and Importance of Long-term Ecological Studies with the British Ecological Society (BES)

ECT attended the BES's Annual Meeting in Liverpool in December 2024, hosting another very successful exhibition stand to help communicate our mission and science to BES's 1500+ delegates. The Trust's Executive Director and Communications Officer were kept busy providing a considerable number of visitors with details of the ECT's mission and achievements with over 200 of the different ECT and LTE information flyers taken. The fourth in our series of virtual reality headset 'tours', this time of Rothamsted Research's North Wyke Farm Platform LTE in Devon, was highly acclaimed by the 120+ individuals who used it from our exhibition stand.

The charity contributed the following four articles to the BES's quarterly membership magazine in 2024, which has a readership of several thousand:

"Long-term experiments essential for our future", March 2024 by George Peterken.

"Living laboratories: landscape-scale transformation and restoration", June 2024 by Ben Sykes

"Outcomes from the Resilient Landscapes for People, Nature & Climate symposium", September 2024 by Ben Sykes.

"Long-term experiments as platforms for all", December 2024 by Ken Thompson, ECT Trustee.

Newsletters, Blogs and Website Development

ECT produced **six** newsletters throughout 2024, which can be viewed on the ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/newsletter-archive>.

Two blog articles were published this year, which can also be viewed on the ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/blog>

A new webpage was published for the Wicken Fen Vision LTE and can be viewed here: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/wicken-fen>. Further new dedicated site pages were under development towards the end of this reporting year for the recently registered SRUC Tulloch agroecology rotation LTE and the Loughgall agroforestry LTE. These will be completed in early 2025. ECT also began a major overhaul and re-design of its SquareSpace website which will be completed in 2025 with assistance from an external contractor.

LTE International Databases

Data from several LTEs are deposited in international databases, adding to the wider ‘remote’ usage of these important long-term experiments.

Webinars

The ECT hosted the following series of webinars in 2024, which attracted several new members to join our core audience. Recordings of all these webinars can be viewed on ECT’s YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjcaas_6y9rD0lulNsxGEXw

- Jon Storkey, Rothamsted Research
The world-famous Park Grass experiment still delivering new science after 168 years
(15 March 2024)
- Julie Ewald, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)
Ecological impacts of farming changes in arable ecosystems in a 56-year-long study in Sussex
(23 May 2024)
- Robin Pakeman, James Hutton Institute
Latest results from Glen Finglas long-term grazing experiment
(22 November 2024)

Volunteer Pool

The ECT’s ‘Volunteer Pool’ grew to 43 members by the end of 2024. Volunteers provide an additional resource to LTEs to assist with, for example, site maintenance and where particular skills are available with monitoring floral and faunal compositions of plots.

LTE User Group

The ECT’s LTE User Group comprises academic ecologists, research students, policymakers, ecological consultants, environmental non-governmental organisations, landowners, and industrialists. Its membership grew during 2024 to 280 members from 261 at the beginning of the year.

Recent Scientific Publications From LTEs

The LTEs on ECT’s register have an impressive record of scientific publications. Comprehensive bibliographies are maintained on the individual webpages for each LTE on our register. During 2024, the following selected publications from LTEs were notable:

RainDrop: E. Fenollosa, P. Fernandes, A. Hector, H. King, C. S. Lawson, J. Jackson & R. Salguero-Gómez. (2024) Differential responses of community-level functional traits to mid- and late-season experimental drought in a temperate grassland. *Journal of Ecology* **112**: 2292-2306.

BIFoR-FACE: Norby, R.J., Loader, N.J., Mayoral, C., Ullah, S., Curioni, G., Smith, A.R., Reay, M.K., van Wijngaarden, K., Amjad, M.S., Brettle, D., Crockatt, M.E., Denny, G., Grzesik, R.T., Hamilton, R.L., Hart, K.M., Hartley, I.P., Jones, A.G., Kourmouli, A., Larsen, J.R., Shi, Z., Thomas, R.M. & MacKenzie, A.R. (2024) Enhanced woody biomass production in a mature temperate forest under elevated CO₂. *Nature Climate Change* [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-02090-3>].

Wardlow Hay Cop: Taylor, C.R., England, L.C., Keane, J. B., Davies, J.A.C., Leake, J.R., Hartley, I.P., Smart, S.M., Janes-Bassett, V. & Phoenix, G.K. (2024). Elevated CO₂ interacts with nutrient inputs to restructure plant communities in phosphorus-limited grasslands. *Global Change Biology* **30**(1): e17104. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.17104>]

North Wyke Farm Platform, Moor House Hard Hill, Palace Leas, Park Grass: Marshall, C.A.M., Wade, K., Kendall, I.S., Porcher, H., Poffley, J., Bladon, A.J., Dicks, L.V. & Treweek, J. (2024) England's statutory biodiversity metric enhances plant, but not bird nor butterfly, biodiversity. *Journal of Applied Ecology* **61**(8): 1918-1931. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14697>]

Plynlimon Catchments: Forest, N. & Wentworth, J. (2024). POSTNote: Enhanced rock weathering: Potential UK greenhouse gas removal. UK Parliament. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.58248/PN726>]

Thursley Common: Kowal, J., Pino-Bodas, R., Arrigoni, E., Delhaye, G., Suz, L.M., Duckett, J.G., Bidartondo, M.I. & Pressel, S. (2024) Assessing above and belowground recovery from ammonium sulfate addition and wildfire in a lowland heath: mycorrhizal fungi as potential indicators. *Restoration Ecology* **32**(3) e14096. [Available online at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/rec.14096>]

Peatland-ES-UK: Liu, B., Heinemeyer, A., Marchant, R. & Mills, R.T.E. (2024) Exploring optimal sampling strategy of testate amoebae as hydrological bioindicators in UK upland peatlands. *Journal of Environmental Management* **370**: 122959. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2024.122959>].

Funding and Staff

From January to July 2024 the Charity operated with 2.0 FTE paid staff. From August to December 2024, this increased to 2.1 FTE with the Trust's Fundraising Manager taking on an additional role of managing the ECT's accounts that required an additional half-day per week. The ECT also draws on the in-kind expertise of 13 Trustees.

The British Ecological Society (BES) endorsed its support for the ECT with a new grant for the period 2024 to 2026 of £25,000 per annum. BES funding is a very positive endorsement of the value and credibility of the ECT and has provided vital leverage in securing additional core funds

from other external foundations. Over the course of 2024, ECT as been able to transform each BES £1 into £6 secured from elsewhere.

Obtaining project funding is crucial to the support of ECT's Small Grants Scheme. Several external funders consider this an ineligible use of their grant funds, and it is therefore very difficult to secure funding for this purpose, even though ecologists consider this to be one of the most important things that the Trust does for them. This is reflected in our 2024 grants budget being fully committed and over-subscribed, as detailed above.

It remains challenging for ECT to project income any further than 3-4 years into the future, largely because the Trust is entirely dependent upon two income streams – competitively-won grant funding and private donations. We have a clear view of the annual income ECT requires to sustain and steadily grow its current capacity. This is between £130-£180kpa. Under the direction of the ECT's Executive Director, Ben Sykes, the administration of the Trust ran smoothly and efficiently throughout 2024. The ECT's 2024 financial accounts were managed efficiently by the Trust's Fundraising and Finance Manager, Tim Rowland.

During 2024 our Executive Director cultivated ECT's engagement with the following strategic partners, many of whom were engaged through the *Resilient Landscapes and Seas* initiative: British Society of Soil Science (BSSS), Pasture for Life (Pfl), the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), the National Trust, Natural England, the Woodland Trust, the Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust (RWOT), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), RBG Kew at Wakehurst, WWF-UK, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), the Wildlife Trusts, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Royal Society of Biology (RSB).

Our dedicated part-time Communications Officer, Danae Dodge, has helped significantly with administrative work including updating the Trust's website, developing new LTE webpages, working on LTE interpretation boards, preparing our quarterly newsletter and managing our social media channels. Our Communications Officer has achieved a considerable boost to our audiences and followers using various digital platforms and also performs a role as the charity's main link with the Royal Society of Biology.

Governance

Full Board of Trustees meetings took place online quarterly in January, April, July and October in 2024, with our Annual General Meeting taking place alongside the July gathering. The Board's remit is to focus on strategic issues. The Executive Committee comprising the ECT's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary, an Ordinary Trustee and Executive Director, met monthly throughout 2024, overseeing the day-to-day and month-to-month operations of the Trust. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Director reported to the Board at its four quarterly meetings in 2024.

Following the July 2024 AGM, Ordinary Trustees Bridget Emmett and Kadmiel Maseyk were elected for a second five-year term, whilst Chas Holt retired to leave an unfilled vacant position

on the Board at 31 December 2024. Kadmiel Maseyk was also appointed as new Honorary Treasurer from 1 August 2024, after Jeff Duckett stepped back from this role to become an Ordinary Trustee.

All of the ECT's governance policies are available to view on request. and our volunteering policy is available in the public domain via our website 'Opportunities' page at the following link:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/opportunities>.

Plans for the Future

The Charity's plans for the next 12 months are governed by our new three-year Strategic Plan 2024-2026, available to view on our website: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>. The Plan details three key goals and the following is a summary of the activities ECT will prioritise under these goals in 2025:

- ECT will collaborate closely with the BES and UKCEH to secure funding for a small secretariat for the developing *Resilient Landscapes and Seas* partnership which will include an ECT-based post for meetings and events coordination. This will continue and enhance the community-building work we have already started with major UK landowners, land managers and policymakers. It includes our ambition to afford the employment of our Communications Officer (Danae Dodge) full-time from her current part-time position.
- The Charity will contract an established archiving company to undertake the long-term storage of irreplaceable LTE physical materials and samples, and offer data digitisation services where they may still be necessary. This will help to secure LTE materials and data for future generations of ecologists to use.
- We will continue to build upon our pioneering work with Virtual Reality (VR) to plan and deliver at least two new VR headset experiences for selected LTEs in 2025.
- ECT will re-design and re-launch the charity's website within the constraints of our existing SquareSpace Content Management System (CMS), with the assistance of an external contractor who is a SquareSpace specialist.
- Depending upon funding availability, grant resources will remain focused on LTEs, but also on supporting selected long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that add scale values to LTEs. The ECT will prioritise necessary future interventions to safeguard at-risk LTEs that have existing or potential ongoing scientific value.
- Support for existing and new LTEs will remain a core activity of the ECT. We will explore the establishment of a new multidisciplinary pilot LTE at the landscape-scale with a chosen landowner and other key stakeholders. Any 'new' unregistered LTEs to emerge into view in 2025 will be reviewed using the ECT's established criteria for registration, with special attention to be given to under-represented habitats on our national register (for example, coastal saltmarsh, marine and Atlantic 'rainforest'). Once registered, 'new' LTEs

will become eligible for our small grants scheme and benefit from, amongst other things, ECT's free profile-raising activities. Promotion of the value of LTEs and selected LTM to stakeholders and wider society will continue to be a key objective of the Executive Director, who will also work to continue expanding our LTE User Group.

- Subject to the availability of suitable funding, the Charity intends to develop a series of published infographics and case studies that help demonstrate the impact and value of LTEs and landscape-scale projects.
- The Trust will support and continue to grow its 'Volunteer Pool' from its current 43 members, so that ECT has a human resource available which may be drawn upon to assist with free maintenance work or citizen science activities at any of the LTEs on our register.
- The ECT will continue to maintain important existing strategic relationships with partners such as the BES, BSSS and Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust. We will also develop new partnerships with relevant organisations and land managers, focusing in 2025 on nascent relationships with Pasture for Life (Pfl) and the Field Studies Council (FSC) in particular. The Charity will also be investing significant time in further developing the relationships begun with the numerous partners under the *Resilient Landscapes and Seas* initiative. These are:
 - National Trust, Natural England, Woodland Trust, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), WWF-UK, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), the Wildlife Trusts, Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- The Trust will continue to employ Tim Rowland, our part-time Fundraising and Finance Manager who continues to be effective in bringing new funds to the Trust.

A close working relationship with the BES will continue to be maintained through two-monthly meetings, helping to facilitate ECT communications with the wider ecological community. The ECT will work closely with the BES, universities, and research institutes to ensure that both the research and the educational potential of the UK's LTEs is realised.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Position

On 31st December 2024, ECT had funds of £65,895 comprised of £46,610 unrestricted and £19,285 restricted funds. Expenditure during the year was £144,817 and income £157,340. The ECT remains a going concern. ECT is in a strong position to continue to be a catalyst and co-ordinating organisation that has a much bigger impact than its turnover suggests. We can identify other activities that we have enabled partner organisations to deliver, but we do not know the attendant costs.

Reserves

The Trustees have agreed a policy that 3 months operating reserve is desirable. Current unrestricted funds are larger than required to satisfy this, but our fundraising is extremely dependent on occasional relatively large donations and longer cover is highly desirable for stability and continuity of service.

Exemption from Audit

For the period ending 31 December 2024, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Tony Jones of Grosvenor Tax Practice Ltd to carry out the examination of these accounts. The trustees recommend that he remain in office until further notice.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and governed by Memorandum and Articles.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees were appointed for their relevant leadership, ecological knowledge, charity governance and administrative experience. They met four times during the period of this report. When a new Trustee is required, for example when an existing Trustee retires, the position will be openly advertised. New Trustees will be given appropriate induction and information about the role of trustees and their responsibilities under the Charities Acts. The ECT's Board of Trustees reflects broad representation by stakeholders in the ECT's objectives.

Risk Management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Trustees considered the risks to the charity during the course of the year and took appropriate steps to mitigate them as far as possible. The British Ecological Society's support provides endorsement of ECT's reputation and the value of its work, giving confidence to other funders. The ECT is the champion of long-term ecological experiments, therefore persistence is one of our goals and our modest funds are managed to achieve this, while enabling funding opportunities to be exploited to advance our goal of establishing new long-term experiments and sustaining existing ones.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2024

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1126122

Registered Company number

06652160 (England and Wales)

Registered office

Dr Robin Buxton
Manor House
Little Wittenham
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 4RA

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Trustees:

Dr A J Birkett Researcher & Science Engagement Professional
Dr R D Buxton Ecologist
Dr S J Clarke Conservationist
Professor J G Duckett Retired
Professor B A Emmett Ecologist
Professor K W T Goulding Agricultural Research Scientist
C A Holt Ecologist (Retired July 2024)
Dr K Maseyk Ecologist
Professor J W Silvertown University Lecturer
Dr C J Stevens Scientist
Dr D A Stone Scientist
J R B Tallowin Research Biologist
Dr K Thompson Retired University Lecturer

Company Secretary

Dr R D Buxton

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2024

Independent Examiner

Mr A T Jones
Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire GL5 3PL

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Executive Director:
Ben Sykes (appointed 1st March 2018)

Bank: CAF Bank, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ
Website: <http://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org>
Contact: Dr Robin Buxton,
Manor House,
Little Wittenham,
Abingdon, OX14 4RA.

Number of employees: 3

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on12/06/2025.....and
Signed on its behalf by:



.....
J R B Tallwin - Trustee

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Ecological Continuity Trust**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Ecological Continuity Trust ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.



Mr A T Jones

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

Date:13/16/2025.....

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

		Unrestricted	Restricted	31.12.24	31.12.23
	Notes	funds	fund	Total	Total
		£	£	funds	funds
				£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		144,543	11,000	155,543	81,987
Investment income	2	1,797	-	1,797	1,109
Total		<u>146,340</u>	<u>11,000</u>	<u>157,340</u>	<u>83,096</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		20,119	-	20,119	16,130
Charitable activities					
Experiments		23,085	2,661	25,746	24,162
Outreach		94,376	-	94,376	65,806
Other		4,576	-	4,576	3,803
Total		<u>142,156</u>	<u>2,661</u>	<u>144,817</u>	<u>109,901</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		4,184	8,339	12,523	(26,805)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		42,426	10,946	53,372	80,177
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>46,610</u></u>	<u><u>19,285</u></u>	<u><u>65,895</u></u>	<u><u>53,372</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Balance Sheet
31 December 2024**

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted fund	31.12.24 Total funds	31.12.23 Total funds
	Notes	£	£	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	25,000	-	25,000	25,000
Cash at bank		24,768	19,285	44,053	30,399
		<u>49,768</u>	<u>19,285</u>	<u>69,053</u>	<u>55,399</u>
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(3,158)	-	(3,158)	(2,027)
		<u>46,610</u>	<u>19,285</u>	<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>46,610</u>	<u>19,285</u>	<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>46,610</u>	<u>19,285</u>	<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>
NET ASSETS					
		<u>46,610</u>	<u>19,285</u>	<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>
FUNDS					
	7				
Unrestricted funds				46,610	42,426
Restricted funds				19,285	10,946
				<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>
TOTAL FUNDS					
				<u>65,895</u>	<u>53,372</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on and were signed on its behalf by:

12/06/2025



Trustee

J.R.B. TALLOWIN

The notes form part of these financial statements

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The charitable company has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemptions in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows;
- the requirement of paragraph 3.17(d);
- the requirement of paragraph 33.7.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the Charitable Trustcharity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

2. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31.12.24	31.12.23
	£	£
Deposit account interest	1,797	1,109
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

None of the trustees received any remuneration or benefits from the charity or any related entity.

Trustees' expenses

The charity has a policy of meeting trustees' and other volunteers' travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. Five trustees claimed travel expenses during the reporting period and the Treasurer used personal accounts to pay various costs and was reimbursed.

4. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	79,487	2,500	81,987
Investment income	1,109	-	1,109
Total	<u>80,596</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>83,096</u>
 EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	16,130	-	16,130
 Charitable activities			
Experiments	20,108	4,054	24,162
Outreach	65,806	-	65,806
Other	3,803	-	3,803
Total	<u>105,847</u>	<u>4,054</u>	<u>109,901</u>
 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	 (25,251)	 (1,554)	 (26,805)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	67,677	12,500	80,177
 TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	 <u>42,426</u>	 <u>10,946</u>	 <u>53,372</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

5.	DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.24	31.12.23
		£	£
	Other debtors	25,000	25,000
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
6.	CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.24	31.12.23
		£	£
	Accrued expenses	3,158	2,027
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
7.	MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		
		Net movement	At
	At 1.1.24	in funds	31.12.24
	£	£	£
	Unrestricted funds		
	General fund	32,426	4,184
	Designated Fund	10,000	-
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
		42,426	4,184
	Restricted funds		
	Restricted Fund	10,946	8,339
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	TOTAL FUNDS	<u>53,372</u>	<u>12,523</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	136,740	(132,556)	4,184
Designated Fund	9,600	(9,600)	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	146,340	(142,156)	4,184
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	11,000	(2,661)	8,339
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>157,340</u>	<u>(144,817)</u>	<u>12,523</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	67,677	(35,251)	32,426
Designated Fund	-	10,000	10,000
	<u>67,677</u>	<u>(25,251)</u>	<u>42,426</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	12,500	(1,554)	10,946
	<u>12,500</u>	<u>(1,554)</u>	<u>10,946</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>80,177</u>	<u>(26,805)</u>	<u>53,372</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	70,596	(105,847)	(35,251)
Designated Fund	10,000	-	10,000
	<u>80,596</u>	<u>(105,847)</u>	<u>(25,251)</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	2,500	(4,054)	(1,554)
	<u>2,500</u>	<u>(4,054)</u>	<u>(1,554)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>83,096</u>	<u>(109,901)</u>	<u>(26,805)</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.1.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	67,677	(31,067)	36,610
Designated Fund	-	10,000	10,000
	<u>67,677</u>	<u>(21,067)</u>	<u>46,610</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	12,500	6,785	19,285
	<u>12,500</u>	<u>6,785</u>	<u>19,285</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>80,177</u>	<u>(14,282)</u>	<u>65,895</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 December 2024

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	207,336	(238,403)	(31,067)
Designated Fund	19,600	(9,600)	10,000
	<u>226,936</u>	<u>(248,003)</u>	<u>(21,067)</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	13,500	(6,715)	6,785
	<u>13,500</u>	<u>(6,715)</u>	<u>6,785</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>240,436</u>	<u>(254,718)</u>	<u>(14,282)</u>

8. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Robin Buxton is a trustee of the Patsy Wood Trust, the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and The Sylva Foundation. Stewart Clarke is a trustee of British Ecological Society, which gives grants to ECT. Carly Stevens is an employee of Lancaster University which has received grants from ECT. No trustee, their family, or any organisation they are associated with has benefitted financially from the ECT.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1126122

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06652160 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1126122



Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements Year Ended 31st December 2023

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

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ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Ecological Continuity Trust

The Ecological Continuity Trust is the only organisation working to safeguard the future of the UK's strategic network of long-term ecological experiments (LTEs). Many ecological processes operate over timescales of decades. As the effects of environmental change on ecosystems are often slow to emerge, long-term studies are essential to characterise and understand these changes. Certain questions in ecology can only be answered by setting up an LTE and allowing it to run for many years.

LTEs involve experimental manipulation combined with monitoring and these have been the focus of the ECT during its first fifteen years. LTEs provide greater insight into how ecosystems are likely to respond to environmental changes than monitoring alone. An experimental approach allows researchers to investigate cause and effect, to test the effectiveness of management regimes and to manipulate environmental variables beyond those currently prevailing, allowing the investigation of future scenarios. Long-term ecological experiments provide a unique platform for such studies, investigating the effects of, and interactions between environmental changes, such as air pollution, grazing management, and climate change on ecosystems. LTEs allow us to understand and predict future scenarios for ecosystems in the face of environmental change. The role that LTEs play in enabling society to understand and mitigate (where possible) the consequences of climate change on ecosystems is now more important than ever.

During 2023, ECT in close collaboration with the British Ecological Society (BES) brought together landowners, policymakers and the major UK NGOs that are undertaking or considering landscape-scale projects. The aim was to build a coordinated community to provide guidance, promote best practice and where appropriate initiate long-term experimental and monitoring studies for evidence-generating landscape-scale projects. For the ECT this landscape-scale initiative is additional to its existing primary mission to support the UK's existing LTE network. The initiative also embraces support for selected long-term monitoring studies (LTMs), such as the Environmental Change Network sites, and the creation of LTE/LTM hubs to add significant scale values to the scientific outputs of LTEs.

The landscape-scale project should increase societal understanding of the values and need for long-term ecological studies and thus broaden the User Group community. ECT has already established a significant number of new end-user contacts and landscape-scale practitioners as

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

a result of this new work. It should also enhance public perception of the importance of the ECT as a charity requiring funds and donations.

The ECT's Corporate Plan 'Securing Long-term Experiments for the Future' sets out a strategic framework for our activities and operations for the decade 2020-2030 and this remained unchanged in 2023. It is available to download from ECT's website at:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>.

In light of the charity's improved financial circumstances in 2023 - due to competitively-won external grants - the development of a three-year Strategic Plan for the period 2024-2026 was initiated in November 2023 that supports the aspirations of our ten-year Corporate Plan. This will be finalised at the beginning of 2024.

Overall Purpose

To ensure that the ecological evidence available to inform land management decisions is supported by studies that are conducted over a long enough time to:

- include representative and extreme weather conditions;
- allow for ecological processes that operate slowly - sometimes over decades;
- capture infrequent stochastic events such as epidemic disease or severe drought.

Specific Objectives of the ECT

1. Support the integrity and maintenance of existing long-term ecological experimental platforms (LTEs) and new research initiatives that make use of these LTEs.
2. Maintain a register of LTEs and add new LTEs that emerge.
3. Facilitate the establishment of a landscape-scale management community to guide best practice around long-term monitoring of ecological changes and processes, thereby providing evidence to establish sustainability metrics.
4. Facilitate the establishment of new LTEs and monitoring (LTM) studies as LTE/LTM research hubs within landscape-scale initiatives where the scientific need is identified and enable their use as research platforms by a wide variety of researchers.
5. Build a network of LTE/LTM users and stakeholders (the User Group) to promote and integrate knowledge exchange and innovative scientific and practical outputs from LTEs/LTMs.
6. Help place experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking and sustainable land use, leading to environmental and social wellbeing.
7. Communicate the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs to a wide audience of stakeholders beyond the ecological research community.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

The ECT's Key Roles

1. **Finance** – brokering major funding, especially for repair, replacement or new experimental facilities on LTEs; providing a stopgap in emergencies for existing LTEs, funding LTE data archiving, LTE interpretation boards and outreach material for wider society; providing small grants to facilitate the use of LTEs by the ecological community and support essential maintenance/repair work at LTEs.
2. **Advocacy and Engagement with Science Policy** - championing the case for LTEs/LTMs in the ecological research community, with Government/Research Councils and within host institutions, highlighting the rich LTE resource that the UK possesses; building partnerships with organisations in the scientific and conservation sectors, to help put experimental ecology at the heart of evidence based policymaking, sustainable land management and education.
3. **Moral Support** – supporting researchers and trying to ensure continuity of leadership and institutional support for existing LTEs/LTMs; providing a web-based resource promoting our sites for use as research platforms by the wider community.
4. **Intellectual** – identifying research gaps in the LTE network and advocating the filling of these gaps and that the suite of existing LTEs is greater than the sum of its parts; maintaining a network of key stakeholders.
5. **Communication** – explaining the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs by harnessing innovative new digital technologies such as webinars and virtual reality and developing impact case studies.

Activities and Achievements - How the Public Benefitted

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. In 2023, our activities to forward our public benefit were as follows, noting that ECT's primary mission to safeguard and support the UK's LTE resource remained unchanged:

Communicating the ECT Mission to Society

The importance and value of long-term field ecology to society was promoted significantly by our dedicated part-time Communications Officer, mainly through digital platforms. Our social media presence grew steadily and by the end of 2023 we had an impressive 1982 followers on X (formerly Twitter), 321 LinkedIn followers and a growing number of followers on YouTube, Instagram and Threads. Our Communications Officer issued regular updates, invitations to events, links to interesting articles and the latest news to all our social media followers. Our formal quarterly newsletters were shared across all our platforms.

The ECT funded an interpretation board at the Aston Rowant LTE in the Chilterns that was designed by our Communications Officer to provide context and understanding of the experiment to the public as they walk past the different treatment plots. Other boards and also a leaflet are currently planned for the Glen Finglas, Palace Leas and Newborough Warren experiments and are in various stages of drafting and design. These will be installed at the LTEs in 2024.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Small Grants to Support LTEs

The ECT issued seven grants to LTEs during this reporting year to enhance their value to society as follows:

- £1745 to Sylvia Toet at the University of York towards the costs of sustaining annual vegetation measurements at the **Cors Fochno** climate change experiment in mid-Wales. Costs included infrastructure maintenance, greenhouse gas measurement training and soil microbial sampling.
- £3000 to Scott Hayward at the University of Birmingham towards the costs of species-level identification of the insect sample archive taken from the **BIFoR-FACE** climate change experiment in Staffordshire. Samples are being processed for DNA barcoding as part of the UK-wide BIOSCAN project run by the Sanger Institute.
- £3000 to Roberto Salguero-Gómez at the University of Oxford towards the costs of consumables for tracking plant community resilience using phenocams and artificial intelligence (AI) at the **RainDrop** long-term drought experiment at Wytham Woods.
- £3848 to Andreas Heinemeyer at the University of York towards the costs of replacement water table depth loggers and battery pack renewal at the **Peatland-ES-UK** long-term heather moorland management experiment in Yorkshire and Lancashire.
- £750 to Sophie Mills at the University of Birmingham to support her work on pollen analysis using novel Artificial Intelligence at the **BIFoR-FACE** long-term CO₂ elevation experiment.
- £3000 to Konstans Wells at Swansea University for consumables costs associated with comparing the gut microbiome-parasite health status of grazing animals on different grasslands at the **Rowden Plots** land drainage experiment in Devon.
- £5000 to Catalina Estrada at Imperial College towards repairs to the fencing surrounding the grazing exclosures at the **Nash's Field** long-term grassland grazing and fertilisation experiment in Berkshire.

The grant award to Sophie Mills at Birmingham resulted in a very informative [blog article](#) for the ECT website, following her presentation of results at a major overseas conference. The use of artificial intelligence in this project also attracted journalistic interest from the USA, giving ECT significant profile at the time.

Landscape-scale Experiments and Living Laboratories Initiative

In close partnership with the British Ecological Society (BES), ECT hosted an invitation-only workshop in London on 21 June 2023 which brought together 40 of the UK's major landowners with interests in landscape-scale transformation and management. The main purpose of the workshop was to connect stakeholders and begin discussions around best practice for the design and implementation of landscape-scale experiments, living laboratories and "wholescapes" (landscapes, coastal zones and seascapes). A formal [report of the proceedings](#) was published via the ECT website and can be fully cited. By the end of this reporting year, five stakeholder partners had stepped forward to assist both ECT and BES in planning a second workshop scheduled for 25 January 2024. The partners were the National Trust (NT), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK), the Woodland Trust (WT), Natural England (NE), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH).

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Promoting the Value and Importance of LTEs With the BES

At the BES's Annual Meeting in Belfast in December 2023 attended by over 1500 delegates, the ECT hosted a very successful exhibition stand. The Trust's CEO and Communications Officer were kept busy providing a considerable number of visitors with details of the ECT's mission and achievements. The third in our series of virtual reality headset 'tours' - for the Plynlimon Catchments LTE in mid-Wales - was made available from the stand and highly acclaimed by the 60 individuals who used it.

Through the BES's quarterly magazine *The Niche* which is circulated to the Society's entire membership, ECT contributed the following one-page articles authored by either ECT staff, trustees or invited guest writers:

"The perspective of time - why we need long-term experiments in a crisis" – Jonathan Silvertown (Spring issue).

"Missed opportunities in long-term ecological research" – Jeffrey Duckett (Summer issue).

"Landscape-scale long-term ecological experiments" – Bridget Emmett and Ben Sykes (Autumn issue).

"Long-term experiments essential for our future" – Rob Marrs (Winter issue).

ECT Newsletter

ECT again produced quarterly newsletters throughout 2023, which can be viewed on the ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/newsletter-archive>. By the end of the reporting year, it was clear that the increasing amount of content in the charity's newsletters would necessitate a change of frequency in 2024 to six two-monthly issues.

Biology Week Event and Article in *The Biologist*

Under our strategic partnership with the Royal Society of Biology (RSB), the ECT hosted a free webinar as part of the RSB's *Biology Week* programme of events on 18 October 2023. The event introduced the ECT and then focussed on four of the long-term ecological field experiments on our national register, one from each of the four home nations.

The charity authored a major four-page [feature article](#) on LTEs titled *"In it for the long-run"* that was published in the Spring 2023 issue of the RSB's member magazine *The Biologist*.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Recent Scientific Publications From LTEs

The LTEs on ECT's register have an impressive record of scientific publications. Comprehensive bibliographies are maintained on the individual webpages for each LTE on our register. During 2023, the following selected publications from LTEs were notable:

Wardlow Hay Cop: Taylor, C.R., England, L.C., Keane, J. B., Davies, J.A.C., Leake, J.R., Hartley, I.P., Smart, S.M., Janes-Bassett, V. & Phoenix, G.K. (2024). Elevated CO₂ interacts with nutrient inputs to restructure plant communities in phosphorus-limited grasslands. *Global Change Biology* **30**(1): e17104. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.17104>]

Thursley Common: Duckett, J.G., Andrew, E., Kowal, J. & Pressel, S. (2023) Fires, drought, extinction and regeneration. *Field Bryology* **129**: 19-34.

Peatland-ES-UK: Heinemeyer, A. (2023) Protecting our peatlands - full summary of ten years studying moorland management as part of Peatland-ES-UK: heather burning compared to mowing or uncut approaches. White Rose Consortium University of York. [Available online at: https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/195299/11/3547_university_of_york_report_FULL_SUMMARY_FINAL.pdf].

Heinemeyer, A., David, T. & Pateman, R. (2023) Restoration of heather-dominated blanket bog vegetation for biodiversity, carbon storage, greenhouse gas emissions and water regulation: comparing burning to alternative mowing and uncut management. Final 10-year Report to the Peatland-ES-UK Project Advisory Group. White Rose Research Online. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.15124/yao-2wtg-kb53>].

BIFoR-FACE : Rabbai, A., Wendt, D.E., Curioni, G., Quick, S.E., MacKenzie, A.R., Hannah, D.M., Kettridge, N., Ullah, S., Hart, K.M., Krause, S. (2023). Soil moisture and temperature dynamics in juvenile and mature forest as a result of tree growth, hydrometeorological forcings, and drought. *Hydrological Processes* **37** (6): e14919. [Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hyp.14919>].

Bamford Edge: Alday, J.G., Cox, E.S., Santana, V.M., Lee, H., Ghorbani, J., Milligan, G., McAllister, H.A., Le Duc, M.G. and Marrs, R.H (2023). Recovery of upland acid grasslands after successful *Pteridium aquilinum* control: Long-term effectiveness of cutting, repeated herbicide treatment and bruising. *Journal of Environmental Management* **342**, 118273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2023.118273>

LTE Results in International Databases

Data from several LTEs are deposited in international databases, which adds to the wider 'remote' usage of their results. The charity remains vigilant for LTE datasets that are vulnerable to loss and seeks to work with partners to help ensure safe, long-term digital data curation.

ECT Webinars

The ECT hosted the following series of webinars in 2023, which attracted several new members to join our core audience. The charity continues to hold webinars every two months on average and recordings of all these webinars can be viewed on ECT's YouTube channel at:

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https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjcaas_6y9rD0lulNsxGEXw

- John Langley-Randall, ADAS
“Mob Grazing and Soil Health”
(14 November 2023)
- Jack Cosby and Alan Radbourne, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
“Plynlimon Catchments Long-term Experiment in mid-Wales”
(15 September 2023)
- Raj Whitlock, University of Liverpool
“Thirty Years of Research at Buxton Climate Change Impacts Laboratory (BCCIL)”
(30 June 2023)
- Christine Watson and Rob Graham, Scotland’s Rural College
“32 Years of Research at SRUC Tulloch Agroecology LTE”
(14 April 2023)
- Mara Lawniczak and Lyndall Pereira, BIOSCAN Initiative Sanger Institute
“BIOSCAN Flying Insect Diversity by DNA Sequencing”
(10 February 2023)

ECT Website Development and Reach

The charity developed a new LTE site webpage for the [Plynlimon Catchments](#) experiment in mid-Wales, together with a new ‘[Opportunities](#)’ page to aid in our recruitment of volunteers and in attracting future trustees. Alongside other regular updates to our website, these changes helped to increase overall visits to the ECT website by 10% compared with 2022.

ECT Volunteers

The ECT’s ‘Volunteer Pool’ grew to 38 members by the end of 2023. Volunteers provide an additional resource to LTEs to assist with, for example, site maintenance and where particular skills are available with monitoring floral and faunal compositions of plots. A particular example of very valuable volunteer participation in 2023 was a week-long detailed monitoring of trees at the Lady Park Wood LTE in Gloucestershire.

LTE User Group

The ECT’s LTE User Group comprises academic ecologists, research students, policymakers, ecological consultants, environmental non-governmental organisations, landowners and industrialists, and grew during 2023 to 261 members from 235 at the beginning of the year. This represents a growth of 11%.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Funding and Staff

Throughout 2023 the ECT continued to operate with 2.0FTEs and the in-kind expertise of 13 Trustees (our constitutional maximum).

The British Ecological Society (BES) endorsed its support for the ECT with a new grant for the period 2024 to 2026 at £25,000 per annum. BES funding is a very positive endorsement of the value and credibility of the ECT and has almost certainly provided vital leverage in securing additional core funds from other external foundations, such as the Aspen Trust.

The AmazonSmile Foundation donated a total of £35.40 to ECT during 2023, derived through qualifying purchases from Amazon customers who supported the ECT in this way. However, this source of funding ceased in 2023.

Obtaining project funding is crucial to the support of ECT's Small Grants Scheme. Several external funders consider this an ineligible use of their grant funds, and it is therefore very difficult to secure funding for this purpose, even though ecologists consider this to be one of the most important things that the Trust does for them. This is reflected in our 2023 small grants budget being fully committed at £16.8k, as detailed above. The majority of our private donations, which are generally modest but unrestricted, go towards supporting the Small Grants Scheme.

It remains challenging for ECT to project income any further than 3-4 years into the future, largely because the Trust remains entirely dependent upon two income streams – competitively-won grant funding and private donations. We have a clear view of the annual income ECT requires to sustain and steadily grow its current capacity. This is between £100-£150kpa. Under the direction of the ECT's Executive Director, Ben Sykes, the administration of the Trust ran smoothly and efficiently throughout 2023.

During 2023, our Executive Director cultivated the ECT's engagement with the following strategic partners: the BES, the National Trust, the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), the Royal Society of Biology (RSB), the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS), the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust. The latter is especially notable in that ECT is close to agreeing a *Memorandum of Understanding* between our two Trusts that will enable the Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust to contribute financially to the ECT's Small Grants Scheme.

ECT's dedicated 0.5FTE Communications Officer, Danae Dodge, has helped significantly with administrative work during 2023 including updating the Trust's website, developing new LTE webpages, working on LTE Interpretation Boards, preparing our quarterly newsletter and managing our social media channels on a day-to-day basis.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Governance

Full Board of Trustees meetings took place online quarterly in January, April, July and October in 2023, with our Annual General Meeting taking place alongside the July gathering. The Board's remit is to focus on strategic issues. The Executive Committee comprising the ECT's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and Executive Director, met monthly throughout 2023, overseeing the day-to-day and month-to-month operations of the Trust. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Director reported to the Board at its four quarterly meetings in 2023.

The ECT implemented a policy on the use of volunteers at our registered LTEs in 2023. All our policies are available to view on request, and our approach to recruiting volunteers can be viewed on our website 'Opportunities' page at the following link:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/opportunities>.

Plans for the Future

The next three years of ECT activities will be governed by our new Strategic Plan 2024-2026, currently in an advance drafting stage with a view to launch in early 2024. The following plans are reflected in the current draft.

The ECT has begun a major new initiative around design and best practice for landscape-scale projects across the UK. We are collaborating closely with the BES and additional partners on a second workshop to be held on 25 January 2024 and to then bring together major UK landowners and land managers for a more comprehensive symposium in June 2024.

There remains an ambition to afford the employment of our Communications Officer (Danae Dodge) full-time from her current part-time position. This will provide the additional capacity to deliver further LTE interpretation boards, virtual reality projects, citizen science activities, LTE Open Days/site visits and website enhancements. Moving forward on this will be dependent upon securing competitively-won grants for core costs.

The ECT also has a longer-term ambition to employ an 'Events Officer' to further expand the activities reported above. The Trust will continue to employ Tim Rowland, our 0.5FTE Fundraising Manager and Budget Manager, who continues to be effective in bringing new funds to the Trust.

Depending upon funding availability, grant resources will remain focused on LTEs, but also on supporting selected long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that add scale values to LTEs. The Trust will prioritise necessary future interventions to safeguard at risk sites.

ECT will continue to build upon its pioneering work with Virtual Reality (VR) to plan and deliver one new VR headset experience (our fourth) for a selected LTE in 2024. This will be presented for the first time to a public audience at the BES Annual Meeting in Liverpool in December 2024.

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Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Subject to the availability of suitable funding, the Charity intends to develop a series of published infographics that help demonstrate the impact and value of LTEs and Landscape scale projects.

The Trust will support and continue to grow its 'Volunteer Pool' from its current 38 members, so that ECT has a human resource available which may be drawn upon to assist with free maintenance work or citizen science activities at any of the LTEs on our register.

The ECT will explore the potential for an Ecological Archives Centre where data and physical materials from LTEs can be secured for future generations of ecologists to access and use.

The ECT will continue to build new strategic relationships with relevant organisations and land managers, focusing in 2024 on our nascent relationship with the Ramble Worldwide Outdoor Trust and on renewing our relationship with the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) following numerous changes at its executive level. We will aim to build upon recent dialogue with both Pasture for Life and the Field Studies Council, in addition to maintaining our more mature and established partnerships with the BES, Royal Society of Biology, National Trust, Natural England and the NBN Trust.

Support for existing and new LTEs will remain a core activity of the ECT. Any 'new' unregistered LTEs to emerge into view in 2024 will be reviewed using the ECT's established criteria for registration. Once registered, 'new' LTEs will become eligible for our small grants scheme and benefit from, amongst other things, ECT's free profile-raising activities. Promotion of the value of LTEs and selected LTM to stakeholders and wider society will continue to be a key objective of the Executive Director, who will also work to continue expanding our LTE User Group and oversee the Charity's potential new venture into landscape-scale LTEs in 2024 and beyond.

A close working relationship with the BES will continue to be maintained through two-monthly meetings, helping to facilitate ECT communications with the wider ecological community. The ECT will work closely with the BES, universities, and research institutes to ensure that both the research and the educational potential of the UK's LTEs is realised.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

On 31st December 2023, ECT had funds of £53,372 comprised of £42,426 unrestricted and £10,946 restricted funds expenditure during the year was £109,901 and income £83,096. The ECT remains a going concern. ECT is in a strong position to continue to be a catalyst and co-ordinating organisation that has a much bigger impact than its turnover suggests. We can identify other activities that we have enabled partner organisations to deliver, but we do not know the attendant costs.

Reserves

The Trustees have agreed a policy that 3 months operating reserve is desirable. Current unrestricted funds are larger than required to satisfy this, but our fundraising is extremely dependent on occasional relatively large donations and longer cover is highly desirable for stability and continuity of service.

Exemption from Audit

For the period ending 31 December 2023, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Tony Jones of Grosvenor Tax Practice Ltd to carry out the examination of these accounts. The trustees recommend that he remain in office until further notice.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and governed by Memorandum and Articles.

The Board of Trustees

The Trustees were appointed for their relevant leadership, ecological knowledge, charity governance and administrative experience. They met four times during the period of this report. When a new Trustee is required, for example when an existing Trustee retires, the position will be openly advertised. New Trustees will be given appropriate induction and information about the role of trustees and their responsibilities under the Charities Acts. The ECT's Board of Trustees reflects broad representation by stakeholders in the ECT's objectives.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Trustees considered the risks to the charity during the course of the year and took appropriate

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

steps to mitigate them as far as possible. The British Ecological Society's support provides endorsement of ECT's reputation and the value of its work, giving confidence to other funders. The ECT is the champion of long-term ecological experiments, therefore persistence is one of our goals and our modest funds are managed to achieve this, while enabling funding opportunities to be exploited to advance our goal of establishing new long-term experiments and sustaining existing ones.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

06652160 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1126122

Registered office

Dr Robin Buxton
Manor House
Little Wittenham
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 4RA

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Trustees:

Dr A J Birkett Researcher & Science Engagement Professional
Dr R D Buxton Ecologist
Dr S J Clarke Conservationist
Professor J G Duckett Retired
Professor B A Emmett Ecologist
Professor K W T Goulding Agricultural Research Scientist
C A Holt Ecologist
Dr K Maseyk Ecologist
Professor J W Silvertown University Lecturer
Dr C J Stevens Scientist
Dr D A Stone Scientist
J R B Tallowin Research Biologist
Dr K Thompson Retired University Lecturer

Company Secretary

Dr R D Buxton

Independent Examiner

Mr A T Jones
Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire GL5 3PL

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Executive Director:

Ben Sykes (appointed 1st March 2018)


Bank: CAF Bank, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Website: <http://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org>

Contact: Dr Robin Buxton,
Manor House,
Little Wittenham,
Abingdon, OX14 4RA.

Number of employees: 3

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 3 August 2024 and
signed on its behalf by:


.....
Trustee

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Ecological Continuity Trust**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Ecological Continuity Trust ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.



Mr A T Jones

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

Date:4/8/2024.....

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	31.12.23 Total funds £	31.12.22 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		79,487	2,500	81,987	89,263
Investment income	2	<u>1,109</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,109</u>	<u>196</u>
Total		<u>80,596</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>83,096</u>	<u>89,459</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		16,130	-	16,130	12,364
Charitable activities					
Experiments		20,108	4,054	24,162	13,530
Outreach		65,806	-	65,806	61,252
Other		<u>3,803</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,803</u>	<u>10,462</u>
Total		<u>105,847</u>	<u>4,054</u>	<u>109,901</u>	<u>97,608</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(25,251)	(1,554)	(26,805)	(8,149)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		67,677	12,500	80,177	88,326
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>42,426</u></u>	<u><u>10,946</u></u>	<u><u>53,372</u></u>	<u><u>80,177</u></u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Balance Sheet
31 December 2023**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	31.12.23 Total funds £	31.12.22 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	25,000	-	25,000	25,000
Cash at bank		<u>19,453</u>	<u>10,946</u>	<u>30,399</u>	<u>57,200</u>
		44,453	10,946	55,399	82,200
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(2,027)	-	(2,027)	(2,023)
		<u>42,426</u>	<u>10,946</u>	<u>53,372</u>	<u>80,177</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		<u>42,426</u>	<u>10,946</u>	<u>53,372</u>	<u>80,177</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>42,426</u>	<u>10,946</u>	<u>53,372</u>	<u>80,177</u>
NET ASSETS					
		<u>42,426</u>	<u>10,946</u>	<u>53,372</u>	<u>80,177</u>
FUNDS					
	7				
Unrestricted funds				42,426	67,677
Restricted funds				<u>10,946</u>	<u>12,500</u>
TOTAL FUNDS					
				<u>53,372</u>	<u>80,177</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2023.

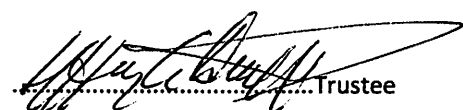
The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 3 August 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

 Trustee

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The charitable company has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemptions in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows;
- the requirement of paragraph 3.17(d);
- the requirement of paragraph 33.7.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the Charitable Trustcharity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

2. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31.12.23	31.12.22
	£	£
Deposit account interest	<u>1,109</u>	<u>196</u>

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

None of the trustees received any remuneration or benefits from the charity or any related entity.

Trustees' expenses

The charity has a policy of meeting trustees' and other volunteers' travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. Five trustees claimed travel expenses during the reporting period and the Treasurer used personal accounts to pay various costs and was reimbursed.

4. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	76,763	12,500	89,263
Investment income	<u>196</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>196</u>
Total	<u>76,959</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>89,459</u>
 EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	12,364	-	12,364
Charitable activities			
Experiments	13,530	-	13,530
Outreach	61,252	-	61,252
Other	<u>10,462</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,462</u>
Total	<u>97,608</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>97,608</u>
 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)			
Transfers between funds	(20,649)	12,500	(8,149)
	<u>45,360</u>	<u>(45,360)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	24,711	(32,860)	(8,149)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	42,966	45,360	88,326
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>67,677</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>80,177</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

5.	DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.23	31.12.22
		£	£
	Other debtors	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>
6.	CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.23	31.12.22
		£	£
	Accrued expenses	<u>2,027</u>	<u>2,023</u>
7.	MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		
		Net	
		movement	At
	At 1.1.23	in funds	31.12.23
	£	£	£
	Unrestricted funds		
	General fund	67,677	(35,251)
	Designated Fund	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
		67,677	(25,251)
	Restricted funds		
	Restricted Fund	12,500	(1,554)
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	TOTAL FUNDS	<u>80,177</u>	<u>(26,805)</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	70,596	(105,847)	(35,251)
Designated Fund	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	80,596	(105,847)	(25,251)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	2,500	(4,054)	(1,554)
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>83,096</u>	<u>(109,901)</u>	<u>(26,805)</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	42,966	(20,649)	45,360	67,677
Restricted funds				
Restricted Fund	45,360	12,500	(45,360)	12,500
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>88,326</u>	<u>(8,149)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>80,177</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	76,959	(97,608)	(20,649)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	12,500	-	12,500
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>89,459</u>	<u>(97,608)</u>	<u>(8,149)</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.1.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	42,966	(55,900)	45,360	32,426
Designated Fund	-	10,000	-	10,000
	42,966	(45,900)	45,360	42,426
Restricted funds				
Restricted Fund	45,360	10,946	(45,360)	10,946
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>88,326</u>	<u>(34,954)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,372</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 December 2023

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	147,555	(203,455)	(55,900)
Designated Fund	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	157,555	(203,455)	(45,900)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	15,000	(4,054)	10,946
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>172,555</u></u>	<u><u>(207,509)</u></u>	<u><u>(34,954)</u></u>

8. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Robin Buxton is a trustee of the Patsy Wood Trust, the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and The Sylva Foundation. Stewart Clarke is a trustee of British Ecological Society, which gives grants to ECT. Carly Stevens is an employee of Lancaster University which has received grants from ECT. No trustee, their family, or any organisation they are associated with has benefitted financially from the ECT.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

	31.12.23 £	31.12.22 £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	81,987	89,263
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	<u>1,109</u>	<u>196</u>
Total incoming resources	83,096	89,459
EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Wages	14,717	11,198
Pensions	<u>1,413</u>	<u>1,166</u>
	16,130	12,364
Charitable activities		
Wages	53,569	41,453
Pensions	5,648	4,182
IT & website costs	1,282	722
Hosting meetings & conference fees	2,288	11,435
Outreach travel expenses	2,996	2,634
Sundries	23	826
Grants to institutions	<u>24,162</u>	<u>13,530</u>
	89,968	74,782
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	-	5,979
Pensions	-	397
Insurance	632	670
Sundries	<u>1,044</u>	<u>375</u>
	1,676	7,421
Finance		
Bank charges	223	-
Governance costs		
Sundries	704	641
Accountancy and legal fees	<u>1,200</u>	<u>2,400</u>
	<u>1,904</u>	<u>3,041</u>
Total resources expended	<u>109,901</u>	<u>97,608</u>
Net expenditure	<u><u>(26,805)</u></u>	<u><u>(8,149)</u></u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1126122

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06652160 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1126122



Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

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ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2022

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

The Ecological Continuity Trust

The Ecological Continuity Trust is the only organisation working to safeguard the future of the UK's strategic network of long-term ecological experiments (LTEs). Many ecological processes operate over timescales of decades. As the effects of environmental change on ecosystems are often slow to emerge, long-term studies are essential to characterise and understand these changes.

LTEs involve experimental manipulation combined with monitoring and these have been the focus of the ECT during its first fourteen years. LTEs provide greater insight into how ecosystems are likely to respond to environmental changes than monitoring alone. An experimental approach allows researchers to investigate cause and effect, to test the effectiveness of management regimes and to manipulate environmental variables beyond those currently prevailing, allowing the investigation of future scenarios. Long-term ecological experiments provide a unique platform for such studies, investigating the effects of, and interactions between environmental changes, such as air pollution, grazing management and climate change on ecosystems. LTEs allow us to understand and predict future scenarios for ecosystems in the face of environmental change. The role that LTEs play in enabling society to understand and mitigate (where possible) the consequences of climate change on ecosystems is now more important than ever.

During 2022 the ECT included in its remit support for some long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that are associated with existing LTEs. The rationale for this inclusion in the ECT's remit and vision is fourfold:

1. Evidence that LTM studies, such as those included within the UK Environmental Change Network, are increasingly threatened with funding cuts and staffing shortages in the same way that LTEs were in 2008, when the ECT was established.
2. LTMs such as the Environmental Change Network sites that are associated with existing LTEs have the potential to add significant scale values to the scientific outputs of the latter.
3. The creation of LTE/LTM research 'hubs' around existing LTEs should increase their research, education and societal outreach value and thus broaden the User Group community.
4. Inclusion of LTM studies should broaden ECT's interest and appeal to the wider public, both in terms of its science content and its status as a charity requiring funds and donations.

In 2020, ECT published its first Corporate Plan *'Securing Long-term Experiments for the Future'*, which sets out a strategic framework for our activities and operations for the decade 2020-2030. The Plan was formally reviewed by the Board of Trustees in July 2022 and deemed fit-for-purpose unchanged. It is available to download from ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>.

Overall Purpose

To ensure that the ecological evidence available to inform land management decisions is supported by studies that are conducted over a long enough time to:

- include representative and extreme weather conditions;
- allow for ecological processes that operate slowly - sometimes over decades;
- capture infrequent stochastic events such as epidemic disease or severe drought.

The following are **Specific Objectives of the ECT**

1. Supporting existing long-term experimental platforms and new research initiatives that make use of these platforms;
2. Growing ECT's register of long-term experimental platforms as previously unknown or new LTEs emerge into view;
3. Facilitating the establishment of new LTEs and LTE/LTM research hubs where the scientific need is identified and enabling their use by a wide variety of researchers;
4. Establishing a new register of long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that add scale value to existing LTEs and supporting those studies in a similar way to LTEs;
5. Building a network of LTE/LTM users and stakeholders (the User Group) to promote and integrate knowledge exchange and innovative scientific and practical outputs from LTEs/LTMs;
6. Helping to place experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking and sustainable land use, leading to environmental and social well-being;
7. Communicating the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs to a wide audience of stakeholders beyond the ecological research community.

The ECT's Key Roles

1. **Finance** – brokering major funding, especially for new experimental facilities; providing a stop-gap in emergencies for existing LTEs/LTMs, and funding small research projects, data curation and essential maintenance/repair work;
2. **Advocacy and Engagement With Science Policy** - championing the case for LTEs/LTMs in the ecological research community, with Government/Research Councils and within host institutions; building partnerships with organisations in the scientific and conservation sectors, to help put experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking, sustainable land management and education;
3. **Moral Support** – supporting researchers and trying to ensure continuity of leadership and institutional support for existing LTEs/LTMs; providing a web-based resource promoting our sites for use as *research platforms* by the wider community;
4. **Intellectual** – identifying research gaps in the LTE network and advocating the filling of these gaps and that the suite of existing LTEs as a whole is greater than the sum of the parts; maintaining a network of key stakeholders;
5. **Communication** – explaining the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs by harnessing new digital technologies such as webinars and virtual reality, and developing impact case studies.

Activities and Achievements - How the Public Benefitted

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. In 2022, our activities to forward our public benefit were as follows:

- ECT's primary mission to safeguard and support the UK's resource of LTEs remained unchanged. The inclusion of strategically important professional LTM studies was advanced through the creation of LTE/LTM research hubs.
- The importance and value of long-term field ecology to society was promoted significantly by our dedicated part-time Communications Officer, mainly through digital platforms (details further below).
- Recognition of the relevance and importance of the ECT was furthered through publication of a high-profile Signal Boost article in the *New Scientist* in March.
- ECT held a one-day Fringe Event highlighting the values of LTEs at the World Congress of Soil Science in Glasgow on 4 August, followed by a guided tour for delegates at the Whim Bog LTE in the Scottish Borders. This event was held in association with one of our strategic partners – the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS).
- ECT hosted a highly successful exhibition stand at the British Ecological Society's Annual Meeting in Edinburgh in December. The Trust's CEO and Communications Officer were kept extremely busy providing a considerable number of visitors with details of the ECT's mission and purpose. The virtual reality headset 'tours' of BCCIL and Whim Bog LTEs were highly acclaimed by the dozens who used them.

- The Trust engaged in its first ever citizen science activity at the RainDrop LTE in June with an Executive Team of the British Society of Soil Science. Participants used equipment to record site data on a number of parameters including sward height, chlorophyll levels and soil moisture content.
- ECT funded and completed a project (in collaboration with NERC) to curate and safeguard over 27 years of vulnerable data from the Somerford Mead LTE into the Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC) at CEH Lancaster. This was a major achievement which paves the way for further similar data curation projects at other LTEs where data is vulnerable to loss.
- The Charity's Continuity Fund for small grants was fully committed in 2022, supporting the following six awards that were designed to facilitate the use of (and add value to) existing LTEs:
 - £1150 for repair and calibration of CO₂ emission monitoring equipment for the Peatland-ES-UK LTE (University of York).
 - £3000 for a validation study of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric using data from LTEs (University of Cambridge).
 - £2560 for Phenocams to capture near-continuous quantitative measurements of tree canopy/phenological responses to environmental changes at the BIFoR-FACE LTE (University of Birmingham).
 - £1000 for instruments to measure leaf canopy temperature and for a PhD student to work at the BIFoR-FACE LTE (University of Plymouth).
 - £3000 for long-term data curation and ensuring that data generation is efficient and seamless in the future at Palace Leas LTE (Newcastle University).
 - £2855 for the installation of minirhizotrons and the purchase of camera equipment to record root development at Ainsdale Dune Slacks LTE (Edge Hill University).
- Two 'new' long-term experiments (LTEs) were registered with ECT this year, bringing the total number of currently active LTEs in our national network to 36 across 37 different sites. The new LTEs are:
 - the Wicken Fen Vision grazing experiment in Cambridgeshire on land owned by the National Trust;
 - the agroecological rotational grazing experiment at SRUC Tulloch in Aberdeenshire.
- The LTE User Group, which comprises academic ecologists, research students, policy makers, ecological consultants, environmental non-governmental organisations, landowners, and industry grew during 2022 to 235 members at the close of the year. This represents a **12%** growth in membership on the previous year.
- ECT continued to develop a 'Volunteer Pool' to provide an additional resource to LTEs to assist with, for example, site maintenance and where particular skills are available with monitoring floral and faunal compositions of plots. At the end of 2022, the 'Pool' comprised 12 volunteers.
- The LTEs on ECT's register have an impressive record of scientific publications. Comprehensive bibliographies are maintained on the individual webpages for each LTE on our register. During 2022, the following selected high-profile publications from LTEs were notable:
 - Llyn Brianne:
Whelan, M.J. et al. (2022). Is water quality in British rivers "better than at any time since the end of the Industrial Revolution"? *Science of The Total Environment* 843: 157014. [<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.157014>].
 - Cors Fochno:
Andrews, L.O. et al. (2022). Plant community responses to experimental climate manipulation in a Welsh ombrotrophic peatland and their palaeoenvironmental context. *Global Change Biology* 28(4): 1596-1617 [<https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.16003>].
 - Glen Finglas:
Pozsgai, G., Quinzo-Ortega, L. & Littlewood, N.A. (2022) Grazing impacts on ground beetle (Coleoptera: Carabidae) abundance and diversity on semi-natural grassland. *Insect Conservation and Diversity* 15, 36-47. [<https://doi.org/10.1111/icad.12533>].

- Park Grass:
Storkey, J. and Macdonald, A. J. (2022) "The role of long-term experiments in validating trait-based approaches to achieving multifunctionality in grasslands", *Frontiers of Agricultural Science and Engineering*. [<https://doi.org/10.15302/J-FASE-2021438>].
 - Bangor Diverse:
Cesarz, S., et al. (2022) Tree diversity effects on soil microbial biomass and respiration are context dependent across forest diversity experiments. *Global Ecology and Biogeography* 31(5): 872-885. [<https://doi.org/10.1111/geb.13461>]
 - BIFoR-FACE:
Gardner, A. et al. (2022). Optimal stomatal theory predicts CO₂ responses of stomatal conductance in both gymnosperm and angiosperm trees. *New Phytologist* 237(4): 1229-1241. [<https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.18618>].
- Data from several LTEs are deposited in international databases, which adds to the wider 'remote' usage of these important long-term experiments.
- The Trust's Executive Director Ben Sykes contributed the following ECT-authored articles for each publication of the BES's quarterly membership magazine *The Niche* in 2022:
 - Expanding the UK's network of long-term ecological experiments (December issue);
 - Plynlimon research catchments added to ECT network (September issue); co-authored by Bridget Emmett & Alan Radbourne, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Bangor.
 - Llyn Brianne stream observatory added to ECT network (June issue); co-authored by Steve Ormerod and Isabelle Durance, Cardiff Water Research Institute and School of Biosciences.
 - Moor House grazing exclosures study in Upper Teesdale (March issue); co-authored by Rob Marrs, University of Liverpool.
- ECT produced a quarterly newsletter throughout 2022 as previously, in March, June, September and December. All issues can be viewed on the ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/newsletter-archive>.
- The following podcast interviews were carried out in 2022, which are available for listening from the ECT website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/podcasts>.
 - Alan Radbourne & Jack Cosby on Plynlimon Catchments (14 June 2022)
 - Francine Hughes & Owen Mountford on the Wicken Fen Vision grazing experiment (29 July 2022)
- The Trust hosted the following series of webinars in 2022, which proved popular and attracted several new members to join our core audience. Recordings of all these webinars can be viewed on ECT's YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjcaas_6y9rD0luINsxGEXw
 - Mike Morecroft, Natural England
"Climate Change & Long-term Ecological Field Experiments"
(9 December 2022)
 - Richard Bardgett, University of Manchester
"Colt Park Meadows Long-term Grassland Restoration Experiment" (7 October 2022)
 - Mick Crawley, Imperial College London
"The Silwood Park Long-term Ecological Field Experiments"
(15 July 2022)
 - Rob MacKenzie, University of Birmingham
"Research Update from the BIFoR-FACE Elevated CO₂ Woodland Experiment" (13 May 2022)

- Bruce Lascelles, British Society of Soil Science
“Engaging more soil scientists in long-term ecological field experiments, a potentially under-used resource”. (8 March 2022).
- Steve Ormerod, Cardiff University
“Forty Years of Continuous Research at Llyn Brianne Stream Catchments in Wales” (12 January 2022).
- The Trust’s social media following increased significantly during 2022 as we continued to broaden our audience and appeal. There was an increase in all our digital audiences as follows:
 - Twitter followers reached 1849, a **25%** increase on the previous year;
 - YouTube subscribers reached 69, a **64%** increase on the previous year;
 - LinkedIn followers reached 217, an **81%** increase on the previous year;
 - Instagram followers reached 210, a **69%** increase on the previous year.

Funding and Staff

The ECT continued to grow throughout 2022, rising to three employees for the first time in its fourteen-year history. In April a dedicated *part-time* fundraising manager Tim Rowland was appointed on a one-year contract, raising **£36,700** by 31 December 2022. The Trust now operates with 2.0FTEs and the in-kind expertise of 13 Trustees.

The British Ecological Society (BES) continued to support the ECT with a grant of £25,000 in 2022. The BES funding is a very positive endorsement of the value and credibility of the ECT and has almost certainly provided vital leverage in securing additional core funds from other external foundations.

At the BES Annual Meeting in December 2022 the ECT gave away books donated by one of ECT’s founding Trustees, Jonathan Silvertown, and as a result received £138 in voluntary donations.

The AmazonSmile Foundation donated a total of £36.96 to ECT in 2022, derived through qualifying purchases from 24 Amazon customers who support the ECT in this way.

Obtaining project funding is crucial to the support of ECT’s Small Grants Scheme. Several external funders consider this an ineligible use of their grant funds, and it is therefore very difficult to secure funding for this purpose, even though ecologists consider this to be one of the most important things that the Trust does for them. This is reflected in our 2022 grants budget being fully committed, as detailed above.

It remains challenging for ECT to project income any further than 3-4 years into the future, largely because the Trust is entirely dependent upon two income streams – competitively-won grant funding and private donations. We have a clear view of the annual income ECT requires to sustain and steadily grow its current capacity. This is between £100-£150kpa.

Under the direction of the ECT’s Executive Director, Ben Sykes, the administration of the Trust ran smoothly and efficiently throughout 2022. Prior to the appointment of our dedicated fundraising manager in April 2022, a significant amount of the Director’s time was taken up with preparing bids for potential funding organisations. Since then, our Executive Director has been able to focus effectively on engagement initiatives with strategic partners, including the British Society of Soil Science (BSSS), Pasture for Life (Pfl), the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), the Royal Entomological Society (RES) and the National Trust. Our association with the BSSS resulted in the organisation of the ECT’s fringe event at the World Congress of Soil Science in Glasgow on 4 August, followed by the site tour of the Whim Bog LTE on 5 August. Our dedicated part-time Communications Officer, Danae Dodge, has helped significantly with administrative work including updating the Trust’s website, developing new LTE webpages, working on LTE Interpretation Boards, preparing our quarterly newsletter and managing our social media channels. Since the appointment of our Communications Officer on 1 February 2021, there has been a considerable boost to our audiences and followers using various digital platforms.

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the functioning of the ECT were not significant in 2022. With a previous long-standing commitment to home-working and online meetings (for cost and environmental reasons), ECT staff and trustees continued working normally for the most part throughout 2022.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of ECT's ability to sustain the 36 currently active LTEs now on its register. Where LTEs struggle for funding, both tenured and retired ecological researchers volunteer their time to keep treatments going and analyse data, often drawing in undergraduate and postgraduate students to assist in the overall running of experiments.

ECT also engages members of the public as volunteers from time-to-time when the need arises. At 31 December 2022, the Trust has a 'Volunteer Pool' of 12 to support relevant engagement activities at LTEs, such as maintenance days. Such activity is driven by arising need rather than by design each year, and ECT is always vigilant for such opportunities. In some rare cases, it is also possible for ECT to engage volunteers in botanical surveys at LTEs, though this requires specialist skills and is dependent upon the availability of those skills in any given locality.

ECT's LTE User Group continues to be chaired by a volunteering Trustee.

Governance

Full Board of Trustees meetings took place online quarterly in January, April, July and October in 2022, with our Annual General Meeting taking place alongside the July gathering. The Board's remit is to focus on strategic issues. The Executive Committee comprising the ECT's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and Executive Director, met monthly throughout 2022, overseeing the day-to-day and month-to-month operations of the Trust. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Director reported to the Board at its four quarterly meetings in 2022.

ECT implemented *three* new corporate policies in 2022 as follows:

- Compassionate Leave policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy;
- Carbon Sustainability policy.

All our policies are available to view on request, and our EDI policy is available in the public domain via our website 'Opportunities' page at the following link:

<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/opportunities>

Plans for the Future

The ECT is planning a major new initiative around design and best practice for landscape-scale LTEs. We hope to bring together the major UK landowners and land managers for a stakeholder workshop in Spring 2023. There is also an ambition to afford the employment of our Communications Officer (Danae Dodge) full-time from her current part-time position. This will provide the additional capacity to deliver further LTE interpretation boards, virtual reality projects, citizen science activities, LTE Open Days/site visits and website enhancements. ECT also has a longer-term ambition to employ an 'Events Officer' to further expand the above activities. The Charity plans to continue employing Tim Rowland, our part-time Fundraising Manager, who has been so effective in bringing new funds to the Trust between April and December 2022.

ECT will continue to initiate more research 'hubs' which integrate appropriate long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) with existing LTEs on ECT's register. Depending upon funding availability, grant resources will remain focused on LTEs, but also on supporting LTE/LTM research hubs.

The Trust will prioritise necessary future interventions to safeguard at risk sites. A major initiative to help secure vulnerable LTEs is underway through ECT's coordination of a NERC Large Grant application involving 15 grassland LTEs on ECT's register. Designated as the 'GRASE' project consortium, this could yield up to £3M in funding across the 15 participating LTEs if the application is successful. The Charity is expecting a funding decision in summer 2023, potentially leading to a brand-new coordination role for ECT with Rothamsted Research (Park Grass LTE) as the scientific lead.

In partnership with the National Trust, ECT plans to hold a national/international in-person conference in 2023. This will highlight the importance of long-term ecological experimentation *at the landscape scale* in providing evidence to help mitigate the effects of environmental changes on the ecosystems on which society depends.

ECT will continue to build upon its pioneering work with Virtual Reality (VR) to plan and deliver one new VR headset experience for a selected LTE in 2023. This will be presented for the first time to a public audience at the BES Annual Meeting in Belfast in December 2023.

Subject to the availability of suitable funding, the Charity intends to develop a series of published infographics that help demonstrate the impact and value of LTEs and LTE/LTM hubs.

The Trust will embark upon a renewed campaign in 2023 to grow its 'Volunteer Pool' from its current 12 members, so that ECT has a human resource available which may be drawn upon to assist with free maintenance work or *citizen science* activities at any of the LTEs on our register.

The ECT will continue to collaborate with NERC's Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC) based in Lancaster to curate and secure vulnerable data from LTEs, following the landmark success in 2022 in archiving over 30 years of 'at-risk' data from the Somerford Mead grazing experiment in Oxfordshire.

The ECT will continue to build new strategic relationships with relevant organisations and land managers, focusing in particular in 2023 on nascent relationships with *Pasture for Life*, *Field Studies Council* and the *Royal Entomological Society*.

Support for existing and new LTEs will remain a core activity of the ECT. Any 'new' unregistered LTEs to emerge into view in 2023 will be reviewed using the ECT's established criteria for registration. Once registered, 'new' LTEs will become eligible for our small grants scheme and benefit from, amongst other things, ECT's free profile-raising activities.

Promotion of the value of LTEs/LTMs to stakeholders and wider society will continue to be a key objective of the Executive Director, who will also work to continue expanding our LTE User Group and oversee the Charity's potential new venture into landscape-scale LTEs in 2023 and beyond. A close working relationship with the BES will continue to be maintained through two-monthly meetings, helping to facilitate ECT communications with the wider ecological community. The ECT will work closely with the BES, universities, and research institutes to ensure that both the research and the educational potential of the UK's LTEs is realised.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

On 31st December 2022, ECT had funds of £80,177 comprised of £67,677 unrestricted and £12,500 restricted funds. Expenditure during the year was £97,608 and income £76,959. The ECT remains a going concern.

ECT is in a strong position to continue to be a catalyst and co-ordinating organisation that has a much bigger impact than its turnover suggests. We can identify other activities that we have enabled partner organisations to deliver, but we do not know the attendant costs.

Reserves

The Trustees have agreed a policy that 3 months operating reserve is desirable. Current unrestricted funds are larger than required to satisfy this, but our fundraising is extremely dependent on occasional relatively large donations and longer cover is highly desirable for stability and continuity of service.

Exemption from Audit

For the period ending 31 December 2022, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Tony Jones of Grosvenor Tax Practice Ltd to carry out the examination of these accounts. The trustees recommend that he remain in office until further notice.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and governed by Memorandum and Articles.

The Board of Trustees

The trustees were appointed for their relevant leadership, ecological knowledge, charity governance and administrative experience. They met four times during the period of this report. Further trustees will be appointed as the charity develops and requires contributions to its governance by people with other skills, networks and experience. They will be given appropriate induction and information about the role of trustees and their responsibilities under the Charities Acts. The development of the Board of Trustees is seen as an ongoing process and an induction process is used with new trustees. The ECT's Board of Trustees reflects broad representation by stakeholders in the ECT's objectives.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

The Trustees considered the risks to the charity during the course of the year and took appropriate steps to mitigate them as far as possible. The British Ecological Society's support provides endorsement of ECT's reputation and the value of its work, giving confidence to other funders. As the champion of long-term ecological experiments, persistence is one of our goals and our modest funds are managed to achieve this, while enabling funding opportunities to be exploited to advance our goal of establishing new long-term experiments and sustaining existing ones.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

06652160 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1126122

Registered office

Dr Robin Buxton
Manor House
Little Wittenham
Abingdon
Oxfordshire
OX14 4RA

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2022

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Trustees

Dr A J Birkett University Research Ecologist
Dr R D Buxton Ecologist
Dr S J Clarke Conservationist
Professor J G Duckett Retired
Professor B A Emmett Ecologist
Professor K W T Goulding Agricultural Research Scientist
C A Holt Ecologist
Dr K Maseyk Ecologist
Professor J W Silvertown University Lecturer
Dr C J Stevens Scientist
Dr D A Stone Scientist
J R B Tallowin Research Biologist
Dr K Thompson Retired University Lecturer

Company Secretary

Dr R D Buxton

Independent Examiner

Mr A T Jones
Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Executive Director: Ben Sykes (appointed 1st March 2018)

Bank: CAF Bank, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Website: <http://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org>

Contact: Dr Robin Buxton, Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, OX14 4RA

Number of employees: 3

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Ecological Continuity 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 which 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 Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper 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.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on **31/08/2023** and signed on its behalf by:



Jeremy R.B. Tallwin
Chair of Trustees

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
Ecological Continuity Trust**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Ecological Continuity Trust ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.



Mr A T Jones

Grosvenor Tax Practice Limited
7 Larksfield Road
Kingscourt
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL5 3PL

Date:31/08/2023.....

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

		Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	31.12.22 Total funds £	31.12.21 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies		76,763	12,500	89,263	45,612
Investment income	2	<u>196</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>596</u>
Total		<u>76,959</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>89,459</u>	<u>46,208</u>
 EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds		12,364	-	12,364	4,655
Charitable activities					
Experiments		13,530	-	13,530	24,959
Outreach		61,252	-	61,252	41,447
Other		<u>10,462</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,462</u>	<u>5,149</u>
Total		<u>97,608</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>97,608</u>	<u>76,210</u>
 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)					
Transfers between funds	7	<u>(20,649)</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>(8,149)</u>	<u>(30,002)</u>
		<u>45,360</u>	<u>(45,360)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		24,711	(32,860)	(8,149)	(30,002)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		42,966	45,360	88,326	118,328
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>67,677</u></u>	<u><u>12,500</u></u>	<u><u>80,177</u></u>	<u><u>88,326</u></u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Balance Sheet
31 December 2022**

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	31.12.22 Total funds £	31.12.21 Total funds £
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	25,000	-	25,000	25,000
Cash at bank		<u>44,700</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>57,200</u>	<u>66,012</u>
		69,700	12,500	82,200	91,012
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	6	(2,023)	-	(2,023)	(2,686)
		<u>67,677</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>80,177</u>	<u>88,326</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
		67,677	12,500	80,177	88,326
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES					
		<u>67,677</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>80,177</u>	<u>88,326</u>
NET ASSETS					
		<u>67,677</u>	<u>12,500</u>	<u>80,177</u>	<u>88,326</u>
FUNDS	7				
Unrestricted funds				67,677	42,966
Restricted funds				<u>12,500</u>	<u>45,360</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>80,177</u>	<u>88,326</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 31/08/2023 and were signed on its behalf by:


.....
Trustee

Hon. Treasurer, Ecological Continuity Trust

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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 (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The charitable company has taken advantage of the following disclosure exemptions in preparing these financial statements, as permitted by FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland':

- the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows;
- the requirement of paragraph 3.17(d);
- the requirement of paragraph 33.7.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the Charitable Trust. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

2. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31.12.22	31.12.21
	£	£
Deposit account interest	<u>196</u>	<u>596</u>

3. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

None of the trustees received any remuneration or benefits from the charity or any related entity.

Trustees' expenses

The charity has a policy of meeting trustees' and other volunteers' travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. Five trustees claimed travel expenses during the reporting period and the Treasurer used personal accounts to pay various costs and was reimbursed.

4. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted fund £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	10,613	34,999	45,612
Investment income	<u>596</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>596</u>
Total	<u>11,209</u>	<u>34,999</u>	<u>46,208</u>
 EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	4,655	-	4,655
Charitable activities			
Experiments	19,048	5,911	24,959
Outreach	3,391	38,056	41,447
Other	<u>5,149</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,149</u>
Total	<u>32,243</u>	<u>43,967</u>	<u>76,210</u>
 NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	 (21,034)	 (8,968)	 (30,002)
 RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	 <u>64,000</u>	 <u>54,328</u>	 <u>118,328</u>
 TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	 <u>42,966</u>	 <u>45,360</u>	 <u>88,326</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

5. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.22	31.12.21
	£	£
Other debtors	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>

6. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR	31.12.22	31.12.21
	£	£
Accrued expenses	<u>2,023</u>	<u>2,686</u>

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.12.22
	At 1.1.22	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	42,966	(20,649)	45,360	67,677
Restricted funds				
Restricted Fund	45,360	12,500	(45,360)	12,500
	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>88,326</u>	<u>(8,149)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>80,177</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	76,959	(97,608)	(20,649)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	12,500	-	12,500
	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>89,459</u>	<u>(97,608)</u>	<u>(8,149)</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 December 2022

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.1.21 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.12.21 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	64,000	(21,034)	42,966
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	54,328	(8,968)	45,360
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>118,328</u>	<u>(30,002)</u>	<u>88,326</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	11,209	(32,243)	(21,034)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	34,999	(43,967)	(8,968)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>46,208</u>	<u>(76,210)</u>	<u>(30,002)</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.1.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	64,000	(41,683)	45,360	67,677
Restricted funds				
Restricted Fund	54,328	3,532	(45,360)	12,500
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>118,328</u>	<u>(38,151)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>80,177</u>

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 December 2022

7. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	88,168	(129,851)	(41,683)
Restricted funds			
Restricted Fund	47,499	(43,967)	3,532
	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>135,667</u>	<u>(173,818)</u>	<u>(38,151)</u>

8. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Robin Buxton is a trustee of the Patsy Wood Trust, the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and The Sylva Foundation. Stewart Clarke is a trustee of British Ecological Society, which gives grants to ECT. Carly Stevens is an employee of Lancaster University which has received grants from ECT. No trustee, their family, or any organisation they are associated with has benefitted financially from the ECT.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

	31.12.22	31.12.21
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS		
Donations and legacies		
Donations	89,263	45,612
Investment income		
Deposit account interest	<u>196</u>	<u>596</u>
Total incoming resources	89,459	46,208
 EXPENDITURE		
Raising donations and legacies		
Wages	11,198	3,938
Pensions	1,166	496
Sundries	<u>-</u>	<u>221</u>
	12,364	4,655
Charitable activities		
Wages	41,453	37,148
Pensions	4,182	3,155
IT & website costs	722	-
Hosting meetings & conference fees	11,435	-
Outreach travel expenses	2,634	2,350
Sundries	826	5,000
Grants to institutions	<u>13,530</u>	<u>18,753</u>
	74,782	66,406
Support costs		
Management		
Wages	5,979	2,625
Pensions	397	331
Insurance	670	-
Payroll management	-	48
Sundries	<u>375</u>	<u>100</u>
	7,421	3,104
Governance costs		
Wages	-	1,313
Pensions	-	165
Sundries	641	74
Accountancy and legal fees	<u>2,400</u>	<u>493</u>
	3,041	2,045

This page does not form part of the statutory accounts

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 December 2022

	31.12.22	31.12.21
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Total resources expended	<u>97,608</u>	<u>76,210</u>
Net expenditure	<u><u>(8,149)</u></u>	<u><u>(30,002)</u></u>

This page does not form part of the statutory accounts

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1126122

Accounts



Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021.

Company Number: 6652160

Charity Number: 1126122

Ecological Continuity Trust

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Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report

The Ecological Continuity Trust

The Ecological Continuity Trust is the only organisation working to safeguard the future of the UK's strategic network of long-term ecological experiments (LTEs). Many ecological processes operate over timescales of decades. As the effects of environmental change on ecosystems are often slow to emerge, long-term studies are essential to characterise and understand these changes.

LTEs involve experimental manipulation combined with monitoring and these have been the focus of the ECT during its first thirteen years. LTEs provide greater insight into how ecosystems are likely to respond to environmental changes than monitoring alone. An experimental approach allows researchers to investigate cause and effect, to test the effectiveness of management regimes and to manipulate environmental variables beyond those currently prevailing, allowing the investigation of future scenarios. Long-term ecological experiments provide a unique platform for such studies, investigating the effects of, and interactions between environmental changes, such as air pollution, grazing management and climate change on ecosystems. LTEs allow us to understand and predict future scenarios for ecosystems in the face of environmental change. The role that LTEs play in enabling society to understand and mitigate where possible, the consequences of climate change on ecosystems is now more important than ever.

During 2021 the ECT expanded its remit to include support for some long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that are associated with existing LTEs. The rationale for this expansion of ECT's remit and vision was fourfold:

1. Evidence that LTM studies, such as those included within the UK Environmental Change Network, are increasingly threatened with funding cuts and staffing shortages in the same way that LTEs were in 2008, when the ECT was established.
2. LTMs such as the Environmental Change Network sites that are associated with existing LTEs have the potential to add significant scale values to the scientific outputs of the latter.
3. The creation of LTE/LTM research 'hubs' around existing LTEs should increase their research, education and societal outreach value and thus broaden the User Group community.
4. Inclusion of LTM studies should broaden ECT's interest and appeal to the wider public, both in terms of its science content and its status as a charity requiring funds and donations.

Ecological Continuity Trust

In 2020, ECT published its first Corporate Plan '*Securing Long-term Experiments for the Future*, which sets out a strategic framework for our activities and operations for the next decade 2020-2030. The Plan is available from ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>

Overall Purpose

To ensure that the ecological evidence available to inform land management decisions is supported by studies that are conducted over a long enough time to:

- include representative and extreme weather conditions;
- allow for ecological processes that operate slowly - sometimes over decades;
- capture infrequent stochastic events such as epidemic disease or severe drought.

The following are **Specific Objectives of the ECT**

1. Supporting existing long-term experimental platforms and new research initiatives that make use of these platforms;
2. Growing ECT's register of long-term experimental platforms as previously unknown LTEs emerge into view;
3. Facilitating the establishment of new LTEs and LTE/LTM research hubs where the scientific need is identified and enabling their use by a wide variety of researchers;
4. Establishing a new register of long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that add scale value to existing LTEs and supporting those studies in a similar way to LTEs;
5. Building a network of LTE/LTM users and stakeholders (the User Group) to promote and integrate knowledge exchange and innovative scientific and practical outputs from LTEs/LTMs;
6. Helping to place experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking and sustainable land use, leading to environmental and social well-being;
7. Communicating the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs to a wide audience of stakeholders beyond the ecological research community.

Ecological Continuity Trust

The ECT's Key Roles

1. **Finance** - brokering major funding, especially for new experimental facilities; providing a stop-gap in emergencies for existing LTEs/LTMs, and funding small research projects, data curation and essential maintenance/repair work;
2. **Advocacy and Engagement With Science Policy** - championing the case for LTEs/LTMs in the ecological research community, with Government/Research Councils and within host institutions; building partnerships with organisations in the scientific and conservation sectors, to help put experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking, sustainable land management and education;
3. **Moral Support** - supporting researchers and trying to ensure continuity of leadership and institutional support for existing LTEs/LTMs; providing a web-based resource promoting our sites for use as *research platforms* by the wider community;
4. **Intellectual** - identifying research gaps in the LTE network and advocating the filling of these gaps and that the suite of existing LTEs as a whole is greater than the sum of the parts; maintaining a network of key stakeholders;
5. **Communication** - explaining the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs by harnessing new digital technologies such as webinars and virtual reality, and developing impact case studies.

Activities and Achievements - How the Public Benefitted

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. In 2021, our activities to forward our public benefit were as follows:

- The ECT's primary mission to safeguard and support LTEs remains unchanged but has now been supplemented by objectives around the safeguarding of certain types of professional LTM studies. The ECT's 10-year Corporate Plan for the current decade 2020-2030 outlines the development of our science communication activities, which aim to showcase the importance and value of long-term field ecology to society. The way ECT has approached its science communication activities has been modified during the coronavirus pandemic to focus more on digital technologies. The appointment of ECT's first ever dedicated Communications Officer in February

Ecological Continuity Trust

2021 has been a milestone in our communications activity, details of which will be presented later in this report.

- ECT's impact as an organisation has seen a step change in the recognition of our relevance and importance during 2021. This has been achieved through our development of several new strategic partnerships, including with the National Biodiversity Network, the Sustainable Soils Alliance, the Royal Society of Biology, Natural England, CIEEM and, most recently, the British Society of Soil Science. Through the latter partnership, ECT gained communications access to COP26 in Glasgow, enabling us to showcase online to a large audience how relevant LTEs on our register contribute to our understanding and potential mitigation of the long-term effects of climate change on ecosystems.
- Partnerships have led to the Trust co-hosting the following significant events in 2021:
 - o CIEEM/ECT Joint Spring Conference on LTEs, held 16 March online;
 - o CIEEM/ECT joint webinar on Biodiversity Net Gain, held 21 July online;
 - o AFBI/ECT 50th anniversary celebration for the Hillsborough long-term grassland experiment, held on site 16 September in person.
- The impacts of the science being conducted on the LTEs on ECT's national register continue to be realised mainly within the scientific community, but also socially through inputs to policymaking and decision-making around land use and biodiversity improvement. Economic impacts are much harder to assess and quantify for LTEs, but the ECT has commenced a piece of work with an environmental economist at NatureScot to try to interpret economic impacts as potential cost savings to government and other landowners in taking preventive action informed by LTEs as opposed to dealing with the economic consequences of maintaining the status quo (or taking the wrong action). A good example would be the BangorDIVERSE LTE at Bangor in North Wales, which has impacts in natural flood management through the planting of different species of deciduous trees in different densities and arrangements to understand better their effects upon soil hydrological processes.
- New long-term experiments are being added to ECT's national register every year. **Three** were added in 2021 as follows:

Ecological Continuity Trust

- o The Llyn Brianne Stream Observatory LTE located in the Cambrian Mountains of mid-Wales and managed by Steve Ormerod (Cardiff University), the first *freshwater* experiment to be added to our register – running since 1981;
 - o The Moor House Grazing Enclosures LTE located in the northern Pennines in Upper Teesdale and managed by Rob Marrs (University of Liverpool) – running since 1953;
 - o The Plynlimon Catchments LTE located in Wales in the headwaters of the Severn and Wye rivers and managed by Bridget Emmett (Centre for Ecology and Hydrology) – running since 1968.
- The ECT now supports **36** currently active LTEs across all four nations of the UK. The overall annual usage of LTEs for both research and educational purposes is estimated to be at least 1500 individuals, including 73 early-career researchers and 338 PhD, Masters and undergraduate student projects collectively. LTEs clearly provide a valuable and well-used resource for the UK’s ecological community. Relatively few LTEs utilise volunteers at the present time but those that do, do so on a regular basis and are often sited on NNR land owned by Natural England. ECT itself is in the process of building its own ‘Volunteer Pool’ to help provide an additional resource to LTEs where it may be needed, for example for site maintenance days. Data from LTEs in several cases is deposited in international databases, which adds to the wider ‘remote’ usage of these important experiments.
- The LTEs on ECT’s register have an impressive record of scientific publications on an annual basis. Comprehensive bibliographies are maintained on the individual webpages for each LTE on our register. For example, the Llyn Brianne freshwater stream catchments LTE in the Cambrian Mountains in Wales has produced over 100 scientific papers during its 40-year existence. In 2021, key publications emerged from the Wardlow Hay Cop LTE in Derbyshire and the BIFoR-FACE elevated CO₂ experiment in mature oak woodland in Staffordshire. For the latter, the publication in *Tree Physiology* reported the first major results from the experiment, indicating that given adequate nutrients, mature oak trees will continue to enhance their carbon assimilation under elevated CO₂ treatments. This publication led to numerous online and broadcast media activities during October, for example *BBC Midlands Today*, involving post-doctoral researcher Anna Gardner (University of Birmingham).
- The LTE User Group, which comprises academic ecologists, research students, policy makers, ecological consultants,

Ecological Continuity Trust

environmental non-governmental organisations, landowners and industry grew consistently during 2021 to **210** members at the close of the year. This represents a 20% growth in membership on the previous year.

- A survey of the vulnerabilities of all 36 currently active LTEs on ECT's register was completed this year. Seven were identified to be at risk of ceasing to be functional through, for example, lack of research funding or declining use. ECT's Executive Director initiated dialogue with PIs to begin to address issues within our power to influence.
- ECT launched its **first three** new *research 'hubs'* which link up long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) with existing LTEs on our national register. The new hubs are built around the MOORCO experiment in Glenshagh, Scotland; the Park Grass experiment in Hertfordshire; and the North Wyke Farm Platform in Devon. They will be featured in a brand-new section of our website currently under development.
- The ECT continues to break new ground in its activities, awarding more Small Grants to ecologists in 2021 than in any year previously. The following seven grants were awarded across the year:
 - o Dr Kris Hart (University of Birmingham) was awarded a grant of £2000 towards the costs of processing tree leaf samples from the BIFoR-FACE experiment that require careful preparation and curation to guarantee their long-term storage for future analysis;
 - o Katy Faulkner (University of Warwick) was awarded a grant of £2000 towards the costs of consumables and travel for a PhD project investigating microbial carbon cycling at the BIFoR-FACE experiment;
 - o Dr Jill Kowal (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew) was awarded £3000 towards the renewal of Thursley Common LTE in Surrey. A new team is measuring the ability of heathland vegetation and belowground mycorrhizal fungal communities to recover 10 years after persistent elevated nitrogen treatments, with a view to examining the influences of past treatments on ecosystem carbon sequestration;
 - o Dr Josep Barba (University of Birmingham) was awarded £1914 towards field consumables for work at the BIFoR-FACE experiment in Staffordshire looking at how future atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations affect tree

Ecological Continuity Trust

stem carbon dioxide and methane fluxes in mature oak woodland;

- o Dr Caroline Meharg (Queen's University Belfast) was awarded a grant of £3000 towards the costs of surveying the soil rhizosphere microbes at the Hillsborough LTE in Northern Ireland. This study will provide insights into impacts of soil management on microbial biodiversity and how this integrates with soil chemistry to drive competition in grassland pastures;
 - o Dr Jonathan Holland (Agri-food and Biosciences Institute, NI) was awarded £1020 towards the costs of co-hosting (with ECT) the 50th anniversary event for the Hillsborough long-term nutrient addition experiment in Northern Ireland;
 - o Professor David Gowing (Open University) was awarded a special data curation grant of £5272 for vital work to secure the long-term survey data from the Somerford Mead LTE in Oxfordshire. The data will be deposited in NERC's Environmental Information Data Centre and so available to all.
- ECT continues to be a pioneer (in the UK) of the use of virtual reality (VR) to communicate the science behind LTEs. Our second VR headset experience was completed this year for the Whim Bog LTE located in the Scottish Borders, and was made available to the public for the first time at a major conference in December (see below);
 - ECT participated in the British Ecological Society's (BES) *Ecology Across the Borders* Conference in Liverpool held 12-15 December 2021. Despite pandemic constraints on "in-person" attendance, the Trust's exhibition stand received a good level of interest with many new members joining the LTE User Group and signing up to receive the ECT Newsletter. Stringent biosecurity measures were in place to enable several conference delegates to view the new VR experience of the Whim Bog LTE. The response of the viewers was enthusiastic and highly positive.
 - In association with ECT, the University of Oxford published a video on the RainDrop experiment as part of its on-going *Laboratory With Leaves* series. Titled '[The Climate Machine](#)', the video features Andy Hector and Sara Middleton explaining the importance of this LTE to science and society.

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- The Trust's Executive Director Ben Sykes contributed the following ECT-authored articles for each publication of the BES's quarterly members magazine *The Niche* in 2021:
 - *LTEs and Urban Horticulture - a Missing Link?* by Ken Thompson (March issue);
 - *Building Collaborative Links Between LTEs and Monitoring* (June issue);
 - *Breathing New Life Into Long-term Ecological Experiments* (September issue);
 - *Expanding the UK's Network of Long-term Ecological Experiments* (December issue).
- A further article referencing the Trust was published by David Wilkinson (University of Lincoln) in *British Wildlife* in August 2021 titled '*Peering Into the Future With Help From the Past - the Importance of Long-term Ecological Studies*'.
- ECT produced a quarterly newsletter throughout 2021 as previously, in March, June, September and December. All issues can be viewed on the ECT's website at:
<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/newsletter-archive>.
- The following podcast interviews were carried out in 2021, which are available for listening from the ECT website at:
<https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/podcasts>.
 - Steve Ormerod of Cardiff University at the Llyn Brianne Stream Observatory in the Cambrian Mountains of mid-Wales (November 2021);
 - Raj Whitlock of the University of Liverpool at the Buxton Climate Change Impacts Laboratory (BCCIL) in Derbyshire (July 2021);
 - Richard Bardgett of the University of Manchester at the Colt Park Meadows long-term grassland restoration experiment in North Yorkshire (July 2021);
 - Jill Kowal of Royal Botanic Gardens Kew at the Thursley Common nitrogen deposition experiment in Surrey (June 2021);
 - Andy Smith of Bangor University in North Wales at the BangorDIVERSE long-term deciduous woodland experiment at Henfaes (June 2021);
 - Dario Fornara of the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in Northern Ireland at the Hillsborough long-term grassland experiment (May 2021).
- The Trust hosted the following series of six webinars in 2021,

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which proved popular and attracted several new members to join our core audience. Recordings of all these webinars can be viewed on ECT's YouTube channel at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjcaas_6y9rD0luINsxGEXw

- o Ken Thompson, University of Sheffield
"Long-term Experiments & Urban Horticulture - A Missing Link?"
(29 January 2021)
 - o Martin Lester, National Trust Wicken Fen
"Long-term Ecological Field Research at the National Trust's Wicken Fen" (30 March 2021)
 - o Lisa Chilton, NBN Trust
"The Work of the National Biodiversity Network" (19 May 2021)
 - o Jason Reeves, CIEEM
"The Role & Activities of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management" (21 July 2021)
 - o Gareth Clay, University of Manchester
"Linking up Long-term Ecological Experiments with Wildfire Research" (17 September 2021)
 - o Simon Peacock, Newcastle University
"More Than a Century of Grassland Research at Palace Leas Experiment" (26 November 2021)
- New webpages were published in 2021 for the following LTEs on our register: Newborough Warren and Colt Park Meadows.
 - The Trust's social media following increased significantly during 2021 as we continued to broaden our audience and appeal. New platforms were established including Instagram and LinkedIn, and these have led to a steady increase in all our digital audiences as follows:
 - o Twitter followers reached 1475, a 33% increase on the previous reporting year;
 - o YouTube subscribers reached 42, a 282% increase on the previous reporting year;
 - o LinkedIn followers reached 120 from new;
 - o Instagram followers reached 124 from new.

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Funding and Staff

The British Ecological Society (BES) supported the ECT with a grant of £25,000 in 2021. Continued funding support by the BES is a very positive endorsement of the value and credibility of the ECT and has provided vital leverage in securing additional core funds from other external foundations. Other funds received in 2021 included: £25,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, £30,356 in private donations, £5044 from the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and £50 via the AmazonSmile Foundation.

Obtaining project funding is crucial to the support of ECT's Small Grants Scheme. Several external funders consider this an ineligible use of their grant funds and it is therefore very difficult to secure funding for this purpose, even though ecologists consider this to be one of the most important things that the Trust does for them. This is reflected in our 2021 grants budget being fully committed, with £20k awarded across seven grantees. It is probable therefore, that post-pandemic demand for the ECT's grants will outstrip the availability of funds in the coming years.

It remains challenging for ECT to project income any further than 3-4 years into the future, largely because the Trust is entirely dependent upon two income streams - competitively-won grant funding and private donations. However, we now have a much clearer view of the annual income ECT requires to sustain and steadily grow its current capacity. This is between £100-£150kpa.

ECT's Executive Director, Ben Sykes, moved to full-time working for the Trust from January 2021. Under his Direction the ECT's administration ran smoothly and efficiently throughout 2021 despite constraints imposed by covid restrictions on site visits and face-to-face meetings. A significant amount of the Director's time was, however, taken up with preparing bids for potential funding organisations. The time consumed by the continuing search for potential funders and preparing bids means that some engagement initiatives by the Director had to be postponed into 2022. The appointment of ECT's first ever dedicated Communications Officer (Danae Dodge) in February 2021 has significantly helped with administrative work such as updating the Trust's website, preparing our quarterly newsletter and managing our social media channels. The Communications Officer appointment has resulted in a considerable boost to our audiences and followers using various digital platforms.

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the functioning of the ECT were not significant in 2021. With a previous long-standing commitment to home-working and online meetings (for cost and

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environmental reasons), ECT staff and trustees continued working normally for the most part throughout 2021.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of ECT's ability to sustain the 36 currently active LTEs now on its register. Where LTEs struggle for funding, both tenured and retired ecological researchers volunteer their time to keep treatments going and analyse data, often drawing in undergraduate and postgraduate students to assist in the overall running of experiments.

ECT also engages members of the public as volunteers from time-to-time when the need arises. In 2021, the Trust began recruiting a 'Volunteer Pool' to support relevant engagement activities at LTEs, such as maintenance days. By the end of the year, the Pool comprised 11 volunteers. Such activity is driven by arising need rather than by design each year, and ECT is always vigilant for such opportunities. In some rare cases, it is also possible for ECT to engage volunteers in botanical surveys at LTEs, though this requires specialist skills and is dependent upon the availability of those skills in any given locality.

Constraints imposed by the coronavirus pandemic made volunteer activity difficult or impossible to arrange at many LTEs throughout 2021.

ECT's LTE User Group continues to be chaired by a volunteering Trustee.

Governance

Full Board of Trustees meetings took place quarterly in January, April, July and October in 2021, with our Annual General Meeting taking place alongside the July gathering. The Board's remit is to focus on strategic issues. Stewart Clark (National Trust) was welcomed to the ECT Board as the BES representative in January 2021 and, in July 2021, the Board also welcomed Professor Jeff Duckett (Queen Mary University of London) as the Trust's new Honorary Treasurer and member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee now comprises ECT's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and Executive Director, and continued to meet monthly throughout 2021, overseeing the day-to-day and month-to-month operations of the Trust. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Director reported to the Board at its four quarterly meetings in 2021.

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ECT implemented four new corporate policies in 2021 on Grievance, Homeworking, Expenses and Data Protection. All our policies are available to view on request.

Plans for the Future

The appointment of a part-time (0.5FTE) Communications Officer in 2021 on a two-year contract allows the ECT to grow its outreach and engagement capacity significantly during 2022 and beyond. This will enable its Executive Director to allocate more time to building strategic relationships with key organisations, engaging in further advocacy activities with policymakers and continuing our ongoing fundraising campaign. Subject to the availability of funds, the Trust will be looking to extend the Communications Officer's contract and hours of work.

ECT will build upon the recent expansion of its remit by facilitating further research 'hubs' which integrate appropriate long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) with existing LTEs on ECT's register. Depending upon funding availability, grant resources will remain focused on LTEs, but also on supporting LTE/LTM research hubs.

Considering the review of the vulnerability of the 36 currently active LTEs on our register, the ECT will prioritise necessary future interventions to safeguard at risk sites.

ECT's current fundraising campaign will continue throughout 2022, focused initially on securing a major core funding contribution from the John Ellerman Foundation. We will also target significant project-based funding to boost ECT's Continuity Fund for small grants. We will explore the possibility of appointing a part-time dedicated fundraiser to increase the volume of grant applications that we are able to prepare and submit.

The Trust will seek to partner with the British Society of Soil Science to hold a national/international, in-person conference in 2022 that will engage the soil science community in making more use of LTE sites on our national register.

ECT will continue to build upon its pioneering work with Virtual Reality (VR) to plan a third new VR headset experience for a selected LTE in late 2022.

We will continue to grow our 'Volunteer Pool' from its current 11 members, so that ECT has a human resource available which may be drawn upon to assist with free maintenance work at any of the LTEs on our register.

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The Trust will work towards conducting at least one ‘citizen science initiative’ at a suitable LTE (or LTEs) in 2022. We have begun work partnering with academic PIs at selected LTEs to begin framing appropriate activities that can be conducted by ‘laypersons’ with minimal training.

Subject to the lifting of pandemic restrictions, ECT will look to hold at least one ‘Open Day’ for members of the public at a strategic LTE within our network.

Subject to available funds, the Trust will produce a series of infographics highlighting the value and impacts of LTEs.

The ECT will continue to collaborate with NERC’s Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC) based in Lancaster to curate and secure the data from LTEs.

The Trust will look to resume momentum in the building of new strategic relationships with relevant land management organisations, where impetus was lost due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Support for existing and new LTEs will remain a core activity of the ECT. Any ‘new’ unregistered LTEs to emerge into view in 2022 will be reviewed using the ECT’s established criteria for registration. Once registered, ‘new’ LTEs will become eligible for our small grants scheme and benefit from, amongst other things, ECT’s free profile-raising activities.

Promotion of the value of LTEs/LTMs to stakeholders and wider society will continue to be a key objective of the Executive Director, who will also work to continue expanding our LTE User Group. A close working relationship with the BES will continue to be maintained through two-monthly meetings, helping to facilitate ECT communications with the wider ecological community. The ECT will work closely with the BES, universities and research institutes to ensure that both the research and the educational potential of the UK’s LTEs is realised.

Jeremy R.B. Tallwin

Chair of Trustees 20 July 2022

Jeremy R.B. Tallwin

Ecological Continuity Trust

Ecological Continuity Trust

Financial Review

Financial Position

On 31st December 2021, ECT had funds of £88,327 comprised of £42,971 unrestricted and £45,356 restricted. Expenditure during the year was £76,209 (or £119,386 when in kind expenditure is included) and income £46,208 (or £89,385 when in kind income is included). The ECT remains a going concern.

ECT is in a strong position to continue to be a catalyst and co-ordinating organisation that has a much bigger impact than its turnover suggests. We can identify other activities that we have enabled partner organisations to deliver, but we do not know the attendant costs (note 5 to the accounts).

Reserves

The Trustees have agreed a policy that 3 months operating reserve is desirable. Current unrestricted funds are larger than required to satisfy this, but our fundraising is extremely dependent on occasional relatively large donations and longer cover is highly desirable for stability and continuity of service.

Exemption from Audit

For the period ending 31/12/2021, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Certax Accounting to carry out the examination of these accounts. The trustees recommend that Certax Accounting remain in office until further notice.

Jeffrey Duckett
(Hon. Treasurer)

22 September 2022

Ecological Continuity Trust

Ecological Continuity Trust

Independent Examiner's Report

to the trustee on the unaudited financial statements of the Ecological Continuity Trust

We report on the financial statements of the Ecological Continuity trust for the year ended 31st December 2021 which comprise financial activities, the balance sheet and the related notes.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner: As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is our responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)9b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report: Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission and in accordance with the provisions in part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement: In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2021 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 and the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities.

Simon Oakland

Ecological Continuity Trust

CerTax Accounting
Independent Scrutineer

Ecological Continuity Trust

Legal & Administrative Matters

Trustees/Company Directors - serving during the report period

Jeremy Tallowin (Chair)
Robin Buxton (Secretary)
Jonathan Silvertown
Keith Goulding
Carly Stevens
Alison Birkett
Kadmiel Maseyk
Charles Holt
Bridget Emmett
Kenneth Thompson
David Stone
Stewart Clarke
Jeffrey Duckett (Treasurer) - took office from 22nd July 2021

Executive Director - Ben Sykes appointed 1st March 2018
Charity number (registered 1st October 2008): 1126122
Company number (registered 21st July 2008): 6652160
Registered Office: Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RA
Independent Examiner: Certax Accounting, Little Sturt, Oxford Road, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4ET
Bank: CAF Bank, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ
Contact: Dr Robin Buxton, Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, OX14 4RA
Number of employees: 2
Website: www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org

Structure, Governance and Management

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and governed by Memorandum and Articles.

The Board of Trustees

The trustees were appointed for their relevant leadership, ecological knowledge, charity governance and administrative experience. They met four times during the period of this report. Further trustees will be appointed as the charity develops and requires contributions to its governance by people with other skills, networks and experience. They will be given appropriate induction and information about the role of trustees and their responsibilities under the Charities Acts. The development of the Board of Trustees is seen as an ongoing process and an induction process is used with new trustees. The

Ecological Continuity Trust

ECT's Board of Trustees reflects broad representation by stakeholders in the ECT's objectives.

Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

None of the trustees received any remuneration or benefits from the charity or any related entity. The charity has a policy of meeting trustees' and other volunteers' travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. Five trustees claimed travel expenses during the reporting period and the Treasurer used personal accounts to pay various costs and was reimbursed.

Related Parties

Robin Buxton is a trustee of the Patsy Wood Trust, the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and The Sylva Foundation. Stewart Clarke is a trustee of British Ecological Society, which gives grants to ECT. Carly Stevens is an employee of Lancaster University which has received grants from ECT. No trustee, their family, or any organisation they are associated with has benefitted financially from the ECT.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the year end and of its incoming resources and resources expended during that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

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

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The Trustees have considered the fundraising standards and regulations contained in *The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016* and confirm that the Charity has complied with its requirements.

The Trustees have all confirmed in writing that they are not disqualified from acting as trustees.

The Trustees have reviewed the charity's processes for holding and managing personal data and are confident that they have done everything in their power to comply with GDPR.

Accountant's Fees: for conducting independent scrutiny of accounts and related submissions - £840 an increase of £600 due to HMRC demands for a series of Corporation Tax returns. The Trustees could not have foreseen these retrospective demands none of which resulted in a liability for tax.

Risks to the Charity

The Trustees considered the risks to the charity during the course of the year and took appropriate steps to mitigate them as far as possible. The British Ecological Society's support provides endorsement of ECT's reputation and the value of its work, giving confidence to other funders. As *the* champion of long-term ecological experiments, persistence is one of our goals and our modest funds are managed to achieve this, while enabling funding opportunities to be exploited to advance our goal of establishing new long-term experiments and sustaining existing ones.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 22 September 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Jeremy R.B.Tallowin

Jeremy R.B.Tallowin
(Chair of Trustees)

22 September 2022

Ecological Continuity Trust

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet

At the end of December 2021 the ECT had a balance of £88,327 which includes both restricted and unrestricted funds. We received £45,612 in voluntary income as outlined in our accompanying notes on the accounts.

We are grateful to the British Ecological Society for facilities, financial support and practical collaboration, and to all our donors for their financial and practical support and enthusiasm.

Ecological Continuity Trust SOFA for period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021

	Notes	2021			2020		
		Unrestricte d	Restrict ed	Total	Unrestrict ed	Restrict ed	Total
Income							
Voluntary	2	10,612	35,000	45,612	96,167	15,000	111,167
Investment	3	596		596	25		25
In Kind income	4	43,177		43,177	42,330		42,330
TOTAL INCOME		54,385	35,000	89,385	138,522	15,000	153,522
Expenditure							
Cost of Generating Funds		4,655		4,655	4,768		4,768
Charitable Activities	5,6,7	22,438	43,968	66,406	25,148	2,000	27,148
Governance & Admin		5,148		5,148	5,038		5,038
In Kind expenditure	4	43,177		43,177	42,330		42,330
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7	75,418	43,968	119,386	77,284	2,000	79,284
NET INCOMING/OUTGOING		-21,033	-8,968	30,001	36,468	37,770	74,238
Funds Brought Forward		63,999	54,329	118,328	27,531	16,559	44,090
Funds carried forward	6,7	42,971	45,356	88,327	63,999	54,329	118,328

Ecological Continuity Trust

Ecological Continuity Trust Balance Sheet for period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021				
		31.12.20 21	31.12.20 20	
	Note s	£	£	
Current Assets				
Debtors		25,000	31,258	
Creditors due within 1 year		2,686	1,356	2020 Restated from £10,356
Cash at bank		66,013	88,426	,
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		88,327	118,328	
Net Current Assets		88,327	118,328	
Total Assets		88,327	118,328	
Funds				
Restricted Funds	6,7	45,356	54,329	2020 restated from £20,559
Unrestricted Funds		42,972	63,999	2020 restated from £88,769
TOTAL FUNDS		88,327	118,328	

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 22 September 2022 and are signed on its behalf by:

Jeffrey Duckett (Hon. Treasurer)

Notes to the Financial Statements

Ecological Continuity Trust

1. Accounting Policies - Basis of preparation - The accounts have been prepared under the FRS 102 policies, concepts and principles for smaller entities including the adjustment of estimates and errors and Charity Commission SORP2016.
2. Voluntary income - grants from the British Ecological Society of £25,000 and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation of £20,000 made up the majority of our income.
3. Investment income = bank interest and a compensation payment of £588 from HSBC after we closed our account with them.
4. In Kind income and expenditure and volunteer time - It is particularly difficult to estimate the money cost equivalent of time given to the ECT for things that, were it not given, it would have to pay for. Most of this given time is given by trustees, but outside the narrow, minimum formal limits required for responsible trusteeship. The figure given is based on £250 a day per person. Leaving aside time spent by the trustees, ECT enjoys commitments of time from half a dozen people. No cost equivalent can be calculated as the contributions are not susceptible to being expressed as services that the charity would otherwise pay for. The figure given is estimated on a 2% increase on the figure for 2020.
5. Costs of Activities:- ECT achieves its charitable aims through two sorts of activity:
 - a. practical matters of establishment, maintenance, operation and measurement of experiments;
 - b. communication, outreach, engagement and promotion of long term ecological experimentation.

Both sorts of activity are delivered in partnership with other organisations, ECT being the coordinating catalyst. The major costs are borne by partners. There is sometimes a delay between promising a grant to an institution and payment being requested. We have limited access to partners' information on expenditure on long term experiments, so we have no way of calculating an accurate monetary value of the catalytic role we fulfil although an estimate of at least £3,000,000 is supported by returns from a sample of our experiments.

Costs of activities in 2021

£	Direct costs of activities	Support costs apportioned <i>pro rata</i> to direct costs	Total costs of activities
Experiments	13,481	6,206	19,687
Outreach	25,931	15,516	41,447
TOTAL	39,412	21,722	61,134

Ecological Continuity Trust

Costs of activities in 2020 - as restated see note 7

£	Direct costs of activities	Support costs apportioned pro rata to direct costs	Total costs of activities
Experiments	3,098	6,187	9,285
Outreach	2,396	15,468	17,864
TOTAL	5,494	21,655	27,149

The following new grants were awarded during the year:

University of Birmingham - Hart - £2,000;
 University of Warwick - Faulkner - £2,000;
 Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew - Kowal - £2,000 to consortium for research on wildfire effects at Thursley common;
 University of Birmingham, Institute of Forest Research, Barba - £1,914;
 AFBI Hillsborough - Holland - £1,020
 Queen's University Belfast - Meharg - £3,000;
 Open University grant for curation of data from the Somerford Mead grassland experiment at Wytham, Oxford - Gowing - £5,272 (of £6000 committed for this purpose in 2020).

6. Detail of Restricted Funds

2021	Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing balance
Gibson Experiment	1,546	0	0	0	1,546
Continuity Fund	23,013	15,000	18,206	0	19,807
EFF Fund	24,805	20,000	25,762	0	19,043
TOTALs	54,323	35,000	43,968	0	45,355

2020	Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing balance
Gibson Experiment	1,546	0	0	0	1,546
Continuity Fund	15,013	15,000	2000	0	23,013
EFF Fund	0	25,000	195	0	24,805
TOTALs	16,559	40,00	2,195	0	54,32

Ecological Continuity Trust

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The grant of £25,000 received in 2020 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation was treated as unrestricted in the 2020 accounts and this is restated here as restricted.

7. Restatement of Funds in 2020

- a. an accrual of £9,000 of expenditure was included in the 2020 accounts in expectation that two grants that had been offered would be claimed. This proved to be incorrect, with one of them partly claimed during 2021 and the other abandoned. Restatement of the figures for the Continuity Fund enables accurate comparison between the 2020 and 2021 figures for the Continuity Fund.
- b. The 2020 accounts treated the grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation as unrestricted grant. While not incorrect this treatment made clear comparison of funds between years more complicated than necessary and we have chosen to restate this grant within the restricted funds. This change has had the effect of reducing the unrestricted funds apparently available to the charity although the real effect on operational decisions has been neutral.

ECOLOGICAL CONTINUITY TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1126122

Accounts



Ecological Continuity Trust

**Trustees' report and financial statements
1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020.**

Company Number: 6652160

Charity Number: 1126122

Ecological Continuity Trust

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Ecological Continuity Trust

Trustees' Report

The Ecological Continuity Trust

The Ecological Continuity Trust is the only organisation working to safeguard the future of the UK's strategic network of long-term ecological experiments (LTEs). Many ecological processes operate over timescales of decades. As the effects of environmental change on ecosystems are often slow to emerge, long-term studies are essential to characterise and understand these changes.

LTEs involve experimental manipulation combined with monitoring and these have been the focus of the ECT during its first ten years. LTEs provide greater insight into how ecosystems are likely to respond to environmental changes than monitoring alone. An experimental approach allows researchers to investigate cause and effect, to test the effectiveness of management regimes and to manipulate environmental variables beyond those currently prevailing, allowing the investigation of future scenarios. Long-term ecological experiments provide a unique platform for such studies, investigating the effects of, and interactions between environmental changes, such as air pollution, grazing management and climate change on ecosystems. LTEs allow us to understand and predict future scenarios for ecosystems in the face of environmental change. The role that LTEs play in enabling society to understand and mitigate where possible, the consequences of climate change on ecosystems is now more important than ever.

ECT will continue to support LTEs as before, with the addition of long-term monitoring studies in 2021 and beyond. The rationale for this expansion of ECT's remit and vision is threefold:

1. Evidence that LTM studies, such as those included within the UK Environmental Change Network, are increasingly threatened with funding cuts and staffing shortages in the same way that LTEs were in 2008, when the ECT was established.
2. LTMs such as the Environmental Change Network sites that are associated with existing LTEs have the potential to add significant scale values to the scientific outputs of the latter.
3. The opportunity provided by LTM studies to broaden ECT's interest and appeal to the wider public, both in terms of its science content and its status as a charity requiring funds and donations.

In 2020, ECT published its first Corporate Plan '*Securing Long-term Experiments for the Future*', which sets out a strategic framework for our activities and operations for the next decade 2020-2030. The Plan is available from ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/strategy>

Overall Purpose

To ensure that the ecological evidence available to inform land management decisions, is supported by studies that are conducted over a long enough time to:

Ecological Continuity Trust

- include representative and extreme weather conditions;
- allow for ecological processes that operate slowly - sometimes over decades;
- capture infrequent stochastic events such as epidemic disease or severe drought.

The following are **Specific Objectives of the ECT**

1. Supporting existing long-term experimental platforms and new research initiatives that make use of these platforms.
2. Growing ECT's register of long-term experimental platforms as previously unknown LTEs emerge into view.
3. Facilitating the establishment of new experimental platforms where the scientific need is identified and enabling their use by a wide variety of researchers.
4. Establishing a new register of long-term monitoring studies (LTMs) that add scale value to existing LTEs and supporting those studies in a similar way to LTEs.
5. Building a network of LTE/LTM Users and Stakeholders (the User Group) to promote and integrate knowledge exchange and innovative scientific and practical outputs from LTEs/LTMs.
6. Helping to place experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking and sustainable land use, leading to environmental and social well-being.
7. Communicating the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs to a wide audience of stakeholders beyond the ecological research community.

The ECT's Key Roles

1. **Finance** – brokering major funding, especially for new experimental facilities; providing a stop-gap in emergencies for existing LTEs/LTMs, and funding small research projects, data curation and essential maintenance/repair work;
2. **Advocacy and Engagement With Science Policy** - championing the case for LTEs/LTMs in the ecological research community, with Government/Research Councils and within host institutions; building partnerships with organisations in the scientific and conservation sectors, to help put experimental ecology at the heart of evidence-based policymaking, sustainable land management and education;
3. **Moral Support** – supporting researchers and trying to ensure continuity of leadership and institutional support for existing LTEs/LTMs; providing a web-based resource promoting our sites for

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- use as *research platforms* by the wider community;
4. **Intellectual** – identifying research gaps in the LTE network and advocating the filling of these gaps and that the suite of existing LTEs as a whole is greater than the sum of the parts; maintaining a network of key stakeholders;
 5. **Communication** – explaining the science and impact of LTEs/LTMs by harnessing new digital technologies such as webinars and virtual reality, and developing impact case studies.

Activities and Achievements - How the Public Benefitted

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. In 2020, our activities to forward our public benefit were as follows:

- ECT registered **two** 'new' LTEs in 2020, bringing the total number of currently active LTEs on ECT's register to 33 across 30 different sites. The additions were: **Hillsborough** in Northern Ireland, which has been investigating the impacts of long-term nutrient fertilization on grassland since 1970. This experiment is of importance and public interest in that it has shown how: (1) agricultural grasslands can actively sequester carbon either under low or high management intensity (i.e. low and high cattle manure applications); (2) grassland soils have not reached carbon 'saturation' even after 44 years of management; (3) repeated applications of cattle slurry may significantly increase soil carbon sequestration, and (4) soil carbon sequestration can offset between 9 and 25% of greenhouse gas emissions associated with fertilized grasslands; **Colt Park Meadows** LTE, located within the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve (NNR) in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, was added to the register in October. Colt Park LTE is investigating the impacts of specific land management interventions - grazing by sheep and/or cattle, hay cutting, seed addition and nutrient fertilization - on ecosystem services, especially carbon storage and resilience to climate extremes such as drought.
- COVID-19 lockdown imposed different fieldwork constraints on LTEs depending upon different institutions' interpretation of guidance and the need for social distancing. In collaboration with CIEEM, the ECT shared guidance from Defra to CIEEM with the LTE User Group to enable essential LTE fieldwork to take place. ECT's action was instrumental in avoiding gaps in some long-term datasets occurring in 2020.
- Despite COVID-19 severely limiting activities on LTEs, the following ECT grants were awarded in 2020. **Wardlow Hay Cop** LTE: Chris Taylor (University of Sheffield) was awarded a grant of £2k to facilitate fieldwork research. **Peatland-ES-UK** LTE was awarded a grant of £1360 for

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LICOR equipment repair. **BIFoR-FACE** LTE was awarded a grant of £2k for sample archiving and data curation equipment.

- ECT initiated a data curation pilot project with the NERC Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC) at Lancaster. Somerford Mead LTE was selected to be the 'pioneer LTE' and the ECT offered a £6k grant to facilitate this project to David Gowing at the Open University.
- Three of the LTEs on ECT's national register narrowly missed being damaged by wildfires in 2020. Wildfires are set to become more frequent under a changing UK climate. One of the LTEs that came very close to being burned was Thursley Common in Surrey, which was originally established in 1989 by Sally Powers to examine the effects of nitrogen pollution on a heathland system. In 2020, the future of Thursley Common LTE was uncertain. The ECT therefore sought new 'champions' for this LTE with the idea that it might be repurposed to include an examination of the effects of wildfires on heathland restoration. Jill Kowal from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, plus collaborators from the Natural History Museum and Queen Mary University of London, have taken on this role, with the JNCC and Natural England being key stakeholders in this initiative.
- ECT undertook an LTE impacts survey in 2020, which was designed to critically examine scientific, economic and social impacts of existing LTEs. Response to this survey highlighted the need to redesign ECT's website homepage, which was carried out in Spring 2020. The website was changed to showcase more clearly how LTEs contribute to policymaking around climate change and sustainable land management. A secondary landing page now includes detailed impacts from five 'case study' LTEs. Homepage traffic to the ECT website totalled 2534 views in 2020, a 15% increase on 2019.
- ECT participated in the British Ecological Society's (BES) 2020 *Festival of Ecology* with a virtual exhibition booth that was visited online between 14-18 December 2020. The festival attracted 1492 online delegates. The ECT booth showcased four of the long-term experiments on our register. A new virtual reality (VR) experience of the Whim Bog LTE, completed in 2020 in collaboration with the VR technology provider Stickee UK, was launched at the Festival in the form of 360-degree videos made available exclusively to delegates via the ECT online booth. The new VR headsets arising from this project will be available to a wider audience when in-person conferences and meetings resume.
- A thematic session on '*Long-term environmental monitoring – challenges and opportunities*', jointly organised by Ben Sykes, ECT's

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Executive Director, and Don Monteith of the UK Environmental Change Network, took place at the BES 2020 *Festival of Ecology*. Keynote speakers included: Jaana Bäck, University of Helsinki eLTER on '*The European Long-term Ecosystem Research Network*'; Denise Pallett, CEH Wallingford on '*Twenty years of long-term abiotic and biotic monitoring across the UK & a case study at Wytham*'; Sue Benham, Forest Research, Alice Holt on '*Woodland plant ecological surveys under the Long-term Intensive Forest Monitoring Programme*'; Roberto Salguero-Gomez, University of Oxford on '*Emerging robotics technologies for grassland environmental monitoring*' and Paul Howden-Leach, Wildlife Acoustics Inc. on '*The latest developments in bioacoustics monitoring systems*'. Over 400 delegates participated in this thematic session.

- ECT initiated two new strategic partnerships in 2020 as follows:
 - the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) which has been championing the gathering, curation, sharing and use of data about the UK's wildlife for over 20 years. It is the UK's largest partnership for nature working with over 200 partners. ECT has become an Organisational Member of the NBN.
 - the Sustainable Soils Alliance (SSA), a campaigning partnership of farming organisations, businesses, NGOs, applied science and academia working together to restore our soils to health.
- ECT's Executive Director Ben Sykes contributed the following ECT articles for each publication of the BES's quarterly *Niche* magazine in 2020:
 - '*Growing the Nation's Network of LTEs*' (March issue).
 - A feature article on '*Climate Change – what long-term experiments can tell us*' in association with ECT trustee Jonathan Silvertown (June issue).
 - '*Wildfires – new opportunities for long-term ecological experiments*' (September issue).
 - '*Long-term ecological experiments in virtual reality*' (December issue).
- ECT again produced a quarterly newsletter throughout 2020 in March, June, September and December. All issues can be viewed on the ECT's website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/newsletter-archive>.
- The following series of podcast interviews were carried out in 2020, all of which are available to view on the ECT website at: <https://www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org/podcasts>.

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- Jonathan Silvertown, University of Edinburgh on the importance of LTEs (January);
 - Kris Hart, Operations Manager at the BIFoR-FACE long-term CO₂ elevation experiment at Norbury in Staffordshire (January);
 - Chris Field, Manchester Metropolitan University on Little Budworth Common LTE in Cheshire (February);
 - Simon Caporn, Manchester Metropolitan University on the Ruabon Moor LTE in north-east Wales (May);
 - Rob Marrs, University of Liverpool on the Hordron Edge & Bamford Edge LTEs in Derbyshire (June);
 - Gareth Phoenix, University of Sheffield on the Wardlow Hay Cop LTE in Derbyshire (July);
 - Simon Peacock, Newcastle University on the Palace Leas LTE in Northumberland (September);
 - Laurence Jones, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (Bangor) on the Newborough Warren LTE on Anglesey in north Wales (October).
-
- The ECT hosted the following series of six webinars in 2020, which proved popular with our core audience, each attracting up to 50 attendees. Recordings of most of these webinars can be viewed on ECT's YouTube channel at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjcaas_6y9rD0luINsxGEXw
 - Sabine Reinsch, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (Bangor)
Long-term climate change manipulation at Clocaenog LTE - Lessons learned from 20 years of drying & warming upland heath on organo-mineral soil (24 January);
 - Giulio Curioni, Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR)
Data curation & sample archiving at the BIFoR-FACE woodland CO₂ enrichment experiment in Staffordshire (26 March);
 - Markus Fischer & Eric Allan, University of Bern, Switzerland
The German Biodiversity Exploratories: Large-scale & long-term (26 June);
 - Rob Marrs, University of Liverpool
A future for the Hordron Edge & Bamford Edge LTE plots in Derbyshire (20 August);
 - Vicky Morgan, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
The value of long-term field experiments to end users (26 November);
 - Charlie Burrell, Knepp Wildland
Impacts of wilding on biodiversity & soil health (1 December).
-
- New webpages were published in 2020 for four of the LTEs on our register: North Wyke Farm Platform, Hillsborough, Little Budworth Common and Ruabon Moor.

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- Guest blog postings were published in January and June for a broad non-scientific audience, featuring University of Oxford research staff taking stock of our flagship RainDrop experiment, and Rothamsted Research staff discussing greenhouse gas emissions from the North Wyke Farm Platform experiment in Devon. In January, Jane Hawkins from Rothamsted Research (North Wyke) also posted an accessible article on the Rothamsted Research website titled “*In LTE We Trust*” covering a summary of all three Rothamsted Research LTEs on the ECT register. See: <https://www.rothamsted.ac.uk/articles/lte-we-trust>.
- New journal publications arose from the research at several LTEs on our register in 2020, most notably this year from the Scottish LTEs on our register – MOORCO and Glen Finglas. All have been added to the comprehensive bibliographies which ECT maintains on the individual webpages for each experiment on our register.
- During 2020, ECT’s social media following increased significantly as we continued to broaden our audience and appeal:
 - Twitter following up to 1,110, a 42% increase from 2019;
 - YouTube recruited 11 subscribers and accrued 142 views of our corporate introduction video and 68 views of our VR preview video for the Buxton experiment.
- The LTE User Group increased to 175 members, a 25% increase from 2019.

Funding and Staff

The British Ecological Society (BES) continued to support the ECT with a grant of £25,000 in 2020. Our Executive Director was successful in securing funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (£45,000) and the Britford Bridge Trust (£20,000). Private donations to the ECT amounted to £35,050 during 2020, of which £5,050 was donated via our online CAF platform. ECT registered with the AmazonSmile Foundation in September 2020, to generate additional small donations via the online purchases of Amazon customers. By the end of the calendar year, 14 Amazon customers were using AmazonSmile to support ECT. A first income transfer from the Foundation was not expected until February 2021.

Our Executive Director, Ben Sykes, worked 4 days per week for the Trust during 2020. With the above new funding in place, the Director commenced planning to recruit a part-time (0.5FTE) Communications Officer to the ECT in early 2021.

ECT coped with the coronavirus pandemic in the following ways:

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With a long-standing commitment to home-working and online meetings (for cost and environmental reasons), the ECT and its Executive Director continued working normally for the most part, making considerable headway with grant applications in its fundraising campaign, as indicated above. The Director attended fewer external meetings and the ECT elected not to hold a national conference in 2020 in favour of extra lunchtime webinars delivered online. There were two areas in which progress was compromised for a significant proportion of the year – site visits to LTEs by our Director for relationship-building and communications purposes, and partnership building with external organisations that had furloughed or released significant numbers of staff (particularly the National Trust and the Field Studies Council). It is intended that these activities will resume with new momentum in 2021.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of ECT's ability to sustain the 33 currently active LTEs now on its register. Where LTEs struggle for funding, both tenured and retired ecological researchers volunteer their time to keep treatments going and analyse data, often drawing in undergraduate and postgraduate students to assist in the overall running of experiments.

ECT also engages members of the public as volunteers from time-to-time when the need arises. Such activity is driven by arising need rather than by design each year, and ECT is always vigilant for such opportunities. In some rare cases, it is also possible for ECT to engage volunteers in botanical surveys at LTEs, though this requires specialist skills and is dependent upon the availability of those skills in any given locality.

Constraints imposed by the coronavirus pandemic made volunteer activity difficult or impossible at many LTEs throughout 2020.

ECT's LTE User Group continues to be chaired by a volunteering Trustee.

Governance

Following an open call for new trustees issued in February 2020, ECT recruited two new trustees to its Board in 2020. These were Ken Thompson (University of Sheffield) and David Stone (Deputy Chief Scientist, Natural England). Both were appointed for a five-year term from 1 June 2020.

Following the ECT's Board of Trustees revision of the Trust's governance model in autumn 2019, full Board meetings became *quarterly* from 1 January 2020. The Board's remit is to focus on strategic issues. At our July AGM, the Board approved a small change to ECT's constitution to allow for a maximum of 13 trustees to be recruited to the Board, an increase of one from the previous limit

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of 12. The ECT's Executive Committee, comprising ECT's Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Executive Director, met monthly throughout 2020 and oversaw the day-to-day and month-to-month operations of the Trust. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Director reported to the Board at its four quarterly meetings in 2020.

ECT prepared and implemented several new corporate policies in 2020, on *Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Conflicts of Interest, Complaints, Risk Management, Whistleblowing, Managing Volunteers, and Funding Investments*. All our policies are available to view on request.

There were no issues or incidents arising under our *Safeguarding or Health and Safety* policies during this reporting year.

Plans for the Future

ECT will recruit a new part-time (0.5FTE) Communications Officer in 2021, to be appointed on a two-year contract, thereby growing our capacity. The Trust will also appoint its Executive Director full-time in early 2021, enabling the Director to allocate more time to building strategic relationships with key organisations, engaging in further advocacy activities with policymakers and continuing our ongoing fundraising campaign.

ECT will launch the expansion of its remit in 2021 to include long-term monitoring studies (LTMs), by calling for Expressions-of-Interest from the LTM research community to create 'hubs' of long-term ecological research linked to the 33 currently active LTEs on ECT's national register. Depending upon funding availability, grant resources will remain focused on LTEs until such a time as our scheme can be extended to LTM studies.

The Trust will conduct a review of the vulnerability of the 33 currently active LTEs on our register so that we are better able to prioritise any necessary future interventions.

ECT will develop a formal Communications Strategy, to include a digital communications strategy nested within it and aimed at making wider use of additional and appropriate digital platforms to further the Trust's objectives.

ECT's current fundraising campaign will continue throughout 2021, focused initially on securing further small core funding contributions from target trusts such as the Charlotte Heber-Percy Charitable Trust and the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust. We will also target significant project-based funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation in an attempt to boost ECT's Continuity Fund for small grants. We will continue to seek relationships with key funders for whom an invitation to apply is required.

The Trust will seek to partner with a key external organisation to hold a national,

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in-person conference on LTEs/LTMs in late 2021 that will engage end-users alongside ecological researchers to their mutual benefit and the benefit of society at large.

ECT will continue to build upon its pioneering work with Virtual Reality (VR) to create a third new VR headset experience for a selected LTE.

We plan to establish the Trust's first ever 'pool' of volunteers whose time and energies may be drawn upon to assist with free maintenance work at any of the LTEs on our register.

The Trust will work towards conducting at least one 'citizen science initiative' at a suitable LTE (or LTEs) in 2021.

Subject to the lifting of pandemic lockdown restrictions, ECT will look to hold at least one 'Open Day' for members of the public at a strategic LTE within our network.

ECT will explore the development of a smartphone 'app' for communicating the science and outputs/benefits from LTEs.

Subject to available funds, the ECT will produce a series of infographics highlighting the value and impacts of LTEs.

ECT will continue to collaborate with NERC's Environmental Information Data Centre (EIDC) based in Lancaster to curate and secure the data from the Somerford Mead LTE for which data are at risk of loss.

The Trust will look to resume momentum in the building of new strategic relationships with relevant land management organisations, where impetus was lost due to the coronavirus pandemic. One or more of the following will be prioritised: National Trust, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), Field Studies Council, NatureScot, Natural Resources Wales, the Wildlife Trusts, the British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB.

Support for existing and new LTEs will remain a core activity of the ECT. We expect more than one 'new' LTE to emerge into view in 2021 that has not previously been registered with us, and we will extend our services to those LTEs through free profile-raising and eligibility for our small grants scheme, amongst other things.

Promotion of the value of LTEs/LTMs to stakeholders and wider society will continue to be a key objective of the Executive Director, who will also work to continue expanding our LTE User Group. A close working relationship with the BES will continue to be maintained through two-monthly meetings, helping to facilitate ECT communications with the wider ecological community. The ECT

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will work closely with the BES, universities and research institutes to ensure that both the research and the educational potential of the UK's LTEs is realised.

Jeremy R.B. Tallowin

Chair of Trustees

22 April 2021

Jeremy R.B. Tallowin

Ecological Continuity Trust

Financial Review

Financial Position

On 31st December 2020, ECT had funds of £109,328 comprised of £88,769 unrestricted and £20,559 restricted. Expenditure during the year was £45,954 (or £88,284 when in kind expenditure is included) and income £111,192 (or £153,522 when in kind income is included). The ECT remains a going concern.

ECT is in a strong position to continue to be a catalyst and co-ordinating organisation that has a much bigger impact than its turnover suggests. We can identify other activities that we have enabled partner organisations to deliver, but we do not know the attendant costs (note 5 to the accounts).

Reserves

The Trustees have agreed a policy that 3 months operating reserve is desirable. Current unrestricted funds are larger than required to satisfy this, but our fundraising is extremely dependent on occasional relatively large donations and longer cover is highly desirable for stability and continuity of service.

Exemption from Audit

For the period ending 31/12/2020, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Independent Examiner

The trustees have appointed Certax Accounting to carry out the examination of these accounts. The trustees recommend that Certax Accounting remain in office until further notice.

Robin Buxton
(Hon. Treasurer)

22nd April 2021



Ecological Continuity Trust

Independent examiner's report

to the trustee on the unaudited financial statements of the Ecological Continuity Trust

We report on the financial statements of the Ecological Continuity trust for the year ended 31st December 2020 which comprise of financial activities, the balance sheet and the related notes.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner: As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is our responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)9b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report: Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission and in accordance with the provisions in part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be require in an audit, and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement: In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2020 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 and the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities.

Simon Oakland, CerTax Accounting
Independent Scrutineer



Ecological Continuity Trust

Legal & Administrative Matters,

Trustees/Company Directors – serving during the report period

Jeremy Tallowin (Chair)

Robin Buxton (Treasurer and Secretary)

Jonathan Silvertown

Keith Goulding

Carly Stevens

Alison Birkett

Kadmiel Maseyk

Charles Holt

Bridgett Emmett

Kenneth Thompson – took office from 23rd April 2020

David Stone – took office from 20th July 2020

(Stewart Clarke – took office from 19th January 2021)

Executive Director – Ben Sykes appointed 1st March 2018

Charity number (registered 1st October 2008): 1126122

Company number (registered 21st July 2008): 6652160

Registered Office: Manor House, Little Witteham, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RA

Independent Examiner: Certax Accounting, Creek End, Burcot, Abingdon, OX14 3DJ

Bank: HSBC, Cornmarket Street, Oxford OX1 3HY

CAF Bank, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

Contact: Dr Robin Buxton, Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, OX14 4RA

Number of employees: 1

Web site: www.ecologicalcontinuitytrust.org

Structure, Governance and Management

The Ecological Continuity Trust (ECT) is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and governed by Memorandum and Articles.

The Board of Trustees

The trustees were appointed for their relevant leadership, ecological knowledge, charity governance and administrative experience. They met four times during the period of this report. Further trustees will be appointed as the charity develops and requires contributions to its governance by people with other skills, networks and experience. They will be given appropriate induction and information about the role of trustees and their responsibilities under the Charities Acts. The development of the board of Trustees is seen as an ongoing process and an induction process is used with new trustees. The ECT's Board

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of Trustees reflects broad representation by stakeholders in the ECT's objectives.

Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

None of the trustees received any remuneration or benefits from the charity or any related entity. The charity has a policy of meeting trustees' and other volunteers' travel expenses incurred in carrying out their duties. One trustee claimed travel expenses during the reporting period and the Treasurer used personal cards to pay various costs and was reimbursed.

Related Parties

Robin Buxton is a trustee of the Patsy Wood Trust, the Grit Howe Charitable Trust and The Sylva Foundation. Alison Birkett is a trustee of British Ecological Society, which gives grants to ECT and is an employee of Lancaster University which received a grant from ECT. Carly Stevens is also an employee of Lancaster University and a co-supervisor of two students, one of them in receipt of a research grant from ECT and the other conducting research using the RainDrop Experiment. No trustee, their family, or any organisation they are associated with has benefitted financially from the ECT.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Charity law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the year end and of its incoming resources and resources expended during that year. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business

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

The Trustees have considered the fundraising standards and regulations contained in *The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016* and confirm that the Charity has complied with its requirements.

The Trustees have all confirmed in writing that they are not disqualified from acting as trustees.

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The Trustees have reviewed the charity's processes for holding and managing personal data and are confident that they have done everything in their power to comply with GDPR.

Accountant's Fees: for conducting independent scrutiny of accounts and related submissions - £240.

Risks to the Charity

The Trustees considered the risks to the charity during the course of the year and took appropriate steps to mitigate them as far as possible. The British Ecological Society's support provides endorsement of ECT's reputation and the value of its work, giving confidence to other funders. As the champion of long-term ecological experiments, persistence is one of our goals and our modest funds are managed to achieve this, while enabling funding opportunities to be exploited to advance our goal of establishing new long-term experiment and sustaining existing ones.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 22 April 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Jeremy R.B. Tallowin

Jeremy R.B. Tallowin
(Chair of Trustees)

22 April 2021

Ecological Continuity Trust

Financial Statement and Balance Sheet

At the end of December 2020 the ECT had a balance of £109,328 which includes both restricted and unrestricted funds. We received £111,167 in voluntary income as outlined in our accompanying notes on the accounts.

We are grateful to the British Ecological Society for facilities, financial support and practical collaboration, and to all our donors for their financial and practical support and enthusiasm.

Ecological Continuity Trust SOFA for period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020

	Notes	2020			2019		
		Unrestr	Restr	Total	Unrestr	Restr	Total
Income							
Voluntary	2	96,167	15,000	111,167	19,880	10,000	29,880
Investment	3	25		25	2		2
In Kind income	4	42,330		42,330	41,500		41,500
TOTAL INCOME		138,522	15,000	153,522	61,382	10,000	71,382
Expenditure							
Cost of Generating Funds		4,768		4,768	2,500		2,500
Charitable Activities	5,6	25,148	11,000	36,148	32,073	10,025	42,098
Governance & Admin		5,038		5,038	3,672		3,672
In Kind expenditure	4	42,330		42,330	41,500		41,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		77,284	11,000	88,284	79,745	10,025	89,770
NET INCOMING/OUTGOING		61,238	4,000	65,238	- 18,363	- 25	- 18,388
Funds Brought Forwards		27,531	16,559	44,090	45,894	16,584	62,478
Funds carried forwards	7	88,769	20,559	109,328	27,531	16,559	44,090

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Ecological Continuity Trust Balance Sheet for period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020

	Notes	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
Current Assets			
Debtors		31,258	27,889
Creditors due within 1 year		10,356	4,681
Cash at bank		88,426	20,882
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		109,328	44,090
net current assets		109,328	44,090
Total Assets		109,328	44,090
Funds			
Restricted Funds	7	20,559	16,559
Unrestricted Funds		88,769	27,531
TOTAL FUNDS		109,328	44,090

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 22 April 2021 and are signed on its behalf by:

Robin Buxton (Hon. Treasurer)



Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting Policies - Basis of preparation – The accounts have been prepared under the FRS 102 policies, concepts and principles for smaller entities including the adjustment of estimates and errors and Charity Commission SORP2016.
2. Voluntary income – grants from the British Ecological Society and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, each of £25,000, the Britford Bridge Trust of £20,000 the Cockiollie Trust of £30,000, a match-funding donation of £5044 from Robin Buxton and various private donations amounting to £5044.
3. Investment income = bank interest.
4. In Kind income and expenditure and volunteer time – It is particularly difficult to estimate the money cost equivalent of time given to the ECT for things that, were it not given, it would have to pay for. Most of this given time is

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given by trustees, but outside the narrow, minimum formal limits required for responsible trusteeship. The figure given is based on £250 a day per person. Leaving aside time spent by the trustees, ECT enjoys commitments of time from half a dozen people. No cost equivalent can be calculated as the contributions are not susceptible to being expressed as services that the charity would otherwise pay for. The figure given is estimated on a 2% increase on the figure for 2019.

5. Costs of Activities:- ECT achieves its charitable aims through two sorts of activity:
- a. practical matters of establishment, maintenance, operation and measurement of experiments;
 - b. communication, outreach, engagement and promotion of long term ecological experimentation.

Both sorts of activity are delivered in partnership with other organisations, ECT being the co-ordinating catalyst. The major costs are born by partners. There is sometimes a delay between promising a grant to an institution and payment being requested, in one case more than one year. We have limited access to partners' information on expenditure on long term experiments, so we have no way of calculating an accurate monetary value of the catalytic role we fill although an estimate of at least £3,000,000 is supported by returns from a sample of our experiments.

Costs of activities in 2020

£	Direct costs of activities	Support costs apportioned pro rata to direct costs	Total costs of activities
Experiments	12,098	6,187	18,285
Outreach	2,396	15,468	17,864
TOTAL	14,494	21,655	36,149

Costs of activities in 2019

£	Direct costs of activities	Support costs apportioned pro rata to direct costs	Total costs of activities
Experiments	20,530	1,791	22,320
Outreach	21,569	1,881	23,450
TOTAL	42,099	3,672	45,770

Of the direct costs of experiments, £9,000 is commitment to projects that have not yet begun at Wytham, Oxfordshire, for data curation of the Somerford Mead meadow restoration project and repurposing of the Gibson experiment as the original purpose, an experiment on successional processes in former arable land, has been fulfilled. £2,000 was a small project research grant to a student at the University of Sheffield.

Ecological Continuity Trust

6. Detail of Restricted Funds

2020	Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing balance
Gibson Experiment	1,546	0	1,546	0	0
Continuity Fund	15,013	15,000	9,454	0	20,559
TOTALs	16,559	15,000	11,000		20,559

2019	Opening balance	Income	Expenditure	Transfer	Closing balance
Gibson Experiment	1,546	0	0	0	1,546
Continuity Fund	15,038	10,000	10,025	0	15,013
TOTALs	16,584	10,000	10,025	0	16,559

The grant of £25,000 received in 2020 from the Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation is for particular core costs. It is tracked in management accounts but, by agreement, not treated here as a restricted fund as it is not project related.