

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

England & Wales · Charity number 1152954

Details

Other names BSBI

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [08553976](#)

Registered 2013-07-18

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

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Activities

Objects: 1. TO PROMOTE THE STUDY OF AND INTEREST IN THE BRITISH AND IRISH VASCULAR PLANT AND CHAROPHYTE FLORA.2. TO SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE, CARRY OUT AND PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTO THE TAXONOMY, ECOLOGY, BIOGEOGRAPHY AND CONSERVATION OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH FLORA AND TO CO-OPERATE WITH CONTINENTAL AND OTHER BOTANISTS IN MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN.

Activities: THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND IS THE SUCCESSOR BODY OF THE BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF THE BRITISH ISLES (CHARITY NO 212560) AND COMMENCED ACTIVITIES ON 1 NOVEMBER 2013. ITS PURPOSE IS TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL BOTANISTS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTO THE TAXONOMY, ECOLOGY, BIOGEOGRAPHY AND CONSERVATION OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH FLORA.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Environment/conservation/heritage, Recreation
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Guernsey
- Ireland
- Isle Of Man
- Jersey
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,372,222	£918,759	£1,463,728	16
2024-03-31	£818,239	£697,061	£1,008,868	13
2023-03-31	£538,427	£622,466	£834,425	12
2022-03-31	£459,438	£500,828	-	-
2021-03-31	£396,354	£421,899	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Barry O'Kane		2022-11-17
Dr ANDREW JOHN LACK		2024-11-21
Dr Helena Jane Crouch		2021-06-22
Dr Maria Long		2023-03-21
Dr Mary Dean		2020-11-21
Dr Sandra Knapp		2017-11-25
Kathleen Nicola Jayne Tainton		2024-01-19
Kylie Nicole Jones		2021-11-19
Prof Peter Hollingsworth FRSE		2022-11-17
Richard John Allanach		2024-01-06
Susan Jane Oliver Edwards		2024-11-21
TREVOR DINES		2023-11-16

Accounts



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**For the Year Ended
31 March 2025**

**Registered Charity
England and Wales No. 1152954
Scotland No. SC038675**

Company Registration No. 08553976

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

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BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2025

The Board of Trustees presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI, the Society, the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2025. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 44-46 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

1. Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

The objectives of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

Strategy

During the period under review, various measures were taken to facilitate the meeting of these objectives, to complete the delivery of the *BSBI Strategic Plan 2021-2024* and to begin the implementation of the *BSBI Strategic Plan 2024-2027*

Vision: A world where wild plants thrive and are valued and understood

Purpose: To advance the understanding and appreciation of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland

Goals:

1. Inspire, build & support a diverse community of botanists to sustain & develop the skill base
2. Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address key environmental issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change
3. Raise the profile of plants and botany so that wild plants are better understood and more highly valued

Foundations:

1. Motivated, skilled people
2. Strong relationships
3. Strong governance
4. Effective data management
5. Sustainable business model

Values: A love of plants, Intrepid, Inclusive, Inquisitive

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The Strategic Plans have helped BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and address key environmental issues, such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

The next section of this report, Activities, Achievements & Performance, sets out the steps taken under the leadership of the Society's Chief Executive, Julia Hanmer, to deliver BSBI's three Strategic Goals during the period under review.

2. Activities, Achievements and Performance

Goals

Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base

The Society, which traces its origins to 1836, is now 189 years old and its principal achievement is, arguably, in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. The period under review saw one of the fullest programmes of field meetings and both indoor and online events ever offered by the Society, aimed at botanists of all skill levels across Britain and Ireland. This programme introduces newcomers to the Society, fosters the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encourages existing members to work together and helps to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base. Wherever possible, talks given at online and in-person events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel; by the end of March 2025, the channel had attracted almost 5,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

Events across Britain and Ireland

In total, 62 national field meetings or indoor events were held during the period under review; these included field meetings aimed particularly at beginner botanists; one-day general meetings at locations across Britain and Ireland: from the Isle of Wight to Banffshire and from Connemara to North Norfolk; and residential recording weeks in Carmarthenshire and the Isle of Tíre.

Events for intrepid botanists were held in a wide range of habitats and locations: on sand dunes on Jersey and Cos. Waterford and Wexford; along coast paths in northeast Yorkshire; on grasslands in Co. Limerick; scree slopes in Brecknockshire; urban sites in the Greater London area; in Westmorland's moors and the fens of Cos. Laois and Offaly. Several meetings were held jointly with partners such as the Wild Flower Society, National Trust for Scotland, Plantlife, British Bryological Society, Surrey Wildlife Trust and London Natural History Society. Workshops and training meetings were targeted at all skill levels, from beginner to improver, with specialist meetings aimed at the most experienced botanists; and conferences/ weekend events were held in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales aimed at bringing together botanists of national and international standing to mix with the general membership and to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

The Irish Spring Conference took place at the National Botanic Garden of Ireland at Glasnevin in Dublin and featured six talks and three workshops, while the Irish Autumn Meeting at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Co. Armagh, featured nine talks and three workshops; each event attracted 80-90 participants. A residential Recording Meeting was held in Shrewsbury in April 2024, aimed at both beginner and more seasoned recorders.

The Annual Summer Meeting was held on Guernsey over a long weekend in late May 2024; it attracted 21 participants who enjoyed various daytime excursions and evening talks. The residential Wales Annual Meeting and AGM took place at University of Swansea ~~was held~~ in July 2024, also over a long weekend,

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and attracted 55 attendees; the theme was brownfield and coal spoil habitats, with excursions to a selection of post-industrial sites, evening talks and workshops on forget-me-nots and willow-herbs.

The Scottish Botanists' Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh in November 2024, attracted 220 visitors (a record number) who enjoyed ten talks, eight workshops, flash talks from student researchers and 42 exhibits. The talks were recorded and had attracted 984 views by 31st March 2025.

The British and Irish Botanical Conference was held at the Natural History Museum, London, in November 2024; demand was unprecedented, with over 300 advance bookings - many more than could be accommodated at this prestigious venue – so, sadly, we were unable to issue tickets to some people who wanted to attend. The event featured ten talks, ten flash talks, two herbarium workshops and two behind-the-scenes herbarium tours (one of the Sloane Herbarium and one of the British & Irish Collection). There were 42 exhibits (a record number) with posters on subjects such as Securing the future of Scarce Tufted-sedge in the UK, plant pathogens of Ireland and neophytes in London, and stalls from partner organisations such as the Field Studies Council and the Natural History Museum's Centre for UK Nature. Speakers included Dr Trevor Dines, Phoebe O'Brien and Dr Stuart Desjardins, with the keynote speech given by Dr Sandy Knapp. The talks were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted a total of 2,921 views by the end of March 2025.

The 2024 Annual General Meeting was held online as a separate event, to allow participation from members who did not wish to, or were unable to, travel to London but still wished to hear about the Society's achievements over the previous year and vote on the nominations for (re-)election to the Board of Trustees and for the nomination of Dr Brenda Harold for Honorary Membership. The AGM was preceded by two talks, one from the recipient of the 2023 Award for Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany and one on the urban flora of Glasgow.

Activities to help build a diverse community of botanists continued into the winter months. The Society's annual New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH) was held over four days between 29 December 2024 and 1 January 2025. Now in its fourteenth year, this popular citizen science event provided plant-lovers at all skill levels with an opportunity to try out botanical recording by looking for wild and naturalised plants in bloom at midwinter. Building on the popularity of two digital spotter sheets (a Top Ten and a Top Twenty most frequent species) introduced for the first time at the January 2024 NYPH, the selection was expanded to provide two spotter sheets for each of the countries or regions across the Society's geography. To provide support for the plant-hunters, especially those taking part for the first time, the new spotter sheets were augmented by a pre-registration facility; increased pre-publicity; regular email updates and reminders for registrants; a dedicated support team providing encouragement and helping with identification; and guidance on how to take plant photographs which, once uploaded via the NYPH recording app, would maximise the likelihood of accurate identification. Around 3,000 people took part over the four days and submitted a total of almost 25,000 records (a record number) of 647 taxa in bloom, making the NYPH both a valuable engagement/ outreach activity and a means of collecting equally valuable data on phenology (plant flowering times), thus feeding into BSBI's three Strategic Goals of building a botanical community and gaining a better understanding of how wild plants in Britain and Ireland are responding to a changing climate.

This programme of in-person national events was augmented by local field meetings organised by local botany groups, and by a selection of webinars and other online training events. A series of three online winter talks attracted a total 1,608 attendees; talks were recorded, and the videos had been viewed 1,608 times by the end of March 2025. The Committee for England held their Annual Meeting online in February 2025 with four talks which were recorded and had attracted 1,045 views by 31st March 2025.

Focus on training

Thanks to follow-on funding from the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) for a three-year Targeted Aquatic Plant Project, BSBI was able to offer a series of field-based workshops across Ireland, alongside webinars and other online training events which reached hundreds of people (see the Table below). The Botanical Skills Ladder, which shows people how to self-assess their botanical skill level

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and flags the professional and voluntary opportunities available at each level on the Ladder, and also the accompanying leaflet, *So You Want To Know Your Plants*, which signposts future field botanists towards the resources and activities to help them climb the Skills Ladder, were both updated during the year. Also, as part of the action plan for improving BSBI's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) provision, the latter was also made available in Welsh, as was the *BSBI Code of Conduct*, which lists scheduled/ protected plants in Britain and Ireland and provides guidance on how to collect, photograph and enjoy wild plants with conservation in mind.

Plant group(s)	Training Events 2024/25					
	Target area	Funded/ charged	No.	In-person or online?	Participants on the day	YouTube views as of 31 March 25
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£5	1	O	Online link only	1.3K
Aquatic plants: field training events	Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by NPWS	4	IP	72	n/a
Composites	Inverness	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	20	n/a
Ferns for Beginners	Dunbartonshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	10	n/a
Grassland plants	Limerick, Ireland	Free	1	IP	20	n/a
Grass ID	Lanarkshire & Perthshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	2	IP	4/15	n/a
Lady's-mantles	Perthshire	Free	1	IP	12	n/a
Plant families	Various locations across Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	3	IP	10/7/4	n/a
Sedges	Westmorland, England	Free	1	IP	14	n/a
Sedges & Rushes	Dumfriesshire	Free	1	IP	14	n/a
Brambles	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	179	456
Dryopteris	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	169	460
Getting started with Cotoneasters	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	!	O	321	742

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Getting Started with Flower Anatomy	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	424	870
Getting Started with Plant and Leaf Anatomy	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	478	1.2K
Grasses & grassland habitats	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	500	877
Grasses, Sedges & Rushes for absolute beginners	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	500	1.4K
Horsetails	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	213	585
Lepidoptera and plants	Northern Ireland	Free to attend/ funded by DAERA	1	O	313	546

By combining in-person and digital activities, BSBI has grown its programme of training events and expanded its ability to deliver opportunities for learning and local engagement, as well as implementing policies and initiatives aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities.

The Society's grants programme, offering a range of grants from Training Grants aimed at beginners and improvers, through Plant Study Grants and Science & Research Grants aimed at undergraduate and post-graduate researchers, also helped to develop the skills base and support research into the British and Irish flora. Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, to attend a national event such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference or the Scottish Botanists' Conference and to offer a poster and/or a flash talk, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. This allows members attending these Conferences to hear more about the work their subscriptions help to support. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical.

	Grants			
	2025 Applications	2025 Awards	2024 Applications	2024 Awards
Training Grant	81	37	66	32
Plant Study Grant	6	4	2	2
Science & Research Grant	5	4	4	3
Total	92	45	72	37

FISC and Identiplant

Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests, the industry standard for assessing field plant identification skills, and Identiplant, the online tutor-led plant ID course, were brought in-house in 2023, under the leadership of BSBI's dedicated Training Coordinator, Dr Chantal Helm.

FISC

In 2024, FISC expanded from nine FISC Providers in 2023 to 12 Providers, including Wildlife Trusts, ecological consultancies, the Field Studies Council and Natural England. 29 FISCs were run across England in 2024, significantly expanding the geographical spread. A record number of 513 candidates undertook a FISC in 2024, bringing the total number of people with a FISC to over 2000 people. FISCs have firmly established themselves as the industry standard in assessing field botanical identification skills with many employers listing a FISC as a desirable or essential criterion in job specifications. BSBI also published an article on FISCs in the CIEEM *In Practice* magazine in September 2024, highlighting the progress that has been made in recognising the importance of an objective and standardised assessment for plant identification skills.

The BSBI continues to ensure that recruitment and training of Assessors and the Quality Assurance process are as robust and transparent as possible to ensure standardisation across all FISC Providers. These processes also ensure that FISC continues to be the industry leading mechanism allowing individuals to demonstrate their field botanical ID skills. A FISC Development Working Group provided valuable support and, input into standards and quality assurance, while working to improve the FISC protocols and guidance for Assessors as well as providing mentorship to new Assessors..

During January to March 2025, preparations were made to pilot the first FISC in the Republic of Ireland, planned for summer 2025.

Identiplant

Record numbers of students applied for the Identiplant course in 2024, but places could only be allocated to 292 students across 66 Tutors. Unfortunately, 170 students could not be offered a place, resulting in efforts to explore an alternative option that could be self-led for 2025, as well as an expanded recruitment drive to recruit more tutors for 2025. In 2024, Identiplant was delivered for the first time via BSBI's in-house bespoke learning platform called Capsella which was developed by BSBI Data Support Officer Dr James Drever and received excellent feedback from both students and tutors. A record completion rate was achieved at the end of the course with one student delivering a talk at the British & Irish Botanical Conference on how Identiplant kickstarted their career in botany. Over 2000 students have taken the Identiplant course to date. The Identiplant Management Team has played a vital role in the work to update and improve course content, mentoring new tutors and supporting the mid-season quality assurance process.

After successfully recruiting additional tutors to reach a record number of 92 tutors, BSBI was able to substantially increase the number of places on the Identiplant course starting in February 2025 to 412. Only eight people remained on the waiting list, and they joined a trial of the new Identiplant Foundations self-led course hosted on Capsella. This course was originally envisaged as a precursor to Identiplant but can also be a stand-alone beginner course for those at Level 1 or 2 of the Botanical Skills Ladder and with limited time to undertake field work and submit written work. The Identiplant course benefitted from the introduction of a number of elements aimed at enriching the course content, including optional quizzes, webinars and several new videos.



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These initiatives, alongside the selection of training events outlined above, helped build the in-house training offering as a complement to the external training courses which have long been listed on the BSBI website. An in-person 'Training for Trainers' event was held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) in October 2024 to support the growing number of trainers needed to deliver BSBI's training offering; a video from this event had attracted more than 100 views by the end of March 2025.

Thanks to funding from DAERA and the Carrier Bag Levy/ Environment Fund <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/carrier-bag-levy>, a targeted programme of training and engagement in Northern Ireland could be offered. In 2024–25, the BSBI Northern Ireland Botanical Skills and Evidence Project engaged more than 7,000 participants through training, fieldwork and online events; it also strengthened key partnerships with landowners and NGOs, boosted participation in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (see below), improved data upload, provided targeted scientific advice to DAERA and helped to ensure better access to plant data to support nature recovery in Northern Ireland. Details of the ten webinars offered under the banner of the BSBI Northern Ireland Botanical Skills and Evidence Project can be found in the Table above.

Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer Vice-County Recorders. The Society and its members have always engaged in the accurate recording of plant distributional data; during the period under review, botanical surveys, recording activities and partnership initiatives continued to deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives, including the monitoring over time of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. BSBI's recording activities also support the development and implementation of conservation and land management policy and practice to address key environmental issues such as biodiversity loss and climate change. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation, boosted by the publication in 2023 of a third plant distribution atlas, for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners.

In March 2024, the BSBI *Science Strategy 2024-2029* was published; its three Goals are to:

1. Provide high-quality evidence on the British and Irish flora, including its taxonomy, biogeography and ecology
2. Provide high-quality evidence on the state of our flora and how it is responding to environmental and human drivers
3. Provide impartial scientific advice to ensure BSBI data have impact in supporting nature recovery.

During the period under review, the BSBI Science Team contributed to various high-profile partnerships and, guided by the new Science Strategy, worked with BSBI committees and members to develop a range of new recording activities for BSBI members and supporters. The BSBI Recording App was launched and is now widely and routinely used by recorders; feedback has been very positive, and the next phase will focus on the development of a 'desktop' version which will provide a quick and reliable way of entering records from record cards. Members' access to the BSBI Distribution Database (the DDb) was also rolled out.

GB Red List

In partnership with, and thanks to funding from, Natural England, BSBI's Science Team has been working with the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) to review and update the threat status list for vascular plants, using the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) criteria. During the period under review, BSBI coordinated a major revision to the GB Red List for vascular plants,

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updating the previous List (Cheffings & Farrell, 2005) which appeared after publication of the second plant distribution Atlas and the availability of around 30 million additional validated records. This new version includes a thorough assessment of 1,719 native and archaeophyte taxa, including many that had not been assessed before. It also includes appendices that list threat assessments for all native *Hieracium* and *Taraxcum* taxa, as well as threat assessments for segregates within *Limonium binervosum* agg. and *Dryopteris affinis* agg., and taxa that have not been assessed but are instead included on the Waiting and Parking Lists. The results, which are due to be published as a special issue of *British & Irish Botany* in late summer 2025, will provide the basis for plant conservation for decades to come, helping organisations to prioritise and target conservation actions.

Botanical Heatmaps

BSBI continued to build on the successful launch in 2022 of botanical value maps and 'heatmaps' for England, based on the plant records held in the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) and developed in partnership with Natural England. The heatmaps are an evidence-based tool which use BSBI data to target positive conservation measures and ensure that land use decisions, such as tree planting and agriculture, cause no harm to those species-rich open habitats, such as peatlands, that are so important for biodiversity and carbon storage. Further work took place in 2024-25 to refine the heatmaps for England, notably to make better use of BSBI tetrad records in areas where monad data were lacking and to improve the benchmarking of monads; the heatmaps are now being used by Natural England and Forestry Commission staff to guide tree-planting and update Habitat Inventories. A feasibility study for equivalent maps for the Republic of Ireland was also completed, while in Scotland a scoping study is underway for NatureScot.

Improving dataflows

During 2024-2025 the data team undertook a range of work to improve data flows both to and from the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (the DDb), which is one of the world's largest databases of biological records. Most notably this included the further development and testing of the BSBI's new Recording App, which is now being used routinely by many recorders in the field, resulting in almost 195,000 new records being submitted during the period under review, swelling the total number of records held to 60 million. This work also included a large transfer of plant records from iRecord and iNaturalist to the DDb, with plans now in place for more regular transfers going forwards; updating the UK Species Inventory (UKSI) and increasing the flow of BSBI data from BSBI to the NBN Atlas, notably in England as a result of the Natural England funded project – 36 of the 58 Vice-County Recorders in England are now sharing data to the NBN, with more than 22 million records already added.

Documentation and training

Through the course of 2024-25, the documentation provided at BSBI's Documentation website, www.docs.bsbi.org, has expanded considerably, making this the 'one-stop shop' for guidance and training materials on recording, data management and data use. New sections were added for the BSBI Recording App, and for managing records in the DDb from iRecord and from the App. During the period under review, the Documentation website attracted 28,000 pageviews from 10,200 users. Ten training sessions were delivered (two in person, eight online) covering introductions to the DDb and the Recording App and managing records in the DDb from the App. Bi-annual online sessions for the new Vice-County Recorders have been put in place. Face-to-face training on the DDb and the BSBI Recording App was delivered at the Recorders' Meeting, the Scottish Botanists' Conference and the Irish Spring Conference.

Data requests and data sharing

The BSBI Data Team processed 23 external requests for data extracts during the period under review; four new data sharing agreements and/ or annual licences were established in 2024-25, bringing the total to 21 organisations benefiting from access to BSBI data. BSBI data were also made available provided for a variety of conservation projects, including Butterfly Conservation's research into the distribution of various butterfly and moth species in NI (by providing information on occurrence of foodplants). In turn, Butterfly Conservation provided an exhibit of their work in this area at the BSBI Ireland Autumn Conference.

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National Plant Monitoring Scheme

The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS), which aims to better understand the health of plants and habitats across the UK. BSBI's role includes helping to promote the Scheme at internal and external events and on social media and encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and Vice-County Recorders to take on mentorship roles. Participation in Northern Ireland was boosted by the appointment of a new staff member under the banner of the BSBI Northern Ireland Botanical Skills and Evidence Project (see above).

Botanical recording at country and county level

BSBI now has a full complement of Country Officers, and a Countries Manager, to support the growing networks of Vice-County Recorders and local groups. New Vice-County Recorders were appointed during the period under review, swelling the network to 229 and working alongside 94 expert taxonomic referees to provide the essential volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements. A growing number of vice-counties opted for a team approach, rather than having just one person covering the whole vice-county; by the end of March 2025, there were 73 Vice-County Recorder teams, compared to 78 with a solo Vice-County Recorder, and twelve new iRecord verifiers were added, bringing the overall total to 119.

Supported by the Country Officers, Vice-County Recorders and taxonomic experts, BSBI members and supporters continued to contribute to the final recording periods of several targeted country-level recording projects to refind plant species of national, regional or local conservation importance which have not been recorded in recent decades: the Lost Rarities in England initiative; Rare Plant Project Ireland; and the Scottish Hectad Rare Plant Project.

In Scotland, funding from NatureScot facilitated work on the development of a protocol for structured monitoring to provide information on changes to the flora of Scottish mountains, while a proposal from the National Trust for Scotland and Plantlife Scotland led to BSBI contributing to the development of a Mountain Plant Alliance, which brings interested parties together to share expertise and actions to help protect the flora and bryophytes of montane areas.

2024 saw the appointment of a Wales Officer to work on the two-year 'Priority Plants on SSSIs in Wales Project' funded by the Welsh Government's Nature Network Fund. Additional funding was sourced for the Wales Officer to provide more general support to Vice-County Recorders in Wales during the winter of 2024-25.

In England, the England Officer provided in-person and online support to Vice-County Recorders and local group leaders, and facilitated the publication of, for example, a Rare Plant Register for Surrey and an axiophyte list for London. In the Republic of Ireland, the Ireland Officer undertook three Rare Plants surveys and three clubmoss surveys, the latter to help inform Article 17 reporting by Ireland's National Parks & Wildlife Service and also facilitated a collaboration between BSBI and BirdWatch Ireland to survey plots within their reserves in the Shannon Callows.

BSBI members and supporters made several notable plant finds during the year under review. In Wales, these included *Ophioglossum azoricum* (Small Adder's-tongue) in Denbighshire, *Juncus capitatus* (Dwarf Rush) on Anglesey, *Matthiola sinuata* (Sea Stock) in Cardiganshire and *Equisetum x font-queri* (Great horsetail x Marsh horsetail) in Carmarthenshire; a new whitebeam *Aria wyensis* was also described from Monmouthshire and published in *British & Irish Botany*.

Four new taxa for Scotland were recorded in 2024-25: *Amelanchier alnifolia* and *Zinnia peruviana* from Midlothian, *Dactylorhiza viridis* x *Gymnadenia densiflora* from West Sutherland, and *Raphanus sativus* var. *oleiformis* from Moray.

In Ireland, *Dryopteris remota* (Scaly Buckler-fern) was found in Co. Clare – this is only the fourth record for the species in Ireland; *Ranunculus peltatus* (Pond Water-crowfoot) was recorded in West Mayo for

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the first time in over fifty years; and in Co. Wexford, *Geranium maderense* (Giant Herb-robert) and naturalised *Berberis julianae* (Chinese Barberry) were recorded for the first time in the county and *Avena barbata* (Slender Oat) was the first record for Ireland.

In England, several species were recorded for the first time in a vice-county; these included *Carex filiformis* (Downy-fruited Sedge) in Sussex, Bladderwort *Utricularia australis* in Wiltshire, *Himantoglossum hircinum* (Lizard Orchid) and *Valerianella eriocarpa* (Hairy-fruited Cornsalad) on the IoW and *Fumaria densiflora* (Dense Flowered Fumitory) in Northeast Yorkshire, while *Galium constrictum* (Slender Bedstraw), was re-found on Jersey for the first time since 1906. Finally, *Crepis praemorsa* (Leafless Hawk's-beard) was found on Tarn Moor, North Yorkshire: this is only the second record for Britain and western Europe.

During 2024, the BSBI Science staff, Country Officers and members of country committees worked together to develop ideas for recording activities to follow on from Plant Atlas 2020. These included further development of a method to record flowering phenology along fixed transects, building on the success of the New Year Plant Hunt; the methodology has been developed, and BSBI is now planning a trial phase with volunteers in the coming year, while also seeking to raise funding for an Engagement Officer role. An activity was also launched to help assess methods to monitor changes on mountain tops; and a range of recording activities began in Spring 2025 for recorders across Britain and Ireland to complete during routine recording: origin and habitats of non-natives, under-recorded species and monads, and targeted species for survey including a suite of seven species for beginners to record. Additionally, a new recording project for upland plants was launched in Ireland.

Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants

The Society's portfolio of publications and periodicals, its website and social media activity, and its outreach and training programmes all operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to the many research and recording projects outlined above, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so. To support the delivery of BSBI's Strategic Goals, especially Goal 3, work was undertaken to produce a Communications Strategy and Toolkit with a view to making them available in the summer of 2025.

Publications and periodicals

During the period under review, the Society's publications and periodicals portfolio continued to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, to raise the profile of botany, and to sustain and develop the skill base.

Under the auspices of the BSBI Handbooks Editor, Dr Liz Kungu, supported by a small working group, work continued apace to bring new titles into the pipeline and augment the series of BSBI Handbooks for difficult plant groups. Handbook no. 25, *Brambles of Scotland*, was prepared for publication during the period under review – it was published in April 2025 – and Handbook no. 26, *Wild Roses of Great Britain and Ireland*, entered the final stages of editorial supervision, with publication expected before the end of 2025.

Many titles in the BSBI's catalogue of publications, including the entire series of BSBI Handbooks for difficult plant groups and a selection of county Floras, have been made available at a competitive price as PDF eBooks, thereby helping to drive sales to members and non-members alike while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications in both traditional and digital formats.

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The 2024 Presidents' Award, which is awarded annually by the Presidents of the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI, went to Paul Green for his *Flora of Wexford*. The presentation was made at the Wild Flower Society AGM. The *Flora of Wexford* was also made available as an eBook.

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. Twelve scientific papers were published in the sixth volume of *British & Irish Botany* under the editorship of Dr Stuart Desjardins, and the first issue of volume seven, which comprised six papers, appeared in March 2025.

The Society's membership magazine, *BSBI News*, continued to engage, inform and educate botanists at all skill levels; one full free article and a five-page sampler from each issue of *BSBI News* were made available to non-members via the website and promoted across social media platforms; these served as eye-catching advertisements for the benefits of membership and proved an effective recruiting tool. The periodicals portfolio also includes two monthly e-Newsletters, one aimed at active botanical recorders and one aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events; country newsletters for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, all of which were made freely available online; and a popular *News & Views* blog, all of which have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

Membership

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for all students, regardless of age, in possession of a student card; for anyone under 25; and for longstanding members over 65. A BSBI Hardship Fund also exists to support existing members wishing to continue their association with the Society in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. While calls on this Fund have been modest so far, it is reassuring that it can help many others in years to come.

The Society is delighted to report continued membership growth (+8% overall) across all geographical areas. The year under review saw excellent consolidation and retention of members, continuing the growth of the profile of the charity and the number of people supporting its aims. Membership benefits continue to be added and BSBI works to use membership subscription income to best achieve its strategic goals. The positive financial impact of this continued growth is described in the Financial Review section 4 below.

	Membership as at 31 March		
	2025	2024	% Change
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,911	3,615	+8%
Ireland	433	384	+13%
Rest of World	56	57	-2%
Total	4,400	4,056	+8%

During the period under review, efforts were undertaken to broaden the range of services and resources available to BSBI members and to acknowledge their outstanding contributions. Five BSBI members, nominated by their fellow members for outstanding contributions to botany, received BSBI Awards under an initiative launched in 2022 by the BSBI Nominations, Awards and Governance Committee.

Faith Anstey, Patricia Lockwood and Wendy McCarthy all received awards recognising outstanding contributions in their local area, while Arthur Chater received the 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' Award for his service to the Society for over 70 years, including editing many of the early BSBI Handbooks, authoring more than 400 publications including two Floras, acting as one of BSBI's expert taxonomic referees (for sedges, *Carex* spp.) and serving on BSBI Council, Publications

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Committee and the Committee for Wales as well as being Vice-County Recorder for Cardiganshire for almost 40 years.

Access to the network of 94 expert taxonomic Referees for 185 difficult plant groups is one of the benefits of membership; Referees' contact details and guidance on collection of material are listed in the BSBI Yearbook or via a searchable table on the members-only area of the BSBI website, which also includes reports on BSBI Forums (see below); every scientific paper published in *New Journal of Botany* 2011-17; resources for Vice-County Recorders; information for members on subjects such as Database access, BSBI Handbooks and opportunities to claim discounts when purchasing selected botanical titles; digital copies of members-only periodicals such as *BSBI News* and the *Yearbook*, both of which can be accessed as pdfs or in browser via a screen reader; and details of the BSBI archive, stored in Harrogate, which holds physical copies of important BSBI publications. The online members' area helps support the increasing proportion of members opting for the digital subscription option; by the end of the period under review, it was pleasing to see that 4 out of 10 members had opted into this environmentally friendly delivery format.

Website

BSBI's comprehensive website, www.bsbi.org/, has been fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated regularly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community. A Working Group was set up in autumn 2024 to investigate the feasibility of developing a new website with increased functionality and greater accessibility, including the option for Vice-County Recorders to update their county pages. Following a positive response from BSBI trustees and the allocation of a small budget to hire a designer, migration work commenced early in 2025 with a view to launching a new and improved website before the end of 2025.

The current BSBI website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-use basis, with more than 400 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications. Resources such as these are helping to raise the Society's profile, clarify objectives and practices and disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and have established the Society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, the website attracted a total of 1,262,620 pageviews by 283,212 active users. BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained the most popular page. The Plant Atlas website, launched in Spring 2023 and externally-hosted but accessible via links on the BSBI homepage and drop-down menu, attracted 1.3 million pageviews from 128,000 users during the period under review.

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Webpage Views 2024/25 vs 2023/24 (000's)				
Rank	Webpage	2024/25	2023/24	% Change
1	Plant Atlas 2020 (externally hosted) plantatlas2020.org	1,300.0	686.8	+189%
	Maps bsbi.org/maps	183.6	186.7	-2%
2	Homepage bsbi.org/	175.7	67.1	+162%
3	Field Meetings and Indoor Events bsbi.org/field-meetings-and-indoor-events	22.3	15.0	+49%
4	Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISC) bsbi.org/field-skills	20.7	17.8	+16%
5	New Year Plant Hunt bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt	17.8	19.1	-7%
	Total number of pageviews to the five most popular webpages	420.1	305.7	+37%

Outreach and engagement

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public, support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally, and provide advice and guidance to national bodies and agencies.

Members of the Committee for Wales attended and exhibited at the Welsh Government Biodiversity Day in May 2024 at the Senedd. They also responded to a Senedd Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee Consultation on 'Halting and reversing the loss of nature by 2030'. In Ireland, BSBI contributed to a Knowledge Sharing event on future biological monitoring needs, organised by Ireland's National Biodiversity Data Centre, and attended a Grasslands Conservation Strategy workshop organised by National Parks & Wildlife Service and the National Biodiversity Centre.

Members in Scotland commented on two national consultations during the year under review: "Meeting our '30 by 30' biodiversity commitment on Terrestrial and Freshwater sites: Consultation on legislative proposals" and "Biodiversity Metric for Scotland's Planning system - Key issues". They also contributed to discussions on the Implementation Plan for the Scottish Plant Biodiversity Strategy and the associated development of species scorecards and provided a letter of support for a grant application to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, seeking funding for an aquatic plant survey project in Kirkcudbrightshire. The Scotland Officer also gave talks about the Society's work to several horticultural societies and led nine guided walks, attended by more than 200 people in total, as part of the Eco-Museum of Scottish Mining Landscapes Project; reports on the walks were published on the Museum's website.

BSBI display material (leaflets and posters) were also made available for volunteer-manned exhibits at local outreach events across Britain and Ireland.

Reaching out to the next generation of botanists, BSBI display material was included in the delegate packs of plant science students attending the Gatsby Plant Summer School. BSBI staff members also attended the 2024 Botanical University Challenge (BUC) competition and Student Botany Festival, held over three days in August at University of Oxford and aimed at plant science students. BSBI had a stand displaying BSBI material and ran a very popular 'mini-FISC' at Oxford Botanic Garden where students could use a selection of field keys to help them identify a selection of plant specimens. All the finalists, quarter-finalists and semi-finalists in the BUC competition were given a one-year digital/ student membership of BSBI as a prize and were encouraged to access BSBI resources and attend events such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference, which many of them did: four students from BUC also exhibited and/ or gave flash talks at the Conference about their research and two also went on to join BSBI Events & Communications Committee. Face-to-face interactions with students were rounded off

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for the year in March 2025 with a display stand at the Scotland's Nature Student Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Media Coverage

The Society continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media throughout the year under review; this included building up new relationships at regional and local level, by publicising county-level finds of eye-catching plants, as well as strengthening ongoing relationships with national media contacts and contributing to prestigious scientific journals.

The most high-profile plant find during the period under review was the discovery in August 2024 by BSBI member Richard Bate of a single *Epipogium aphyllum* (Ghost Orchid); this was the first sighting for 15 years of Britain's rarest orchid, which it was feared might have gone extinct. Richard's find, the exact location of which was kept secret, was confirmed by BSBI Head of Science Dr Kevin Walker and reported to national media via a BSBI press release. The resulting media coverage included a television appearance by Richard on BBC World Today; interviews on BBC Radio 4's Today programme and BBC Radio 5 Live, LBC News and various local radio stations. Print coverage included articles in *The Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mail* and *BBC Wildlife Magazine*, as well as local newspapers and websites, and a follow-up letter from the finder of the 1982 Ghost Orchid was published in *The Guardian*. In all his media appearances, Richard was keen to point out his BSBI membership and his gratitude for the Society's support for amateur botanists like himself.

Other notable plant finds made by BSBI members and/ or confirmed by BSBI Vice-County Recorders and staff, and reported in local and regional media, included the discovery of a population of *Carex lasiocarpa* (Slender Sedge) in full bloom at Askham Bog, Yorkshire; and an *Orchis simia* (Monkey Orchid) was found in a Cambridge College Garden. *Hypopitys monotropa* (Yellow Bird's-nest) was spotted in Killarney National Park after a gap of 128 years, the find confirmed by Dr Rory Hodd and reported on RTE's Morning Ireland; and the refind of *Spiranthes spiralis* (Autumn Lady's-tresses) in Co. Galway was reported in the *Irish Independent*, *Galway Daily* and on various websites.

The find of a *Neottia nidus-avis* (Bird's-nest Orchid) in the Tyne Valley, with a mention of BSBI records, was reported in *The Guardian's* Country Diary in June 2024, and in September another Country Diary column in *The Guardian* reported on a BSBI survey they had accompanied in Co. Down during which a colony of *Limonium procerum* (Tall Sea-lavender) was refound. The NatureScot website and several local papers reported on the results of a volunteer survey led by partners including BSBI to count numbers of the rare *Lychnis viscaria* (Sticky Catchfly) in the Ochil Hills. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, BSBI President 2022-24, appeared on Radio Kerry talking about Ragwort, while Chris Miles, Vice-County Recorder and BSBI's former Chair (until 21 November 2024) appeared on BBC Radio 4's Open Country programme, reporting on the wild plants found on a walk around the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) reserve at Caerlaverock in southwest Scotland. The Ireland Officer also contributed articles on Irish plant finds for *Biodiversity Ireland* and *British Wildlife* magazine.

Media coverage of Plant Atlas 2020, launched to great acclaim in the media in March 2023, continued during the period under review, with a glowing review in the prestigious *Irish Naturalists' Journal*; mentions in an editorial in the Royal Horticultural Society's magazine, in the State of the Environment report published by Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency, in *The Journal* and on the Yahoo News website. BSBI data from the Plant Atlas fed into the *State of Yorkshire's Nature* report, which received regional media coverage, for example in *Yorkshire Bylines* and the *Yorkshire Post*, with quotes from BSBI Head of Science Kevin Walker. Kevin and BSBI Scotland Officer Matt Harding co-authored a paper which was published in *Scottish Forestry* on the spread of Sitka Spruce in Britain and Ireland, building on Plant Atlas 2020 findings

BSBI has increasingly become the first port of call for print and broadcast media covering stories involving wild plants, fact-checking and planning high-profile television series: in November 2024, the Communications Officer and Countries Manager met with producers at the BBC Natural History Unit to discuss how BSBI might contribute to a new TV series being planned on the life of plants.

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In Ireland, the results of the New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH) featured once again on 'Mooney Goes Wild', Ireland's premier nature programme on RTE Radio 1, and on local radio and in various websites and periodicals including the *Irish Examiner*. In Great Britain, NYPH findings were covered in *Horticulture Week*, the *Hampshire Chronicle*, *Wharfedale Observer*, on Mark Avery's blog and the Bird Guides' and Countryside Jobs' websites.

Media coverage of the kind listed above raises the Society's profile to target audiences and may also lead to engagement: a full-length opinion article by the BSBI Communications Officer, about how birders can get involved in plant recording, appeared in the Winter issue of *BTO News*, the membership magazine of the British Trust for Ornithology. The following issue published a letter from a BTO member who was inspired by the article to sign up for the BSBI's Identiplant course.

The Society also continued to build and diversify its social media profile during the year under review. Following management changes at X (formerly Twitter and previously by far the Society's main social media platform) and a subsequent decline worldwide in use of this platform, BSBI launched accounts in 2024 on three other platforms - Threads, Bluesky and TikTok – and posted more frequently on the BSBI LinkedIn page. The main BSBI Bluesky account is being supported by accounts run by various staff members and trustees, and this has rapidly become the most vibrant social media platform for botanists of all ages and skill levels, while the volunteer-run TikTok account was targeted at, and helped us reach, a younger demographic. BSBI staff, officers and volunteer members continued to offer plant identification support to the wider public across all social media platforms, particularly on a weekly basis under the #wildflowerhour banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March (000's)		
	2025	2024	% Change
Facebook (Britain)	13.0	13.0	-
Facebook (Ireland)	3.6	3.5	+3%
Twitter	40.3	43.1	-6%
Bluesky	7.3	-	n/a
Instagram	11.5	10.0	+15%
TikTok	1.0	-	n/a
Total	76.7	69.6	+10%

Income Diversification

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for BSBI's core goals from beyond the Society, income from membership is supplemented by grants and donations from a range of other sources. Income generation is directed through the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, which was reviewed in 2023 and extended to 2027, with work led by the Fundraising and Engagement Manager. This Strategy aims to keep BSBI's income at a level to support its strategic work, and from a broader range of funding streams, thereby further improving the Society's financial resilience. The Society is grateful to all the individuals, organisations and grant-making bodies that have contributed towards BSBI's work in this period. BSBI has many active volunteers and considers itself very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve its charitable objectives at low cost.

Strategic Overview

The BSBI Strategic Plan 2024-27 sets out the priorities of the Society's work towards the vision of a world where wild plants thrive and are valued and understood. During the year under review, as you can see in this report, progress has been made across all three Goals.

To inspire, build and support a diverse community of botanists and develop the skills base (Goal 1), BSBI has broadened opportunities for learning, by expanding the training offering and publishing an updated botanical Skills Ladder, clarifying learning pathways. Local engagement has been increased,

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for example through BSBI's field meetings and New Year Plant Hunt, and it has also continued to support survey and recording and the Vice-County Recorder network via the work of its Countries Support Team in each country, including work to identify and overcome barriers to recording and data mobilisation, and to improve training and support for recorders at all skill levels.

To provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address key environmental issues (Goal 2), BSBI gathered 2.8 million records during the year under review, much helped by the new BSBI Recording App. A suite of new recording activities and new survey methods for a Wildflower Hunt (phenology) survey and a montane summit survey have been developed. Also, interpretation of BSBI data continues to provide evidence to underpin conservation and land use decision-making through its Botanical Heatmaps and an update to the GB Red List for vascular plants.

To raise the profile of plants and botany so that wild plants are better understood and more highly valued (Goal 3), BSBI employees have been working behind the scenes to develop a new Communications Strategy and Toolkit, and to redesign the website, both of which will be launched in the year ahead, improving impact and reach.

The Society was hugely fortunate to receive very generous legacies in 2024 from long-standing members: this has allowed us to invest in capacity to better support members and deliver BSBI's plans going forwards. Trustees have agreed that these legacies will be used to make step changes in what is done for botany and wild plants, making it possible to invest in important science projects, data support, training development, organisational resilience and in a contingency fund for Country Officer roles. Everyone at BSBI is very grateful for this support from members' legacies, which will make a big difference to what can be achieved.

Foundations

Work to strengthen the Society's five strategic foundations also continues:

Foundation 1: Motivated, skilled people

BSBI has developed guidance and training resources for recorders and data users; supported Vice-County Recorders in growing their local teams; and set up an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group and published an EDI statement.

Foundation 2: Strong relationships

During the year under review, the range of partners worked with has grown still further and there are clear agreements in place for how we work together. To give just a few examples, there is now a data sharing agreement in place with Scottish Forestry; BSBI continues to support Botanical University Challenge; and discussions continue with the Danish Botanical Society to share protocols for BSBI's Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs).

Foundation 3: Strong governance

BSBI published its Governance Handbook in 2024 to provide a clear summary of how BSBI governance works, how decisions are made and where to go for further information. Committees have been working hard to embrace timely succession planning; for example, Science & Data Committee's Secretary is due to step down in two years' time but advertising to members resulted in a new Secretary coming forward who can shadow the current role-holder prior to handover. New committee members were also recruited at BSBI events and outreach activities.

Foundation 4: Effective data management

A Data Plan has been put in place to improve the data management infrastructure, documentation, guidance and user training; work has continued on data infrastructure and members' access to the DDb was launched this year. These are just some of the areas the Data Plan Steering Group has been working on to improve data management, with quarterly meetings to review and oversee progress against the Data Plan.

Foundation 5: Sustainable business model

Since the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023* launched in 2021, BSBI has been working hard to diversify income sources, to ensure long term financial resilience and sustainability. Income pie charts and other information at the Financial Review section 4 illustrate progress made. This Annual Report and Accounts and the Annual Review are shared with BSBI members each Autumn and those attending the AGM each November can also listen to an update from the Board, when there is an opportunity to ask questions.

Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's website, events and media coverage are all ways in which the Society works to inform and educate the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focused on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

To learn more about BSBI and all it has to offer:



www.bsbi.org

Also, see:

www.plantatlas2020.org
www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org
www.PlantAlert.org
www.identiplant.bsbi.org



<https://x.com/BSBIbotany>



<https://www.facebook.com/BSBI2011>
<https://www.facebook.com/IrishSectionBSBI/>



<https://www.instagram.com/bsbibotany/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/botanical-society-of-britain-and-ireland>



<https://www.youtube.com/botanicalsocietyofbritainandireland>



<https://www.tiktok.com/@bsbibotany>



<https://bsky.app/profile/bsbibotany.bsky.social>



<https://www.threads.com/@bsbibotany>

3. Fundraising

Fundraising in BSBI is currently following the roadmap of the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023 (IDS)* which was reviewed in 2023 & extended to 2027. This has overarching objectives to increase income to ensure a consistently balanced budget, support the wider Strategic Plan, diversify income streams and maximise existing income, for example, from membership and partnerships.

BSBI employs one member of staff, the Fundraising & Engagement Manager, to oversee its fundraising (as part of their role), and BSBI is subscribed to both the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Excellence Framework.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



Great care is taken to follow good fundraising practices, and no complaints have been received, either directly to the BSBI or via the Regulator, with regards to the Society's fundraising activities. Also, BSBI does not undertake fundraising that represents an unreasonable intrusion, is overly persistent or places undue pressure on an individual to donate.

The *Code of Fundraising Practice*, issued by the Fundraising Regulator sets the standards that apply to fundraising conducted by all charitable institutions and third-party fundraisers in the UK. From 1 November 2025, fundraising regulation in the UK is evolving to reflect modern fundraising practices. The Fundraising & Engagement Manager has reviewed the new Code and will ensure compliance.

Return on Investment (RoI) on Fundraising Activities

Fundraising is an organisational priority within BSBI which is carefully monitored against the *Income Diversification Strategy*. Updates are reported by the CEO at every quarterly board meeting and overall progress is discussed and reviewed annually in December. Trustees constantly learn from its fundraising activities as some outcomes are more successful than others. One of the ways in which Trustees measure fundraising performance is the Return on Investment (RoI) metric. Although RoI must always be looked at in a wider context, it provides a useful guide to assess performance against sector benchmarks, to assess progress over time and of course to ensure that valuable charitable funds are being directed in the right way and value for money is being achieved.

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising (www.ciof.org.uk) does not have a specific approach to calculating RoI, instead guiding it to be appraised on a case-by-case basis. BSBI has chosen a straightforward RoI methodology: If BSBI incurs £1 on fundraising activities & generates £1.50 fundraising income, the $RoI = 1.5$. An average benchmark of 3 was proposed to BSBI by the Fundraising Standards Institute (FSI) when advising on the *Income Diversification Strategy* and adopted by Trustees as a long-term aim through its Strategy.

BSBI has carefully assessed the income sources to be included within its RoI calculation; all donations are included, some grants and contracts and a proportion of other income felt to be directly linked to fundraising activities. The costs directly incurred in delivering these activities are included within the RoI calculation. Some sources are recurring; others are short-term or one-off.

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For the year under review, Trustees are very pleased to report that overall, for each £1 spent on fundraising, £11.90 (2024: £3.80) of income has been generated, representing an RoI of 11.9. This figure is extraordinary in that it has been driven largely through legacy income (recognised as being a more volatile income source) which comprised three legacies; two of which are for more than £0.2M each.

Other than for legacies, RoI would have been 1.7, a drop compared to 2024. Income from trusts and foundations is a particular source of focus for the year to come, as BSBI looks to continue to diversify income sustainably.

Looking ahead, Trustees will continue to guide and monitor BSBI's fundraising activities whilst working towards a stable & recurring RoI of 3. The Board will also continue to ensure that BSBI's fundraising activities thrive, and the Fundraising & Engagement Manager has adequate capacity to continue to develop opportunities aligned with BSBI's charitable aims.

4. Financial Review

Overview

For the year under review, the Board of Trustees is delighted to report Total Income for the year of £1,372k (2024: £818k), a 68% increase vs 2024. Net Income is £455k (2024: £174k); an Operating Surplus of £454k plus investment gains of £1k (2024: £121k plus £53k)

Looking further within these numbers, the Operating Surplus on the Unrestricted General Fund (BSBI's continuing operations) is £493k for 2025 (2024: £120k), well ahead of the Budget set by the Board in March 2024, and the reasons for this variance are set out in the Income section below. BSBI continues its journey of progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner as illustrated below:

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the General Fund £000 *	493*	120	(27)	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)

*This, together with the deficit of (£25k) on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve, (£14k) deficits on Restricted Reserves and Gains on Investments of £1k, altogether comprise Net Income of £455k as per the SOFA.

Economic & Political Backdrop

The UK and Ireland economies in 2024/25 have been shaped by a mixture of economic and political challenges including political and financial change and economic uncertainty through the impact of higher UK Employer's National Insurance, implemented in April 2025, and the widely felt threat of US tariffs. It is against this backdrop that this report is written.

Investments and Cash

Total Return on investments (total gains/losses, plus investment income, less fees) was £11,742 (2024: £64,351).

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RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD) is BSBI's investment manager and, under its guidance, the BSBI Board continues to operate an ethical investment stance aligned with its charitable aims, designed to have limited exposure to organisations engaged in the fossil fuel industry. This approach was incorporated into an updated BSBI Investment Policy approved by the Board in March 2025.

Total Return of BSBI's investment portfolio this year (net of fees) & a comparison to other metrics:

BSBI's portfolio - this year	+1.6%
BSBI's portfolio - last year	+9.6%
RBCBD Risk Category 6 (Benchmark)	+6.5%
ARC Charity Steady Growth (Peer Group Benchmark)	+2.7%
CPI +2%	+4.6%

In 2024/25, BSBI's investment portfolio was muted in comparison to 2023/24 when it benefited from strong performance in North American equities, specifically in the Information Technology sector. Also, the final quarter of 2024/25 was a tough quarter which pulled down 2024/25 full year performance.

Key reasons for the underperformance of BSBI's portfolio vs Benchmarks are as follows:

- Markets were buffeted by erratic changes in trade policy in the US which created heightened uncertainty
- Equity markets were particularly volatile, with US equities falling by c7%, significantly lagging other regions. Therefore, within the portfolio, positions in US equity funds detracted
- In addition, markets experienced a rotation in leadership with the technology sector giving up some ground on concerns around the competitive threat of China's low-cost AI company, DeepSeek. Consequently, equity funds with a focus on technology were particularly weak. Interestingly, these funds rebounded very strongly in QE June 2025
- Elsewhere within the portfolio, other assets such as fixed interest/bonds and gold proved to be good diversifiers during the volatility

It has been pleasing to see a recovery in the quarter after year end when BSBI's portfolio total return was 4.3% (net of all fees) compared to the ARC Charity Steady Growth peer group benchmark return, which was 3.1%.

At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £1,463,728 (2024: £1,008,868); Fixed Asset Investments of £740,932 (2024: £729,190) and Net Current Assets of £722,796 (2024: £279,678).

BSBI held £219,649 Cash at Bank at 31 March 2025 (2024: £316,293) and Current Asset Investments (treasury deposits on fixed terms of more than 3 months) of £475,000 (2024: £85,000). These assets are managed in line with the BSBI Treasury Policy developed and implemented during 2024.

Income

Having reached an important income milestone of £0.5M just two years ago, the Board is pleased to report that income has now surpassed £1M; 2025 income was £1,372,22 (2024: £818,239).

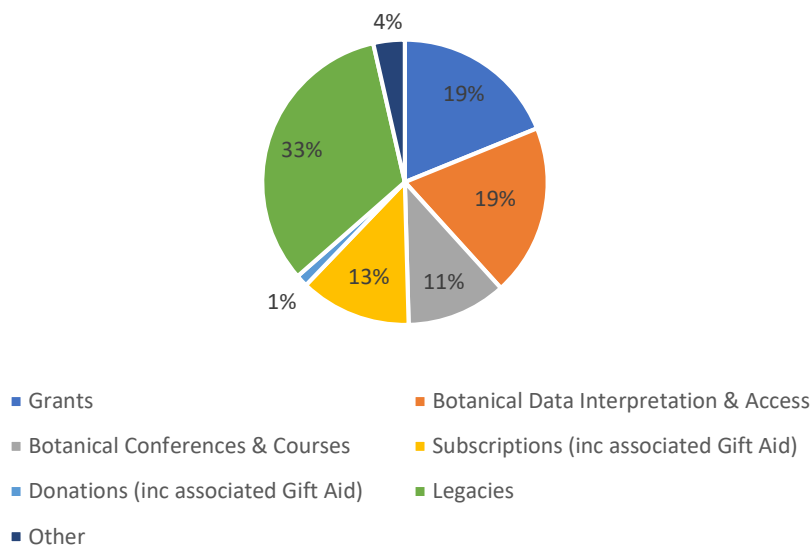
A visual illustration of BSBI's income categories and a comparison to the previous year follows below.

It is the hallmark of a healthy organisation to have several stable income categories (sources). This profile aims to reduce the risk of a reduction in any one category threatening the future of an organisation and this aim is central to BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy*. It is pleasing, therefore, to report that BSBI has a total of nine income categories; six (as pictured) and three more contained within the Other category.

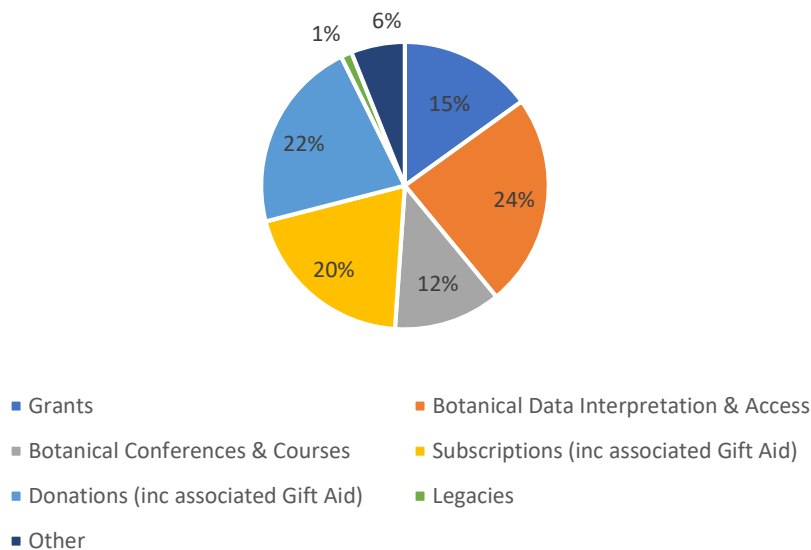
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BSBI Income Categories - Actual 2024/25



BSBI Income Categories - Actual 2023/24



The clearly visible highlight of the year is **Legacies**; income grew from 1% to a huge 33% of all income, amounting to £451,271 (2024: £9,982) over three individual gifts in wills (2024: three) and trustees are immensely grateful for the generosity shown. These individuals are named & thanked below, and trustees' decisions on how this income will be used to make step changes in BSBI's work for botany and wild plants are described in the Strategy Overview above.

Income generated by **Grants** increased from 15% to 19% and unrestricted income more than doubled to £241k. DAERA joined the roster of BSBI's statutory funders in 2023/24 year with a five-year grant running to 2028 and 2024/25 saw a full year of activities with income reflecting this: £102k vs £38k the year before. Also, the grant for the Priority Plants on SSSIs in Wales project, from the Nature Networks Programme (delivered by the Heritage Fund on behalf of the Welsh Government), began in June 2024 for which BSBI received grant income of £57k in 2024/25. Grants continue to be an important way of delivering nationally important botanical objectives and a crucial source of recurring income. Thanks go to BSBI's many partners, named below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

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Botanical Data Interpretation and Access generated £267k (2024: £196k) income and BSBI is pleased to help many organisations achieve their aims. Natural England (NE) funded partnership work with BSBI to further improve the accessibility and mobilisation of BSBI plant data for those making evidence-based decisions. With a full year of activity in 2024/25, income from NE's Supporting Local Engagement in England contract increased from £5k to £67k. BSBI also continues to work with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), adviser to the UK Government on nature conservation, as part of the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) partnership. There are many other long term relationships too; with The Environment Agency and with UKCEH under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species and annual agreements exist to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including Plantlife, Royal Botanic Garden Kew, National Botanic Garden of Ireland, RSPB and National Trust Scotland, as well as a number of universities, institutes and other organisations to undertake scientific research on a diverse range of topics.

Botanical Conferences, Courses & Education: although the % has remained fairly static at 11% (2024: 12%), income of £155k (2024: £99k) has been heavily driven by the pleasing growth in Identiplant with income increasing from £46k to £81k as demand has been better fulfilled.

Although a smaller % of total income (13% vs 20%), **Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)** experienced yet another year of solid growth; +6% to £173k. It was pleasing to hold Membership Subscription rates unchanged rates for calendar year 2025 so this increase is entirely down to growth in membership numbers.

The **Membership Retention KPI %** (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year), measured since 2019, has edged up to its highest ever level of 92% (2024: 91%). The stability and incremental growth of this KPI, alongside another year of good membership growth, reinforces that members continue to enjoy and value all that BSBI offers.

Donations, including associated Gift Aid: Thousands of members supported the Society this year, and individuals and organisations made donations and contributions of all types - to sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI's key projects, as part of fundraising drives and through generous gifts in Wills. Total donation income fell from £177k in 2023/24 to £19k in 2024/25, however it is important to note that 2023/24 income was lifted by a one-off, unusually large and anonymous donation of £120k.

Thank You; Whilst some income is given anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following individuals and organisations who have generously donated or otherwise supported BSBI's projects and goals, while also thanking everyone who has contributed to and made use of BSBI's resources and supported its aims, without whom BSBI could not continue to achieve all that it does:

Celia Baxter
Gerry Firkins
Brenda Harold
Roger Horton
Mary Parker
The late Michael E Braithwaite
The late Roy Maycock
The late Michael F Wildish
The Estate of the late Mary Fry
Greenwings Wildlife Tours Ltd
Habitat Aid Ltd
Mariposa Nature Tours Ltd
The Oakdale Trust

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The Society expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies and others, namely Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), NatureScot, Department for Food, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Natural History Museum, National Lottery Heritage Fund, The National Trust, Plantlife, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), National Botanic Garden of Ireland - Glasnevin and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) all continue to be long-term supporters and the income received from them, whether by grant, for botanical data or by donation, contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

Other Income: This category of income - comprising Botanical Publications, Royalties, Income from Investments (including Bank Deposit Interest) - collectively remained virtually static at £49k (2024: £50k). Within this, however, the emphasis of **Botanical Publications** income is pivoting towards e-book sales, which grew by +3% to over £6k, while paper book sales fell back from £11k to £9k. **Bank Deposit Interest** almost trebled to £14k due to the careful investment of higher cash balances, with activities guided by a new BSBI Treasury Policy implemented in December 2024.

Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +33% in the year to £884,084 (2024: £661,821) and a few notable highlights are covered below.

Expenditure on Raising Funds remained stable at £135,053 (2024: £137,831). To improve the visibility of Membership Costs, the Direct costs of member publications (e.g. *BSBI News*) were moved into here in 2023/24 from **Expenditure on Charitable Activities; Botanical Publications**. As mentioned earlier, it is very pleasing that 40% (2024: 33%) of members have chosen the digital membership format which has allowed BSBI to weather cost increases, save valuable charitable funds and, importantly, reduce environmental impact.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities amounted to £783,706 (2024: £559,230) growing by +40%. This category has increased significantly and in line with Budget expectations. A large part of the increase can be explained by the cost of more time and more employees being engaged in generating income such as Natural England contracts, which increased by £58k to £184k in 2024/25. As noted above, the Nature Networks Fund Priority Plants on SSSIs in Wales grant began in June 2024 and the salary cost of the Wales Officer, engaged to deliver this, is included in here.

Other cost changes are explained below:

- **Botanical Conferences, Courses & Education** is £169,721 (2024: £73,310) and, as explained above, this increase reflects growth in Identiplant (Income: 2024: £81k vs 2023: £46k) and therefore costs, e.g. to tutors, have increased in line. Also, improvements have been made in the accuracy of reporting the cost of support staff time. Feedback is constantly sought to inform these activities. For example, BSBI uses funds generated by Identiplant and FISC educational training to identify how it can adapt, improve and expand its offering.
- **Governance Staff Costs** remained well controlled and fell slightly to £61,659 (2024: £63,954) This mostly comprises the time of the CEO and Finance Manager.
- **Professional & HR advice, Payroll & Accounting** costs of £21,740 (2024: £5,664) include the one-off implementation & training cost of a HR system to support the growth in staff numbers and to support good governance, the cost of a triennial salary benchmarking exercise

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designed to ensure that BSBI's staff are paid appropriately and there was also legal advice to support BSBI's anticipated registration with the Charities Regulator in Ireland. To assist the part-time Finance Manager, bookkeeping services have been outsourced since May 2024 and this cost £5k.

Valuing Volunteering

BSBI is immensely fortunate, as it is every year, in being able to supplement its financial resources with the gift of freely and generously volunteered time. Whether it be the gift of botanical expertise to identify and record plant data, serving as a Trustee or Committee member, authoring a BSBI Handbook, helping to organise and run BSBI's lively calendar of botanical events, generously passing on expert knowledge to teach other botanists, acting as a Vice-County Recorder or national plant Referee or something else entirely, all of it is hugely important.

Although Trustees have always known that the nature and scale of volunteering for BSBI is vast, measuring time and placing an accurate value on it is innately difficult. In recent years, the Board has been pleased to make considerable steps forward through the design of a methodology to estimate volunteer time spent on various, different types of volunteering and to use this to estimate the value of volunteering to the Society. The results for the year are set out in overview below, with some further context on the Data Support and Recording Network aspects of these. The overall results show an increase this year due to a much higher number of records submitted during the New Year Plant Hunt (almost 25,000 records submitted vs just over 10,000 two years ago)

- **20+ types of volunteering exist (2023/24: 20+)**
- **Over 13,000 days volunteered (2023/24: just under 11,000)**

Research indicates some charities use National Minimum Wage to value volunteering. Others use different rates such as the £20 per hour rate placed on volunteering by Heritage Fund (known more widely as The National Lottery Heritage Fund).

Individuals undertaking volunteering time to BSBI are from all walks of life, with different experiences and skillsets – many with important botanical knowledge built up over a lifetime - however, it is the coming together of the collective effort that persuades the Board that every hour volunteered is equally important and valuable. As such, a single £20 per hour and 7.5 hour working day are applied in arriving at its valuation.

- **Days volunteered in 2024/25 are valued at a vast £2.0m (2024: £1.6m)**

The Board continues to be deeply appreciative of this vast contribution which illustrates BSBI's true scale and reach. BSBI has always been indebted to all its members and others who volunteer. It simply could not fulfil its charitable objectives without this help, and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; all these people continue to make BSBI the vibrant and energetic organisation it is today.

In recognition of the immense contribution of volunteering to BSBI's achievements, the Board of Trustees makes awards for outstanding contributions to botany (see Section 2, pages 11-12 for this year's awardees) and nominates candidates for honorary membership which are voted upon by members at the Annual General Meeting (see Section 2, page 3).

The Board also prioritises putting into place guidance, training and support for volunteers, under BSBI's Strategy Foundation: "Motivated, Skilled People". This year BSBI Staff have substantially developed guidance and training resources for recorders and data users and have also supported Vice-County Recorders in growing their local teams. This is demonstrated through the following new Key

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Performance Indicators (KPIs), put into place to measure progress in building and supporting the network of recorders who are so vital to all of the Society's work.

Data Support KPIs; During calendar year 2024:

- The BSBI documentation website was viewed by 7,800 people
- 149,765 records were submitted by the BSBI Recording App
- 8 data training events (3 in person, 8 online) were held for recorders, with 250 attendees

Recording Network KPIs; There are a total of 157 recording areas (vice-counties and islands treated as separate recording units) across Britain, Ireland, the Channel Islands and Isle of Man. Of these, during 2024/25:

- 73 (46%) have Vice-County Recorder (VCR) teams: 65 with at least two VCRs (grown from 64 before January's Science & Data Committee meeting (S&D) and 8 further with a non-VCR iRecord verifier team member
- 78 (50%) have a solo-VCR
- 6 (4%) have a vacancy:
 - i. South Devon VC3 – A VCR has been nominated for approval at the May S&D
 - ii. Surrey VC17 – Two VCRs have been nominated for approval at the May S&D
 - iii. Essex VC18 – Continues vacant
 - iv. Essex VC19 – Continues vacant
 - v. Buckinghamshire VC24 – exploring with local natural history societies to identify candidates
 - vi. Kintyre VC101 – Three VCRs have been nominated for approval at the May S&D meeting.

These numbers illustrate that BSBI is close to achieving parity between solo-VCRs and VCR teams; 78 solo VCRs and 73 teams.

Overall, 229 VCR posts are filled across Britain and Ireland. In addition, there are 119 iRecord verifiers in place across 80 VCs, of which 24 are filled by non-VCRs (broader members of a county team).

109 VCs returned a 2024 Annual Report against a possible total figure of 157. This compares to 97 reports returned for 2023, an increase of 12.

5. Looking Ahead - a Message from Julia Hanmer, BSBI's Chief Executive



"As the publication of our Plant Atlas 2020 demonstrated, in this time of biodiversity loss and a changing climate, our wild plants have never been more in need of the understanding, appreciation and support that BSBI is uniquely placed to provide.

In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on priorities set out in our Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 to address this need. Thanks to the very generous legacies received from members in 2024, we can make real step changes in our work for botany and wild plants by investing in science projects, data support, training development, organisational resilience and in a contingency fund for Country Officer roles.

We will continue to build a diverse community of botanists and to share knowledge and foster a love of plants through field meetings and indoor events, training, grants, publications, periodicals, communications, our website, our social media, outreach and membership.

We will trial expansion of FISC, the industry standard for botanical skills assessments, into Ireland and further expand provision of our Identiplant plant identification training, as well as broadening our overall training offering, including providing specialist training for the most challenging plant groups.

Our *Science Strategy 2024-29* will guide our work in providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address key environmental issues. We will continue to increase the number of records flowing into the BSBI Distribution Database, improve ease of data entry via the new BSBI Recording App and develop a 'desktop' version of the App which will provide a quick and reliable way of entering records logged in the field using BSBI recording cards. We will also provide more guidance and training for our data users.

In partnership with Natural England (NE) and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, we will publish the GB Red List, which will provide an assessment of threat to plant species in Britain, based on internationally recognised IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) criteria. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action.

We continue to support surveying and recording and our Vice-County Recorder networks in each country via the work of our Countries Support team in England (including work to identify and overcome barriers to participation in recording and data mobilisation, funded by NE), in Ireland (funded by NPWS and including our Targeted Aquatic Plant Project and an Irish Grassland project), in Scotland (funded by NatureScot) and in Wales (including the Priority Plants on Sites of Scientific Interest in Wales project, funded by the Nature Networks Programme). In Northern Ireland we will continue to develop botanical skills and evidence, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Northern Ireland Environment Fund.

We will continue to encourage participation in the New Year Plant Hunt across Britain and Ireland and the National Plant Monitoring Scheme in the UK. We will also seek funding to roll out a new Wildflower Hunt to provide evidence on how our flora is responding to the changing climate.

We will implement our new Communications Strategy to further raise the profile of wild plants and botany and launch our new, improved website, increasing its impact and useability.

Our work to strengthen our foundations and resilience will also continue, by publishing and taking forward a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan and further progression of our application to register with the Charities Regulator in Ireland, amongst other priorities.

In summary, in the year ahead, BSBI's members, the botanists recording wild plants, sharing their knowledge and fostering a love of plants and our science and data, will continue to make a unique contribution to the evidence and action needed to ensure wild plants thrive and are valued, and to shape and prioritise efforts to conserve them."

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6. Structure, governance and managementConstitution

The Society is a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675) and is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 08553976), with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It has no share capital. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Board of Trustees (Directors)

The Board of Trustees (Directors) are the Society's legal trustees. The Board governs all BSBI's activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive. Together, they coordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Trustees are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Trustees, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Trustees. One third of the Trustees (other than those currently co-opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (20 November 2025) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years. Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post on 31 March 2025 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CM Miles (Chair until 21 Nov 24)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 21 Nov 2024
Dr S Knapp OBE (Chair from 21 Nov 24)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 16 May 2024
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 22 June 2021
Miss KN Jones	Appointed 19 Nov 2021
Mr B O'Kane	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Prof P Hollingsworth FRSE	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Dr M Long	Appointed 21 Mar 2023
Dr T Dines	Appointed 16 Nov 2023
Mr RJ Allanach	Appointed 6 Jan 2024
Mrs K Nicola J Tainton	Appointed 19 Jan 2024
Ms SJ Edwards	Appointed 21 Nov 2024
Mr A Lack	Appointed 21 Nov 2024

The membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All Trustees are made aware of their obligations and the Articles of Association and the Board is provided with regular updates on BSBI's financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission and other regulator guidance, including "*The Essential Trustee*" and other Trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of Trustees is targeted effectively. In this period, BSBI developed and consulted on a new Governance Handbook (see Strategic Plan, Good Governance above)

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Honorary Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Honorary General Secretary. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager, all of whom attend Board meetings in order to do so. Other staff members attend as and when the need arises.

Details of other office bearers, including Vice-County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and the Editor-in-Chief of *British & Irish Botany* are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2025*.

The Staff

As at 31 March 2025 the Society employed 16 staff (2024: 14), equivalent to 14 full time posts (2024: 12), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in coordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its members and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Chief Executive leads the team of employees, which is structured into these key functions:

- Science & Data
- Country Support
- Membership, Engagement & Communications
- Finance

Committees

The *BSBI Yearbook 2025* sets out full details of BSBI's Committees, more details of which are outlined below; the BSBI website also lists the members of Committees and the Board and provides contact details for each.

The Country Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (All-Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work and play an important role in the governance structure, working alongside the Countries Manager and Country Officers to drive engagement, support the recording community and showcase their country's work to the membership and to the wider public.

For example, the **Committee for Scotland** plays an important role in the organisation of the annual Scottish Botanists' Conference, which attracts a huge number of participants; the **Committee for Ireland** supports the Ireland Officer with organisation of, and participation in, Ireland's Spring Conference and Autumn Meeting; the Vice-County Recorders who sit on the **Committee for Wales** lead on recording activities there; the **Committee for England** holds well-attended online Annual Meetings. Editors of the four country newsletters sit on Country Committees; each does an invaluable job communicating information that matters to BSBI's membership in their respective countries.

BSBI has three Standing or Operational Committees, as follows:

The **Events & Communications Committee** supports staff with organising national events, conferences and field meetings, such as the New Year Plant Hunt and the British & Irish Botanical Conference. It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.

The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the Vice-County Recorder network and the Panel of Plant Referees and Specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the

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staff of the BSBI Science and Data team. Its Science & Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.

The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards Training and Plant Study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants. This Committee also has two very active working groups of members leading on oversight and development of BSBI's FISC botanical skills assessments and Identiplant training course

The Board of Trustees has two permanent sub committees:

The **Nominations, Awards & Governance Committee** has responsibility for identifying and recommending candidates for election as Trustees, for assuring a steady flow of nominations for awards and for recommending to Trustees any changes to the governance arrangements of the Society.

The **Finance Committee** works closely with the Finance Manager, as Committee Secretary, to assist the Board in ensuring there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise; and for ensuring BSBI complies with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. This and its other objectives are set out in a **Terms of Reference** approved in December 2022 which will be reviewed & updated in Autumn 2025. Under its Terms of Reference, the Finance Committee advises the Board on its **Investment Policy**, which underwent its triennial update in March 2025. In December 2024, the Finance Committee also recommended to the Board a **Treasury Policy**, created in response to the more growing needs of the Society. The Honorary Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and while this role is on hold, the Finance Committee continues to fulfil the responsibilities set out in its Terms of Reference.

The Society's Finance Committee is made up of a minimum of three Trustees and, normally with the Chair of the Board, CEO and Committee Secretary in attendance, meets once a year with the Society's Investment Manager to review investment performance and to hold them to account. Also, the performance and effectiveness review of the Finance Committee in carrying out its Terms of Reference is self-evaluated on a three-yearly basis and its findings reported to the Board for scrutiny. This will take place in Autumn 2025.

In addition to the Committees listed above, the **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion working group** plans and oversees BSBI's EDI Action Plan and regularly reviews progress. This group includes representatives from trustees, staff, and members.

Investment Policy

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its Investment Manager, RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD).

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash. Trustees have set the Return Objective for Investments to generate a Total Return (net of investment management fees) in excess of UK Inflation (measured by CPI) +2% over the Long Term. Investment income is accumulated; however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

Demonstrating our Commitment to the Environment through Investing

BSBI is fortunate to have an investment portfolio which provides crucial financial resources to help reach financial sustainability and deliver the vision for a world where wild plants thrive and are valued.

Although there are no legal requirements (from the Charity Commission for England and Wales or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) to adopt an ethical investing stance, BSBI is committed to

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Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) investment strategies which promote the protection and health of the natural environment through investing. This has been BSBI's stated commitment for several years now, which remains carefully balanced with the desire to optimise total return from investments to secure all the important work BSBI does for botany now and in the future.

BSBI is reassured to know it is keeping pace with changing attitudes; Civilsociety.co.uk tells us that 2024 research from a group of charities found that the vast majority of UK adults now believe that charities have a responsibility to be environmentally sustainable.

BSBI's trusted Investment Manager, RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD), has advised charities for 70 years and traces its origins back to 1762, even earlier than BSBI's founding in 1836! Its experienced teams are focused on building individual relationships that endure through good times and bad. Under its guidance, BSBI articulates its position on ethical investing in its **Investment Policy**.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are integrated into RBCBD's investment analysis and stewardship, and engagement are important parts of its investment process. In March 2025, RBCBD reported this Morningstar analysis of BSBI's investment portfolio:

- (1) 3.5% (2024: circa 5%) exposure to companies involved in fossil fuels, based on revenues. This is less than half of the underlying benchmark exposure, currently 9.6%
- (2) 93.5% (2024: 91.5%) of the underlying investments held within collective funds have an ESG risk rating of medium or lower.
- (3) 0% (2024: 0%) exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in the production and/or distribution of palm oil
- (4) 0% (2024: 0.1%) exposure to companies with 10% or more of revenues involved in growing genetically modified (GM) crops or the development and/or cultivation of GM seeds & plants

RBCBD is firmly committed to stewardship, ensuring the responsible ownership of assets. It continues to engage with funds to improve climate change reporting and to support investment into renewable infrastructure. Through its partner, Columbia Threadneedle, which provides ESG-specific collaborative engagement services, it also has numerous engagements with leading corporations around protecting and setting biodiversity targets.

In 2023, RBCBD became members of www.Natureaction100.org, a global investor engagement initiative focused on driving greater corporate ambition and action to reverse nature and biodiversity loss.

Nature Action 100



More information can be found in RBCBD's 2024 Annual Stewardship and Engagement Report here: <https://www.brewin.co.uk/stewardship-policy>

All of this work aims to create long term value leading to sustainable benefits for the environment and society and, through these actions and monitoring, BSBI feels reassured its investment activities promote the health and protection of the natural environment.

Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical study and research are set out on the BSBI website and more information is also included in the Notes to the Accounts below (Note 6).

Risk Management

Like all charities, BSBI operates in an environment in which there are uncertainties and risks. The Board of Trustees works to identify the types of risk to which BSBI is or could be exposed and then assesses the probability and impact of each on the organisation. Each risk is then considered in more detail to understand how it can be either mitigated or managed before arriving at a Current Risk Score.

The Trustees maintain a Risk Register which documents the major risks identified, under the updated themes of Governance, Operational, Finance, Legal compliance and Health & Safety. The Board reviews the Risk Register at its quarterly Board meetings and agrees actions. Trustees are satisfied that this system addresses, mitigates and manages BSBI's exposure to the major risks. Examples of ways in which financial risks are mitigated include:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive range of insurance policies in relation to its activities and associated risks, including those for Public & Employer's Liability, Professional Indemnity and Trustee Indemnity. For example, when BSBI expanded FISC & Identiplant into Ireland, checks were made to ensure these activities are adequately insured.
- ii. The Society maintains a Balance Sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all its Net Assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in several ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of RBC Brewin Dolphin, an independent professional Investment Manager, which follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually. Also, a Client Services review meeting is conducted annually. The Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against industry benchmarks and other expectations.
- iii. BSBI operates in Britain, Ireland and overseas and must therefore handle transactions in UK £ Sterling, Euro €, United States Dollar \$. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of its transactions, balances and investments being denominated in UK £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk. It aims to manage investments and cash to optimise investment income & gains and bank interest. Because the individual investments in BSBI's investment portfolio are freely traded, it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice and this mitigates risk.
- v. An Income & Expenditure Budget is set and approved annually in advance by the Board which is then rigorously applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive and the Finance Manager, to ensure that the Society enters into only appropriate financial commitments within its means.
- vii. Working within the Treasury Policy implemented in December 2024 and with the oversight of BSBI's Finance Committee and Chief Executive, the Finance Manager monitors bank balances and ensures there are sufficient but not excessive liquid funds to meet liabilities as they fall due.
- viii. The impact of the Covid pandemic taught BSBI to develop a flexible mindset which continues to help manage risks.

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For the year ended 31 March 2025

Principal Risks & Mitigations:

Notwithstanding the above, significant risks can develop and remain and there are currently two risks with a high Current Risk Score to which Trustees' attention is particularly focussed, as noted below:

1) Operational – Data: Loss of data or disruption of business due to the failure or malicious compromise of IT systems

Risk: BSBI is operationally dependent on a range of in-house IT systems (e.g. the DDb and websites) and external service providers (e.g. Beacon, for CRM and membership). The failure, or the loss or compromise of data from these systems could disrupt core functions and activities or result in the loss of valuable, income-generating, data assets. While BSBI possesses the specialist skills and knowledge required to secure and maintain its systems, some of the processes are poorly documented, so that the loss of a few key staff could result in a loss of critical knowledge. In-house systems have been concentrated excessively on a single server, representing a potential single point of failure for multiple systems.

Mitigation: Trustees address this risk as follows: Core databases (membership and DDb) are backed up remotely and servers are in physically secure hosting facilities and protected by appropriate cyber security measures (e.g. firewalls). Bespoke software systems are designed to be secure. BSBI's third-party service providers operate secure systems that have achieved appropriate levels of security certification. The organisation is also in the process of moving its websites to separate hosting (away from the DDb server) and has plans to establish a separate server for software development work.

Fully documented disaster recovery plans are being developed by the Data Team. A Cyber Essentials exercise (a UK government-backed scheme designed to help organizations protect themselves against common cyber threats) will be undertaken in 2025, which will provide a structured way of identifying where BSBI may need to improve its security.

2) Finance - Loss of staff and services due to insufficient funding

Risk: Reduction in funding from national agencies and other donors could render BSBI unable to deliver its current activities, leading to an unhappy membership. The skills of knowledgeable and experienced employees could be lost.

Mitigation: Trustees are addressing this risk via a range of measures. Relationships are developed at operational and senior levels within all national agencies and major donors, so they know BSBI and value its work. Ties are made to the national agencies' policies and their need for open data and BSBI works with the agencies to establish longer-term strategic agreements, so that income is less restricted and more flexible. Good progress is being made against BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy* and work continues to develop funder relationships and consolidate cross-staff engagement with income generation. As a back-up plan, Trustees consider and approve the Strategic Development Reserve to meet gaps between funding agreements.

Reserves Policy

The Board last reviewed its Reserves Policy in September 2024, and the next review will take place in Autumn 2025. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Over time, BSBI's income has become more diversified, with a more predictable core of income, thereby reducing overall risk in the face of one or more sources becoming vulnerable. This increasing robustness gives the comfort BSBI sought through its *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, reviewed in 2023 & extended to 2027.

In its Reserves Policy, the Board of Trustees has carefully reflected and concluded that £0.6m – equivalent to 7-8 months' operating expenditure - is an adequate and appropriate minimum level of Reserves which will help BSBI achieve a financially sustainable & resilient business model.

Meanwhile, the General Fund stood at £0.9M at 31 March 2025, (2024: £0.7M). Therefore, there is £0.3M buffer above the minimum of £0.6M. This affords the Board capacity to respond to - or seek out - opportunities. When opportunities are identified to deliver BSBI's aims even more effectively, the Board will consider designating further funds to ringfence further funds to ensure the opportunity is achieved.

Looking ahead, income diversity and therefore resilience will continue to inform BSBI's Reserves Policy.

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

- 1) **The General Fund:** this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to leverage further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.6M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.
- 2) **The Strategic Development Fund:** this designated fund was created in June 2020 to fund the one-off or short-medium term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

BSBI has maintained eleven Restricted Income Funds during the year under review, currently valued at £18,488 (2024: £32,460) Four funds were existing at the start of the year and seven were created in the year to address areas of funding needed to meet BSBI's long term aims. There is more information about what each of these funds is for in the Notes to the Accounts (Note 13).

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2025

7. Reference and administrative details

Founded & Name	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland name adopted in 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	MKS LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA HSBC UK Bank plc, Birmingham, B1 1HQ Flagstone Group Ltd, 26-27 Oxendon St, SW1Y 4EL.
Investment Manager	RBC Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Auditor	MKS LLP, 4 Victoria Square, St Albans, AL1 3TF
Legal Advisers	Stone King LLP, 91 Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HR
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr S Knapp
Honorary Treasurer	On hold (Finance Committee covers this role)
President	Prof P Ashton (from 23 Nov 2024)
President Elect	Prof P Ashton (until 23 Nov 2024) now vacant
Honorary General Secretary	Mr B O'Kane
Company Secretary	Vacant
Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms JE Etherington
Website	www.bsbi.org

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2025

8. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- d) state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

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

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

The Trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

MKS LLP Chartered Accountants were appointed auditors to the Society and a resolution proposing their reappointment will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 16th September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr S Knapp
Trustee & Chair of the Board



Miss KN Jones
Trustee & Chair of Finance Committee

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland ('the charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 36, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

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

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011, the Charity SORP, Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council, health and safety legislation, employment law and data protection.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

Shivani Kothari (Senior Statutory Auditor)

17 September 2025

For and on behalf of:
Moore Kingston Smith LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
4 Victoria Square, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3TF

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £
INCOME FROM							
Subscriptions, Donations, Grants & Legacies	2	881,668	19,655	901,323	409,392	63,917	473,309
Charitable activities	3	439,712	-	439,712	322,431	-	322,431
Investments	4	30,184	1,003	31,187	22,405	94	22,499
Total		1,351,564	20,658	1,372,222	754,228	64,011	818,239
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising funds	5	134,451	602	135,053	137,831	-	137,831
Charitable activities	6	749,633	34,073	783,706	523,990	35,240	559,230
Total		884,084	34,675	918,759	661,821	35,240	697,061
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		467,480	(14,017)	453,463	92,407	28,771	121,178
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	6,152	205	6,357	(8,869)	(37)	(8,906)
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(4,800)	(160)	(4,960)	61,913	258	62,171
Total (losses)/gains on investments		1,352	45	1,397	53,044	221	53,265
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		468,832	(13,972)	454,860	145,451	28,992	174,443
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		976,408	32,460	1,008,868	830,957	3,468	834,425
Net movement in funds as above		468,832	(13,972)	454,860	145,451	28,992	174,443
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		1,445,240	18,488	1,463,728	976,408	32,460	1,008,868

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025		2024 as restated	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9		740,932		729,190
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	23,062		24,919	
Debtors	11	335,568		150,971	
Investments		475,000		85,000	
Cash at bank		219,649		316,293	
		1,053,279		577,183	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	330,483		297,505	
Net Current Assets			722,796		279,678
Net Assets			1,463,728		1,008,868
Funds					
Restricted funds	13		18,488		32,460
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund			870,900		716,360
Strategic Development Fund			574,340		260,048
			1,463,728		1,008,868

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 16th September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr S Knapp, Trustee &
Chair of the Board



Miss K N Jones, Trustee &
Chair of Finance Committee

Company registration number 08553976. Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025	2024 as restated
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from (used in) operating activities	17	279,577	90,496
Cash generated from interest on deposits		13,779	4,768
Net cash generated from (used in) operating activities		293,356	95,264
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	-	30,000
Purchase of Investments		(390,000)	(85,000)
Net cash provided by investing activities		(390,000)	(55,000)
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(96,644)	40,264
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		316,293	276,029
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		219,649	316,293

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2024 as restated £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash at Bank	316,293	(96,644)	219,649

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice (UK GAAP) as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months after the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the Charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the 12 months from the date of signing the financial statements, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the Charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

Statement on Public Benefit

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

Recognition of Income

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Investment Income is recognised when earned, with dividends pending being accrued or prepaid.

Other income is recognised when received.

The Society's Vice-County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Plant Distribution Database (DDb), for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Expenditure on Raising Funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Expenditure on Charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities (botanical data interpretation & access, botanical conferences, courses & education, botanical publications and website or governance costs) which cannot be allocated directly, the costs are apportioned based on estimated time spent or by other reasonable assumptions.

Grants awarded are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient unless the grant is conditional on a future event. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

Investments

Investments are carried in the Balance Sheet at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

Stocks

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Financial Instruments

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors

Debtors – short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents – cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks with a short maturity of 3 months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors – short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Holiday pay accrual

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Pensions

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The Society currently transacts in Euros € and US Dollars \$.

Taxation

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC, and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. This means its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration made to BSBI by a member or donor. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT and irrecoverable VAT is reported as an expense.

Fund accounting

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds – are those funds where restrictions were established by the original donor(s) as to what type of expenditure was permitted.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

2. SUBSCRIPTIONS, DONATIONS, GRANTS & LEGACIES	2025	2024
	£	£
Membership Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	172,826	162,700
Unrestricted Donations (including Gift Aid) and sundry income	16,091	131,044
Unrestricted Grants	241,480	113,166
Unrestricted Legacies	451,271	2,482
Total Unrestricted Fund income	881,668	409,392
Restricted Donations (including Gift Aid) and sundry income	2,655	46,417
Restricted Grants	17,000	10,000
Restricted Legacies	-	7,500
Total Restricted Fund income	19,655	63,917
	901,323	473,309
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation & access delivery	266,877	196,068
Botanical conferences, courses and education	155,147	99,109
Botanical publications	14,866	17,598
Royalties	2,822	9,656
	439,712	322,431
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income (Restricted £1,003 (2024 - £94))	17,408	17,731
Bank deposit interest	13,779	4,768
	31,187	22,499
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff & Other Costs of Membership & Communications	47,014	45,480
Direct Costs of Member publications (Restricted £602 (2024 - £NIL))	39,755	39,907
Staff & Other Costs of Fundraising for Donations, Grants & Legacies	34,230	38,773
Publicity	989	1,896
Investment management costs & finance charges	13,065	11,775
	135,053	137,831

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2025 £	2024 £
Botanical Data Interpretation & Access and Grant Delivery		
Direct Staff & Other Costs (Restricted £27,000 (2024 £25,000))	400,133	322,406
Support Staff & Other Costs (Note a)	89,914	54,756
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £468 (2024 £240))	<u>1,953</u>	<u>1,844</u>
	<u>492,000</u>	<u>379,006</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Direct Costs of Conferences and courses	87,443	42,895
Staff Costs (Restricted £6,605 (2024 £10,000)) (Note a)	74,371	25,431
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>7,907</u>	<u>4,984</u>
	<u>169,721</u>	<u>73,310</u>
Botanical Publications		
Cost of publication sales	4,919	7,314
Staff Costs (Note a)	4,559	-
Grants awarded for botanical publications	<u>750</u>	<u>2,500</u>
	<u>10,228</u>	<u>9,814</u>
Governance		
Strategy Implementation Costs	-	851
Trustee indemnity insurance	1,493	1,117
Staff Costs	61,659	63,954
Audit fees	10,250	9,750
Professional & HR advice, Payroll & Accounting (Note b)	21,740	5,664
Committee costs and expenses	6,092	2,287
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	2,930	848
Recruitment, Training & other governance costs	<u>7,593</u>	<u>12,529</u>
	<u>111,757</u>	<u>97,100</u>
Total (Restricted £34,073 (2024 £35,240))	<u>783,706</u>	<u>559,230</u>

Note a – Costs reflect improvements in the accuracy of how staff time is spent

Note b - Includes fees of £3,303 (2024: £1,910) for MKS LLP non-audit services. See Section 4 of the Annual Report for further information.

The Society awards three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees:

- 1) **Grants for scientific or research work;** those with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000.
- 2) **Grants for training and education;** these are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses. Occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given for plant study or to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. Identiplant training grants are also given to a small number of students to cover the study cost, currently at £250 (see Note 16)
- 3) **Grants for botanical publications,** normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by BSBI members.

In total, 36 individuals (2024: 22) claimed grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £10,610 (2024: £9,328). The individual grants were awarded based on applications made by individuals as described above.

Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in Note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President, President Elect, nor Trustees received remuneration from BSBI for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is thought to be similar to the amount disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £822 (2024: £837) were reimbursed to 3 (2024: 4) trustees who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £50 (2024: £94) is outstanding at the year end.

Under BSBI's Articles of Association 3.4.1, all Trustees must be BSBI members and therefore each person pays an annual subscription at the relevant rate, currently £39pa or €45pa

In addition to giving time to BSBI to fulfil their various roles, Trustees also purchased tickets to attend BSBI events totalling £304 (2024: £NIL) and gave donations totalling £298 (2024: £698) to BSBI during the year, either personally or through their companies

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). During the year, NHM gave BSBI free of charge meeting space at the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Nature, within the NHM, for two meetings in 2024. Also, in November 2024, it supplied a meeting room and its Flett Theatre facilities free of charge for BSBI's British & Irish Botanical Conference; a total of three occasions (2024: two occasions). Dr Knapp is also a Scientific Associate at Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and, during the year, BSBI received £1,750 income (2024: £825) from this organisation for access granted to BSBI's plant database.

Professor P Ashton, President from 23 November 2024, is Professor of Botany with teaching and research responsibilities at Edge Hill University (EHU) in Lancashire. BSBI provides EHU with access to its database in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Dr HJ Crouch, Trustee, was engaged in 2025 for as a contractor to National Trust for 0 days survey work (2024: 3 days). During the year, BSBI received £3,750 income (2024: £6,500) from National Trust in respect of data and other work to support its Conservation Strategy, of which £3,750 (+ VAT) was outstanding at year end (2024: £NIL)

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee until 16 May 2024, is Honorary Vice-President of Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year, BSBI paid FSC £5,392 (2024: £9,995) for the provision of accommodation, catering and meeting facilities for BSBI member and other events held at FSC field centres, of which £70 was outstanding at year end (2024: £NIL). BSBI also received £11,400 income (2024: £6,525) from FSC in respect of advertising space taken in BSBI News and FISC fees, of which £225 was outstanding at year end (2024: £NIL)

Dr T Dines is an author engaged under contract by Bloomsbury Press, the publisher of the *British Wildlife Collection*. Bloomsbury has agreed to collaborate with and promote BSBI in its book "Harrap's Wildflowers, Second edition". BSBI has promoted and offered BSBI members 25% discount on Dr Dines' book *Urban Plants* published by Bloomsbury on 5 June 2025.

Prof Pete Hollingsworth, Trustee, is Director of Science and Deputy Keeper at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). During the year, BSBI paid RBGE £350 for costs associated with BSBI events

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

held there (2024: £5,208). RBGE also provides free of charge services for other BSBI events and office facilities used by BSBI's Scotland Officer.

Dr M Long, Trustee, is employed as an Ecologist for Conservation Planning and Grasslands within the Scientific Advice and Research Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). During the year, BSBI received grants of £45,190 (2024: £50,391); the £ equivalent of € denominated grants, from NPWS for BSBI's Ireland Officer, for the Targeted Aquatic Plant Project. In earlier years, Dr Long has been the key contact in arranging grant funding to BSBI for the "Irish Grasslands Project". The equivalent of £6,885 was outstanding at year end (2024: £NIL).

Employees Ms JC Hanmer (Chief Executive) and Dr KJ Walker (Head of Science) received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles. Also, amounts totalling £7,455 (2024: £7,398) were reimbursed to these employees for of travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £431 (2024: £1,222) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £195,280 from NE (2024: £133,866) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data in England and the interpretation of this data to facilitate delivery of NE's statutory duties. £NIL (2024: £55,424) is outstanding at the year end. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is allowed to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford to facilitate research. BSBI reported income of £11,250 (2024: £9,000) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species, of which £6,780 (2024: £5,400) is outstanding at the year end.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

8. STAFF COSTS	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries	558,490	448,697
Social Security costs	52,733	40,466
Pension costs	21,904	18,345
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	2,930	848
Total staff costs	636,057	508,356

The average number of employees during the year was 16 (2024: 13). At the reporting date there were 16 employees (2024: 14) of which, one (2024: one) was resident in Republic of Ireland, equivalent to 14 full time posts (2024: 12)

One employee earned more than an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2024: nil).

Key Management Personnel

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be Key Management Personnel: the Chief Executive and Head of Science. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 21% (2024: 26%) of the total above.

	2025	2024
	£	£
Total Remuneration	135,503	130,006

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled, and contributions are paid at or above the minimum required rate set by the Pensions Regulator, currently 8%. Also, a standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) is offered to BSBI's employees in Ireland into which BSBI contributes the same % as UK based employees.

No taxable employee benefits were paid during the year (2024: £NIL).

9. INVESTMENTS	2025	2024
	£	£
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	729,190	694,839
Investment income retained	17,408	17,731
Investment management charges deducted	(7,063)	(6,645)
Transfers to bank current account	-	(30,000)
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	6,357	(8,906)
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	(4,960)	62,171
Market value at the end of the year	740,932	729,190

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

At Original Cost	681,805	664,479

The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

	2025	2024
Equities - UK	17.2%	18.7%
Equities - Overseas	46.9%	49.6%
Bonds	17.2%	16.7%
Global Investments	5.6%	1.1%
Property	3.2%	2.7%
Private Equity	2.2%	2.6%
Other	6.1%	5.1%
Cash	1.6%	3.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical publications	23,062	24,919

Stocks of publications are held by BSBI's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £3,816 (2024: £4,883). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	30,697	75,222
Accrued income	279,326	46,492
Prepayments	25,545	29,257
Total debtors	335,568	150,971

The decrease in Debtors is substantially down to a single customer paying a £55k debt a few days after 31 March 2024, whereas the same customer's similarly timed invoices were paid a few days before 31 March 2025. The increase in Accrued Income is explained by legacy income of £0.2M not yet paid to BSBI by the Executors at 31 March 2025.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

12. CREDITORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	14,779	9,759
Taxation and social security	31,923	37,548
Pensions	4,496	4,736
Holiday pay accrual	13,090	10,160
Other accrued expenses	16,613	18,545
Deferred income	249,582	216,757
Total Creditors	330,483	297,505

£106,692 Deferred income (2024: £102,520) relates to subscriptions for 2025, therefore the 75% relating to the nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred.

Deferred income also arises from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences.

Brought Forward	216,757	155,649
Added during the year	283,718	263,105
Released during the year	(250,893)	(201,997)
Carried forward	249,582	216,757

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	1 April 2023 £	Investment Gains/(losses) £	Income £	Expenditure £	31 Mar 2024 £
Presidents' Award	2,211	141	60	(240)	2,172
Welsh Flora	1,257	80	34	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	22,000	(22,000)	-
Botanical Training	-	-	26,043	(10,000)	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	-	12,874	-	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Total	3,468	221	64,011	(35,240)	32,460

	1 April 2024				31 Mar 2025
Presidents' Award	2,172	3	67	(300)	1,942
Welsh Flora Fund	1,371	2	42	(168)	1,247
Botanical Training	16,043	22	1,009	(6,605)	10,469
Support for Recorders	12,874	18	678	(10,000)	3,570

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Botanical Engagement	-	-	15,112	(15,000)	112
Wales	-	-	2,050	(2,000)	50
Scotland	-	-	120	-	120
England	-	-	86	-	86
All Ireland	-	-	5	-	5
Science & Data	-	-	60	-	60
Hardship	-	-	1,429	(602)	827
Total	32,460	45	20,658	(34,675)	18,488

Where the fund is sourced from an external grant, it shares in investment gains and losses unless prohibited under the terms of the grant. Funds are held as shown in note 14.

The **Presidents' Award** is an expendable fund, providing an award of £300pa to individual(s) selected by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. In 2024, it was awarded to Paul Green for his book *Flora of Wexford*.

The **Welsh Flora** fund provides funding for botanical publications relating to North Wales. There was one disbursement of £168 in 2025 (2024: £NIL) for travel expenses relating to the Menai Strait whitebeam *Sorbus arvonicola* in Caernarvonshire (VC49) and Anglesey (VC52)

The **Scottish Officer** fund received £22,000 income in 2023/24 which was donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scotland Officer. The remaining costs of this post were met by grant funding. The fund was fully expended and closed by 31 March 2024

The **Botanical Training Fund** was established out of a successful fundraising campaign begun in 2023 & focused on expanding BSBI's Identiplant and FISC training into Ireland and Scotland which has allowed £6,605 (2024: £10,000) to be used towards the associated pay costs of BSBI's Training Co-ordinator. Fundraising continues and monies are invested to meet future expenditure in pursuit of its aims.

The **Support for Recorders Fund** has four aims: to fund the work of BSBI staff to:

- Develop new and emergent Recorders through support, training and mentorship
- Provide training and trainer opportunities for all Recorders
- Ensure BSBI's software and database support Recorders' needs, and that there is training, physical equipment and help available for their use.
- Advance projects that make a meaningful contribution to botanical conservation through science and data collection

Funds received for this purpose has allowed it to meet the cost of the Countries Manager's time devoted to these aims. Donations have continued during 2024/25 & fundraising is ongoing, with monies invested to meet future expenditure in pursuit of these aims.

The **Holy Grass Project** fund was created by a £3,000 donation to meet the expenditure of a joint project between BSBI and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) looking at the genetics of *Hierochloe odorata* (Holy-grass) across its disjunct populations in Britain and Scandinavia. The £3,500 project costs were also met by a BSBI Science & Research grant of £500 in 2023/24.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

Seven new funds were established in the year:

The **Botanical Engagement** fund is used to support public engagement projects, such as the New Year Plant Hunt, and other outreach activities that raise the profile of the Society and botany.

The separate **Wales, Scotland, England** and **All Ireland** funds are designed to meet expenditure relating to BSBI's activities in each of those four respective countries / areas.

The **Science & Data** fund is to meet expenditure relating to science and data activities, including data management, recording activities and incidental science project costs not met by other funding, e.g. BSBI's Wildflower Hunt.

The **Hardship** fund helps members remain members in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. Members may apply to BSBI for the cost of part or all of one year's membership at their existing rate to be waived. Awards are assessed on a case-by-case basis. <https://bsbi.org/hardship-fund>

14. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2025 £	2024 £
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	716,360	670,351
Incoming resources	1,343,524	749,897
Resources expended	(850,706)	(629,680)
Investment (losses)/gains	993	42,792
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(339,271)	(117,000)
At the end of the year	870,900	716,360

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	2025 £	2024 £
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	260,048	160,606
Resources expended	(33,378)	(32,142)
Investment Income	8,039	4,332
Investment (losses)/gains	360	10,252
Designated from General Fund	339,271	117,000
At the end of the year	574,340	260,048

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure designed to deliver BSBI's Strategy designed to place BSBI on a long-term financially sustainable footing.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

15. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments £	Other Net Assets £	Total £
As at 31 March 2025:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award	1,942	-	1,942
Welsh Flora	1,247	-	1,247
Botanical Training	-	10,469	10,469
Support for Recorders	-	3,570	3,570
Botanical Engagement	-	112	112
Wales	-	50	50
Scotland	-	120	120
England	-	86	86
All Ireland	-	5	5
Science & Data	-	60	60
Hardship	-	827	827
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	577,137	293,763	870,900
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	413,734	574,340
	740,932	722,796	1,463,728
As at 31 March 2024:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award	2,172	-	2,172
Welsh Flora	1,371	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	-
Botanical Training	-	16,043	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	12,874	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	565,041	151,319	716,360
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	99,442	260,048
	729,190	279,678	1,008,868

16. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2025, The Society had commitments to 43 training and research grants awarded in Spring 2025, totalling £14,043 (2024: 35 grants, £9,987). There were no Flora grant commitments (2024: One grant, £250). Grants for external training are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. Grants payable accrued at year end are excluded from commitments.

There are three office leases. Two in Harrogate; one for the Head of Science's office, the other for BSBI archives. These leases expired in 2022 & 2023 respectively and the premises are now occupied on a rolling lease basis without a contractual commitment to a fixed end date. The third lease is for office space at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens for BSBI's Scientific Officer. Notice was served on 21 February 2025 prior to the Scientific Officer's relocation and the lease and any further commitment ended on 21 April 2025. The total non-cancellable commitment under the Harrogate leases is calculated at 1 month for each lease, amounting to £271 (2024: £571).

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which was onerous.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2025

17. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025	2024
	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	454,860	174,443
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	(1,397)	(53,265)
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(31,187)	(22,498)
Investment management charges	7,063	6,644
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	1,857	2,043
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(184,597)	(88,409)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	32,978	71,538
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	279,577	90,496

18. PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENT

Under Current Assets, the comparatives have been restated to show £85,000 of Cash at Bank as Investments as these balances have a maturity of more than 3 months from inception.

Accounts



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

**For the Year Ended
31 March 2024**

**Registered Charity
England and Wales No. 1152954
Scotland No. SC038675**

Company Registration No. 08553976

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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The Board of Trustees presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI, the Society, the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 38-40 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

1. Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

The objectives of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

Strategy

During the period under review, various measures were taken to facilitate the meeting of these objectives, and to complete the delivery of the *BSBI Strategic Plan 2021-2024*:

Vision: A world where wild plants thrive and are valued.

Purpose: To advance the understanding and appreciation of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland.

Goals:

1. Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.
2. Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change.
3. Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants.

Foundations:

1. Strong relationships and brand
2. Strong governance
3. Effective data management systems
4. Sustainable business model
5. Passionate skilled staff & volunteers

Values: A love of plants, Intrepid, Inclusive, Inquisitive

The Strategic Plan has helped BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and address issues such as concerns around climate change and biodiversity loss.

The next section of this report, Activities, Achievements & Performance, sets out the steps taken to deliver the Strategy's Goals during the period under review.

2. Activities, Achievements and Performance

Goals

Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base

The Society, which traces its origins to 1836, is now 188 years old and its principal achievement is, arguably, in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. The period under review saw one of the fullest programmes of field meetings and indoor events ever offered by the Society, with 53 events held across Britain and Ireland, aimed at botanists of all skill levels. This programme aimed to introduce newcomers to the Society, foster the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encourage existing members to work together and help to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base. Wherever possible, talks given at online and hybrid events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel; by the end of March 2024, the channel had attracted almost 4,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

Events across Britain and Ireland

In total, 53 events were held during the period under review; these included field meetings aimed at beginner botanists; recording days from Donegal to Essex and from Devon to West Ross; a pilot event run jointly with the Royal Entomological Society, aimed at bringing together those interested in conservation management for both plants and invertebrates; events for intrepid botanists – examples include a survey of lakes in Co. Galway (chest waders advised) and a week-long boat journey to gain records from the Barra islands in the Outer Hebrides; workshops, residential recording weeks and specialist training meetings targeted at both improver and expert botanists; and conferences in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland aimed at bringing together botanists to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

The Annual Summer Meeting was held in Killarney, in the Republic of Ireland, over a long weekend in May 2023; it attracted 90 participants who enjoyed various daytime excursions, including a boat trip (thanks to funding support from the National Parks & Wildlife Service) across the scenic Killarney Lakes, and a series of evening talks were recorded and made available to all via the BSBI website.

The British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly known as the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) was held at Newcastle University in December 2023 as a joint event with the Natural History Society of Northumbria (NHSN); it attracted 300 bookings and featured ten talks, four flash talks, a Dandelion ID workshop, two behind-the-scenes tours of the NHSN archive, 38 exhibits and a pop-up bookshop. The talks were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted a total of 3,731 views by the end of March 2024. The Annual General Meeting was held online as a separate event, to allow participation from members from across Britain and Ireland; it was preceded by two talks, one on urban botany and the other an update on the Society's achievements over the previous year.

The Scottish Botanists' Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in November 2023, attracted 200 visitors who enjoyed nine talks, seven mini-workshops and 28 exhibits. The talks were recorded and had attracted 1,530 views by 31st March 2024. The Irish Spring Conference attracted 90 attendees and featured nine talks and a workshop, while the Irish Autumn Conference attracted 75 attendees and five talks; both events were hosted by the National Botanic Garden, Glasnevin. The residential Wales Annual Meeting and AGM, scheduled to take place in Montgomeryshire over a long weekend in July 2023, was cancelled by the venue at three days' notice due to a health and safety issue; Committee for Wales rose to the occasion and hosted a successful online event later in the year.

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The Committee for England held their Annual Meeting online in February 2024 with three talks which were recorded and had attracted 516 views by 31st March 2024.

Two residential meetings aimed at botanical recorders were held during the period under review: a week-long recording event in Carmarthenshire, Wales in July 2023 and a weekend Recorders' Meeting in Shrewsbury in October 2023, when 53 participants enjoyed a selection of talks and workshops; four of the talks were recorded and the videos have since been viewed 676 times.

Activities to help build a diverse community of botanists continued into the winter months. The Society's annual New Year Plant Hunt (NYPH), now in its thirteenth year, provided plant-lovers at all skill levels with an opportunity to try out botanical recording by looking for wild and naturalised plants in bloom at midwinter. Innovations to support the January 2024 NYPH included a pre-registration facility; digital spotter sheets to support first-time participants; guidance on how to take plant photographs which, once uploaded via the NYPH recording app, would maximise the likelihood of accurate identification; and an increased pre-publicity drive, in partnership with other conservation organisations. These innovations, alongside the usual dedicated support team providing encouragement and helping with identification, arguably contributed to the huge surge in participation: 3,336 people took part – a 97% increase on the previous year, and the highest total in the event's history.

A series of four online winter talks attracted a total 476 attendees; talks were recorded and the videos had been viewed 1,486 times by the end of March 2024.

Focus on training

The table below summarises BSBI's individual training events in 2023/24. Thanks to funding from the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) for a three-year Targeted Aquatic Plant Project, we were able to offer a series of field-based workshops across Ireland and online training which reached hundreds of people (see the Table below) and also to purchase an underwater drone to assist with future survey work for rare aquatic species.

Plant group(s)	Training Events 2023/24					
	Target area	Funded/charged	No	In-person or online?	Participants on the day	YouTube views
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£5	1	O	Online link only	1,123
Grasses, Sedges & Rushes	Perthshire, Scotland	Free	1	IP	16	n/a
Grasses	Perthshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	20	n/a
Aquatic plants: field training events and herbarium workshops	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	9	IP	26	n/a
Aquatic plants: webinars	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	2	O	108	1,001

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Plant families	Various locations across Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	2	IP	21(13+8)	n/a
Sedges	Westmorland, England	Free	1	IP	15	n/a
Dandelions	East Midlands, England	Free	1	IP	18	n/a
Ferns	Co. Wexford, Ireland	Free	1	IP	11	n/a
Ferns for Beginners	Lanarkshire, Scotland	£40 (£20 BSBI members/ students) including Identification booklet	1	IP	15	n/a
Urban plants	Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland	Free	1	IP	6	n/a
Conifers	Shrewsbury, England	£2	1	IP	15	n/a
Brambles	Ayrshire, Scotland & Co. Durham, England	Free	3	IP	10	n/a
Plant ID for Habitat Surveys	Stirlingshire, Scotland	Free	1	IP	10	n/a
Total			26		291	2,124

By combining in-person and digital activities, BSBI has grown its programme of training events and expanded its ability to deliver opportunities for learning and local engagement, as well as implementing policies and initiatives aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities. The Society's grants programme, offering a range of grants from Training Grants aimed at beginners and improvers, through Plant Study Grants and Science & Research Grants aimed at undergraduate and post-graduate researchers, also helped to develop the skills base and support research into the British and Irish flora.

Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, to attend a national event such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference or the Scottish Botanists' Conference and to offer a poster and/or a flash talk, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. This allows members attending these Conferences to hear more about the work their subscriptions help to support. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical.

During the period under review, work also continued under the auspices of BSBI's Skills & Training Committee to promote urban botany, by piloting urban botany walks, and developing of guidance to support more members to lead these walks in future, under the 'Botany for All' banner which aims to feed into the strategic goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

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	Grants			
	2024 applications	2024 Awards	2023 applications	2023 Awards
Training Grant	66	32	29	23
Plant Study Grant	2	2	7	3
Science & Research Grant	4	3	5	3
Total	72	37	41	29

Bringing FISC and Identiplant in-house

The period under review saw the first full year of BSBI coordinating both the Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests, the industry standard for assessing field plant identification skills, and Identiplant, the online tutor-led plant ID course.

201 students attended Identiplant in 2023, supported by 44 tutors. Extensive recruitment of tutors was then undertaken, led by BSBI's dedicated Training Coordinator, Dr Chantal Helm, supported by the Identiplant Management Team. Online events, and in-person events in Scotland, were held to increase capacity and a bespoke online learning platform was also developed in-house to deliver the course. This was launched at the end of 2023, and 2024's intake saw a record number (460) of applications, of which 292 students were accepted, supported by 66 tutors (32 of these were new tutors). The high demand for places is thought to be partly driven by its excellent reputation and also by recent changes in environmental legislation and the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain in England. This has presented the challenge of supply far exceeding demand in parts of the UK, especially England, and work is ongoing to recruit even more tutors and to explore opportunities to adapt the Identiplant delivery model to support even more students in future, despite capacity limitations, and to promote and extend the course into Ireland (both Northern Ireland and the Republic).

The 2023 transition of FISC co-ordination from its founders to BSBI, with the support of the BSBI Training Coordinator and substantial input from the FISC Development Working Group, resulted in the introduction of a number of new procedures and policies (including a rigorous QA process), which were successfully adopted by six new FISC Providers and seven new Assessors recruited in 2023, allowing for the delivery of 26 FISCs to 392 candidates, the highest number to date. This resulted in a surplus, meeting financial targets two years early.

A closer working relationship was fostered with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the professional body for the large majority of individuals interested in undertaking a FISC. A new FISC logo (shown below) was designed and registered as a BSBI trademark, thereby protecting the brand. Similar to Identiplant, demand for FISCs has also grown and similar capacity limitations are evident. Work is ongoing to raise the profile of the FISC Assessor role to encourage more botanists to consider taking it on and there are plans to expand FISC into Scotland and Wales in 2025.



These initiatives, alongside the ongoing success of the Society's online fern identification course and the selection of training events outlined above, helped build the in-house training offering as a complement to the external training courses which have long been listed on the BSBI website.

Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change

The Society and its members have always engaged in the accurate recording of plant distributional data; during the period under review, our botanical surveys, recording activities and partnership initiatives continued to deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives, including the monitoring of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. BSBI's recording activities also support the development and implementation of conservation and land management policy and practice to address biodiversity loss and tackle climate change. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation, boosted by the recent publication of our third plant distribution atlas, for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners.

Plant Atlas 2020

When Plant Atlas 2020, the Society's third plant distribution atlas and the most in-depth survey of British and Irish flora ever undertaken, was published in March 2023, we said that it would serve as an essential resource for the study and conservation of our wild plants and their vitally important habitats for decades to come. This is already proving to be the case, with initiatives outlined below and later in this report such as the updating of the GB Red List and the multiple references noted in the media to Plant Atlas 2020 key findings. As part of funding agreements with Natural England and NatureScot, two summary reports have also been produced on the findings of Plant Atlas 2020 for England and Scotland.

GB Red List

In partnership with Natural England and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), BSBI has been working to update the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) threat status list for vascular plants. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action. The GB Red List (Cheffings & Farrell, 2005) compared trends between the first and second BSBI atlas date classes (1930-69 vs 1987-99) and then applied an IUCN threat status, using the relevant IUCN criteria, for all native and archaeophyte taxa. These threat statuses have, in large part, remained unaltered since publication, as to update most of them would have required the availability of a third atlas dataset. Thanks to the efforts of BSBI members and numerous other individuals and organisations, we now have a verified dataset for a third atlas (2000-19), and so it is possible to begin work on updating the GB Red List, comparing 1987-99 data with that of 2000-19.

Natural England (NE) has generously provided funds for BSBI and UKCEH to undertake this review, with the aim of publishing the new GB Red List in March 2025. This year UKCEH have provided BSBI with the trend analysis relevant to two of the five main IUCN criteria, Area of Occupancy (AOO; Criterion

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A) and Extent of Occurrence (EOO, Criterion B). BSBI has reviewed the results and shared these with members of the Species Status Assessment Group for comment and discussion. We have also collated information from reports and key contacts for those species (usually Nationally Rare) for which we require detailed population data (used for Criterion C and D) and used all of this to assess threat status with a view to completing a draft before a meeting of experts in Taunton in spring. In the year ahead, further field work and threat assessment work will be needed before signing off by IUCN and publication of the new GB Red List.

Botanical Heatmaps

We continued to build on the successful launch in 2022 of our botanical value maps and 'heatmaps' for England, based on the plant records held in the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) and developed in partnership with Natural England. This year we have worked with NE colleagues in developing an interactive app that can be used by practitioners involved in tree-planting proposals and guidance on how to use it. Similar work has also started on developing heatmaps in Scotland, for NatureScot and a feasibility study of heatmaps in the Republic of Ireland is planned in the coming year for the National Parks and Wildlife Service. These maps are aimed at identifying areas of high botanical value and ensuring that tree-planting and other land management takes these and other wildlife interests into consideration.

United Kingdom Species Inventory (UKSI)

During the year under review, we worked on an update for plant taxa on the UK Species Inventory (UKSI) which ensures that major data aggregators such as the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), iRecord, iNaturalist, all have access to the same taxonomic concepts, thereby ensuring efficient data-flows between different organisations and data platforms. The BSBI leads on this work for plants in the UK and an update to the UKSI has been long overdue.

Members' data access to the Distribution Database

The BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) is one of the world's largest databases of biological records. 1.3 million new botanical occurrence records were added to it during the year under review, and as of 31 March 2024, it held over 56 million plant records. The Society is committed to increasing access to the information it holds for the benefit of its members and for the plants that we all care so passionately about. By providing greater access to these data, we hope to encourage more recording amongst members and increase the conservation, research and educational activities carried out by the Society and our partners throughout Britain and Ireland. During 2023 and into early 2024, we put in place the systems and guidance needed to implement members' data access to the DDb in preparation for a launch to members in April 2024. The essential preparations included creating a new log-in for members, a rigorous system to agree and check access levels with County Recorders, and a communications plan to keep members informed of the various stages of the roll-out.

BSBI Data Management Plan

During the year under review, we developed BSBI's Data Management Plan, a 2-year plan with priorities for our data work, and expanded our data management capacity with the appointment of a Data Support Officer, who consulted with County Recorders on their data support needs and then developed a 'documentation website' which provides guidance on how to access BSBI data and use our Distribution Database. The extra capacity in our data team has also allowed us to develop tools to upload data sets. Over the coming year the documentation website will support user training and the upload tools will help County Recorders by expanding options for data upload.

BSBI Recording App

In 2023/24 we continued to co-develop and test the new BSBI Recording App with an increasing group of recorders (using an online forum for submitting feedback and via sessions at the Autumn Recorders' Meeting). By 31 March 2024, more than 28,000 records had been submitted via the App by 171 recorders. In the coming year the BSBI Recording App will be made available via app stores.

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National Plant Monitoring Scheme

The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, helping to promote the Scheme at internal and external events and on social media, and encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and County Recorders to take on mentorship roles.

Botanical recording at country and county level

During the period under review, 12 new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 208 and working alongside 91 expert taxonomic referees to provide the essential volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements. New local recording groups were set up in Stirlingshire, in Lothian and in Leicester, and a North East Scotland Recording Network, spanning Kincardineshire, South and North Aberdeenshire, was also established. Members and supporters continued to contribute to targeted country level recording projects to re-find plant species of national, regional or local conservation importance which have not been recorded in recent decades: the Lost Rarities in England initiative; Rare Plant Project Ireland; and the Scottish Hectad Rare Plant Project.

Notable plant finds by BSBI members during the year under review included several species new to Wales: hare's foot clubmoss *Lycopodium lycopus*, recorded by Robbie Blackhall-Miles and never previously found south of Scotland; yellow oxeye *Bupthalmum salicifolium*, recorded by BSBI trustee and creator of 'No Mow May' Dr Trevor Dines; triplet lily *Triteleia laxa*, recorded by Richard Jones; and nursery bitter-cress *Cardamine occulta*, recorded by Dr Tim Rich. In Ireland, there were new sites for dense-flowered orchid *Neotinea maculata* in Co. Antrim (recorded by David McNeill) and in Co. Sligo (by Eamon Gaughan); a new hybrid orchid on Rathlin Island: *Dactylodenia st-quintinii* (*Gymnadenia borealis* x *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*), recorded by David McNeill and Ric Else; a second Sligo sighting of early orache *Atriplex praecox* recorded by Eamon Gaughan; the northernmost Irish record (and county first) of large-flowered butterwort *Pinguicula grandiflora* at Lough Carra, Co. Mayo, found by Chris and Lynda Huxley; and a new Co Offaly record of dark-red helleborine *Epipactis atrorubens* found at a cutaway bog by Dan Singer.

BSBI Science Strategy 2024-2029

Work on a BSBI Science Strategy continued through 2023; consultations were held with members and key partners to help the Science Team identify the high-level themes, goals, priorities and foundations, and develop the objectives, strategy and tactics going forward. This work culminated with the publication in March 2024 of the BSBI Science Strategy 2024-2029. The three goals are: to provide high-quality evidence on the British and Irish flora, including its taxonomy, biogeography and ecology; to provide high-quality evidence on the state of our flora and how it is responding to environmental and human drivers; and to provide impartial scientific advice to ensure BSBI data have impact in supporting nature recovery.

Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer County Recorders. The Society's portfolio of publications and periodicals, its website and social media activity, and its outreach and training programmes all operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to our research projects, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so.

Publications and periodicals

During the period under review, the Society's publications and periodicals portfolio continued to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and to sustain and develop the skill base. Until the end of December 2023, BSBI members continued to benefit from a 50% discount offer on the print version of BSBI's third plant distribution atlas, *Plant Atlas 2020*, published to great acclaim in March 2023 by Princeton University Press, and they also received substantial offers during the period under review on the purchase of several other botanical books authored by BSBI members but not published

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by the Society. By the end of March 2024, the website printatlas2020.org, hosted by BRC/UKCEH, had attracted 686,872 pageviews by 224,067 users.

The five authors of *Plant Atlas 2020* were also the recipients of the 2023 Presidents' Award; this is awarded annually by the Presidents of the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI. The presentation was made at the British & Irish Botanical Conference by BSBI President Micheline Sheehy Skeffington, with Janet John and Sheila Wynn representing the Wild Flower Society.

Although no new titles were published in the series of BSBI Handbooks for difficult plant groups, work continued under the auspices of the recently-appointed Handbooks Editor, Dr Liz Kungu, and a small publications group, to bring new handbooks into the pipeline. As an innovation in 2023, many titles in the BSBI's catalogue of publications, including the entire series of Handbooks and a selection of county Floras, were made available at a competitive price as PDF eBooks, thereby increasing their accessibility and e-sales while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications in both traditional and digital formats.

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. 22 scientific papers were published in the fifth volume of *British & Irish Botany*. Prof Ian Denholm, Editor-in-Chief since the journal's inception, handed over in February 2023 to Dr Stuart Desjardins, with the first issue of the sixth volume of the journal scheduled for publication in June 2024.

The Society's membership newsletter, *BSBI News*, continued to engage, inform and educate botanists at all skill levels; one full free article and a five-page sampler from each issue of *BSBI News* were made available to non-members via the website and promoted across social media platforms; these served as eye-catching advertisements for the benefits of membership and proved an effective recruiting tool. The periodicals portfolio also includes two monthly e-Newsletters, one aimed at active botanical recorders and one aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events; country newsletters for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, all of which were made freely available online; and a popular *News & Views* blog, all of which have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

A digital subscription option, with periodicals made available in browser via a screen reader as well as in the more traditional pdf format, had been launched in February 2022 in response to demand from members, both current and potential, and with an eye to environmental considerations. By the end of the period under review, we were delighted that, by year end, more than 33% (vs 2023; 25%) of members had opted into this format.

Membership

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for all students, regardless of age, in possession of a student card; for anyone under 25; and for longstanding members over 65. A BSBI Hardship Fund also exists to support existing members wishing to continue their association with the Society in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. While calls on this Fund have been modest so far, we look forward to being able to help others in years to come.

BSBI is delighted to report continued membership growth across its geographical areas. Following last year's record annual increase in membership coinciding with the publication of *Plant Atlas 2020*, we have seen excellent consolidation and retention of members, continuing the growth of the profile of the charity and the number of people supporting its aims. We continue to grow and add to our member benefits and to work to use the income we receive from membership to best achieve our strategic goals, and hope to continue to encourage record numbers of members to join the charity for the eighth consecutive year. The positive financial impact of this continued growth is described in the Financial Review section 4 below.

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	Membership as at 31 March		
	2024	2023*	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,615	3,436	+5%
Ireland	384	323	+19%
Rest of World	57	51	+12%
Total	4,056	3,810	+6%

* 85 Northern Ireland members were erroneously included in the Rest of World field in 2023. This has been corrected in the above table.

During the period under review, efforts were undertaken to broaden the range of services and resources available to BSBI members and also to acknowledge their outstanding contributions. Five BSBI members, nominated by their fellow members for outstanding contributions to botany, received BSBI Awards under a new initiative launched in 2022 by the BSBI Nominations, Awards and Governance Committee. Malcolm Macneill, Ian McNeill, Richard Pryce and David Welch received awards recognising outstanding contributions in their local area, while Tim Rich received the 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' Award for his long-standing contributions in the areas of field ID skills, BSBI Handbooks, contributions to scientific journals, research and his high-profile media appearances.

Access to the network of 91 expert Referees for 185 difficult-to-identify plant groups is one of the benefits of membership; to make accessing Referees' contact details and guidance on collection of material more easily accessible for members, a searchable table was created on the members-only area of the BSBI website, which also includes reports on BSBI Forums (see below); notices for members on subjects such as Database access; information and links for BSBI members to claim discounts when purchasing selected botanical titles; digital copies of members-only periodicals such as *BSBI News* and the *Yearbook*; updates about BSBI Handbooks; and details of the BSBI archive, stored in Harrogate, which holds physical copies of important BSBI publications.

Website

BSBI's comprehensive website, www.bsbi.org/, is fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated regularly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community.

The website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-use basis, with more than 400 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications.

New web pages were created during the period under review to share details of job vacancies in BSBI and to advertise volunteering opportunities, including vacancies on standing committees; new county pages were created for Co. Armagh and Westmeath (all vice-counties in England, Scotland and Wales already have county pages, and work is ongoing to liaise with County Recorders in Ireland with the aim of a county page for every vice-county in Ireland).

A page now hosts multiple species accounts prepared by Dr Ralph Forbes, County Recorder for Co. Fermanagh, to support the *Flora of Fermanagh* and provide a valuable resource for the wider botanical community; a page was created offering guidance on taking photographs of plants to maximise the chances of a correct identification; and there is now a page setting out BSBI's commitment to the environment through responsible investing.

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Resources such as these are helping to raise the Society's profile, clarify our objectives and practices and disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and are establishing the society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, the website attracted a total of 1,190,184 pageviews by 298,743 users.

BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained the most popular page. The Plant Atlas website, externally-hosted but accessible via links on the BSBI homepage and drop-down menu, attracted more than 9,000 views in the first few weeks following the high-profile launch and attendant media coverage but has gone on to attract a huge number of views (686,872) since then.

Bringing FISCs in-house, and the related appointment of a dedicated Training Coordinator (see above), have presumably impacted the surge in visits to the FISC page. The training courses landing page dropped out of the Top 5: it attracted 14,461 pageviews in 2022/23 but only 11,689 during the period under review, although this is likely to be due to the content being split into two new pages listing internal and external provision (reflecting bringing FISC and Identiplant in-house) and also to the increase in views to other pages. See the table below:

Webpage Views 2023/24 vs 2022/23 (see Note)				
Rank	Webpage	Views 2023/24	Views 2022/23	% Increase/ (Decrease)
1	Maps bsbi.org/maps	186,634	104,774	+78%
2	Homepage bsbi.org/	67,122	37,591	+ 78%
3	New Year Plant Hunt bsbi.org/new-year-plant-hunt	19,125	8,516	+125%
4	Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISC) bsbi.org/field-skills	17,834	9,234	+93%
5	Field Meetings and Indoor Events /field-meetings-and-indoor-events	14,986	6,865	+118%
	Total	305,701	166,980	+83%

Note – Webpage Views data is collected using Google GA4 Analytics. Last year, 2022/23 data was collected using an older version of Google Analytics and has now been updated using this new collection method.

Outreach and engagement

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public, support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally, and provide advice and guidance to national bodies and agencies.

Members in Wales attended an event organised by the Museum of Wales at which BSBI Countries Manager James Harding-Morris gave a presentation about Plant Atlas 2020 and there was a stand displaying BSBI literature. The Committee for Wales also submitted a response to the Welsh government's consultation on the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme in Wales which is intended to replace the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) System of Support.

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Members in Scotland contributed to five national consultations during the year under review: they supported a BSBI objection to Highland Council for creation of a golf course at Coul Links; responded to consultations proposals from Forestry & Land Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland with potential to impact nationally important plant populations at Angus Glens and Holyrood Park; and responded to consultations on Future Grant Support for Forestry, led by Scottish Forestry, and Tackling the Nature Emergency, led by the Scottish Government. Following the successful Scotland launch of *Plant Atlas 2020* at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in March 2023, BSBI was invited to make a presentation about the importance of Atlas key findings to Ministers, Members of the Scottish Parliament and their staff from all five major parties. The presentation in December 2023 received an encouraging and knowledgeable reception, and an associated parliamentary motion received cross-party support.

A new initiative was launched in Scotland aimed at making information about wild plants more easily available to the wider public. Under the working title "Wild Plants on the Scottish Tourist Trail", the objective is to create online 'leaflets' describing plants that can be seen when visiting tourist sites. A pro forma for such leaflets was created, made available on the BSBI website, and contributions are being sought.

Reaching out to the next generation of botanists, BSBI material was included in the delegate packs of plant science students attending the Gatsby Plant Summer School. BSBI staff members also attended the 2023 Botanical University Challenge (BUC) competition and Student Botany Festival, held over two days in July at University of Nottingham and aimed at plant science students. We had a stand displaying BSBI material and demonstrating Plant Atlas 2020; contributed to panel discussions, Q&A sessions, and a careers workshop; and led a guided walk on campus where teams of students competed to record as many plant species as possible. All 37 finalists, quarter-finalists and semi-finalists in the BUC competition were given a one-year digital/ student membership of BSBI as a prize and were encouraged to access BSBI resources and attend events such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference.

Media Coverage

The Society continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media throughout the year under review; this included building up new relationships at regional and local level, by publicising county-level finds of eye-catching plants, as well as strengthening ongoing relationships with national media contacts and contributing to prestigious scientific journals.

Media coverage of Plant Atlas 2020, launched to great acclaim in the media in March 2023, continued during the period under review, with articles in the newsletters and on the websites of organisations such as the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, National Museums of Northern Ireland, the Biological Records Centre, the National Biodiversity Network and the National Federation of Biological Recording. A glowing review of Plant Atlas 2020 by eminent natural history author Peter Marren was published in *British Wildlife* magazine and an article on wildflowers, with in-depth coverage of the Atlas, appeared in *Resurgence & Ecologist*. Dr Gemma Harper, Chief Executive Officer of the Joint Nature Conservancy Council, discussed Plant Atlas 2020 findings in an in-depth interview published in *Civil Service World*.

References to Plant Atlas 2020 key findings, and to the contribution of the Society's botanical recorders, appeared across the media throughout 2023/24, including in an article on Japanese Knotweed in *The Guardian*; a report on the BBC website about the creation of a new wildflower meadow in the West Midlands; international coverage in *Le Figaro*; and mentions in local newspapers such as *The Worcester Observer*, *Lynn News* (East Anglia), *East Lothian Courier*, *Yorkshire Bylines* and the *Salisbury & Avon Gazette*, and on websites such as Workers Liberty, Nature World News and The Echo (Cork), thereby spreading the Plant Atlas 2020 key messages to a wide and diverse range of audiences.

The Society's staff and officers also engaged with target audiences via other high-profile and specialist media platforms: BSBI Countries Manager James Harding-Morris appeared on BBC Countryfile in May 2023 in a feature about the wild flower meadow at the farm of presenter Adam Henson, while Dr Kevin Walker, BSBI Head of Science, co-authored a paper published in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*, about 'Anthropogenic climate and land-use change drive short- and long-term biodiversity shifts

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across taxa and also published an article about wildflower seed sowing in the Countryside Land Management magazine. An article about the newly-created Scotland Identiplant hub, by BSBI Training Coordinator Dr Chantal Helm, was published in the network bulletin of The Conservation Volunteers, thereby spreading the word about this important online plant identification course (see above) which has recently been brought in-house.

BSBI has increasingly become the first port of call for print and broadcast media covering stories involving wild plants: BSBI distribution maps were used in articles about Giant Hogweed in *The Independent*, the *Liverpool Echo* and on the GB News website; *Horticulture Week* cited BSBI data in a report aimed at finding out 'What is Britain's most successful wild plant?'; Bridget Keehan, BSBI Ireland Officer, contributed to an article about ragwort in the *Irish Independent* and was interviewed by UCB Radio about Giant Hogweed; Dr Fred Rumsey, one of BSBI's expert referees, contributed to an article in the *Daily Mail* about bluebells and helped *BBC Winterwatch* shoot footage in Devon about fern life-cycles, while Dr Helena Crouch, BSBI trustee and County Recorder, was interviewed for a regional BBC report on the spread of Himalayan Balsam in Somerset.

Research on altitudinal records for eleven tree species, building on BSBI data and carried out by Sarah Watts, a key member of BSBI's Committee for Scotland, led to a paper in *British & Irish Botany* which was then picked up by Scottish media. Sarah was interviewed on BBC Scotland TV and radio, appeared on the BBC Scotland and National Trust for Scotland websites as well as several local websites and newspapers; in every interview and on social media, Sarah highlighted the importance of BSBI's altitudinal data which underpinned her research.

Several BSBI County Recorders featured in periodicals, including Phoebe O'Brien (Co. Clare), who was quoted in an article in the *Irish Examiner* about fake lawns; Rory Hodd (Co. Kerry) talked about the Kerry Mousetail Fern, also in the *Irish Examiner*; Steve Chambers (Ceredigion) was quoted in a report in the *Herald Wales* after having identified a mystery orchid at a nature reserve; *The Scotsman* and *Angus County World* both covered the story of David Elston (Kincardineshire) re-finding Small Adder's-tongue; and the Limerick Voice website featured an in-depth interview with young ecologist Oliver Lynch-Milner about his recent appointment as BSBI County Recorder for Co. Limerick and what the role entails.

The BBC website (northern Ireland page), the Irish Garden Plant Society website and the blog of high-profile environmental journalist Mark Avery all picked up on the find reported by BSBI member Jake Dalzell of Autumn Lady's-tresses in Northern Ireland; and several periodicals in the Republic of Ireland reported on events in the Society's annual programme: the *Irish Independent* reported on the proceedings at the Irish Spring Conference; and the *Irish Examiner* and the *Killarney Advertiser* both reported on the 4-day BSBI Summer Meeting in Co. Kerry.

The results of the New Year Plant Hunt featured on 'Mooney Goes Wild', Ireland's premier nature programme on RTE Radio 1, in the *Irish Examiner*, *Horticulture Week* and in local newspapers including the *Sidmouth Herald*, *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Western Morning News*, as well as on websites including Bird Guides, The Irish Gardener and Wild Essex. BSBI Ireland Officer Bridget Keehan also gave two interviews about the Hunt to local radio stations.

Finally, several projects in which BSBI is a partner were also featured in national media or scientific journals during the period under review: Plant Alert, the project run by BSBI in partnership with University of Coventry and aimed at discovering which garden plants have the potential to become invasive in future, was featured in The Telegraph and in *Country Living*; and a paper about the power of data from the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, in which the Society is a partner, for climate change impact monitoring, was published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*.

The Society also continued to build its social media profile during the year under review. Following recent management changes at X (formerly Twitter and previously by far the Society's main social media platform) and a subsequent decline worldwide in use of this platform, BSBI launched accounts

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on three other platforms - Threads, Bluesky and TikTok – and posted more frequently on our LinkedIn page. BSBI staff, officers and volunteer members continued to offer plant identification support to the wider public across these platforms, particularly on a weekly basis under the #wildflowerhour banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March (000's)		
	2024	2023	% Increase
Facebook (Britain)	13.0	11.5	+13%
Facebook (Ireland)	3.5	3.3	+6%
Twitter	43.0	41.5	+4%
Instagram	10.0	8.9	+12%
Total	69.6	65.2	+7%

Income Diversification

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for our core goals from beyond the Society, BSBI extends its income from membership with grants and donations from a range of other sources. Income generation is directed through the Income Diversification Strategy, developed by the Fundraising & Engagement Manager, the most recent review of which was carried out in 2023. This strategy aims to keep BSBI's income at a level to support its strategic work, and from a broader range of funding streams, thereby further improving the Society's financial resilience. The Society is grateful to all the individuals, organisations and grant-making bodies that have contributed towards our work in this period. We also have many active volunteers and consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve our charitable objectives at low cost.

Strategic Plan

During 2023/24, we reviewed progress against BSBI's Strategic Plan for 2021-24 and developed a new plan with priorities for our work in the next three years. The sections above show how we have worked to deliver our three goals: building the community of botanists to sustain and develop the skills base; providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change science; and disseminating information to drive a passion for plants.

Foundations

We have also continued to take steps to build resilience and strengthen our five foundations. Some key steps include:

Foundation 1: Strong relationships and brand

BSBI is committed to working with others who share our Vision to create the change we collectively seek. Plant Atlas 2020 has hugely raised BSBI's profile, resulting in new partnerships this year harnessing the underlying data in Heatmaps to aid land use decision making and Red Lists for conservation prioritisation. We continue to put in place stronger and longer-term partnership arrangements with statutory agencies (a key resilience indicator in the Strategy) and were pleased to receive funding from Welsh Government's Nature Network fund for a 2-year project on rare plants in Wales, as well as funding from Natural England for a new pilot local engagement project (see above).

We have further developed data sharing relationships, putting in place new agreements with Forest and Land Scotland and National Botanic Gardens Glasnevin (Ireland) to provide extracts from, or access to, data from the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) for research and conservation. We have also further developed our training and engagement partnerships, for example working with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to establish a Scotland hub for our Identiplant training course, working with CIEEM on joint guidance on our FISC botanical skills assessments and working with National Museums Northern Ireland on a programme of joint outreach.

Foundation 2: Strong governance

During the year under review, as well as refreshing our strategy for the next three years, we developed and consulted on a new Governance Handbook including role descriptions, committee terms of reference and procedures to improve succession planning including trustee induction plans. The new Handbook addresses all the remaining recommendations from the Governance Plan developed for BSBI by Bayes Business School in 2020-2021 and helps us to ensure we maintain high standards of governance and comply with the Charity Governance Code. We advertised trustee roles widely, which enabled us to recruit three new trustees with botanical, financial and marketing experience, and introduced new trustee induction sessions.

With the changeover in the Hon. Gen. Secretary role, we moved our Registered Office to WMT LLP's St. Albans premises and engaged WMT to assist with statutory returns. Trustees took on more active committee liaison roles. To continue to explore what members need from the Society, we held two Forum meetings, one in April 2023 to consider support for County Recorders (see below) and a cohesive events programme and in February 2024 to consult on our new Strategy and a review of our Nature Conservation Policy.

We also applied to register as a charity in Ireland and received feedback that some changes are required to our Articles of Association (Constitution) to meet charity law in Ireland. In the year ahead, we will be checking these changes with our other regulators (Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) before putting proposals for revised Articles to members for agreement.

Foundation 3: Effective data management systems

We published our Data Management plan and recruited a Data Support Officer to increase capacity to implement our priority data work alongside the Database Officer. For more information see Goal 2 above.

Foundation 4: Sustainable Business Model

BSBI has been through a lot of change and growth recently. In the past two years we have taken on six new staff (four new roles and two replacing retiring staff members), diversified our income streams further and increased our turnover. This increase in income led to our first Statutory Audit for the year ended 31 March 2023 and an audit is now taking place each year. With growth, the Finance Manager knows that BSBI's needs have become more sophisticated. Internal financial reporting continues to be adapted in response to changing needs and further appropriate financial controls have been designed and implemented; all increasingly important as BSBI grows and in order to protect against fraud. To build capacity for change, the Finance Manager has also explored options for efficiencies and a review of finance responsibilities led to trustees approving a proposal to invest in extra finance capacity. This was implemented in Summer 2024 and continues to be monitored and improved.

A review of the results of our Income Diversification Strategy (IDS) 2020-2023 (summarised above) showed that we have a healthy diversity in our income streams, good progress with growth in grants, appeals and sponsorship alongside excellent membership growth and some promising signs for the future including new statutory income and new major donors. We have also seen steady growth in the return on investment in fundraising. Our IDS for the 2024-2027 Strategy period builds on this work in developing BSBI's income streams and encouraging sustainable growth, while continuing to aim for a model that operates at a surplus, thereby minimising the need to rely on reserves. Trustees continue to use our Strategy Decision Making criteria to inform decisions on our work and consider these in the review of staff roles (see next section).

Foundation 5: Passionate, skilled staff and volunteers

At our April 2023 Forum meeting we discussed how we can best support our County Recorders. This led to valuable insights into the challenges, successes and varied nature of these vital roles. Key themes from the discussion were the need for succession planning and guidance on taking a team approach to the role, as well as exploring new ways to motivate and maintain engagement through training, support, recognition for achievements and by offering networking opportunities to build, connect and share knowledge. The reports under Goals 1 and 2 above show some of the work we have done towards addressing these needs.

We have also reviewed our support capacity, following the development of our new Science Strategy. Trustees reviewed roles in the Science & Data and Countries Support teams to ensure we have the right roles in place to meet the needs of the recording community and our science ambitions. This resulted in the decision to make the Countries Support Manager role permanent and from April 2024 to separate the Scientific and England Officer role into two separate roles: Scientific Officer, focusing on leading science projects and a new England Officer role, to deliver a one-year pilot project funded by Natural England to increase support for County Recorders in England and overcome barriers to recording, data flow and mobilisation of data. Trustees also considered an annual review of Identiplant and FISC and agreed to increase the hours of the Training Coordinator role to continue to grow Identiplant and FISC provision.

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Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's website, events and media coverage are all ways in which the Society works to inform and educate the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focused on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

To learn more about BSBI and all it has to offer:



www.bsbi.org

Also, see:

www.plantatlas2020.org
www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org
www.PlantAlert.org
www.identiplant.bsbi.org



<https://x.com/BSBIbotany>



<https://www.facebook.com/BSBI2011>
<https://www.facebook.com/IrishSectionBSBI/>



<https://www.instagram.com/bsbibotany/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/botanical-society-of-britain-and-ireland>



<https://www.youtube.com/botanicalsocietyofbritainandireland>

3. Fundraising

Fundraising in BSBI is currently following the roadmap of the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023 (IDS)*, with overarching objectives to increase income to ensure a consistently balanced budget, support the wider Strategic Plan, diversify income streams and maximise existing income; for example, from membership and partnerships.

BSBI employs one member of staff, the Fundraising & Engagement Manager, to oversee its fundraising, and it is subscribed to both the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Excellence Framework.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**



Great care is taken to follow good fundraising practices and no complaints have been received, either directly to the BSBI or via the Regulator, with regards to the Society's fundraising activities. Also, BSBI does not undertake fundraising that represents an unreasonable intrusion, is overly persistent or places undue pressure on an individual to donate.

Return on Investment (RoI) on Fundraising Activities

The backbone of all BSBI's fundraising activities is the Income Diversification Strategy, developed in 2020 under the guidance of The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) and extended until 2027 in December 2023. This Strategy sets out a clear, realistic, long-term strategy to develop income from diverse and sustainable sources. Trustees have been delivering this Strategy with support from the BSBI Fundraising & Engagement Manager and others.

Fundraising is an organisational priority within BSBI which is carefully monitored. It is reported by the CEO at every quarterly board meeting and is discussed and reviewed annually in December. Trustees constantly learn from its fundraising activities as some outcomes are more successful than others. One of the ways in which Trustees measure fundraising performance the Return on Investment (RoI) metric and, although RoI must always be looked at in a wider context, it provides a useful guide to assess performance against sector benchmarks, to assess progress over time and of course to ensure that valuable charitable funds are being directed in the right way and value for money is being achieved.

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising (www.ciof.org.uk) does not have a specific approach to calculating RoI, instead guiding it to be appraised on a case-by-case basis.

BSBI has carefully assessed the income sources to be included within its RoI calculation; all donations are included, some grants and contracts and a proportion of other income felt to be directly linked to fundraising activities. The costs directly incurred in delivering these activities are included within the RoI calculation.

BSBI has chosen a straightforward RoI methodology: If BSBI incurs £1 on fundraising activities & generates £1.50 fundraising income, the RoI = 1.5

Turning now to BSBI's actual RoI on fundraising activities for the year under review, Trustees are pleased to report that overall, for each £1 spent on fundraising, £3.80 (2023: £2.34) of income has been generated, so a significantly improved RoI of 3.80 (2023: 2.34).

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Trustees are delighted with this large improvement versus the previous year however they urge a note of caution about expectations for the future because the year to March 2024 saw receipt of a single, unusually large, donation of £120,000 which drove up the RoI as described. Other than for this donation, RoI would have been 2.09; comparable to 2023. This donation is talked about later, in the Income section of the Financial Review.

Looking ahead, Trustees will continue to guide and monitor BSBI's fundraising activities whilst working towards the a stable & recurring RoI of 3, which was the conservative average benchmark proposed by the FSI and adopted by Trustees as a long-term aim through its Strategy. The Board will also continue to ensure that BSBI's fundraising activities thrive and the Fundraising & Engagement Manager has adequate capacity to continue to develop opportunities aligned with BSBI's charitable aims to support BSBI's important botanical work in years to come.

4. Financial Review

Overview

For the year under review, the Board of Trustees is delighted to report Total Income for the year of £818k (2023: £538k) a 52% increase vs 2023. Net Income is £174k (2023: Net Expenditure -£154k); an Operating Surplus of £121k plus investment gains £53k (2023: Operating Deficit -£84k plus investment losses -£70k)

Looking further within these numbers, the Operating Surplus on the Unrestricted General Fund (BSBI's continuing operations) is £120k for 2024 (2023: -£27k Operating Deficit), well ahead of the break-even Budget set by the Board in March 2023 and the reasons for this variance are set out in the Income section below. BSBI continues its journey of progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner as illustrated below:

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the General Fund £000 *	120*	(27)	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)

*This, together with the deficit of (£28k) on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve, £29k surpluses on Restricted Reserves, altogether comprise the total net Operating Surplus of £121k as per the SOFA.

Economic & Political Backdrop

The UK economy in 2023/24 has been shaped by a mix of challenges and recovery efforts following the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit adjustments, and subsequent geopolitical events, including the war in Ukraine.

Consumer confidence has been weak, affected by high inflation, rising interest rates and economic uncertainty. UK Base Rate peaked at 5.25% in August 2023 & remained so for a full year until the Bank of England's decision to reduce it to 5% in August 2024.

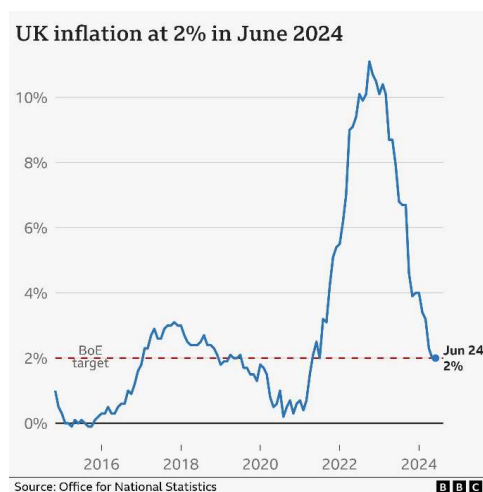
Despite some Government interventions to ease the cost-of-living crisis, many households have faced financial pressure, which has dampened consumer spending.

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The UK economy in 2023/24 has therefore been navigating through a complex mix of legacy issues along with new challenges posed by high inflation and global instability. The new Labour Government's Economic Policy must now remain focused on keeping inflation low & stable (currently 2%) while trying to support growth and a transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy.



It is against this economic and political backdrop that we report.

Investments and Cash

Total Return on investments (net gains/losses, plus investment income) was £64,351 (2023: -£56,636).

RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD) is BSBI's investment manager and, under its guidance, the BSBI Board continues to operate an ethical investment stance aligned with its charitable aims, designed to have limited exposure to organisations engaged in the fossil fuel industry.

In 2024, BSBI's investment portfolio benefited from strong performance in North American equities, specifically in the Information Technology sector. This sector had a phenomenal year, delivering Total Return of +53.7% resulting from a surge in interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) & in "the magnificent 7" Apple, Alphabet (Google's parent), Amazon, Meta (which owns Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Threads), Microsoft, Nvidia & Tesla.

Total Return of BSBI's investment portfolio this year (net of fees) & a comparison to other metrics:

BSBI's portfolio - this year	+9.6%
BSBI's portfolio - last year	- 8.3%
RBCBD Risk Category 6 (Benchmark)	+13.4%
RPI +2%	+6.4%

At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £1,008,868 (2023: £834,425); Fixed Asset Investments of £729,190 (2023: £694,839) and Net Current Assets of £279,678 (2023: £139,586).

BSBI held £401,293 Cash at bank at 31 March 2024 (2023: £276,029). This relatively high level of cash holdings is a continued cautious approach in order to protect against the potential risk of needing cash when the stock market and portfolio valuation is at a low level. This approach to cash holdings has proved sensible when managing the negative impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine. £30,000 was withdrawn from the investment portfolio in the year, less than the £50,000 budgeted (2023: £NIL).

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Income

An important income milestone of half a million pounds was surpassed in 2023 and, in 2024, the Board is once again pleased to report further growth in income to £818,239 (2023: £538,427).

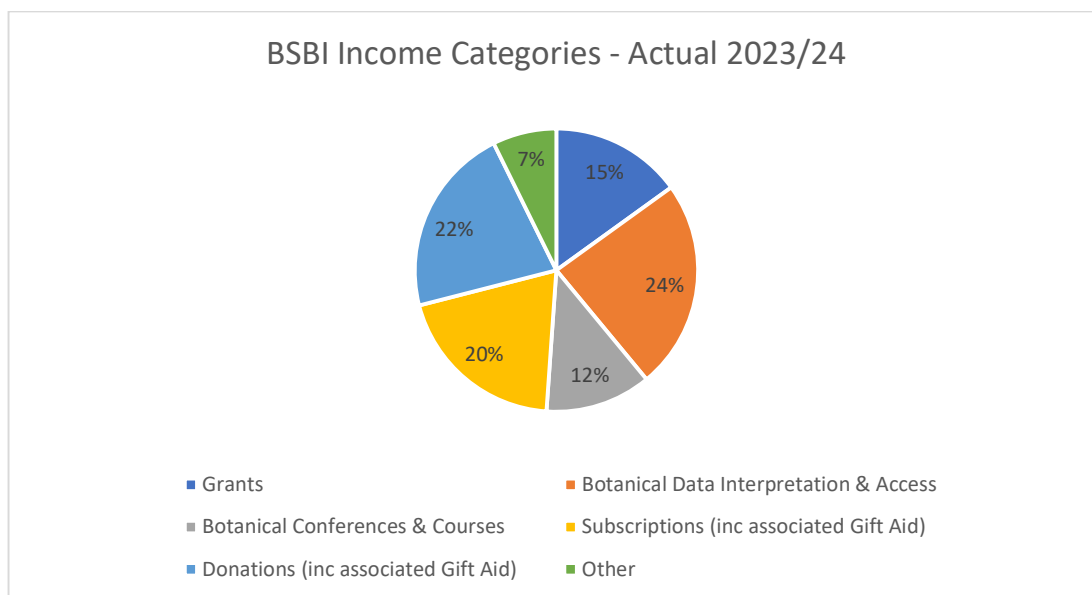
A visual illustration of BSBI's income categories and a comparison to the previous year follows overleaf.

One of the clearly visible highlights is the growth (from 6% to 12% of total income) in **Botanical Conferences and Courses** income, hugely boosted by the first year of income in 2023 from Identiplant and FISC training; generating £46k and £24k income respectively. Demand is even stronger in 2024 and capacity is being further expanded.

Trustees would also like to draw attention to the large growth in **Donations** from £73k in 2023 (14% income) to £177k in 2024 (22% income) which includes a single, unusually large, donation of £120k, from an individual who asked to remain anonymous. Aside from £3k of this being gifted and restricted to a specific project, the remaining £117k was given on an unrestricted basis, to be used at the discretion of BSBI. This huge generosity and flexibility have allowed BSBI to plan ahead with greater financial security and confidence, and for that, Trustees are enormously grateful. Options for this money were drawn up & discussed at BSBI's September 2023 Board meeting. Trustees decided to allocate the money to strategic work to support the recording community and data management, in three ways through to 2027:

- 1) Countries Support - to partially fund the Countries Manager role, central to BSBI's work to support the recorder community across Britain and Ireland
- 2) Scotland Project – to match fund BSBI's wide activities supporting recording in Scotland for the next few years
- 3) Data Development Plan - to support this important project to improve data management and user support, including the development of the new BSBI Recording App, through partial funding of the Data Support Officer's role

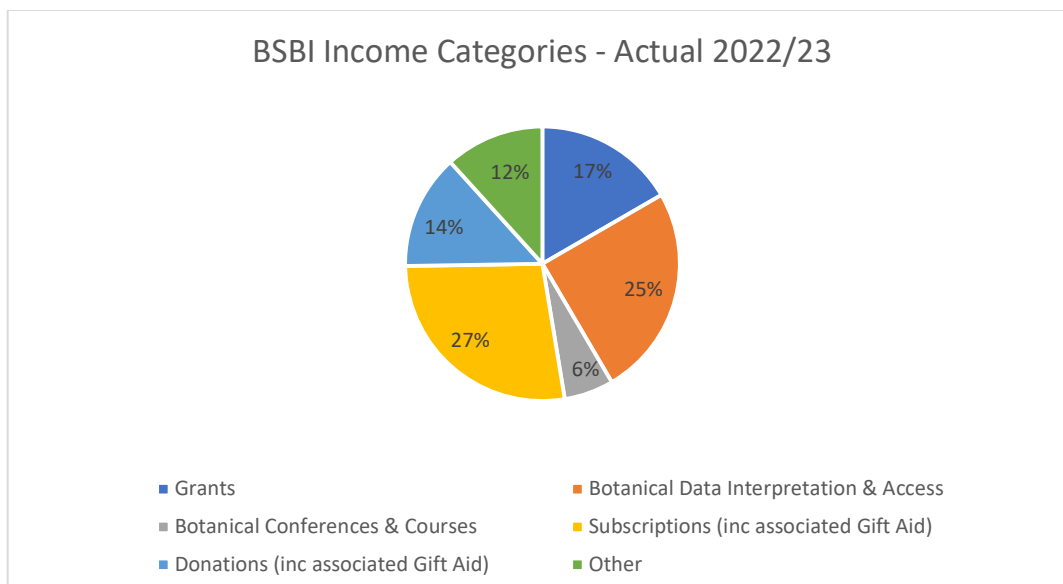
For future visibility and to demonstrate the importance of delivering these plans, Trustees took the additional step of designating the full £117k to the Strategic Development Fund, visible at Note 14.



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It is the hallmark of a healthy organisation to have several stable income categories (sources). This profile aims to reduce the risk of a reduction in any one category threatening the future of an organisation and this aim is central to BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy*. It is pleasing, therefore, to report that BSBI has a total of ten income categories; five (as pictured) and five more contained within the Other category.

Although a slightly smaller % of total income (20% vs 27%), **Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)** experienced yet another year of strong growth; +10% to £163k. We were pleased to hold Membership subscription rates unchanged for calendar year 2024 so this increase is largely a product of a +6% growth in membership numbers. The 1 January 2023 subscription rate increase, effective for only the last 3 months of 2022/23 made up the remainder of the +10% increase.

We have measured the **Membership Retention KPI %** (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year) for five years now and we are delighted that this has edged up 91% in the year; its highest recorded level so far (2023: 88%). The stability of this KPI, alongside another good year of membership growth, reinforces that members continue to enjoy and value all that BSBI offers.

Although the % of income generated by **Grants** decreased slightly from 17% to 15% of income, this belies a growth from £89k to £123k. Grants continue to be an important source of income and, this year, we are pleased that DAERA has joined our roster of statutory funders and we are now helping to support botanical priorities in Northern Ireland. We thank our many partners, whom we name in the Thank you section below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

Botanical Data Interpretation and Access generated £196k (2023: £134k) and we are pleased to help the organisations achieve their aims through our work. This continues to include Natural England (NE), who funded partnership work with BSBI to further improve the accessibility and mobilisation of BSBI plant data for those making evidence-based decisions (including via Botanical Heatmaps, UK Species Inventory update and Plant Atlas 2020 England trends assessment, as mentioned in our Activities report under Goal 2 above). BSBI continues to work with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), adviser to the UK Government on nature conservation, both through data interpretation and under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract. BSBI has also continued to work with the Environment Agency and with UKCEH under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species and to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including, National Trust, Plantlife, Royal Botanic Garden Kew, National

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Botanic Gardens Glasnevin, RSPB and National Trust Scotland, as well as a number of universities, institutes and other organisations to undertake scientific research on a diverse range of topics.

Donations, including associated Gift Aid; Thousands of members supported the Society this year, and individuals and organisations made donations and contributions of all sizes; from major gifts – as explained earlier – to sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI's key projects, as part of fundraising drives and through gifts in Wills.

Thank You; Whilst some of the income described above is given anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following individuals and organisations who have generously supported BSBI's projects and goals. It also thanks those who have contributed to and tapped into BSBI's huge botanical resources and supported its aims; without whom BSBI could not continue to achieve all that it does:

The Big Give Trust
Britford Bridge Charitable Trust
Lynne Farrell
Greenwings Wildlife Holidays
Habitat Aid
National Lottery Heritage Fund
The Owen Family Trust
The Reed Foundation
Josh Styles

The Society expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies and others, namely Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), NatureScot, Department for Food, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland, and National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continue to be long-term supporters and all the income received from them, whether by grant, for botanical data or by donation, contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

Other Income; This category of income experienced a drop from 12% to 7% in 2024 because of the impact of £24k royalties and journal support received in 2023 on the launch of BSBI's *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*. Royalties are now received at a more modest, ongoing level.

Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +11% (2023: +24%) in the year to £661,821 (2023 £595,931) and a few notable highlights are covered below.

At £137,831 (2023: £95,406), **Expenditure on Raising Funds** now includes Direct costs of member publications (eg. BSBI News) to sit with the Staff Costs of Membership already reported here. These costs of £39,907 were previously included within **Expenditure on Charitable Activities; Botanical Publications** (2023 - £38,058). This change improves transparency as all Membership costs are now visible in this single place. We are also very pleased to report that 33% (2023: 25%) of members have chosen the digital membership format (previously called paperless membership) which has allowed us to harness worrying increases in paper costs in order to save valuable charitable funds and, importantly, reduce environmental impact.

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Expenditure on Charitable Activities is £559,230 (2023: £527,060) and +6%. This category has increased in line with Budget expectations. A large part of the increase is Direct Staff costs which reflects, for example, the salaries of employees directly engaged in increased income such as the DAERA grant, as explained earlier in this report. The salary cost of the Data Support Officer who was engaged to mitigate data management risks & began work in August 2023, is included here.

Other cost increases can be explained by changes in activities and / or scale during the year:

- **Conferences and Courses** is £42,895 (2023: £23,572) this increase largely reflects the payment of Identiplant tutors, in its first year in 2023/24.
- Similarly, **Botanical Conferences, Courses & Education Staff Costs** of £25,431 (2023: £3,181) reflect the first year of delivering Identiplant & FISC by the Training Co-ordinator
- **BSBI News and other similar publications** is £NIL in 2024 (2023: £38,058), these costs of member publications having been relocated to **Expenditure on Raising Funds**, as explained earlier.
- **Cost of Publication sales** of £7,314 (2023: £42,873) is correlated to a reduction in Royalty income. 2023 included £33k; a one-off contractual cost paid to Princeton University Press on the launch of the Plant Atlas 2020 publication.
- **Audit fees** £9,750 (2023: £9,000); this is the second year BSBI has been subject to Statutory audit

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Valuing Volunteering

BSBI is immensely fortunate, as it is every year, in being able to supplement its financial resources with the gift of freely and generously volunteered time. Whether it be the gift of botanical expertise to identify and record plant data, serving as Trustee or Committee member, authoring a BSBI Handbook, helping to organise and run BSBI's lively calendar of botanical events, generously passing on expert knowledge to teach other botanists, acting as a County Recorder or national plant referee or something else entirely, all of it is hugely important. This importance was clearer than ever in 2023 when many hundreds of members' recording efforts, under the guidance of County Recorders, over many years, culminated in the long-awaited publication in Spring 2023 of *Plant Atlas 2020*, a landmark publication made possible only by volunteering.

Although Trustees have always known that the nature and scale of volunteering for BSBI is vast, measuring time and placing an accurate value on it is innately difficult. Research shows that many charities have not even begun to quantify the volunteering they receive. The Board was therefore pleased to have made considerable steps forward last year in designing a recording methodology and the results for the year are now set out below. The results are largely unchanged vs the previous year.

➤ **20+ types of volunteering exist (2022/23: 20+)**

➤ **Just under 11,000 days volunteered (2022/23: just over 11,000)**

Research indicates some charities use National Minimum Wage to value volunteering. Others use different rates such as the £20 per hour rate placed on volunteering by Heritage Fund (known more widely as The National Lottery Heritage Fund).

Individuals undertaking volunteering time to BSBI are from all walks of life, with different experiences and skillsets – many with important botanical knowledge built up over a lifetime - however, it is the coming together of the collective effort that persuades the Board that every hour volunteered is equally important and valuable. As such, a single £20 per hour and 7.5 hour working day are applied in arriving at its valuation.

➤ **Days volunteered in 2023/24 are valued at a vast £1.6m (2023: £1.7m)**

The Board continues to be deeply appreciative of this vast contribution which illustrates BSBI's true scale and reach. BSBI has always been indebted to all of its members and others who volunteer. It simply could not fulfil its charitable objectives without this help and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; all of these people continue to make BSBI the vibrant and energetic organisation it is today.

In a wider context, volunteering has an important place in Society. Charities and volunteering exist to make the world a better place.

Last year, we mentioned here the UK Government's *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill*, designed to tackle economic & social disparities. We are pleased this Bill was passed & the Act of Parliament received Royal Assent and became law in October 2023. Amongst its aims are to ensure every young person in England will have access to volunteering opportunities by 2025. For BSBI's part, the methodologies already developed to capture volunteered time will continue to be refined, deepening BSBI's understanding and leading to offering more opportunities to inspire volunteers of the future.

5. Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Society was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08553976) on 3 June 2013 with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It is also registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675). It has no share capital. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Board of Trustees (Directors)

The Board of Trustees (Directors) are the Society's legal trustees. The Board governs all of BSBI's activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive. They together coordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Trustees are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Trustees, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Trustees. One third of the Trustees (other than those currently co-opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (21 November 2024) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years. Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post at 31 March 2024 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CJ Miles (Chair)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014, retired 16 Nov 2023
Dr S Knapp OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 16 May 2024
Dr S Gater	Appointed 4 Dec 2019, retired 16 Nov 2023
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 22 June 2021
Miss KN Jones	Appointed 19 Nov 2021
Mr B O'Kane	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Prof P Hollingsworth FRSE	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Dr M Long	Appointed 21 March 2023
Dr T Dines	Appointed 16 Nov 2023
Mr RJ Allanach	Appointed 6 Jan 2024
Mrs K Nicola J Tainton	Appointed 19 Jan 2024

At present, the membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All Trustees are made aware of their obligations and the charitable company's Articles of Association and are provided with regular updates on its financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission and other regulator guidance, including "*The Essential Trustee*" and other Trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of Trustees is targeted effectively. In this period, BSBI developed and consulted on a new Governance Handbook (see Strategic Plan, Good Governance above)

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Honorary Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary and the Honorary Company Secretary. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager, all of whom attend every Board meeting in order to do so. Other staff members attend as and when the need arises.

Details of other office bearers, including County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and the Editor-in-Chief of *British & Irish Botany* are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2024*.

The Staff

As at 31 March 2024 the Society employed 14 staff (2023: 12), equivalent to 12 full time posts (2023: 9), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in coordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its members and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Chief Executive leads the team of employees, which is structured into these key functions:

- Science & Data
- Countries
- Membership, Engagement & Communications
- Finance

The relatively new Countries Team underwent further changes during the year, with one departure and two new joiners:

- Trustees took the important decision in December 2023 to convert James Harding-Morris' role as Countries Manager; leading and coordinating BSBI's work to support and build the community of botanists across Britain and Ireland, into a permanent position.
- Paul Green, BSBI's Ireland Officer retired in July 2023 and Trustees thank him for all he has contributed to BSBI's activities through this and other roles over the years.
- Trustees welcomed Bridget Keehan as she stepped into the Ireland Officer role in June 2023 and Jen Farrar into the new role of Botanical Skills Officer, Northern Ireland, in October 2023, each being responsible for promoting botany and BSBI's aims in their respective countries.

Committees

The *BSBI Yearbook 2024* sets out full details of BSBI's Committees, more details of which are outlined below; the BSBI website also lists the members of Committees and the Board, and provides contact details for each.

The Country Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (comprising in this context Northern and the Republic of Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work and play an important role in the governance structure, working alongside the Countries Support Manager and Country Officers to drive engagement at national level and showcase their country's work to the membership and to the wider public.

For example, the **Committee for Scotland** plays an important role in the organisation of the annual Scottish Botanists' Conference, which attracts a huge number of participants; the **Committee for Ireland** supports the Ireland Officer with organisation of, and participation in, Ireland's Spring and Autumn Conferences; the County Recorders who sit on the **Committee for Wales** lead on recording activities there. The **Committee for England** holds well-attended online Annual Meetings. Editors of the four country newsletters sit on Country Committees and each does an invaluable job communicating information that matters to BSBI's membership in their respective countries.

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BSBI has three Standing or Operational Committees, as follows:

The **Events & Communications Committee** organises national events, conferences and field meetings, such as the New Year Plant Hunt and the British and Irish Botanical Conference. It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.

The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the County Recorder network and the Panel of Plant Referees and Specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the staff of the BSBI Science and Data team. Its Science & Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.

The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards training and plant study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants. This Committee is also developing the "Botany for All" programme and assembling a range of partners from external groups to help deliver the goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

The Board of Trustees has two permanent sub committees:

The **Nominations, Awards & Governance Committee** has responsibility for identifying and recommending candidates for election as Trustees, for assuring a steady flow of nominations for awards and for recommending to Trustees any changes to the governance arrangements of the Society.

The **Finance Committee** works closely with the Finance Manager, as Committee Secretary, to assist the Board in ensuring there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise, and for ensuring BSBI complies with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. This and its other objectives are set out in a Terms of Reference approved in December 2022. Under its Terms of Reference, the Finance Committee advises the Board on its **Investment Policy Statement** and its **Ethical Position Statement** and reviews these guidance documents every three years or more often if appropriate. The Honorary Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and while this role is on hold, Finance Committee continues to fulfil the responsibilities set out in its Terms of Reference.

The Society's Finance Committee is made up of a minimum of three Trustees and, normally with the Chair of the Board, CEO and Committee Secretary in attendance, meets once a year with the Society's Investment Manager to review investment performance and to hold them to account. Also, the performance and effectiveness of the Finance Committee in carrying out its Terms of Reference is self-evaluated on a three-yearly basis and its findings reported to the Board for scrutiny.

Investment Policy Statement

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy Statement and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its Investment Manager, RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD).

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash, capable of delivering income and portfolio growth combined at 2% over inflation in the long term after expenses. Investment income is accumulated however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

Ethical Position Statement

While there are no legal, Charity Commission (CC) or Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) requirements to adopt an ethical investing stance, Trustees recognise the importance of BSBI investing in a socially responsible manner which promotes the protection and health of the natural environment. This aim is carefully balanced with the desire to optimise Total Return from investments to fund BSBI's work.

With these aims in mind, BSBI works to an Ethical Position Statement (EPS), updated in September 2022, which sets out the above. The EPS, for example, aims to restrict exposure to the fossil fuel sector.

This environmentally aware approach is not only firmly aligned with BSBI's charitable aims but increasingly with the direction of travel in the charity sector, expectations of the world at large and CC's ethical investing advice contained in CC14 *Charities & Investment Matters, a Guide for Trustees*. CC14 reflects the August 2023, in response to the 2022 *Butler-Sloss* High Court case which formally clarifies that charities can adopt investment policies and approaches with ethical and social considerations, even where this will lead to a lesser financial return.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are integrated into RBCBD's investment analysis and stewardship and engagement are important parts of its investment process and in March 2024, RBCBD reported in person to BSBI's Finance Committee that BSBI's investment portfolio has:

- (1) Just under half (2023: half) of the underlying benchmark exposure to companies involved in fossil fuels, based on revenues
- (2) 91.5% (2023: 89%) of the underlying investments held within collective funds have an ESG risk rating of medium or lower.
- (3) 0% (2023: 0%) exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in the production and/or distribution of palm oil
- (4) 0.1% (2023: 0.1%) exposure to companies with 10% or more of revenues involved in growing genetically modified (GM) crops or the development and/or cultivation of GM seeds & plants

RBCBD is firmly committed to stewardship; ensuring the responsible ownership of assets. It continues to engage with funds to improve climate change reporting and to support investment into renewable infrastructure. Through its partner, Columbia Threadneedle, it also has numerous engagements with leading corporations around protecting and setting biodiversity targets.

RBCBD has also recently joined the largest biodiversity engagement collaboration: www.Natureaction100.org to partner & drive positive change.

Nature Action 100



More information can be found in RBCBD's Annual Stewardship and Engagement Report here: <https://www.brewin.co.uk/stewardship-policy>

All of this work aims to create long term value leading to sustainable benefits for the environment and society and, through these actions and monitoring, BSBI feels reassured its investment activities promote the health and protection of the natural environment.

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Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical study and research are set out on the BSBI website.

Risk Management

Like all charities, BSBI operates in an environment in which there are uncertainties and risks. The Board of Trustees works to identify risks to which BSBI is or could be exposed and to then either mitigate or manage the impact.

The Trustees maintain a Risk Register which documents the major risks identified, under the themes of Governance, Operations, Finance, Environmental & Legal. The Board reviews the Risk Register at its quarterly Board meetings and agrees actions. Trustees are satisfied that this system addresses, mitigates and manages BSBI's exposure to the major risks. Examples of ways in which financial risks are mitigated include:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive range of insurance policies in relation to its activities and associated risks, including those for Public & Employer's Liability, Professional Indemnity and Trustee Indemnity.
- ii. The Society maintains a balance sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all of its net assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in a number of ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of independent professional Investment Managers, who follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually; the Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against industry benchmarks and other expectations.
- iii. BSBI operates in Britain, Ireland and overseas and must handle transactions in UK £ Sterling, Euro €, United States Dollar \$. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of its transactions, balances and investments being denominated in UK £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk. It aims to manage investments and cash to optimise investment income & gains and bank interest. Because the individual investments in BSBI's investment portfolio are freely traded, it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice and this mitigates risk.
- v. An Income & Expenditure Budget is set and approved annually in advance by the Board which is then rigorously applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive and the Finance Manager, so as to ensure that the Society enters into only appropriate financial commitments within its means.
- vii. With the oversight of BSBI's Finance Committee, the Finance Manager and Chief Executive monitor bank balances and ensure there are sufficient liquid funds to meet liabilities as they fall due.
- viii. The UK's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020 had no material impact on the operations or finances of the Society and this has been kept under review from time to time. Income from outside the UK represents a small percentage of the Society's income and BSBI has continued to conduct its activities throughout the biogeographical area encompassing Great

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Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to engage with botanists further afield.

- ix. The impact of the Covid pandemic and the risks posed have now all but disappeared; however, the learning opportunity and flexible mindset it taught will be remembered and used in years to come.

Principal Risks & Mitigations:

Notwithstanding the above, significant risks can develop and remain and there are currently two risks to which Trustees' attention is particularly focussed, as noted below:

1) Loss of Data, electronic functions or other important information; Trustees have identified an operational risk particular to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) which holds in excess of 56 million plant distribution records and is a critical BSBI resource.

Risk: A digital & data review was carried out which identified that IT issues such as server failure, a lack of specialist knowledge and resource to manage and maintain the DDb, and / or cyber-attack, exposes BSBI to being unable to carry out core functions and activities if these risks were not to be addressed.

Mitigation: Trustees have been addressing this risk by strengthening BSBI's resources; James Drever was recruited into the new role of Data Support Officer in August 2023, now working alongside the existing Database Officer, each with a clear programme of work, including increasing knowledge and user guidance for the DDb and developing an emergency recovery plan against which progress can be measured. More recently, work on cloud storage has been taken forward and Data Recovery Planning will be discussed at the next Data Plan Steering meeting.

2) Key roles unfilled when current post holders step down

Risk: Lack of a continuity plan for succession of Trustee, Chairs, Secretaries and Vice County Recorders (VCRs). The risks of this are that BSBI's responsibilities may not be carried out: administration, legal obligations, areas of governance, financial responsibilities resulting in financial or other penalties. Where a VCR role becomes vacant, there is a loss of botanical leadership, knowledge & experience for that geographical area.

Mitigation: Trustees are addressing this via a range of succession planning measures, all of which are embedded within the new BSBI Governance Handbook. Succession planning measures include review determining how key roles can be supported & thus workload shared, creating clear job descriptions for key roles and advertising for trustees and those key roles regularly and widely, clearly stating the skills and expertise sought, tracking progression through committees, knowledge sharing and training opportunities. For VCR vacancies, BSBI's Science & Data Committee is capturing the location & number of current & likely upcoming vacancies (eg. through retirement). Measures to fill these vacancies include compiling, sharing and regularly reviewing the list, inviting applications, describing the skills sought, emphasising the benefits of joint recorderships and VCR teams. This is alongside provision of support, training and networking opportunities, support with data management and providing a range of science projects for recorders to participate in (see Support for Recorders fund below).

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Reserves Policy

The Board last reviewed its Reserves Policy in June 2023 and the next review will take place in Autumn 2024. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

Over time, BSBI's income is becoming more diversified, with a more predictable core of income, thereby reducing overall risk in the face of one or more sources becoming vulnerable. This increasing robustness gives the comfort BSBI has sought through its *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*.

In its Reserves Policy, the Board of Trustees has carefully reflected and concluded that £0.5m - an average of 9 months' operating expenditure - is an adequate and appropriate minimum level of Reserves which will help BSBI achieve a financially sustainable & resilient business model.

Meanwhile, the General Fund actually stands at £0.7M at 31 March 2024, unchanged from last year (2023: £0.7M). Therefore, there is a modest excess / buffer above the minimum of £0.5M.

This level affords the Board capacity to respond to - or seek out - opportunities. If opportunities arise to deliver BSBI's aims even more effectively, the Board may consider designating further funds to ringfence what it requires to achieve that opportunity.

Looking ahead, as income streams are even further diversified and become more robust, BSBI becomes more resilient and risk further reduces, the Board may in time feel it is able to further reduce the minimum reserves, perhaps to the equivalent of 6 - 9 months' operating expenditure.

At this point, readers are asked to refer to Note 18 – Post Balance Sheet Events. A generous legacy was received after year end, which affords BSBI choices, a boost to reserves and financial security.

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

- 1) **The General Fund**; this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to raise further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.5M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.
- 2) **The Strategic Development Fund**; this designated fund was created in June 2020 to fund the one-off or short-medium term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

With the final three of the below added in the year, has maintained seven Restricted Income Funds during the year under review, currently valued at £32,460 (2023: £3,468):

- 1) The **Presidents' Award Fund** provides for an annual award of £300 for outstanding contributions to botany.
- 2) The **Welsh Flora Fund** is normally for small ad hoc grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. There was no expenditure this year however, last year, £750 was met from this Fund; the North Wales proportion of the *Plant Atlas 2020* book launch costs.
- 3) The **Scottish Officer Fund** received income of £22,000 this year (2023: £20,000) restricted to meet expenditure relating to the post of and activities undertaken by the Scotland Officer. This fund continued to be fully expended during the year.

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- 4) The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £NIL (2023: £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust) which was fully expended on the Scotland Officer's time costs of organising and delivering four training workshops and five field training days in Summer 2022 and five mini-workshops during the Scottish Botanists' Conference in November 2022. This Fund closed at the end of 2022/23.
- 5) **The Botanical Training Fund** was established in the year out of a successful fundraising campaign focused on expanding BSBI's Identiplant and FISC training into Ireland and Scotland. A generous grant from The Britford Bridge Trust, a sizeable legacy from the Estate of Liz Mc Donnell, together with donations and Gift Aid totalling £26,043 were received for these purposes, enabling £10,000 to be used towards the associated pay costs of BSBI's Training Co-ordinator. The fund is now invested to meet future expenditure in pursuit of its aims.
- 6) **The Support for Recorders Fund** is also a new fund in 2024, the four aims of which are to fund the work of BSBI staff to:
 - 1) Develop new and emergent Recorders through support, training and mentorship
 - 2) Provide training and trainer opportunities for all Recorders
 - 3) Ensure BSBI's software and database support Recorders' needs, and that there is training, physical equipment and help available for their use.
 - 4) Advance projects that make a meaningful contribution to botanical conservation through science and data collection

£12,874 was raised in 2024 for this Fund, comprising a generous legacy from the Estate of Clive Lovatt, donations and Gift Aid, all now invested, to meet future expenditure in 2024/25 & beyond.

- 7) The **Holy Grass Project Fund** was created by a £3,000 donation to meet the expenditure of a joint project between BSBI and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) looking specifically at the genetics of *Hierochloe odorata* (Holy-grass) across its disjunct populations in Britain and Scandinavia. The expected £3,500 project costs are also funded by a BSBI Science & Research grant of £500.

6. Looking Ahead

As the publication of our *Plant Atlas 2020* demonstrated, in this time of biodiversity loss and a changing climate, our wild plants have never been more in need of the understanding, appreciation and support that BSBI is uniquely placed to provide. Our new strategic plan 2024-2027 sets out our priorities for the next three years to address this need.

We will continue to build a diverse community of botanists, share knowledge & foster a love of plants through field and indoor events, training, grants, publications, periodicals, communications, website, social media, outreach and membership. We will further expand provision of our Identiplant plant identification training & FISC skills assessments. We will develop clearer pathways to progress botanical skills, look for new solutions to overcome barriers to participation in botany and redesign our website.

Our new Science strategy will guide our work in providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address key environmental issues. We will continue to increase the number of records on the BSBI Distribution Database, improve ease of data entry via the new Recording app and provide more guidance and training for our data users.

We will continue to work in partnership to develop Botanical Heatmaps. These are an evidence-based tool which uses BSBI data to target positive conservation measures and ensure that land use decisions such as tree planting and agriculture, cause no harm to those species-rich open habitats, such as peatlands, that are so important for biodiversity and carbon storage. In the year ahead we will roll out use of Heatmaps in tree planting decision making in England, with Natural England (NE) and Forestry Commission; develop new Botanical Heatmaps for Scotland with Nature Scot (NS) and carry out a feasibility study of developing Heatmaps for the Republic of Ireland with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

In partnership with NE and UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH) we will complete the GB Red list, which will provide an assessment of threat to plant species in Britain, based on internationally recognised International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action.

We continue to support survey and recording and County Recorders in each country. Trustees are delighted to report we have been awarded funding from the Nature Networks Programme to run a Priority Plants on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Wales project over the next two years. Our Wales Officer will work with our data and recorders in Wales to survey and assess the individual species plant features to improve evidence of their condition and guide future management. Our Countries Support Team will also continue to support recording efforts in England (funded by NE), in Ireland (funded by NPWS and including our Targeted Aquatic Plant Project), and in Scotland (funded by NS). In Northern Ireland we will continue to develop skills and evidence, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA's) Northern Ireland Environment Fund.

We will continue to encourage participation in the New Year Plant Hunt across Britain and Ireland and the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) in the UK. We will also develop a new monthly Flower Hunt to provide evidence on how our flora is responding to the changing climate.

Our work to strengthen our foundations and resilience will also continue, with the publication of our Governance Handbook and further progression of our application to register with the Charities Regulator in Ireland, amongst other priorities.

In summary, in the year ahead, BSBI's members, the botanists recording wild plants, sharing their knowledge and fostering a love of plants and our science and data, will continue to make a unique contribution to the evidence and action needed to ensure wild plants thrive and are valued, and to shape and prioritise efforts to conserve them.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Reference and administrative details

Founded & Name	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland name adopted in 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA HSBC UK Bank plc, Birmingham, B1 1HQ Flagstone Group Ltd, 26-27 Oxendon St, SW1Y 4EL.
Investment Manager	RBC Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Auditor	WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
Legal Advisers	Stone King LLP, 91 Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HR
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr CJ Miles
Honorary Treasurer	On hold
President	Dr M Sheehy Skeffington
President Elect	Prof P Ashton (from 16 Nov 2023)
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater (until 10 Jan 2024) Mr B O'Kane (from 10 Jan 2024)
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater (until 16 Nov 2023)
Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms JE Etherington
Website	www.bsbi.org

8. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

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

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

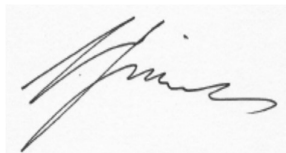
The Trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

WMT Chartered Accountants were appointed auditors to the Society and a resolution proposing their reappointment will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 17th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles
Trustee & Chair of the Board



Miss KN Jones
Trustee & Chair of Finance Committee

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

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

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

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Discussions with and enquiries of management and those charged with governance were held with a view to identifying those laws and regulations that could be expected to have a material impact on the financial statements. During the engagement team briefing, the outcomes of these discussions and enquiries were shared with the team, as well as consideration as to where and how fraud may occur in the entity.

The following laws and regulations were identified as being of significance to the entity:

- Those laws and regulations considered to have a direct effect on the financial statements include UK financial reporting standards, Company Law, Charity Law and Tax and Pensions legislation.
- Those laws and regulations for which non-compliance may be fundamental to the operating aspects of the charity and therefore may have a material effect on the financial statements include compliance with the charitable objectives, public benefit, data protection, health and safety legislation and employment law.

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: inquiries of management and the Trustees as to whether the entity complies with such laws and regulations; enquiries with the same concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims; inspection of relevant legal correspondence; review of Trustee meeting minutes; testing the appropriateness of journal entries; and the performance of analytical review to identify unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

No instances of material non-compliance were identified. However, the likelihood of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is limited by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the entity's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed. Irregularities that result from fraud might be inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error. As explained above, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements may not be detected, even though the audit has been planned and performed in accordance with ISAs (UK).

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF
BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company, the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

WMT.

Elizabeth Wicks (Senior Statutory Auditor)

17 September 2024

For and on behalf of:

WMT

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors

4 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3RD

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

		Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
	Note						
INCOME FROM							
Subscriptions, Donations, Grants & Legacies	2	409,392	63,917	473,309	284,852	25,385	310,237
Charitable activities	3	322,431	-	322,431	207,596	-	207,596
Investments	4	22,405	94	22,499	20,497	97	20,594
Total		754,228	64,011	818,239	512,945	25,482	538,427
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising of funds	5	137,831	-	137,831	95,406	-	95,406
Charitable activities	6	523,990	35,240	559,230	500,525	26,535	527,060
Total		661,821	35,240	697,061	595,931	26,535	622,466
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		92,407	28,771	121,178	(82,986)	(1,053)	(84,039)
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(8,869)	(37)	(8,906)	60,423	299	60,722
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	61,913	258	62,171	(129,755)	(642)	(130,397)
Total (losses)/gains on investments		53,044	221	53,265	(69,332)	(343)	(69,675)
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		145,451	28,992	174,443	(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		830,957	3,468	834,425	983,275	4,864	988,139
Net movement in funds as above		145,451	28,992	174,443	(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		976,408	32,460	1,008,868	830,957	3,468	834,425

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9		729,190		694,839
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	24,919		26,962	
Debtors	11	150,971		62,562	
Cash at bank		401,293		276,029	
		577,183		365,553	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	297,505		225,967	
Net Current Assets			279,678		139,586
Net Assets			1,008,868		834,425
Funds					
Restricted funds	13		32,460		3,468
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund			716,360		670,351
Strategic Development Fund			260,048		160,606
			1,008,868		834,425

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 17th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Trustee &
Chair of the Board



Miss K N Jones, Trustee &
Chair of Finance Committee

Company registration number 08553976. Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024	2023
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from (used in) operating activities	17	90,496	(51,205)
Cash generated from interest on deposits		4,768	782
Net cash generated from (used in) operating activities		95,264	(50,423)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	30,000	-
Net cash provided by investing activities		30,000	-
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		125,264	(50,423)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		276,029	326,452
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		401,293	276,029

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2023 £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2024 £
Cash at Bank	276,029	125,264	401,293

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice (UK GAAP) as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months subsequent to the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the Charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the Charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

Statement on Public Benefit

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

Recognition of Income

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Investment Income is recognised when earned, with dividends pending being accrued or prepaid.

Other income is recognised when received.

The Society's County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Plant Distribution Database (DDb), for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Expenditure on Raising Funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Expenditure on Charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities (botanical data interpretation & access, botanical conferences, courses & education, botanical publications and website or governance costs) which cannot be allocated directly, the costs are apportioned on the basis of estimated time spent or by other reasonable assumptions.

Grants awarded are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient unless the grant is conditional on a future event. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

Investments

Investments are carried in the Balance Sheet at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

Stocks

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Financial Instruments

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors

Debtors – short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents – cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks.

Creditors – short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Holiday pay accrual

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Pensions

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The Society currently transacts in Euros € and US Dollars \$.

Taxation

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. This means its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration made to BSBI by a member or donor. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT and irrecoverable VAT is reported as an expense.

Fund accounting

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds – are those funds where restrictions were established by the original donor(s) as to what type of expenditure was permitted.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

2. SUBSCRIPTIONS, DONATIONS, GRANTS & LEGACIES	2024 £	2023 £
Membership Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	162,700	147,426
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	131,044	47,503
Grants	113,166	89,632
Legacies	2,482	291
Total Unrestricted Fund income	409,392	284,852
Membership Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	-	-
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	46,417	25,385
Grants	10,000	-
Legacies	7,500	-
Total Restricted Fund income	63,917	25,385
	473,309	310,237
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation & access and grant delivery	196,068	134,199
Botanical conferences, courses and education	99,109	31,368
Botanical publications	17,598	17,769
Royalties and journal support	9,656	24,260
	322,431	207,596
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income (Restricted £94 (2023 - £97))	17,731	19,812
Bank deposit interest	4,768	782
	22,499	20,594
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff Costs of Membership & Communications (see Note)	45,480	42,664
Direct Costs of Member publications (see Note)	39,907	-
Staff Costs of Fundraising for Donations, Grants & Legacies	38,046	40,370
Other fundraising costs	727	280
Publicity	1,896	2,052
Investment management costs & finance charges	11,775	10,040
	137,831	95,406

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Note – From 2024, **Expenditure on Raising Funds** includes Direct costs of member publications (eg. BSBI News) to sit with the Staff Costs of Membership already reported here. These costs of £39,907 were previously included within Expenditure on Charitable Activities; Botanical Publications (2023 - £38,058). This improves transparency as all Membership costs are now visible in this single place.

This cost grouping also reflects BSBI's structure whereby the Membership & Communications Team of three looks after managing the membership database, communicating with BSBI's members, whether via BSBI News, e-newsletters, BSBI's website or social media channels about subscriptions, joining BSBI, telling members about educational training, conferences, courses and handbooks and generally ensuring members' needs are met. The same team fundraises for donations, grants & legacies.

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2024 £	2023 £
Botanical Data Interpretation & Access and Grant Delivery		
Direct Staff & Other Costs (Restricted £25,000 (2023 £25,385))	322,406	247,516
Support Staff & Other Costs	54,756	60,002
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £240 (2023 £400))	<u>1,844</u>	<u>2,900</u>
	<u>379,006</u>	<u>310,418</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Conferences and courses	42,895	23,572
Staff costs (Restricted £10,000 (2023 £NIL))	25,431	3,181
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>4,984</u>	<u>8,072</u>
	<u>73,310</u>	<u>34,825</u>
Botanical Publications and Plant Data (see note a)		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications (See Note 5)	-	38,058
Cost of publication sales	7,314	42,873
Grants awarded for botanical publications	<u>2,500</u>	<u>2,000</u>
	<u>9,814</u>	<u>82,931</u>
Governance		
Strategy Implementation Costs (Restricted £NIL (2023 £750))	851	17,542
Trustee indemnity insurance	1,117	838
Staff Costs	63,954	54,717
Audit fees	9,750	9,000
Professional & HR advice, Payroll & accounting platforms (See note b)	5,664	6,310
Committee costs and expenses	2,387	696
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	848	504
Recruitment, Training & other governance costs	<u>12,529</u>	<u>9,279</u>
	<u>97,100</u>	<u>98,886</u>
Total (Restricted £35,240 (2023 £21,150))	<u>559,230</u>	<u>527,060</u>

Note a from 2024, the category previously known as Plant Data Management Staff Costs has been relocated to Botanical Data Interpretation & Access and Grant Delivery, Direct Staff & Other Costs
Note b includes fees of £1,910 (2023: £3,854) for WMT LLP for non-audit services.

The Society awards three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees:

- 1) **Grants for scientific or research work;** those with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000.
- 2) **Grants for training and education;** these are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses. Occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given for plant study or to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. Identiplant training grants are also given to a small number of students to cover the study cost, currently at £250 (see Note 16)
- 3) **Grants for botanical publications,** normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by BSBI members.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

In total, 22 individuals (2023: 24) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £9,328 (2023: £10,872). The individual grants were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above. BSBI provided £NIL (2023: £2,100) grant funding towards the Young Darwin Award Scholarship which is a Field Studies Council initiative, supporting young people with a real interest in the natural world and inspiring the next generation of 'Darwins'. Read more here: www.field-studies-council.org

Honorary officer costs are those of the President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary. Costs of other Board members are included in committee expenses. Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in Note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President, President Elect, nor Trustees received remuneration from BSBI for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is considered to be similar to the amount actually disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

In addition to giving time to BSBI to fulfil their various roles, Trustees also gave donations totalling £698 (2023: £118) to BSBI during the year, either personally or through their companies.

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £837 (2023: £483) were reimbursed to 4 (2023: 4) trustees who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £94 (2023: £145) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr S Gater, Trustee until 16th November 2023, began working as Identiplant tutor & hub co-ordinator for Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) in Spring 2023. Dr Gater acted as Identiplant hub co-ordinator and tutor; co-ordinating delivery of Identiplant by DWT as a regional hub on behalf of BSBI & he claimed tutor fees from DWT. In 2024, BSBI received £900 (2023: £NIL) from DWT in respect of 18 students; £300 fees less £250 per student for tutor and hub co-ordination costs.

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee until 16th November 2023, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £20,859 (2023: £20,483) directly from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also £1,875 (2023: £9,225) indirectly, via Natural England, in 2023/24 to advise JNCC re Countryside Stewardship Plus and in 2022/23 to support JNCC in considering how species data can help with the design of Local Nature Recovery and Environmental Land Management Schemes. £10,692 of the above (2023: £NIL) was outstanding at year end.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). During the year, NHM gave BSBI free meeting space at the Angela Marmont Centre for UK Nature, within the NHM, for two meetings; in September 2023 & in February 2024. The previous year; in November 2022, NHM supplied meeting room and lecture theatre facilities free of charge for BSBI's British & Irish Botany Conference.

Professor P Ashton, President Elect from 16 November 2023, is Professor of Botany with teaching and research responsibilities at Edge Hill University (EHU) in Lancashire. Also, Dr M Dean, Trustee, was employed as an Associate Tutor at (EHU) until August 2021 and continued to maintain an

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

informal relationship with the University until August 2023. BSBI provides EHU with access to its database in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Dr HJ Crouch, Trustee, was engaged in 2024 as a contractor to National Trust for 3 days' survey work. During the year, BSBI received £6,500 income (2023: £NIL) from National Trust in respect of data and other work to support its Conservation Strategy.

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee until 16 May 2024, Mr AD Thomas, Trustee, is Honorary Vice-President of Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year, BSBI paid FSC £9,995 (2023: £10,250) for the provision of accommodation, catering and meeting facilities for BSBI member and other events held at FSC field centres. BSBI also received £6,525 income (2023: £NIL) from FSC in respect of advertising space taken in BSBI News and FISC fees.

Miss KN Jones, Trustee, purchased botanical data services on behalf of Nassington Parish Environment Plan from which BSBI received income during the year of £NIL (2023: £129).

Dr T Dines, Trustee from 16th November 2023, was employed by Plantlife as a Botanical Expert until 2021. During the year, BSBI received £1,650 income (2023: £2,000) from Plantlife for access granted to BSBI's plant database. Dr Dines is also an author engaged under contract on by Bloomsbury Press, the book publisher's British Wildlife Collection. Bloomsbury has agreed to collaborate with and promote BSBI in its book "Harrap's Wildflowers, Second edition".

Prof Pete Hollingsworth, Trustee, is Director of Science and Deputy Keeper at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). During the year, BSBI paid RBGE £5,208 for BSBI events held there (2023: £1,066). RBGE also provides free of charge services for other BSBI events and office facilities used by BSBI's Scotland Officer.

Dr M Long, Trustee, is employed as an Ecologist for Conservation Planning and Grasslands within the Scientific Advice and Research Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). During the year, BSBI received grants of £50,391 (2023: £40,752); the £ equivalent of Euro denominated grants, from NPWS for BSBI's Ireland Officer, for an Aquatic Plants Project and, in 2023, towards the costs of launching Plant Atlas 2020 in Ireland. In earlier years, Dr Long has been the key contact in arranging grant funding to BSBI for the "Irish Grasslands Project".

Employees Ms JC Hanmer (Chief Executive) and Dr KJ Walker (Head of Science), received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles. Amounts totalling £7,398 (2023: £6,879) were reimbursed to these employees for of travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £1,222 (2023: £1,563) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £133,866 from NE (2023: £60,758*) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data in England and the interpretation of this data to facilitate delivery of NE's statutory duties. £55,424 (2023: £NIL) is outstanding at the year end. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is able to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford in order to facilitate research. BSBI reported income of £9,000 (2023: £12,750) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species, of which £5,400 (2023: £12,750) is outstanding at the year end. **Excludes £9,225 received on behalf of JNCC.*

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

8. STAFF COSTS	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	448,697	349,322
Social Security costs	40,466	33,063
Pension costs	18,345	16,143
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	848	504
Total staff costs	508,356	399,032

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2023: nil).

The average number of employees during the year was 13 (2023: 11). At the reporting date there were 14 employees (2023: 12) of which, one (2023: one) was resident in Republic of Ireland.

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be key management personnel; the Chief Executive and Head of Science. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 26% (2023: 31%) of the total above.

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled and contributions are paid at or above the minimum required rate set by the Pensions Regulator, currently 8%. Also, a standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) is offered to BSBI's employees in Ireland into which BSBI contributes the same % as UK based employees.

No taxable employee benefits were paid during the year (2023: £NIL).

9. INVESTMENTS	2024	2023
	£	£
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	694,839	751,475
Investment income retained	17,731	19,813
Investment management charges deducted	(6,645)	(6,774)
Transfers to bank current account	(30,000)	-
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	(8,906)	60,722
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	62,171	(130,397)
Market value at the end of the year	729,190	694,839
At Original Cost		
	664,479	691,757

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)****For the year ended 31 March 2024**

The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

Equities - UK	18.7%	19.6%
Equities - Overseas	49.6%	41.9%
Bonds	16.7%	14.1%
Global Investments	1.1%	6.8%
Property	2.7%	3.1%
Private Equity	2.6%	2.3%
Other	5.1%	8.2%
Cash	3.5%	4.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical publications	24,919	26,962

Stocks of publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,883 (2023: £4,768). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	75,222	16,904
Accrued income	46,492	40,743
Prepayments	29,257	4,915
Total debtors	150,971	62,562

The increase in Debtors is almost entirely a timing difference; explained by a single customer paying a £55k debt a few days after 31 March 2024, whereas the same customer's similarly timed debt for the previous year was settled a few days before 31 March 2023.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

12. CREDITORS

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	9,759	12,810
Taxation and social security	37,548	26,907
Pensions	4,736	3,821
Holiday pay accrual	10,160	9,312
Other accrued expenses	18,545	17,468
Deferred income	216,757	155,649
Total Creditors	297,505	225,967

Deferred income of £102,520 (2023: £95,246) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2024 therefore 75% of such annual subscriptions relating to the remaining nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred.

Deferred income also arises in a similar way from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences. £263,105 (2023: £231,804) was added during the year to the £155,649 (2023: £132,322) deferred income balance brought forward and £201,997 (2023: £208,477) was released from it, leaving £216,757 (2023: £155,649) carried forward at year end.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	1 April 2022 £	Investment Gains/(losses) £	Income £	Expenditure £	31 Mar 2023 £
Presidents' Award	2,750	(194)	55	(400)	2,211
Welsh Flora	2,114	(149)	42	(750)	1,257
Scottish Officer	-	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	5,385	(5,385)	-
Botanical Training Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Support for Recorders	-	-	-	-	-
Holy Grass Project	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,864	(343)	25,482	(26,535)	3,468
	1 April 2023				31 Mar 2024
Presidents' Award	2,211	141	60	(240)	2,172
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	80	34	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	22,000	(22,000)	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	-	-	-
Botanical Training	-	-	26,043	(10,000)	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	-	12,874	-	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Total	3,468	221	64,011	(35,240)	32,460

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

Where the fund is sourced from an external grant, it shares in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. Funds are held as shown in note 14.

The **Presidents' Award** is an expendable fund, providing an award of £300pa to individual(s) selected by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. This year, it was awarded to four individuals; KJ Walker, OL Pescott, PA Stroh, RJ Burkmar & TA Humphrey for their book: *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*.

The **Welsh Flora fund** provides funding for botanical publications relating to North Wales. There were no disbursements in 2024 (2023: £750)

The **Scottish Officer** fund this year received £22,000 income which was donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scotland Officer. The remaining costs of this post are met by grant funding.

The **Scottish Training Programme** fund received donation income of £5,385 in 2022 from The MacRobert Trust. It fulfilled its specific purpose & then closed in 2022/23.

Three new funds were established in the year:

The **Botanical Training** fund was seed funded by a £10,000 grant from Britford Bridge Charitable Trust, followed by a wider BSBI fundraising campaign, resulting in a generous legacy, donations, supplemented by Big Give's Christmas Challenge 2023 <https://donate.biggive.org/christmas-challenge-2023>. The fund is being used to expand Identiplant and FISC training into Ireland and Scotland.

The **Support for Recorders** fund was also established by a successful BSBI fundraising campaign. £12,874 was raised in 2024, comprising a generous legacy from the Estate of Clive Lovatt, an important £5,000 donation from Miss Lynne Farrell, former BSBI President, other donations and Gift Aid. This is all now invested, to meet future expenditure in 2024/25 & beyond. Its four aims are to fund the work of BSBI staff to:

- 1) Develop new and emergent Recorders through support, training and mentorship
- 2) Provide training and trainer opportunities for all Recorders
- 3) Ensure BSBI's software and database support Recorders' needs, and that there is training, physical equipment and help available for their use.
- 4) Advance projects that make a meaningful contribution to botanical conservation through science and data collection

The **Holy Grass Project** fund was created by a £3,000 donation to meet the expenditure of a joint project between BSBI and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) looking at the genetics of *Hierochloe odorata* (Holy-grass) across its disjunct populations in Britain and Scandinavia. The expected £3,500 project costs are also funded by a BSBI Science & Research grant of £500.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	670,351	804,108
Incoming resources	749,897	529,352
Resources expended	(629,680)	(556,410)
Investment (losses)/gains	42,792	(56,699)
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(117,000)	(50,000)
At the end of the year	716,360	670,351

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	160,606	179,167
Resources expended	(32,142)	(59,520)
Investment Income	4,332	3,592
Investment (losses)/gains	10,252	(12,633)
Designated from General Fund	117,000	50,000
At the end of the year	260,048	160,606

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure designed to deliver BSBI's Strategy designed to place BSBI on a long-term financially sustainable footing. The Funds are held as shown in note 14.

14. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments	Other Net	Total
	£	Assets	£
		£	
As at 31 March 2024:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award	2,172	-	2,172
Welsh Flora	1,371	-	1,371
Scottish Officer	-	-	-
Scottish Training Programme	-	-	-
Botanical Training	-	16,043	16,043
Support for Recorders	-	12,874	12,874
Holy Grass Project	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	565,041	151,319	716,360
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	99,442	260,048
	729,190	279,678	1,008,868

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

14. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS (contd)

As at 31 March 2023:

Restricted Income Funds

Presidents' Award Fund	2,211	-	2,211
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	-	1,257
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-

Unrestricted Income Funds

General Fund	530,763	139,588	670,351
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	-	160,606
	694,837	139,588	834,425

15. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2024, The Society had commitments to 35 training and research grants awarded in Spring 2024, totalling £9,987 (2023: 23 grants, £9,298). There was also one £250 Flora grant commitment (2023: nil). Grants for external training are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. Grants awarded before Spring 2024 are recorded as expenditure, having been either paid or accrued at year end.

BSBI has three office leases. Two in Harrogate; one for the Head of Science's office, the other for BSBI archives. These leases expired in 2022 & early 2023 and the premises are now occupied on a rolling lease basis without a contractual commitment to a fixed end date. The third lease, signed in May 2024 for 12 months in advance is for office space at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens for BSBI's Scientific Officer. The total non-cancellable commitment under these leases is calculated at up to 2 months for each lease, amounting to £571 (2023: £238).

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which was onerous.

16. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	174,443	(153,714)
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	(53,265)	69,675
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(22,498)	(20,594)
Investment management charges	6,644	6,774
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	2,043	(3,281)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(88,409)	15,585
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	71,538	34,350
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	90,496	(51,205)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2024

17. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

In July 2024, a letter was received from the solicitors of the late Michael Elliott Braithwaite, who passed away in late 2023, notifying BSBI of a legacy expected to be in the region of £250,000. The final value will be known when the estate is settled.

The Board of Trustees is hugely appreciative of this exceptionally generous gift from this longstanding supporter of BSBI, especially the botanical activities in the area of Scotland where he lived.

Discussions will take place at the September 2024 Board meeting to decide how this valuable funding might best be used and, in the meantime, the first instalment of £150,000 has been invested.

This is deemed to be a non-adjusting Post Balance Sheet Event and this income will therefore be reported in 2024/25.

Accounts



BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended

31 March 2023

**Registered Charity
England and Wales No. 1152954
Scotland No. SC038675**

Company Registration No. 08553976

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

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BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The Board of Trustees presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI, the Society, the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 38-40 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

1. Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

The objects of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

Strategy

During the period under review, various measures were taken to facilitate the meeting of these objectives, and to deliver *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024*:

Vision: A world where wild plants thrive and are valued.

Purpose: To advance the understanding and appreciation of wild plants and support their conservation in Britain and Ireland.

Goals:

1. Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.
2. Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change.
3. Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants.

Foundations:

1. Strong relationships and brand
2. Strong governance
3. Effective data management systems
4. Sustainable business model
5. Passionate skilled staff & volunteers

Values: A love of plants, Intrepid, Inclusive, Inquisitive

The Strategic Plan is helping BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and address issues such as concerns around climate change and biodiversity loss.

The next section of this report, Activities, Achievements & Performance, sets out the steps taken under the leadership of the Society's Chief Executive, Julia Hanmer, to deliver the Strategy's Goals.

2. Activities, Achievements and Performance

Goals

Goal 1: Build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base

The Society, which traces its origins to 1836, is now 187 years old and its principal achievement is, arguably, in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. After the disruption of the pandemic, the Society was able to resume its usual practice of running an annual programme of field meetings and indoor events aimed at botanists of all skill levels across Britain and Ireland. This programme introduces newcomers to the Society, fosters the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encourages existing members to work together and helps to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and deliver the skill base. Wherever possible, talks given at online and hybrid events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel; by the end of March 2023, the channel had attracted almost 3,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

In total, 39 events were held during the period under review; these included field meetings aimed at beginner botanists; recording events for intrepid botanists – examples from Scotland included a boat journey to gain records from Loch Maree Islands National Nature Reserve and a camping weekend to record plants on Mullach Coire Mhic Fhearchair and Sgurr Dubh; workshops and specialist training meetings targeted at both improver and expert botanists; and conferences aimed at bringing together botanists of national and international standing to mix with the general membership and to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

The Annual Summer Meeting was held for the first time since 2019; based at the Field Studies Council's Malham Tarn accommodation over a long weekend in July 2022, it attracted 42 participants. The British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly known as the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) was held at the Natural History Museum, London in November 2022; it attracted 245 bookings and featured nine talks, two guided tours of the world-famous Sloane Herbarium, 24 exhibits and seven flash talks. All the talks were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted 2,648 views by the end of March 2023. The Annual General Meeting was held virtually as a separate event, to allow participation from members who did not wish to, or were unable to, travel to London.

The Scottish Botanists' Conference, held at Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh on 5th November 2022, attracted 150 visitors who enjoyed nine talks, six mini-workshops, 28 exhibits and two herbarium tours. Talks were recorded and had attracted 1,845 views by 31st March 2023. The Irish Spring Conference was held online, with 134 attendees; the seven talks were recorded and had been viewed more than 2000 times by 31st March 2023. The Irish Autumn Conference, held at National Botanic Garden, Glasnevin in September 2022 was attended by 50 people and the six talks have since been viewed 1,325 times. The Wales Annual Meeting, based at the University of Bangor, was held over a long weekend in June 2022; 50 participants enjoyed two talks and excursions to six local sites of botanical interest.

Activities to help build a diverse community of botanists continued into the winter months. The Society's annual New Year Plant Hunt, now in its twelfth year, provided plant-lovers at all skill levels with an opportunity to try out botanical recording by looking for wild and naturalised plants in bloom at midwinter; a dedicated support team provided encouragement and help with identification. A series of three online winter talks attracted a total 278 attendees and the videos were viewed 1,189 times by the end of March 2023.

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Goals (continued)

With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, and thanks to funding from the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS), the BSBI Aquatic Plant Project was able to offer a series of field-based workshops across Ireland and online training which reached hundreds of people (see the Table below). We are delighted that the NPWS has agreed to fund BSBI for a follow-on three-year Targeted Aquatic Plant Project.

Plant group(s)	Training Events 2022/23					
	Target area	Funded/charged	No.	In-person or online?	Participants on the day	YouTube views
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£5	1	O	Online link only	638
Sedges & Rushes	Dumfries, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	17	n/a
Grasses	Hamilton, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	20	n/a
Aquatic plants: field training events	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	8	IP	63	n/a
Aquatic plants: webinars	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	7	O	137	2,485
Composite flowers	Fife, Scotland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	IP	10	n/a
Seagrasses	Co. Wexford, Ireland	Free	1	IP	13	n/a
Seagrasses	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	134	381
Irish scaly male-ferns	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	50	309
Non-native alders	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	O	134	286

By resuming in-person activities while also continuing to harness technology, BSBI was able to grow its programme of training events and expand its ability to deliver opportunities for learning and local engagement, as well as implementing policies and initiatives aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities. The Society's grants programme, offering a range of grants from Training Grants aimed at beginners and improvers, through Plant Study Grants and Science & Research Grants aimed at undergraduate and post-graduate researchers, also helped to develop the skill base and support research into the British and Irish flora.

Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, to attend a national event such as the British & Irish Botanical Conference (formerly the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting) and to offer a poster and/or a flash talk, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. In November 2022, five grant recipients accepted this invitation and members attending the Conference were able to hear more about the work their subscriptions helped to support. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged

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Goals (continued)

to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical. During the period under review, work also continued under the auspices of BSBI's Skills & Training Committee to promote urban botany and to develop a programme of activities under the 'Botany for All' banner which aims to feed into the strategic goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

	Grants			
	2023 applications	2023 Awards	2022 applications	2022 Awards
Training Grant	29	23	29	19
Plant Study Grant	7	3	7	7
Science & Research Grant	5	3	12	3
Total	41	29	48	29

Following several years of discussions and consultation, thanks to the generosity of the BSBI members who founded these schemes, both Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests, the industry standard for assessing field identification and botanical survey skills, and Identiplant, the online plant ID course, were brought in-house during the period under review and are now coordinated by BSBI. The development of sustainable business models made it possible to appoint a dedicated Training Coordinator, Dr Chantal Helm, who took up the post in January 2023. Dr Helm has been liaising with existing FISC providers and recruiting new FISC providers to deliver FISCs across Britain. New FISC assessors have also been trained with a view to growing FISC provision over the next five years; Dr Helm has also been working with the Identiplant Management Team to develop regional delivery hubs and increase the number of tutors and students going forward. In 2023, 199 Identiplant students were recruited, the highest number ever (the previous record was in 2018 with 186 students). Revenue derived from FISC and Identiplant training will begin as students' learning is assessed by tutors during Summer 2023. The resultant income & expenditure will be reported in 2023/24.

The process to register Identiplant as a BSBI trademark, thereby protecting the name and logo, seen below, was completed during the period under review and the listing can be found on the Trademark database <https://www.gov.uk/search-for-trademark>



Work is ongoing to design a logo for FISC and complete the registration process.

These initiatives, alongside the ongoing success of the Society's online fern identification course and the selection of training events outlined above, helped build the in-house training offering as a complement to the external training courses which have long been listed on the BSBI website.

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Goals (continued)

During the period under review, the Society's publications and periodicals portfolio continued to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and to sustain and develop the skill base. New and revised titles in BSBI's Handbook series are published regularly, dependent as ever on the generously given voluntary services of key authors, to bring authoritative titles to members, and to the public at large, at low cost. During 2022/23, a Handbook on *Alchemilla* / Lady's-mantles was published, accompanied by publicity on social media, by a dedicated page on the BSBI website, and by an interview with the author on the News & Views blog, thereby drawing more traffic to the BSBI website and helping to drive sales, while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications. BSBI members benefited from a substantial pre-publication discount offer on this title and also benefited from a 50% discount on the print version of BSBI's important Plant Atlas 2020, launched in March 2023; read much more on this in the next, Goal 2, section. The BSBI Handbook on Dandelions, published in 2021, was awarded the 2022 Presidents' Award by the Presidents of the Wild Flower Society and the BSBI. Work continued during the period under review to bring new handbooks into the pipeline, aided by the appointment in April 2022 of a Handbooks editor.

Goal 2: Provide high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change

The Society and its members have always engaged themselves in the accurate recording of plant distributional data and this long tradition continues – as one member once put it, "...finality in field botany is fortunately unattainable". This year, however, a huge milestone was achieved with the publication of Plant Atlas 2020, the most in-depth survey of British and Irish flora ever undertaken. It builds on two previous plant distribution atlases published by the Society in the twentieth century and will serve as an essential resource for the study and conservation of our wild plants and their vitally important habitats for decades to come.

Plant Atlas 2020 was developed in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the Biological Records Centre and is available in print and as a freely accessible website plantatlas2020.org. In addition, *Britain's Changing Flora* and *Ireland's Changing Flora* were published summarising key findings from the project and assessing changes over time and analysing drivers of change, such as habitat loss and climate change.

Two decades of recording work by almost 9,000 volunteer recorders, collecting more than 30 million records, followed by two years of verification, map preparation, analysis and interpretation by County Recorders, expert referees and the Society's scientific staff, fed into the Plant Atlas 2020 project. By the end of March 2023, 1,576 copies of the 2-volume print atlas, published by Princeton University Press, had been sold and the website printatlas2020.org, hosted by BRC/UKCEH, had attracted more than 83,000 pageviews by more than 32,000 users.

Plant Atlas 2020 was launched at a series of online and in-person events during March 2023. More than 400 people booked for the online launch event which featured talks from BSBI Head of Science and Plant Atlas co-author Dr Kevin Walker and from Chief Executive Julia Hanmer. A series of seven country-level launches followed, attracting high-profile speakers and guests: MSP Lorna Slater, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity spoke at the Scotland launch, held at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; Minister Malcolm Noonan TD opened the Ireland launch at National Botanic Garden Glasnevin, Dublin; and Daniel Zeichner MP attended the Cambridge launch. Many of the talks from these launch events were recorded and uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel, where they had attracted more than 16,000 views in total by the end of March 2023.

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Goals (continued)

The Plant Atlas 2020 launch was supported by a media campaign, with a dedicated webpage, posts across all the Society's social media platforms and press packs circulated to almost 600 media contacts across Britain and Ireland. This resulted in extensive print and broadcast coverage: staff and officers were interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme and Farming Today, on BBC TV News, Channel 4 News, and on various RTE radio programmes in Ireland, as well as on multiple local radio stations; there were features in newspapers including *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *the Financial Times*, *the Irish Times* and the *Irish Examiner*; and reports and blogposts appeared on numerous websites including Sky News, the BBC, the Wildlife Trusts, Plantlife and the Natural History Museum.

The Society's botanical surveys and recording activities continued to deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives, including the monitoring over time of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. More than 1 million new botanical occurrence records were added to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb); as of 31st March 2023, it held more than 52 million plant records, making it one of the world's largest databases of biological records. During the period under review, five new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 201 and working alongside 98 expert taxonomic referees to provide the essential volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements.

In the previous year, Trustees held consultations about BSBI's proposal to give members' greater access to plant records held in the DDb and Trustees took the decision to grant enhanced access, to allow members to better contribute to the Society's efforts to understand and conserve our wild flora. In response to the consultation feedback, the original proposals were adapted so that each County Recorder could choose the level of members' access to the DDb in their county, to take account of the regional pressures they face. This year work started to implement this enhanced access for members by creating a login for members to verify their membership. This took longer than anticipated so the next stages will be carried out in 2023/24. These are, developing a mirror version of the DDb to reduce performance impacts and creating guidance for those new to the database to help them navigate and find the plant data that interests them. Updates on progress will be posted as notices on the members' area of the website.

Work continued to develop a smartphone app for recording plants in the field, and country-level projects encouraged and supported the recording of rare plants in Scotland, in England and in Ireland, while a Working Group considered how best to maximise the value of plant records collected via iRecord. The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and County Recorders to take on mentorship roles.

BSBI's recording activities also support the development and implementation of conservation and land management policy and practice to address biodiversity loss and tackle climate change. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners. One example of this is BSBI's work, in partnership with Natural England, to develop botanical value maps and 'heatmaps', based on the plant records held in the DDb, aimed at identifying areas of high botanical value and ensuring that tree-planting is not carried out on such sites. The England Botanical Value map, which maps records of all positive habitat indicator species at the 1 x 1 km scale, was published under Open Government Licence on Natural England's Magic site in June 2022. Further more detailed heatmap layers showing the coincidence of rare, scarce and threatened species at 100 x 100 m scale and more detailed indicator maps at 1 x 1 km for 10 broad habitats were made available to decision-makers at Natural England and partners during the Summer of 2022 and work is ongoing to build on their success.

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Goals (continued)

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. 24 scientific papers were published in the fourth volume of *British & Irish Botany* and a further eight papers in the first issue of the fifth volume which was published in February 2023.

Work on a BSBI Science Strategy has now commenced with discussions to identify the high-level themes that will form the basis of the Strategy. Consultations with members and key partners over these themes will be held in the year ahead, prior to the publication of the Strategy.

Goal 3: Disseminate information to drive a passion for plants

The Society's membership newsletter, *BSBI News*, continued to engage, inform and educate botanists at all skill levels; one full free article and a five-page sampler from each issue of *BSBI News* were made available to non-members via the website and promoted across social media platforms; these served as eye-catching advertisements for the benefits of membership and proved an effective recruiting tool. The periodicals portfolio also includes two monthly e-Newsletters, one aimed at active botanical recorders and one aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events; country newsletters for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, all of which were made freely available online; and a popular *News & Views* blog, all of which have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for all students, regardless of age, in possession of a student card; for anyone under 25; and for longstanding members over 65. In light of the impact of cost-of-living pressures impacting BSBI members in 2022/23, a BSBI Hardship Fund was launched in May 2022, to support existing members wishing to continue their association with the Society in the event of unforeseen financial difficulty. BSBI Finance Manager Julie Etherington ran a half marathon in June 2022 which raised more than £1,250 towards the Hardship Fund; this is enough to give free membership to more than 30 members facing unforeseen financial difficulties. While calls on this Fund have been modest so far, BSBI looks forward to being able to help others in years to come.

As inflationary pressures continued to impact the Society's costs – for example, the cost of producing *BSBI News*, the Society's membership newsletter, has risen by 25% since 2020 – Trustees proposed increasing subscription rates for 2023 for the first time since 2020. The proposed increase was set at a level lower than inflation and was comparable with other scientific societies and nature conservation charities, and the thinking behind the proposal was communicated to members via the membership newsletter and the BSBI website. At the Annual General Meeting, held online in November 2022, members voted overwhelmingly in favour of Trustees' proposal and the new rates were implemented on 1 January 2023.

A paperless subscription option, with periodicals made available in browser via a screen reader as well as in the more traditional pdf format, had been launched in February 2022 in response to demand from members, both current and potential, and with an eye to environmental considerations. By the end of the period under review, we were delighted that more than 25% of members had opted into this paperless format.

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Goals (continued)

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for our core goals from beyond the Society, BSBI supplements its subscription income with grants and donations from a range of other sources. An *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, developed during the drafting of the Strategic Plan, was implemented and the Fundraising Manager led on taking this forward during the period under review, leading to a broader range of funding streams, thereby further improving the Society's financial resilience. The Society is grateful to all the individuals, organisations and grant-making bodies that have contributed towards our work in this period. We also have many active volunteers and consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve our charitable objectives at low cost.

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer County Recorders. The Society's outreach and training programmes operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to its research projects, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so.

Membership

BSBI is delighted to report both the greatest annual increase in membership, and also that for the third consecutive year, total membership has not only continued on an upward trend but has seen a surge. As of 31st March 2023, membership was +12%, even higher than the previous years' increase of 8.9% and exceeding the previous record of +9.2% reported at 31st March 2021. These totals over three consecutive years have outstripped all expectations and have exceeded the target set in BSBI's Strategic Plan to grow membership by +10% over a three-year period. The increase to March 2023 is most likely linked to the launch of the Plant Atlas – partly due to increased awareness of the Society's work and partly due to the substantial discount available to any member wishing to purchase the two-volume book– but the growth over the three years is also due in large part to the expansion and promotion of the various membership services outlined above.

	Membership as at 31 March		
	2023	2022	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,351	3,113	+8%
Ireland	323	236	+37%
Rest of World	136	61	+123%
Total	3,810	3,410	+12%

The positive financial impact of this growth is described in the Financial Review section 4 below.

During the period under review, efforts were undertaken to broaden the range of services and resources available to BSBI members and also to acknowledge their outstanding contributions. In September 2022, BSBI Trustees launched two new awards and invited BSBI members to nominate a fellow member who had made an outstanding contribution in their local area, or a sustained and nationally significant contribution. The awards were announced in *BSBI News* and the first recipients were Fred Rumsey, nominated in the 'Outstanding Contribution to British and Irish Botany' category for his long-standing contributions to research, publications and fieldwork; and Martyn Stead, Bryan Yorke and Michael Philip in the 'Outstanding Contribution to Botany in Your Area' category.

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Membership (continued)

Martyn has contributed a huge number of plant records and Bryan was nominated for both practical plant conservation and for harnessing social media to promote botany, while Michael's pioneering 'loose network' approach has been instrumental in tripling the average number of plant records submitted annually in three Scottish vice-counties.

The members-only area of the BSBI website, refurbished in 2021/22, was further expanded to include notices for members; information and links for BSBI members to claim a 50% discount when purchasing the Plant Atlas in print and discounts on other botanical titles; booking links for Plant Atlas launches; updates about BSBI Handbooks; and details of the BSBI archive, stored in Harrogate, which holds physical copies of important BSBI publications. Thanks to the efforts of Prof Clive Stace and the generous donations of members, the archive was expanded and by 31 March 2023 it contained almost every publication ever produced by the Society and its forerunners, providing an important resource for researchers and archivists. Pdf versions of *BSBI News* and the *BSBI Yearbook* had long been available via the members-only area of the website but a new and popular feature launched during the period under review was the provision of Screen Reader versions of these membership periodicals.

Website

BSBI's comprehensive website, www.bsbi.org/, is fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated twice weekly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community.

The website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-use basis, with more than 300 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications.

The period under review saw an increase in the number of county webpages on the site, and by 31 March 2023 every vice-county in England, Scotland and Wales, and around half the vice-counties in Ireland, had its own webpage, created in consultation with the County Recorder. Each county page provides contact details of the County Recorder(s) and offers a platform for promoting botanical activity and sharing local resources such as annual reports, Rare Plant Registers, county checklists and newsletters. These pages have helped boost engagement and build capacity at county and regional level, mirroring the national picture and ensuring enduring connectivity at all levels.

New webpages were also created to share details of job vacancies both in BSBI and across the sector; to advertise volunteering opportunities including vacancies on standing committees; to facilitate the giving of donations and legacies; to make the joining process more user-friendly, especially for members opting for paperless membership; to promote the newly-formed Federation of European Botanical Societies, and the BSBI's role within it; and to advertise the programme of winter talks.

In October 2022, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on the UK Government to honour its commitment to our wild flora. Webpages were created to share both the letter and the reply received in December 2022. Various webpages were also set up to promote the Plant Atlas book, website, country-level summaries, talks, Q&A and media coverage as outlined above.

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Website (continued)

Resources such as these are helping to raise the Society's profile and to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and are establishing the society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, the website attracted a total of 485,448 pageviews. BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained the most popular page, although the launch of the externally-hosted Plant Atlas website on 8th March 2023 is likely to impact the number of pageviews going forwards. Bringing FISCs in-house, and the related appointment of a Training Coordinator, is likely to have impacted the surge in visits to the FISC page. See the table below:

Webpage Views 2022/23 vs 2021/22				
Rank	Webpage	Views 2022/23	Views 2021/22	% Increase/ (Decrease)
1	Maps bsbi.org/maps	100,322	120,908	-17%
2	Homepage bsbi.org/	67,459	68,243	-1%
3	Training Courses bsbi.org/training-courses	14,461	16,310	-11%
4	Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISC) bsbi.org/field-skills	12,744	9,205	+38%
5	Plant ID for beginners bsbi.org/plant-id-getting-started	12,469	17,350	-28%
	Total	207,455	232,016	-10.6%

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public and support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally; for example, the Ireland Officer gave a talk about rare plants to 40 people as part of Heritage Week. Welsh members supported the National Botanic Garden of Wales' seed banking efforts by providing records and local level information about population status, and also participated in six seed collecting trips. This support resulted in 23 ex-situ conservation seed collections for threatened species for the Millennium Seed Bank's UK Threatened Flora Project and for the seed bank at NBG Wales. Members in Scotland contributed to four national consultations during the year under review: Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland; the Plant Biodiversity Strategy for Scotland; the Scottish Agriculture Bill; and the Tree Planting and Forestry consultation, which drew heavily on case studies provided by BSBI County Recorders.

Media Coverage

The Society also continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media, both during the Plant Atlas launch and throughout the year. Media coverage of the Plant Atlas is summarised above, but during the period under review, coverage of BSBI activities and comments by BSBI staff and officers, including mention of the Society, also featured in periodicals including: a report in *The Guardian* on Giant Orchids found by BSBI member Hamza Nobes in Oxfordshire; a piece on dandelions in *The Irish Times*; BSBI Scientific Officer Pete Stroh quoted in reports in *The Times* and

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Media Coverage (continued)

The Guardian on orchid thefts; BSBI was mentioned in widespread media coverage of research carried out by Dr Sarah Watts, who sits on BSBI's Committee for Scotland, into impacts of climate change on arctic-alpine plants; an article in *The Spectator* about the decline in wildflower identification skills; a report in *The Observer* on Plant Alert, in which BSBI is a partner; radio coverage and report on the UK Government website of the finding of Fen Orchid by 11-year old Tristan Moss and fellow BSBI members during a national BSBI meeting to an MoD site in South Wales; coverage of the new botanical heatmaps, mentioned above, in the TEPoP Bulletin (Terrestrial Evidence Partnership of Partnerships); and the New Year Plant Hunt was covered in *Horticulture Week* and various regional newspapers.

BSBI's Communications Officer also provided an article on wildflower identification in *Wildlife Watch*, the Wildlife Trusts' junior membership magazine which is circulated to c100,000 junior naturalists.

The Society also continued to build its social media profile, and staff, officers and volunteer members offered plant identification support to the wider public on a weekly basis under the #wildflowerhour banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March		
	2023	2022	% Increase
Facebook (Britain)	11,500	9,500	+21%
Facebook (Ireland)	3,300	3,150	+4.7%
Twitter	41,551	38,838	+7%
Instagram	8,931	6,038	+47%
Total	65,282	57,526	+13%

Strategic Plan

The adoption and implementation of BSBI's *Strategic Plan 2021-2024* has enabled BSBI to continue to move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and deliver its goals. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, there are both opportunities and threats in our environment which BSBI is well placed to respond to, including providing the data to underpin conservation and land management decisions as well as strategy to address biodiversity loss and climate change. BSBI also continues to develop and broaden interest in botany, addresses 'plant blindness' and the need and demand for greater botanical awareness, provides grants and training opportunities to develop plant identification skills and outreach opportunities to support engagement at local and national level.

This year the Society has continued to take steps to build resilience and strengthen foundations, including work to reduce the operating deficit and restructure the Society in order to focus on delivery of our goals, attract further resources and appeal to wider audiences. Some key steps include:

- Strong relationships and brand - Stronger and longer-term partnership arrangements have been put in place with statutory agencies (a key resilience indicator in the Strategy) including with National Parks and Wildlife Service and Natural England. A 5-year grant application was submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Fund. Consultations have been held and agreements developed with FISC delivery partners, and clear agreements have been put in place with conservation partners to provide access to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) for research and conservation. Plant Atlas 2020 has also hugely raised BSBI's profile and strengthened brand recognition.

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Strategic Plan (continued)

- Strong governance - New standing committee recruitment procedures were introduced to improve succession and progression planning, and to advertise roles more widely. These resulted in recruitment of new members from the wider membership for the Science & Data and Events & Communications committees. A range of new ways was explored to discover what BSBI's members in particular, and all those interested in botany, need from the Society. These included the expanded members area of the website, summarised above, and follow-up to the March 2022 BSBI Forum and preparations for the second BSBI Forum, to be held in April 2023; the Forums aim to bring together staff, Trustees and committee members to brainstorm ideas for the Society going forward.
- Effective data management systems - A series of internal meetings was held during winter 2022/23 to review the Society's data priorities; in the year ahead, a Data Development Plan will be published and a Data Support Officer will be recruited, to increase capacity to implement this, alongside the Database Officer.
- Sustainable Business Model - A review of progress against our Income Diversification Strategy at the September Board of Trustees meeting showed good progress in achieving a more sustainable business model and diverse range of income sources for the Society's work. This includes excellent progress on membership growth, good progress on individual giving, further growth in Gift Aid and successfully establishing two new education & training income sources (Identiplant and FISC), as well as establishing good groundwork on building legacies and grant income. The Income Diversification Strategy aims to reach a return on investment (ROI) of 1:3 by the end of three years of having a dedicated fundraiser in post. Trustees have been pleased with the progress so far and agreed to the recommendations, including extending the strategy and targets and the continuation of the work of the Fundraising Manager. Trustees will continue to monitor the progress of the Strategy.
- Passionate, skilled staff and volunteers - Staff posts were reviewed again during the year under review to ensure that the Society has the right roles in place to deliver the strategic goals and support the botanical community. A new Countries Support Manager role was created, to support and develop BSBI's work across the whole of Britain and Ireland, including aiming to provide more consistent support in England and Wales. It is a 15-month post to take the Society through the completion and launch of the Plant Atlas and development of the new Science Strategy, then the Trustees will review the long-term case for this role. A Training Coordinator role was also created, working two days per week, to support and develop Identiplant and FISC.

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Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's website, events and media coverage are all ways in which the Society works to inform and educate the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focused on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

To learn more about BSBI and all it has to offer:



www.bsbi.org

Also, see:

www.plantatlas2020.org

www.BritishAndIrishBotany.org

www.PlantAlert.org

www.identiplant.bsbi.org



<https://twitter.com/BSBIbotany>



<https://www.facebook.com/BSBI2011>

<https://www.facebook.com/IrishSectionBSBI/>



<https://www.instagram.com/bsbibotany/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/botanical-society-of-britain-and-ireland>



<https://www.youtube.com/botanicalsocietyofbritainandireland>

3. Fundraising

Fundraising in BSBI is currently following the roadmap of the *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023 (IDS)*, with overarching objectives to increase income to ensure a balanced budget, support the wider Strategic Plan, diversify income streams and maximise existing income; for example, from membership and partnerships.

BSBI employs one member of staff, the Fundraising Manager, to oversee its fundraising, and is subscribed to both the Fundraising Regulator and the Charity Excellence Framework.



Great care is taken to follow good fundraising practices and no complaints have been received, either directly to the BSBI or via the Regulator, with regards to the Society's fundraising activities. Also, BSBI does not undertake fundraising that represents an unreasonable intrusion, is overly persistent or places undue pressure on an individual to donate.

Return on Investment (RoI) on Fundraising Activities

The backbone of all BSBI's fundraising activities is the Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023, developed in 2020 under the guidance of The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI). This Strategy sets out a clear, realistic, long-term strategy to develop income from diverse and sustainable sources. Trustees have been delivering this Strategy with support from the BSBI Fundraising Manager and others.

Fundraising is an organisational priority within BSBI and is carefully monitored. It is reported by the CEO at every quarterly board meeting and is discussed and reviewed annually in December. Trustees constantly learn from its fundraising activities as some outcomes are more successful than others. One of the ways in which Trustees measure fundraising performance the Return on Investment (RoI) metric and, although RoI must always be looked at in a wider context, it provides a useful guide to assess performance against sector benchmarks, to assess progress over time and of course to ensure that valuable charitable funds are being directed in the right way and value for money is being achieved.

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising (www.ciof.org.uk) does not have a specific approach to calculating RoI; instead guiding it to be appraised on a case-by-case basis.

BSBI has carefully assessed the income sources to be included within its RoI calculation; most donations are included, as are some grants and contracts and a proportion of other income felt to be directly linked to fundraising activities. The costs directly incurred in delivering these activities are included within the RoI calculation.

BSBI has chosen a straightforward RoI methodology: If BSBI incurs £1 on fundraising activities & generates £1.50 fundraising income, the $RoI = 1.5$

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Turning now to BSBI's actual RoI on fundraising activities for the year under review, Trustees are pleased to report that overall, for each £1 spent on fundraising, £2.34 of income has been generated, so a RoI of 2.34.

Trustees are also pleased this is an improvement on the previous year (2022 – RoI 2.19). They were pragmatic, however, that the budgeted RoI of 2.97 was not attained, partly because the impact of the Cost-of-Living crisis on current and potential donors and organisations facing escalating operating costs caused a fall in charitable giving and reaching that level then became much more difficult. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one of success and firmly indicates that BSBI is using its resources wisely.

Looking ahead, Trustees will continue to guide and monitor BSBI's fundraising activities whilst working towards the an RoI of 3, which was the conservative average benchmark proposed by the FSI and adopted by Trustees as a long-term aim through its Strategy. The Board will also continue to ensure that BSBI's fundraising activities thrive and the Fundraising Manager has adequate capacity to continue to develop opportunities aligned with BSBI's charitable aims to support BSBI's important botanical work in years to come.

4. Financial Review

Overview

The Board of Trustees reports Net Expenditure of -£154k (2022: -£18k) for the year under review; an Operating Deficit of -£84k plus investment losses -£70k (2022: Operating Deficit -£41k plus investment gains £23k)

Looking further within these numbers, the Board reports a modest Operating Deficit on the Unrestricted General Fund (BSBI's continuing operations) of -£27k for 2023 which is a slight deterioration vs the £3k Surplus reported 2022, however it is in line with the Board's budget and expectations and BSBI continues its long-term trend of progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner as shown below:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the General Fund £000 *	(27) *	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)	(128)	(178)

*This, together with the deficit of (£56k) on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve and the small deficits on other reserves together comprise the total net Operating Deficit of (£84k) as per the SOFA.

Economic Backdrop

2022/23 has been challenging, with high inflation impacting the Society and the people and organisations connected with it in all manner of ways. After a decade of sub-3% inflation, the combination of post-pandemic demand, the War in Ukraine, supply bottlenecks and other economic & political challenges, inflation ran at its highest level in 30+ years; the 2022 Consumer Prices Index % increase was a huge +10.5%.

The cost of everyday essentials like energy and food has continued to rise much faster than average household incomes. This is what we now know as the Cost-of-Living Crisis. It is against this difficult economic backdrop that we report.

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Investments and Cash

Total Return on investments (net gains less losses, plus investment income) was -£56,636 (2022: £33,120). As a percentage, this is -8.3% (2022: 4.0%) of the average investment during the year.

RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD) is BSBI's investment manager and, under their guidance, the BSBI Board has selected an ethical investment stance aligned with its charitable aims, with limited exposure to organisations engaged in the fossil fuel industry. Because the fossil fuel industry has performed well and made record profits through higher prices in the year (linked to the Cost-of-Living Crisis described above) performance relative to Benchmark (RBCBD's Risk Profile 6 Balanced benchmark) is muted. Taking the quarter ended March 2023 as an example, Total Return net of fees was:

BSBI's portfolio:	0.99%
Benchmark	3.39%

Even though investment income has been foregone through this approach, Trustees believe its ethical investing approach is the right approach for BSBI, its members & stakeholders. This subject is returned to in the Ethical Position Statement section of this Report.

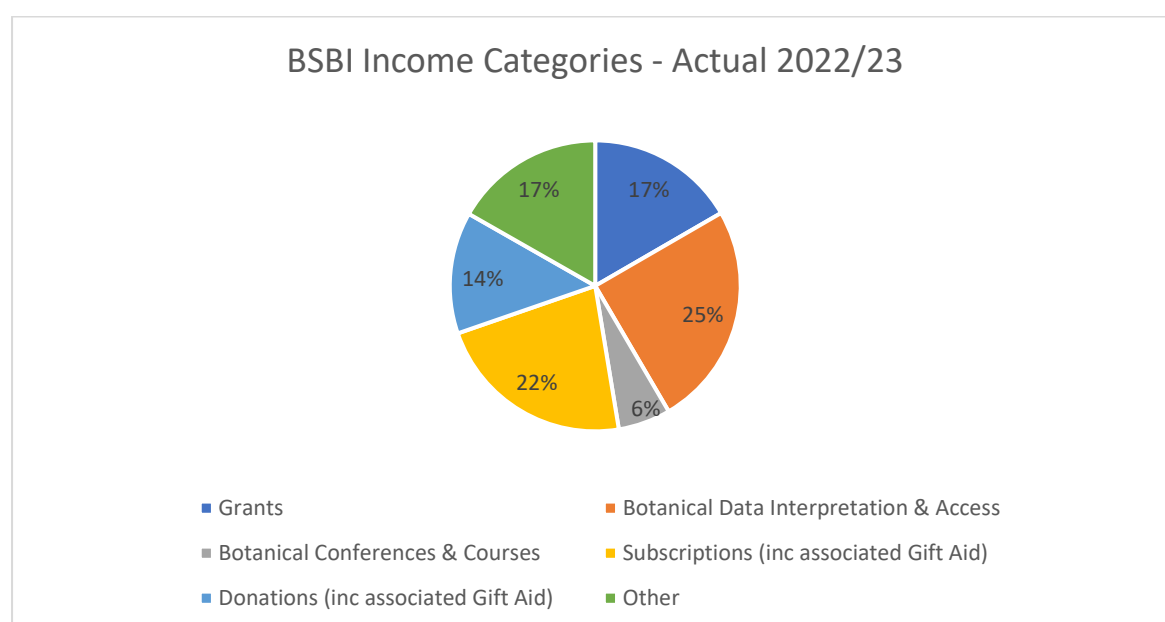
At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £834,425 (2022: £988,139) held as a diversified investment portfolio of £694,839 and Net Current Assets of £139,586.

BSBI held £276,029 Cash at bank at 31 March 2023 (2022: £326,452). This relatively high level of cash holdings is a cautious approach in order to protect against the potential risk of needing cash when the stock market and portfolio valuation is at a low level. This approach to cash holdings proved sensible when managing the negative impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine. As budgeted, no cash was withdrawn from the investment portfolio in 2023 (2022: £100k).

Income

The Board is delighted to report that the important £0.5M income milestone was passed in 2023 and, with income reaching £538,427 (2022: £459,438), total income is +17% versus the previous year.

A visual illustration of BSBI's income categories is below:



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Income (continued)

It is the hallmark of a healthy organisation to have several stable income categories (sources). This profile aims to reduce the risk of a reduction in any one category threatening the future of an organisation and this aim is central to BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*. It is pleasing, therefore, to report that BSBI has a total of ten income categories; five (as pictured) and five more contained within the Other category.

Subscriptions including associated Gift Aid experienced yet another year of strong growth; +12% to £147k and 28% of unrestricted income, (2022: 30%). As explained earlier, this reflects another pleasing year of growth in membership, this time +12% (2022: +9%). Trustees knew that high inflation was impacting members' pockets and were thankful for the understanding shown towards the 1 January 2023 increase in subscription rates by the Members' unanimous votes in favour at the 2022 AGM. We have now been measuring membership retention as a key KPI (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year) for a few years and we are pleased that this has edged up slightly to 88% (2022: 87%) in the year. The stability of this KPI, alongside 2022/23 being the strongest year of membership growth in recent years, reinforces our belief that members continue to enjoy and value all that BSBI offers.

At £31k (2022: £10k), **Botanical Conferences & Courses** saw a huge and pleasing increase in the year, this being a return to a full annual programme of face to face and residential events post-Covid.

Grants remained more or less static at -1% (2022: +21%) in the reporting period and, at £90k, continues to be hugely important to BSBI (2022: £91k) and we thank our many partners, whom we name in the Thank you section below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

Botanical Data Interpretation and Access generated £134k (2022: £102k) and we are pleased to help the organisations achieve their aims through our work. This includes Natural England, who funded partnership work with BSBI to develop and give access to botanical heatmaps to support decision-making around tree planting and other land management. BSBI continues to work with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), adviser to the UK Government on nature conservation, both through data interpretation and under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also continues to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including National Trust, Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts, Royal Botanic Garden Kew, National Trust Scotland and the Met Office as well as a number of universities, institutes and other organisations to undertake scientific research on a wide range of topics.

Donations, including associated Gift Aid; Thousands of members supported the Society this year, and individuals and organisations made donations and contributions of all sizes; from major gifts, sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI's important Plant Atlas 2020 project, for sustaining the BSBI Scotland Officer post and gifts in Wills.

Thank You; Whilst some of the income described above is given anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following individuals and organisations who have generously supported BSBI's projects and goals. It also thanks those who have contributed to and tapped into BSBI's huge botanical resources and supported its aims; without whom BSBI could not continue to achieve all that it does:

The Owen Family Trust
Arnold Clark Community Fund
The MacRobert Trust
Greenwings Wildlife Holidays
The Wildlife Trusts
The Finnis Scott Foundation
Chapman Charitable Trust

Sabina Sutherland Charitable Trust
The William Dean Countryside and Educational Trust
Habitat Aid
West Lancashire Wildlife Group
Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust
Naturesave Trust

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Income (continued)

BSBI also once again thanks Emeritus Professor Clive A Stace BSc PhD DSc, for his generous gifts of botanical publications, reference materials and time in procuring a full complement of BSBI publications for BSBI's archive located in Harrogate for members' and others' reference and research. We also thank the many others encouraged by Clive to give books for this purpose.

The Society also expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies and others, namely Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), NatureScot, Department for Food, Environment & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland, and National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continue to be long-term supporters and all the income received from them, whether by grant, for botanical data or by donation, contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

Other Income & Plant Atlas 2020; The launch in March 2023 of BSBI's *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*, was highly successful and BSBI members alone ordered over a thousand copies from the publisher, Princeton University Press, using the 50% discount available up to 31st March 2023. In all, 1,576 copies were sold in that month, exceeding all expectations. Plant Atlas 2020 income sources have been in several guises; predominantly royalties (as a percentage of the aforementioned book sales) and journal support (£24,260 vs 2022: £276) but also grants, donations & book sales. BSBI's *Alchemilla / Lady's-mantles* handbook was published in April 2022, with its pre-publication launch sales offer having ended in March 2022. As no other new BSBI handbooks launched in 2022/23, income from botanical publications therefore shows a substantial reduction in comparison to 2021/22 when three BSBI handbooks were launched, one of which was the very successful *Dandelions Handbook* selling almost 450 copies, the best-selling launch of the last five years.

Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +24% (2022: +25%) in the year to £601,316 (2022 £484,428) and a few notable highlights are covered below.

At £95,406 (2022: £95,743), **Expenditure on Raising Funds** remained fairly static. Within this, £42,664 (2022: £30,381) represents the staff costs of looking after BSBI's members; the increase is a result of a more accurate attribution of costs between this and the Staff Costs of Fundraising where there is a corresponding reduction.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities was £527,060 (2022: £405,085) and saw a planned 30% increase in line with Budget expectations and much of it driven by increased income activities such as Conferences & Courses, where expenditure increased by over £20k to mirror the increased scale of activities post-Covid and income grew by a corresponding amount.

Other cost increases can be explained by changes in activities & scale during the year:

- Cost of Publication sales include £33k; a one-off contractual cost to Princeton University Press on the launch of the *Plant Atlas 2020* publication from which BSBI now receives Royalty income
- Plant data management staff costs of £48,205 (2022: £23,470) show an increase which more accurately reflects how BSBI's Science staff actually spend their time. The corollary is lower Project Staff costs.

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Expenditure (continued)

- Training Co-ordinator staff costs £3k; a role to look after Identiplant training & FISC assessments, taken in-house in 2022/23, which will be funded by future income from these activities.
- Audit fees of £9k; BSBI is subject to Statutory audit for the first time in 2023 (2022: Independent Examination £2k)
- *BSBI News* costs show a small increase to £38k (2022: £36k) and, on the face of it, there is little to report. Much work has been going on behind the scenes, however, to restrict the impact of huge inflationary increases in the paper pulp industry; in 2023, one copy of *BSBI News* costs 40% more to print than in 2021. So, we are delighted that that over 25% of members have chosen paperless membership which not only helps BSBI save valuable funds but also reduces environmental impact, both important at a time when membership is growing. Paperless membership has saved £3k in 2022/23 and these savings look set to continue and grow.

Valuing Volunteering

BSBI is immensely fortunate, as it is every year, in being able to supplement its financial resources with the gift of freely and generously volunteered time. Whether it be the gift of botanical expertise to identify and record plant data, serving as Trustee or Committee member, authoring a BSBI handbook, helping to organise and run BSBI's lively calendar of botanical events, generously passing on expert knowledge to teach other botanists, acting as a County Recorder or national plant Referee or something else entirely, all of it is hugely important. This importance is clearer than ever in 2023 when many hundreds of members' recording efforts, under the guidance of County Recorders, over many years, have culminated in the long-awaited publication in Spring 2023 of *Plant Atlas 2020*; a landmark publication made possible only by volunteering.

Although Trustees have always known that the nature and scale of volunteering for BSBI is vast, measuring time and placing an accurate value on it is innately difficult. Research shows that many charities have not even begun to quantify the volunteering they receive. This year, however, the Board is pleased to have made considerable steps forward and the results for 2022/23 are set out for the first time below:

- **20+ types of volunteering exist**
- **11,000+ days volunteered**

Research indicates some charities use National Minimum Wage to value volunteering. Others use different rates such as the £20 per hour rate placed on volunteering by Heritage Fund (known more widely as The National Lottery Heritage Fund).

Individuals undertaking volunteering time to BSBI are from all walks of life, with different experiences and skillsets – many with important botanical knowledge built up over a lifetime - however, it is the coming together of the collective effort that persuades the Board that every hour volunteered is equally important and valuable. As such, a single £20 per hour and 7.5 hour working day are applied in arriving at its valuation.

- **Days volunteered in 2022/23 are valued at a vast £1.7m**

The Board is deeply appreciative of this vast contribution which illustrates BSBI's true scale and reach. BSBI has always been indebted to all of its members and others who volunteer. It simply could not fulfil its charitable objectives without this help and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; all of these people make BSBI the vibrant and energetic organisation it is today.

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Valuing Volunteering (continued)

In a wider context, volunteering has an important place in Society. Charities and volunteering exist to make the world a better place.

UK Government's *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill* is designed to tackle economic & social disparities. Amongst its aims are to ensure every young person in England will have access to volunteering opportunities by 2025. For BSBI's part, the methodologies now developed to capture volunteered time will continue to be developed, deepening BSBI's understanding and leading to offering more opportunities to inspire volunteers of the future.

5. Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Society was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08553976) on 3 June 2013 with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It is also registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675). It has no share capital. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive.

Board of Trustees (Directors)

The Board of Trustees (Directors) are the Society's legal trustees which governs all its activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive and they together co-ordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Trustees are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Trustees, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Trustees. One third of the Trustees (other than those currently co-opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (16 November 2023) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years. Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post at 31 March 2023 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CJ Miles (Chair)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Prof AI Denholm	Appointed 3 June 2013, retired 17 Nov 2022
Prof MJ Crawley	Appointed 24 July 2013, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014
Dr PR Bisson	Appointed 25 May 2016, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr JS Faulkner	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, retired 17 Nov 2022
Dr S Knapp OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas OBE	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr S Gater	Appointed 4 Dec 2019
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 22 June 2021
Miss KN Jones	Appointed 19 Nov 2021
Mr B O'Kane	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Prof P Hollingsworth FRSE	Appointed 17 Nov 2022
Dr M Long	Appointed 21 March 2023 (co-opted)

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Board of Trustees (Directors) (continued)

At present, the membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All Trustees are made aware of their obligations and the charitable company's Articles of Association and are provided with regular updates on its financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission guidance, including "*The Essential Trustee*" and other Trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of Trustees is targeted effectively

Honorary Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Company Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager.

Details of other office bearers, including County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, the Hon. Field Meetings Secretary and the Editor-in-Chief of *British & Irish Botany* are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2023*.

The Staff

As at 31 March 2023 the Society employed 12 staff (2022: 10), equivalent to 9 full time posts (2022: 9), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in co-ordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its volunteers and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Chief Executive leads the team of employees, which is structured into these key functions:

- Science & Data
- Countries Support
- Membership & Communications
- Finance

The Countries Support Team underwent significant change during the year, with one departure and three new joiners:

- Jim McIntosh, BSBI's Scottish and Senior Country Officer for many years, retired in November 2022 and Trustees thank him for his vast contribution to BSBI's activities.
- James Harding-Morris took up the new role of Countries Support Manager in Nov 2022 to head the Countries Support team.
- Trustees welcomed Matt Harding as Scotland Officer in November 2022.
- Chantal Helm took up the new role of Training Co-ordinator for Identiplant and FISC; both long-established training courses, taken "in house" by BSBI from 2023.

Committees

The *BSBI Yearbook 2023* sets out full details of BSBI's Committees, more details of which are outlined below; the BSBI website also lists the members of Committees and the Board, and provides contact details for each.

The Country Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (comprising in this context Northern and the Republic of Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work and play an important

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Committees (continued)

role in the governance structure, working alongside the Countries Support Manager and Country Officers to drive engagement at national level and showcase their country's work to the membership and to the wider public.

For example, the **Committee for Scotland** plays an important role in the organisation of the annual Scottish Botanists' Conference, which attracts a huge number of participants; the **Committee for Ireland** supports the Ireland Officer with organisation of, and participation in, Ireland's Spring and Autumn Conferences; the County Recorders who sit on the **Committee for Wales** lead on recording activities there. The **Committee for England** holds well-attended online Annual Meetings. Editors of the four country newsletters sit on Country Committees and each does an invaluable job communicating information that matters to BSBI's membership in their respective countries.

BSBI has three Standing or Operational Committees, as follows:

The **Events & Communications Committee** organises national events, conferences and field meetings, such as the New Year Plant Hunt and the British and Irish Botanical Conference (formerly the Annual Exhibition Meeting). It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.

The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the County Recorder network and the Panel of Plant Referees and Specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the staff of the BSBI Science and Data team. Its Science & Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.

The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards training and plant study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants. This Committee is also developing the "Botany for All" programme and assembled a range of partners from external groups to help deliver the goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.

The Board of Trustees has two permanent sub committees:

The **Nominations, Awards & Governance Committee** has responsibility for identifying and recommending candidates for election as Trustees, for assuring a steady flow of nominations for awards and for recommending to Trustees any changes to the governance arrangements of the Society.

The **Finance Committee** was created in late 2022 when, in the light of BSBI's growth, diversification and in the interests of good governance, the Board decided to convert its Investment Committee to Finance Committee. It works closely with the Finance Manager, as Committee Secretary, to assist the Board in ensuring there is a framework for accountability; for examining and reviewing systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise, and for ensuring BSBI complies with all aspects of the law, relevant regulations and good practice. This and its other objectives are set out in a Terms of Reference approved in December 2022. Under its Terms of Reference, the Finance Committee advises the Board on its Investment Policy Statement and its Ethical Position Statement and reviews these guidance documents every three years or more often if appropriate. The Honorary Treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee and while this role is on hold, Finance Committee continues to fulfil the responsibilities set out in its Terms of Reference.

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Investment Policy Statement

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy Statement and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its Investment Manager, RBC Brewin Dolphin (RBCBD).

The Society's **Finance Committee** (previously **Investment Committee**, see above) is made up of a minimum of three Trustees and normally with the Chair of the Board, CEO and Committee Secretary in attendance meets once a year with the Society's Investment Manager to review investment performance and to hold them to account. Also, the performance and effectiveness of the Finance Committee in carrying out its Terms of Reference is self-evaluated on a three-yearly basis and its findings reported to the Board for scrutiny.

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash, capable of delivering income and portfolio growth combined at 2% over inflation in the long term after expenses. Investment income is accumulated however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

Ethical Position Statement

While there are no legal, Charity Commission (CC) or Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) requirements to adopt an ethical investing stance, Trustees recognise the importance of BSBI investing in a socially responsible manner which promotes the protection and health of the natural environment. This aim is carefully balanced with the desire to optimise Total Return from investments to fund BSBI's work.

With these aims in mind, BSBI works to an Ethical Position Statement (EPS), updated in September 2022, which sets out the above. The EPS, for example, aims to restrict BSBI's exposure to the fossil fuel sector.

This environmentally aware approach is not only firmly aligned with BSBI's charitable aims but increasingly with the direction of travel in the charity sector, expectations of the world at large and CC's ethical investing advice contained in CC14 *Charities & Investment Matters, a Guide for Trustees*. Now reflecting a long-awaited update, announced on 1 August 2023, in response to the 2022 *Butler-Sloss* High Court case. CC14 now formally clarifies that charities can adopt investment policies and approaches with ethical and social considerations, even where this will lead to a lesser financial return.

Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are integrated into RBCBD's investment analysis and stewardship and engagement are important parts of its investment process and in March 2023, RBCBD reported that BSBI's investment portfolio has:

- (1) Half of the underlying benchmark exposure to companies involved in fossil fuels (based on revenues)
- (2) 89% of the underlying investments held within collective funds have an ESG risk rating of medium or lower.
- (3) 0% exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in the production and/or distribution of palm oil
- (4) 0.1% exposure to companies with over 10% or more of revenues involved in growing genetically modified (GM) crops or the development and/or cultivation of GM seeds & plants

RBCBD is committed to stewardship, ensuring the responsible ownership of assets and it continues to engage with funds to improve climate change reporting and to support investment into renewable infrastructure. Through its engagement partner, Columbia Threadneedle, it also has numerous engagements with leading corporations around protecting and setting biodiversity targets. This work aims to creating long term value leading to sustainable benefits for the environment and society.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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For the year ended 31 March 2023

Ethical Position Statement (continued)

More information can be found in RBCBD's Annual Stewardship and Engagement Report here: <https://www.brewin.co.uk/stewardship-policy>

Through these actions and monitoring, BSBI feels reassured its investment activities actively promote the health and protection of the natural environment.

Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical study and research are set out on the BSBI website.

Risk Management

Like all charities, BSBI operates in an environment in which there are uncertainties and risks. The Board of Trustees works to identify risks to which BSBI is or could be exposed and to then either mitigate or manage the impact.

The Trustees maintain a Risk Register which documents the major risks identified, under the themes of Governance, Operations, Finance, Environmental & Legal. The Board reviews the Risk Register at its quarterly Board meetings and agrees actions. Trustees are satisfied that this system addresses, mitigates and manages BSBI's exposure to the major risks. Examples of ways in which financial risks are mitigated include:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive range of insurance policies in relation to its activities and associated risks, including those for Public & Employer's Liability, Professional Indemnity and Trustee Indemnity.
- ii. The Society maintains a balance sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all of its net assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in a number of ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of independent professional Investment Managers, who follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually; the Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against industry benchmarks and other expectations.
- iii. BSBI operates in Britain, Ireland and overseas and must handle transactions in UK £ Sterling, Euro €, United States Dollar \$. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of its transactions, balances and investments being denominated in UK £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk as a result of running a deficit budget. It aims to manage investments and cash to optimise investment income & gains and bank interest. Because the individual investments in BSBI's investment portfolio are freely traded, it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice and this mitigates risk.
- v. An Income & Expenditure Budget is set and approved annually in advance by the Board which is then rigorously applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive and the Finance Manager, so as to ensure that the Society enters into only appropriate financial commitments within its means.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Risk Management (continued)

- vii. With the oversight of BSBI's Finance Committee, the Finance Manager and Chief Executive monitor bank balances and ensure there are sufficient liquid funds to meet liabilities as they fall due.
- viii. The UK's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020 has had no material impact on the operations or finances of the Society and this has been kept under review from time to time. Income from outside the UK represents a small percentage of the Society's income and BSBI has continued to conduct its activities throughout the biogeographical area encompassing Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to engage with botanists further afield.
- ix. The impact of the Covid pandemic and the risks posed have now all but disappeared however the learning opportunity and flexible mindset it taught will be remembered and used in years to come.

Principal Risks & Mitigations:

Notwithstanding the above, significant risks can develop and remain and there are currently two risks to which Trustees' attention is particularly focussed, as noted below:

1) Loss of Data, electronic functions or other important information; Trustees have identified an operational risk particular to the BSBI Plant Distribution Database (DDb) which holds in excess of 52 million plant distribution records and is a critical BSBI resource.

Risk: A digital & data review was carried out which identified that IT issues such as server failure, a lack of specialist knowledge and resource to manage and maintain the DDb, and / or cyber-attack, exposes BSBI to being unable to carry out core functions and activities if these risks were not to be addressed.

Mitigation: Trustees are addressing the situation by strengthening BSBI's resources; a Data Support Officer has been recruited and from Summer 2023 will work alongside the existing Database Officer, each with a clear programme of work, including increasing knowledge and user guidance for the DDb and developing an emergency recovery plan against which progress can be measured.

2) Non-compliance with Irish Charity Registration; Trustees have identified a legal risk arising from BSBI not being registered with the Charities Regulator in Ireland.

Risk: Non-compliance with Irish Charity legislation which exposes risks or even legal liabilities thought to be around the legitimacy of BSBI's activities in Ireland under its UK governing documents.

Mitigation: Trustees are addressing the situation and have applied to the Charities Regulator in Ireland for BSBI to become a charity in Ireland. A response is currently awaited.

Reserves Policy

The Board reviewed its Reserves Policy in June 2023. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

When this Policy was last reviewed in Spring 2022, BSBI's income was felt to be relatively stable / low risk. Since then:

- Income has grown; total income is >£0.5M for the first time
- New income categories have arisen; Royalties

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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For the year ended 31 March 2023

Reserves Policy (continued)

- Income categories have diversified; Identiplant, FISC
- Income commitments have become longer term; see Looking Ahead section

These achievements mean that income has become relatively more diversified, stable and therefore lower risk. This increasing robustness gives the comfort that BSBI seeks through its *Income Diversification Strategy 2021-2023*.

The Board of Trustees has carefully reflected and concludes that £0.5m (LY: £0.5M) - an average of now 9 months' (LY: 1 year's) operating expenditure - is an adequate and appropriate minimum level of Reserves which will help BSBI achieve a financially sustainable & resilient business model.

Meanwhile, the General Fund actually stands at £0.7M at 31 March 2023 (LY: £0.8M). Therefore, there is a modest excess / buffer above the minimum of £0.5M.

This level affords the Board capacity to respond to - or seek out - opportunities. If opportunities arise to deliver BSBI's aims even more effectively, the Board may consider designating further funds to ringfence what it requires to achieve that opportunity.

Looking ahead, as income streams are even further diversified and become more robust, BSBI becomes more resilient and risk further reduces, the Board may in time feel it is able to further reduce the minimum reserves, perhaps to the equivalent of 6 - 9 months' operating expenditure.

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

- 1) **The General Fund**; this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to raise further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.5M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.
- 2) **The Strategic Development Fund**; this designated fund was created following a decision by the Board in June 2020. Its purpose is to fund the one-off or short-medium term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

Three Restricted Income Funds are maintained, currently valued at £3,469 (2022: £4,864):

- 1) The **Presidents' Award Fund** provides for an annual award for outstanding contributions to botany. (£400pa in 2018-2022, £300pa in 2023-2027)
- 2) The **Welsh Flora Fund** is normally for small ad hoc grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. This year, £750; the North Wales proportion of the *Plant Atlas 2020* book / project launch costs, are met from this Fund.
- 3) The **Scottish Officer Fund** received income of £20,000 this year (2022: £16,000) restricted to meet expenditure relating to the post of and activities undertaken by the Scotland Officer. This fund continued to be fully expended during the year.
- 4) The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust (2022: £NIL) which was fully expended on the Scotland Officer's time costs of organising and delivering four training workshops and five field training days in Summer 2022 and five mini-workshops during the Scottish Botanists' Conference in November 2022.

6. Looking Ahead

BSBI's recently published Plant Atlas 2020 gives a better understanding of why, and how rapidly, the distributions of plants are changing in Britain and Ireland and highlights deeply concerning declines. To address these, it is important to place plants' needs at the heart of land use decision making, research and monitoring and build awareness of wild plants and skills in studying them. BSBI's science, data and members, the botanists recording wild plants, sharing their knowledge and fostering a love of plants, make a unique contribution to the evidence and action needed to ensure wild plants thrive and are valued, and to shape and prioritise efforts to conserve them.

In the year ahead, the Society will continue to build a diverse community of botanists and to share knowledge and foster a love of plants through field and indoor events, training, grants, publications, periodicals, communications, website, social media, outreach and membership. In order to meet high demand for plant identification training and skills assessment, work will continue to develop and expand the provision of Identiplant and FISC.

BSBI will develop further guidance and support for County Recorders, in response to their feedback, through new pages and guidance on our website. The first year of the new Targeted Aquatic Plant project, funded for three years by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, will be delivered in 2023.

Trustees are delighted to report that a grant application to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA) Northern Ireland Environment Fund has been successful. A new five-year project will now be established to grow botanical skills and evidence for nature recovery, by recruiting a Botanical Skills Officer based in Northern Ireland to organise plant identification and recorder training and field events, develop partnerships and increase participation in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme. This project will also work with the Society's wider team to increase data flow and use BSBI data to target conservation and land use decision-making in Northern Ireland.

Over the next year, BSBI will continue to build on the success of the Plant Atlas 2020 launch, by collecting and providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change. Aims include increasing the number of records on the BSBI Distribution Database; testing the new data entry app; implementing the members' data access project and encouraging further participation in the New Year Plant Hunt and the National Plant Monitoring Programme.

BSBI will continue to work in partnership with Natural England and others to further develop Botanical Heatmaps as a tool to target positive conservation measures and ensure that land use decisions, such as tree planting and agriculture, cause no harm to those species-rich open habitats that are so important for biodiversity and carbon storage, such as peatlands. Greater links will be forged with partners in other countries to widen this Heatmap approach. BSBI's data will be used to start a new GB Red List project, in partnership with Natural England and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, which will provide an assessment of threat to plant species in Britain, based on internationally recognised IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) criteria. Red Lists are crucial in helping conservation organisations to prioritise and target conservation action.

In 2023, the Society will also consult on, further develop and publish a Science Strategy for the next ten years and a Data Development Plan; a Data Support Officer will be recruited to work alongside the Database Officer to increase capacity to implement this plan.

Finally, over the winter of 2023/24 work will continue to review, update and refresh the BSBI Strategic Plan for the next three years, 2024-2027, building on recent work and in consultation with members, who remain at the heart of all the Society's endeavours and successes.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

7. Reference and administrative details

Founded & Name	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland name adopted in 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	28 Chipchase Grove, Durham, DH1 3FA
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA HSBC UK Bank plc, Birmingham, B1 1HQ
Investment Manager	RBC Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Auditor	WMT LLP, 4 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans, AL1 3RD
Legal Advisers	Stone King LLP, 91 Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HR
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr CJ Miles
Honorary Treasurer	On hold
President	Ms L Farrell (until 17 Nov 2022) Dr M Sheehy Skeffington (from 17 Nov 2022)
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater
Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms JE Etherington
Website	www.bsbi.org

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2023

8. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

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

Statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

The Trustees confirm that so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information (as defined by section 418(3) of the Companies Act 2006) of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware. They have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

WMT Chartered Accountants were appointed auditors to the Society and a resolution proposing their reappointment will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19th September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles
Trustee & Chair of the Board



Mr AD Thomas OBE
Trustee & Chair of Finance Committee

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Opinion

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

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves.

If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Trustees' report, which includes the directors' report prepared for company law purposes, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the Trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

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

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

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Discussions with and enquiries of management and those charged with governance were held with a view to identifying those laws and regulations that could be expected to have a material impact on the financial statements. During the engagement team briefing, the outcomes of these discussions and enquiries were shared with the team, as well as consideration as to where and how fraud may occur in the entity.

The following laws and regulations were identified as being of significance to the entity:

- Those laws and regulations considered to have a direct effect on the financial statements include UK financial reporting standards, Company Law, Charity Law and Tax and Pensions legislation.
- Those laws and regulations for which non-compliance may be fundamental to the operating aspects of the charity and therefore may have a material effect on the financial statements include compliance with the charitable objectives, public benefit, data protection, health and safety legislation and employment law.

Audit procedures undertaken in response to the potential risks relating to irregularities (which include fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations) comprised of: inquiries of management and the Trustees as to whether the entity complies with such laws and regulations; enquiries with the same concerning any actual or potential litigation or claims; inspection of relevant legal correspondence; review of Trustee meeting minutes; testing the appropriateness of journal entries; and the performance of analytical review to identify unexpected movements in account balances which may be indicative of fraud.

No instances of material non-compliance were identified. However, the likelihood of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is limited by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the entity's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed. Irregularities that result from fraud might be inherently more difficult to detect than irregularities that result from error. As explained above, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements may not be detected, even though the audit has been planned and performed in accordance with ISAs (UK).

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Other matters

We draw to your attention the fact that the comparatives are unaudited.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company, the charitable company's members as a body and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

WMT.

Elizabeth Wicks (Senior Statutory Auditor)

26 September 2023

For and on behalf of:

WMT Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
4 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3RD

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

		Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Total Funds 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022 (unaudited)	Restricted Funds 2022 (unaudited)	Total Funds 2022 (unaudited)
	Note	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM							
Donations, Grants and legacies	2	284,852	25,385	310,237	278,307	16,000	294,307
Charitable activities	3	207,596	-	207,596	147,221	-	147,221
Investments	4	20,497	97	20,594	17,820	90	17,910
Total		512,945	25,482	538,427	443,348	16,090	459,438
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising of funds	5	95,406	-	95,406	95,743	-	95,743
Charitable activities	6	500,525	26,535	527,060	388,685	16,400	405,085
Total		595,931	26,535	622,466	484,428	16,400	500,828
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		(82,986)	(1,053)	(84,039)	(41,080)	(310)	(41,390)
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	60,423	299	60,722	66,283	335	66,618
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(129,755)	(642)	(130,397)	(43,135)	(218)	(43,353)
Total (losses)/gains on investments		(69,332)	(343)	(69,675)	23,148	117	23,265
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)	(17,932)	(193)	(18,125)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		983,275	4,864	988,139	1,001,207	5,057	1,006,264
Net movement in funds as above		(152,318)	(1,396)	(153,714)	(17,932)	(193)	(18,125)
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		830,957	3,468	834,425	983,275	4,864	988,139

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023		2022 (unaudited)	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9		694,839		751,475
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	26,962		23,681	
Debtors	11	62,562		78,147	
Cash at bank		276,029		326,452	
		365,553		428,280	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	225,967		191,616	
Net Current Assets			139,586		236,664
Net Assets			834,425		988,139
Funds					
Restricted funds	13		3,468		4,864
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund			670,351		804,108
Strategic Development Fund			160,606		179,167
			834,425		988,139

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 19th September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Trustee &
Chair of the Board



Mr AD Thomas OBE, Trustee &
Chair of Finance Committee

Company registration number 08553976. Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023	2022 (unaudited)
		£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash used in operating activities	17	(51,205)	(22,291)
Cash generated from interest on deposits		782	23
Net cash used in operating activities		(50,423)	(22,268)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	-	100,000
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	100,000
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(50,423)	77,732
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		326,452	248,720
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		276,029	326,452

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2022 £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2023 £
Cash at Bank	326,452	(50,423)	276,029

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice (UK GAAP) as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months subsequent to the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the Charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the Charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

Statement on Public Benefit

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

Recognition of Income

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Recognition of Income (continued)

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Investment Income is recognised when earned.

Other income is recognised when received.

The Society's County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Plant Distribution Database (DDb), for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Costs of raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Charitable activities comprise those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities (botanical data interpretation & access, botanical conferences, courses & education, botanical publications and website or governance costs) which cannot be allocated directly, the costs are apportioned on the basis of estimated time spent or by other reasonable assumptions.

Grants awarded are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient unless the grant is conditional on a future event. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

Investments

Investments are carried in the Balance Sheet at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

Stocks

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

Financial Instruments

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors

Debtors – short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents – cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks.

Creditors – short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Holiday pay accrual

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Pensions

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The Society currently transacts in Euros € and US Dollars \$.

Taxation

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. This means its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration made to BSBI by a member or donor. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT and irrecoverable VAT is reported as an expense.

Fund accounting

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds – are those funds where restrictions were established by the original donor(s) as to what type of expenditure was permitted.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

2. DONATIONS, GRANTS AND LEGACIES	2023	2022
	£	£
Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	147,426	131,961
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	47,503	38,451
Grants	89,632	90,895
Legacies	291	17,000
Total Unrestricted Fund income	284,852	278,307
Restricted Income: Donations	25,385	16,000
	310,237	294,307
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation and access	134,199	101,998
Botanical conferences and courses	31,368	9,875
Botanical publications	17,769	35,072
Royalties and journal support	24,260	276
	207,596	147,221
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income (Restricted £97 (2022 - £90))	19,812	17,887
Bank deposit interest	782	23
	20,594	17,910
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff Costs of Membership & Communications	42,664	30,381
Staff Costs of Fundraising	40,370	52,999
Other fundraising costs	280	351
Publicity	2,052	2,281
Investment management costs & finance charges	10,040	9,731
	95,406	95,743

£42,664 (2022: £30,381) represents the staff costs of looking after BSBI's members. This includes managing the membership database, communicating with BSBI's members, directly, via BSBI's website and through social media channels about subscriptions, joining BSBI, telling members about educational training, conferences, courses and handbooks and generally ensuring members' needs are met. The increase is a result of a more accurate attribution of costs between this and the Staff Costs of Fundraising where there is a corresponding reduction.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2023 £	2022 £
Botanical Data Interpretation and Access		
Project staff costs (Restricted £25,385 (2022 £16,000))	164,072	178,942
Project staff overhead costs	12,310	9,867
Grant direct costs	22,929	26,138
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £400 (2022 £400))	2,900	2,894
Support staff costs and expenses	<u>60,002</u>	<u>40,932</u>
	<u>262,213</u>	<u>258,773</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Conferences and courses	23,572	1,139
Training Co-ordinator staff costs and expenses	3,181	-
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>8,072</u>	<u>(1,897)</u>
	<u>34,825</u>	<u>(758)</u>
Botanical Publications and Plant Data		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications	38,058	35,361
Cost of publication sales	42,873	19,123
Grants awarded for botanical publications	2,000	2,250
Plant data management staff costs	<u>48,205</u>	<u>23,470</u>
	<u>131,136</u>	<u>80,204</u>
Governance		
Strategy Implementation Costs (Restricted £750 (2022 £NIL))	17,542	8,987
Trustee indemnity insurance	838	975
Governance staff costs and expenses	54,717	41,606
Audit fees (2022: Independent Examination fees)	9,000	2,250
Professional & HR advice, Payroll & accounting platforms (See note)	6,310	6,109
Committee costs and expenses	696	1,147
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	504	(166)
Recruitment, Training & other governance costs	<u>9,279</u>	<u>5,958</u>
	<u>98,886</u>	<u>66,866</u>
Total (Restricted £21,150 (2022 £16,400))	<u>527,060</u>	<u>405,085</u>

Note - Includes fees of £3,854 (2022: £1,521) for WMT LLP for non-audit services.

The Society awards three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees:

- (1) **Grants for scientific or research work;** those with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000.
- (2) **Grants for training and education;** these are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses. Occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given for plant study or to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. With BSBI taking Identiplant training "in-house" from 2023, grants are also given to a small number of students to cover the study cost, currently £250 (see Note 16)
- (3) **Grants for botanical publications,** normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by members. In total, 24 individuals (2022: 19) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £10,872 (2022: £3,247). The individual grants were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above. BSBI also provided £2,100 grant funding towards the Young Darwin Award Scholarship which is a Field Studies Council initiative, supporting young people with a real interest in the natural world and inspiring the next generation of 'Darwins'. Read more here: www.field-studies-council.org

Honorary officer costs are those of the President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary. Costs of other Board members are included in committee expenses. Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in Note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President nor Trustees received remuneration for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is considered to be similar to the amount actually disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

As well as giving time to BSBI to fulfil their roles as Trustees & other honorary or Committee positions, Trustees also gave donations to BSBI during the year; some gave by name and others gave anonymously to BSBI's Hardship Fund. Trustees also gave donations of £118 towards BSBI events (2022: £125).

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £483 (2022: £610) were reimbursed to 4 (2022: 4) trustees who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £145 (2022: £106) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr S Gater, Trustee, began working as Identiplant tutor & hub co-ordinator for Durham Wildlife Trust (DWT) in Spring 2023. There were no transactions during the year however, in 2023/24, he will receive fees from DWT of £150 per student tutored and DWT will, in turn, receive £250 per student from BSBI, covering tutor fees and co-ordination costs.

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £20,483 (2022: £20,038) directly from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract and also £9,225 (2022: £NIL) indirectly, via Natural England, to support JNCC in considering how species data can help with the design of Local Nature Recovery and Environmental Land Management Schemes.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). In November 2022 NHM supplied meeting room and lecture theatre facilities free of charge for BSBI's British & Irish Botany Conference (2022 - £NIL). No payments were made to the Linnean Society during the year for the hire of meeting rooms where Dr S Knapp was also President and Chair (2022: £83).

Dr M Dean, Trustee, was employed as an Associate Tutor at Edge Hill University (EHU) until August 2021 and has continued to maintain an informal relationship with the University. BSBI provides EHU with access to its DDb in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee, is Honorary Vice-President of Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year, BSBI paid FSC £10,250 (2022: £NIL) for the provision of accommodation, catering and meeting facilities for two member events in Summer & Autumn 2022; the Annual Summer Meeting and the Recorders' Conference.

Miss KN Jones, Trustee, purchased botanical data services on behalf of Nassington Parish Environment Plan from which BSBI received income during the year of £129 (2022: £NIL).

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (continued)

Prof Pete Hollingsworth, Trustee from 17 November 2022, is Director of Science and Deputy Keeper at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). During the year, BSBI paid RBGE £1,066 for BSBI events held there. RBGE has also provided free of charge services for other BSBI events and office facilities used by BSBI's Scotland Officer.

Dr M Long, co-opted Trustee from 21 March 2023, is employed as an Ecologist for Conservation Planning and Grasslands within the Scientific Advice and Research Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). During the year, BSBI received grants of £40,752 (the £ equivalent of Euro denominated grants) from NPWS for BSBI's Ireland Officer, for an Aquatic Plants Project and towards the costs of launching Plant Atlas 2020 in Ireland. In earlier years, Dr Long has been the key contact in arranging grant funding to BSBI for the "Irish Grasslands Project"

Employees Ms JC Hanmer (Chief Executive) and Dr KJ Walker (Head of Science), received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles. Amounts totalling £6,879 (2022: £5,537) were reimbursed to these employees for out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs, of which, £1,563 (2022: negative £218 due to advances made) is outstanding at the year end.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £60,758* from NE (2022: £49,073) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data and other work in England. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is able to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford in order to facilitate research. BSBI reported income of £12,750 (2022: £9,000) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species, of which £12,750 (2022: £9,000) is outstanding at the year end. **Excludes £9,225 received on behalf of JNCC.*

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

8. STAFF COSTS	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries	349,322	309,392
Social Security costs	33,063	28,211
Pension costs	16,143	15,120
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	504	(166)
Total staff costs	399,032	352,557

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2022: nil).

The average number of employees during the year was 11 (2022: 10). At the reporting date there were 12 employees (2022: 10) of which, one (2022: one) resident in Republic of Ireland.

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be key management personnel; the Chief Executive and Head of Science. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 31% (2022: 32%) of the total above.

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled and contributions are paid at or above the minimum required rate set by the Pensions Regulator, currently 8%. Also, a standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) is offered to BSBI's employees in Ireland into which BSBI contributes the same % as UK based employees.

No taxable employee benefits were paid during the year (2022 - £NIL).

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

9. INVESTMENTS	2023	2022
	£	£
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	751,475	818,355
Investment income retained	19,813	17,887
Investment management charges deducted	(6,774)	(8,032)
Transfers to bank current account	-	(100,000)
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	60,722	66,618
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	(130,397)	(43,353)
Market value at the end of the year	694,839	751,475
At Original Cost	691,757	617,013

The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

Equities - UK	19.6%	23.6%
Equities - Overseas	41.9%	43.0%
Bonds	14.1%	9.3%
Global Investments	6.8%	6.8%
Property	3.1%	4.4%
Private Equity	2.3%	3.4%
Other	8.2%	6.3%
Cash	4.0%	3.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical publications	26,962	23,681

Stocks of botanical publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,768 (2022: £4,782). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3.

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	16,904	16,775
Accrued income	40,743	56,110
Prepayments	4,915	5,262
Total debtors	62,562	78,147

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

12. CREDITORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	12,810	12,103
Taxation and social security	26,907	21,111
Pensions	3,821	3,624
Holiday pay accrual	9,312	8,808
Other accrued expenses	17,468	13,648
Deferred income	155,649	132,322
Total creditors	225,967	191,616

Deferred income of £95,246 (2022: £78,275) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2023 therefore 75% of such annual subscriptions relating to the remaining nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred.

Deferred income also arises in a similar way from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences. £231,804 (2022: £165,767) was added during the year to the £132,322 (2022: £105,155) deferred income balance brought forward and £208,477 (2022: £138,600) was released from it, leaving £155,649 (2022: £132,322) carried forward at year end.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Presidents' Award	Welsh Flora	Scottish Officer	Scottish Training Prog'me	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2021	3,026	2,031	-	-	5,057
Investment gains / (losses)	70	47	-	-	117
Income	54	36	16,000	-	16,090
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(16,000)	-	(16,400)
At 31 March 2022	2,750	2,114	-	-	4,864
Investment gains / (losses)	(194)	(149)	-	-	(343)
Income	55	42	20,000	5,385	25,482
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	(750)	(20,000)	(5,385)	(26,535)
At 31 March 2023	2,211	1,257	-	-	3,468

The Funds share in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS (continued)

The **Presidents' Award Fund** is an expendable fund to provide for an annual award of £400 (will be £300 from 2023) made to individual(s) by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. The 2022 Award of £400 was made to A John Richards for his book: *Field Handbook to British and Irish Dandelions, BSBI Handbook No. 23*.

The **Welsh Flora Fund** provides funding for botanical publications relating to North Wales. In March 2023, the Fund was used to meet £750 expenditure; being the North Wales proportion of the costs of translating into Welsh & launching in Wales the *Plant Atlas 2020: Mapping Changes in the Distribution of the British and Irish Flora*. There were no disbursements in 2022.

The **Scottish Officer Fund** receives income which has been donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scotland Officer. The remaining costs of this post are met by grant funding.

The **Scottish Training Programme** received donation income of £5,385 from The MacRobert Trust (2022: £NIL) which was fully expended on the Scotland Officer's time costs of organising and delivering four training workshops and five field training days in Summer 2022 and five mini-workshops during the Scottish Botanists' Conference in November 2022.

14. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2023 £	2022 £
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	804,108	880,471
Incoming resources	529,352	441,202
Resources expended	(556,410)	(437,922)
Investment (losses)/gains	(56,699)	20,357
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(50,000)	(100,000)
At the end of the year	670,351	804,108

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	2023 £	2022 £
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	179,167	120,736
Resources expended	(59,520)	(46,506)
Investment Income	3,592	2,146
Investment (losses)/gains	(12,633)	2,791
Designated from General Fund	50,000	100,000
At the end of the year	160,606	179,167

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure designed to deliver BSBI's Strategy which will place BSBI on a more financially sustainable footing. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

15. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments	Other Net	Total
	£	Assets	£
		£	
As at 31 March 2023:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,211	-	2,211
Welsh Flora Fund	1,257	-	1,257
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	530,763	139,588	670,351
Strategic Development Fund	160,606	-	160,606
	694,837	139,588	834,425
As at 31 March 2022:			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,750	-	2,750
Welsh Flora Fund	2,114	-	2,114
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	567,444	236,664	804,108
Strategic Development Fund	179,167	-	179,167
	751,475	236,664	988,139

16. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2023, The Society had commitments to 23 training and research grants awarded in Spring 2023, totalling £9,298 (2022: 30 grants, £11,485). There were no Flora grant commitments (2022: nil). Grants for external training are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. Grants awarded before Spring 2023 are recorded as expenditure, having been either paid or accrued at year end.

As at 31 March 2022, BSBI was committed to two three-year term office leases, one for the Head of Science's office and one for BSBI archives. These leases expired in 2022 & early 2023 and the premises are now occupied on a rolling lease basis without a contractual commitment to a fixed end date. The total non-cancellable commitment under these rolling leases is calculated at 1 month for each lease, amounting to £238 (2022: £2,417).

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which is onerous.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2023

17. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	(153,714)	(18,125)
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	69,675	(23,265)
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(20,594)	(17,910)
Investment management charges	6,774	8,032
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	(3,281)	221
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	15,585	1,423
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	34,350	27,333
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	(51,205)	(22,291)

Accounts

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended

31 March 2022

**Registered Charity
England and Wales No. 1152954
Scotland No. SC038675**

Company Registration No. 08553976

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2022

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BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Board of Trustees presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland ("the Society", generally known as BSBI) for the year ended 31 March 2022. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 23-25 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

1. Objectives and activities

Objectives

The objects of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

The Society had undertaken various measures, prior to April 2021, to facilitate the meeting of these objectives, and these were implemented, strengthened and augmented during the period under review. These measures included the adoption of a new Strategic Plan *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024*; the implementation of a suite of governance changes to facilitate the Plan's delivery; and the creation of a new Fundraising Manager role.

In April 2021 the Society's first ever Chief Executive Officer, Julia Hanmer, took up her post with a brief to deliver the Strategic Plan, which was developed in 2020/21 during a series of consultations, workshops and debates funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage initiative and facilitated by the Centre for Charity Effectiveness, Bayes Business School. This work was carried out in order to clarify what BSBI's members in particular, and all those interested in botany, needed from the Society; how decision-making processes might be streamlined; how resources could be deployed even more effectively and the operating deficit reduced; and how the organisation might be restructured in order to attract further resources and appeal to wider audiences.

The Strategic Plan focuses on these three goals:

1. Building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.
2. Providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address bio-diversity loss and climate change.
3. Disseminating information to drive a passion for plants.

Activities

The Strategic Plan is now helping BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world, such as the ongoing impact during the period under review of the Covid-19 pandemic and its attendant restrictions on travel across Britain and Ireland and face-to-face meetings.

BSBI continued to respond to those restrictions as they evolved: clear guidance was made available and regularly updated via the Society's website and social media platforms; all field and indoor meetings were postponed, cancelled, or moved online; and a programme of online training webinars, uploaded

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to a dedicated YouTube channel, supported both experienced botanists keen to keep their identification skills sharp and beginner botanists eager to take their first steps in plant identification and recording.

Fortuitously, plant recording for the Society's third plant distribution Atlas (the Atlas 2020 project) had already completed just prior to the first lockdown, so during the period under review, County Recorders were able to focus on such local activities and projects as were permissible under the restrictions, while the Society's scientific staff were able to focus on developing maps, writing captions, analysing and interpreting the data all in preparation for the publication in Spring 2023 of the print and online versions of the Atlas. As of 31st March 2022, the BSBI Distribution Database (DDb) held 50,530,788 plant distribution records, making it one of the world's largest databases of biological records. During the period under review, 12 new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 196 and working alongside the 99 expert taxonomic referees to provide the volunteer support which underpins all the Society's activities and achievements.

The Society's botanical surveys deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives including the monitoring over time of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. They also support the development and implementation of conservation and land management policy and practice to address biodiversity loss and tackle climate change. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners. One example of this is the Society's work, in partnership with Natural England and the Woodland Trust, to develop botanical value maps and 'heatmaps', based on the plant records held in the BSBI DDb, aimed at identifying areas of high botanical value and ensuring that tree-planting is not carried out on such sites. Work started on this initiative in Spring 2021 with the aim of making the maps available to land-owners and decision-makers in the Summer of 2022.

Three country-level projects were launched to encourage the recording of rare plants in Scotland, in England and in Ireland, and work continued to develop a smartphone app for recording plants in the field, while a Working Group was set up to look at how best to maximise the value of plant records collected via iRecord. A second Working Group was set up to re-initiate lapsed projects to look at national herbaria, with a view to maximising awareness and use of this valuable resource. The Society also continued to be an active partner in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme, encouraging members to adopt a square for monitoring and County Recorders to take on mentorship roles.

BSBI usually holds field meetings throughout Britain and Ireland to further its botanical survey programme while introducing new members to the Society, fostering the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encouraging members to work together and helping to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and deliver the skill base. Most of the face-to-face field meetings and training events planned as part of the 2021/22 national programme at locations across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales had to be postponed due to the ongoing restrictions but some regional and local face-to-face field meetings were able to take place as and when restrictions were lifted, and other events were offered with a hybrid format. In Scotland, two online training events – one focused on grass identification and one on plant families – were augmented by live specimens sent to participants in advance and follow-up field meetings; in Ireland, eight webinars and 13 field training days, attracting 90 participants in total, were offered under the banners of the Irish Grasslands Project and the Aquatic Plant Project, and further training days in the field were offered for glassworts and oraches, two challenging plant groups.

A series of online conferences, workshops and webinars offered opportunities to botanists at all skill levels to stay in touch and to keep their plant identification skills sharp. Some of these events were (part-)funded by National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS). All webinars were uploaded to the BSBI YouTube channel which also provided links to playlists of partner videos. By the end of March 2022,

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the channel had attracted more than 2,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times. A series of four Winter talks, offered to all by video link but with subsequent views restricted to BSBI members, attracted a total 497 attendees.

Plant group(s)	Online Training Webinars 2021/22				
	Target area	Funded/ charged	No. of webinars	Participants on the day	YouTube views
Dandelions	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	32	914
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£7/ £5	1	Online link only	173
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	288	292
Grasses	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	3	131	3,297
Aquatic plants	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS	3	136	1,473
Plant families	Scotland/ Britain & Ireland	£15 including Identification booklet	1	53	3,091
Yellow Composites	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	Online link only	1,243
Potentillas	Britain & Ireland	Free	2	115	1,263
Orchids	Britain & Ireland	Free	2	78	822
Whitlow-grasses	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	277	273
Larches	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	288	389

By harnessing technology in this way, BSBI was able to deliver opportunities for learning and local engagement, as well as implementing policies and initiatives aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities. A dedicated student webpage was set up, featuring a promotional video, produced by a volunteer member, in which staff and officers set out the various ways in which the Society can offer support to students of environment studies and plant sciences, and early-career researchers. A promotional campaign was initiated in Autumn 2021, whereby academics working in the field of plant sciences across Britain and Ireland were informed of the video, and regularly updated about BSBI grants and other resources for students. BSBI's Skills and Training programme, and the Science & Research Committee, subsequently received record numbers of grant applications for training, study and research.

	Grants			
	2022 applications	2022 awards	2021 applications	2021 Awards
Training grant	29	19	16	15
Plant Study grant	7	7	1	1
Science & Research grant	12	3	10	3
Total	48	29	27	19

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Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, and to attend the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting and offer a poster, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical.

Work commenced to develop a programme of activities under the 'Botany for All' banner which aims to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skills base. To this end, the Society's Skills & Training committee assembled a range of partners from external groups, including Sheffield Environmental Movement, which specialises in community-facing environmental work focusing on marginalised groups, and UK Youth for Nature; a number of initiatives were outlined during the period under review and work is ongoing to take them forward.

BSBI's annual programme of conferences and exhibition meetings also continued to be impacted by the pandemic; these events aim to bring together botanists of national and international standing to mix with the general membership and to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research. By moving these events online, and subsequently uploading recordings of talks and online workshops to the BSBI YouTube channel, more people than ever before were able to attend from across BSBI's geography and beyond, making it possible for those normally prevented from travel by mobility, health, financial or other issues to participate. Feedback suggests that these events were extremely popular although many botanists expressed regret that opportunities for mingling and networking were severely curtailed by the pandemic. The virtual Annual Exhibition Meeting, held in November 2021, attracted more than 400 participants and 24 posters which were exhibited on an event micro-site. The Annual General Meeting was also held virtually on the preceding day and was accompanied by short presentations. Videos from both these events, which comprised ten talks and a panel discussion on promoting diversity, had attracted 2,345 views in total by the end of March 2022.

Similarly, the Scottish Botanists' Conference, held online over a weekend in November 2021, attracted a record 288 participants and the videos on the event playlist, comprising two hour-long training workshops and five talks, had attracted 2,189 views by the end of March 2022. The online Irish Autumn Conference was attended by 78 people and the talks have since been viewed over 1,300 times.

Test centres for Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests decided, due to both the pandemic and ongoing discussions around the need to develop a sustainable business model, to offer fewer tests during the year under review: BSBI has, since their inception, participated in the development and promotion of FISCs and helped them become recognised as the industry standard for assessing proficiency (at six levels of competence) in field identification skills. The online Identiplant course, supported by BSBI, also ran at a reduced level in 2021, while discussions were undertaken to devise a more effective business model; the aim is to restart the course along more sustainable lines in 2023.

New and revised titles in BSBI's Handbook series are published regularly, dependent as ever on the generously given voluntary services of key authors, to bring authoritative titles to members, and to the public at large, at low cost. During 2021/22, two Handbooks were published, one on Broomrapes, featuring illustrations by a renowned botanical illustrator and one on Dandelions, the latter replacing a previous Handbook on Dandelions published in 1997 and featuring updated distribution maps, identification keys and taxonomy. BSBI members benefited from pre-publication discount offers on both these titles and also on a third Handbook, on Lady's-mantles, scheduled for publication in April 2022. All three titles were accompanied by publicity on social media, by dedicated pages on the BSBI website, by video presentations and, where possible, by interviews with the lead author(s) on the News & Views blog, thereby drawing more traffic to the BSBI website and helping to drive sales, while also raising the Society's profile as a publisher of essential botanical publications.

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. 34 scientific papers were

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published in the third volume of *British & Irish Botany* and a further six papers in the first issue of the fourth volume which was published in February 2022. The Society's membership newsletter, *BSBI News*, continued to engage and inform botanists at all skill levels; one full free article and a five-page sampler from each issue of *BSBI News* were made available to non-members via the website and promoted across social media platforms; these served as eye-catching advertisements for the benefits of membership and proved an effective recruiting tool. The periodicals portfolio also includes two monthly e-Newsletters, one aimed at active botanical recorders and one aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events; country newsletters for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, all of which made freely available online; and a very popular *News & Views* blog, all of which have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for students under 25 and for longstanding members over 65; during the period under review, the heavily-subsidised rate for students under 25 was extended to all students, regardless of age, in possession of a student card. In response to demand from members, both current and potential, and with an eye to environmental considerations, a paperless subscription option was also introduced in February 2022, with periodicals made available in browser via a screen reader as well as in the more traditional pdf format. By the end of the period under review, we were delighted that almost 20% of members had opted into this paperless format.

In order to operate sustainably, and to encourage participation and support for our core goals from beyond the Society, BSBI supplements its subscription income with grants and donations from a range of other sources. An *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, developed during the drafting of the Strategic Plan, was implemented and the Fundraising Manager led on taking this forward during the period under review, leading to a broader range of funding streams, thereby further improving the Society's financial resilience. The Society also has many active volunteers and considers itself very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve its charitable objectives at low cost.

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer County Recorders. The Society's outreach and training programmes operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to its research projects, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so.

2. Achievements and performance

The Society is now 186 years old and its principal achievement is, arguably, in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. The Society and its members have always engaged themselves in the accurate recording of plant distributional data and this long tradition continues – as one member once put it, "*...finality in field botany is fortunately unattainable*".

Membership

BSBI is delighted to report that for the second consecutive year, total membership has not only continued on an upward trend but has seen a surge, possibly linked, at least in part, to increasing awareness of the importance of the natural world – this was widely reported in the media as one of the results of the pandemic and its attendant lockdowns – but also to the expansion and promotion of the various membership services outlined above. As of 31st March 2022, membership was +8.9%, only slight lower than the record increase of +9.2% reported at 31st March 2021; these totals over two consecutive years have outstripped all expectations and, in two years, has already exceeded the three-year target set in BSBI's Strategic Plan to grow membership by +10%.

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	Membership as at 31 March		
	2022	2021	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	3,113	2,843	+9%
Ireland	236	229	+3%
Rest of World	61	59	+3%
Total	3,410	3,131	+9%

The positive financial impact of this is described in the Financial Review section 3 below.

Efforts were also undertaken to broaden the range of services and resources available to BSBI members. The members-only area of the BSBI website underwent a substantial refurbishment, with a more user-friendly lay-out and the uploading of more than 100 scientific papers, short notes, book reviews and plant record summaries published in *New Journal of Botany* between 2011 and 2017. An archive in which physical copies of important BSBI publications could be stored and made available to researchers was updated, catalogued and expanded, following a call-out to members for donations. A survey to solicit feedback from members and supporters was carried out; a summary of the responses was reported in the membership newsletter and on the website, and many of the suggestions fed into an online Forum held over three days in March 2022, at which staff, Trustees and committee members came together to brainstorm ideas for the Society going forward.

During the period under review, Trustees continued to consult with stakeholders about BSBI's proposal to give members greater access to plant records held in the Distribution Database (DDb). While there is a strong case for providing enhanced data access for members so that they can better contribute to efforts to understand and conserve our wild flora, the means of achieving this has proved controversial. Some members embraced the idea of access to records at full grid reference precision, whereas other members and stakeholders raised strong concerns about risks to sensitive species, sites or to relationships with landowners, local record centres and organisations contributing records. These concerns reflect in part the different regional pressures faced by County Recorders and local record centres. In response, an extended consultation was held; Trustees carefully considered the feedback and concerns raised and adjusted the proposals to provide a set of options aimed at accommodating the range of views expressed. Each County Recorder was then offered the choice of level of members' access to the DDb in their county based on this set of options (full grid reference, monad or tetrad precision). Going forward, work will be carried out to implement this enhanced access for members by creating a login for members to verify their membership, developing a mirror version of the DDb to reduce performance impacts and creating guidance for those new to the database to help them navigate and find the plant data that interests them.

Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's comprehensive website, www.bsbi.org/, is fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated twice weekly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community.

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The website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-use basis, with almost 300 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications. The period under review saw a 27% increase in the number of county webpages on the site, each one providing contact details of the County Recorder(s) and dedicated to promoting botanical activity and sharing local resources such as Rare Plant Registers, county checklists and newsletters; these pages have helped boost engagement and build capacity at county and regional level, mirroring the national picture and ensuring enduring connectivity at all levels.

New webpages were also created to facilitate the giving of donations and legacies, the further uptake of Gift Aid and the switch to paperless membership; to support those wishing to fundraise for the Society or to become corporate supporters/sponsors; to promote the three new country-level recording initiatives listed above; and to make annual reports from County Recorders easily accessible to all.

Resources such as these are helping to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants, and are establishing the society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, the website attracted 499,020 pageviews by 127,683 users, a slight decrease compared to the previous year when, during lockdown, we had seen 510,992 pageviews by 132,545 users, but a considerable increase when compared to pre-lockdown usage during the period 2019-20, which saw 379,509 pageviews by 87,684 users. BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained by far the most popular page, but the 'Plant ID for Beginners' page, created in 2020 by splitting the previous page of identification resources into two separate pages aimed at botanists at different skill levels, saw a 35% increase, suggesting that resources for beginners are particularly valued. See the table below.

Webpage Views 2021/22 vs 2020/21				
Rank	Webpage	Views 2021/22	Views 2020/21	% Increase/ (Decrease)
1	Maps <i>bsbi.org/maps</i>	120,908	123,160	-2%
2	Homepage <i>bsbi.org/</i>	68,243	71,089	-4%
3	Plant ID for beginners <i>bsbi.org/plant-id-getting-started</i>	17,350	12,760	+35%
4	Training Courses <i>bsbi.org/training-courses</i>	16,310	17,063	-4%
	Total	222,811	224,072	-1%

BSBI members, staff and volunteers continued to present lectures to the public and support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally, with the various online platforms, whose popularity soared during lockdown, making it possible to reach new audiences across Britain and Ireland without the time, expense and environmental impact of travel.

BSBI also continued to build links and strengthen relationships with print and broadcast media; during the period under review, comments by BSBI staff and officers, including mention of the Society, featured in periodicals including *The Telegraph* (on foraging wild plants); *The Guardian* (on the benefits to wild plants of fencing off beach areas for ground-nesting birds; *Metro* and *The Mail Online* (on naturalised tomato plants); and in *Country Life* (on poppies, to tie in with Remembrance Day coverage).

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One of the BSBI's expert referees on brambles was interviewed on BBC 6 Music by celebrity broadcaster Lauren Laverne, thus engaging an audience that scientific societies generally struggle to reach. The Society's New Year Plant Hunt was featured in *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *House Beautiful*, and *Horticulture Week*, and the joint County Recorder for County Tyrone was interviewed about the Hunt on *Mooney Goes Wild*, RTE Ireland's flagship countryside programme.

The story of a discovery by BSBI's County Recorder for the Outer Hebrides of 'Scotland's loneliest apple tree' was picked up by *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Week Junior* and *The Sunday Post*, which also reported the re-finding by the BSBI County Recorder for the Inner Hebrides of 'Scotland's shortest grass'. During the period under review, the *Irish Examiner* covered the discovery (made by the BSBI joint County Recorder for County Kerry during 2020/21) of a rare tropical fern in Ireland. Media coverage of projects run by BSBI in partnership included an article about Plant Alert, run in partnership with University of Coventry, in *New Scientist*, and a feature on the Irish Spring Flowers initiative, run in partnership with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, appeared in the *Irish Examiner*. The discovery of an orchid new to Britain in early 2022 was covered by *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail* following interviews with orchid experts within BSBI. BSBI activities and members were also featured in local newspapers covering such diverse areas as Norfolk, Galway, County Durham and Denbighshire.

The Society also continued to build its social media profile and members offered plant identification support to the wider public on a weekly basis under the *#wildflowerhour* banner.

	Social media followers as at 31 March		
	2022	2021	% Increase
Facebook (Britain)	9,500	8,594	+11%
Facebook (Ireland)	3,150	2,902	+9%
Twitter	38,838	35,146	+11%
Instagram	6,038	3,500	+73%
Total	57,526	50,142	+15%

In all of these ways, the Society is able to inform the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focused on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

The adoption and implementation of *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024* has enabled BSBI to continue to move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and deliver its goals. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, there are both opportunities and threats in our environment which BSBI is well placed to respond to, including providing the data to underpin conservation and land management decisions and strategy to address biodiversity loss and climate change and continuing to develop and broaden interest in botany and address 'plant blindness' and the need and demand for greater botanical awareness, provision of grants and training opportunities to develop plant identification skills, and outreach opportunities to support engagement at local and national level.

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3. Financial Review

Overview

The Board of Trustees reports Net Expenditure of -£18,125 (2021: Net Income £180,698) for the year under review.

The Board is delighted to report the underlying Operating Deficit (*) has yet again reduced year on year such that a small Operating Surplus is reported in 2022. This is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates solid long-term progress towards delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner.

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Operating Surplus (Deficit) £000 *	3	(15)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)	(128)	(178)

*Operating Surplus (Deficit) on the Unrestricted General Fund. In 2022 this is a surplus of £3,280.

Note that a deficit of (£44,360) was reported on the Unrestricted Strategic Development Reserve, the total net Operating Deficit is (£41,080) as per the SOFA at page 20.

The Board has, however, budgeted an Operating Deficit for 2022/23, when there is a focus on continuing to reshape the charity and lay the foundations of long-term financial sustainability.

Investments

Total Return on investments (net losses and income) was £33,120 (2021: £220,195). As a percentage, this is 4.0% (2021: 27.9%) of the average investment during the year. Because of the "bounce-back" in 2020/21 after the initial negative impact of Covid in March 2020, investment gains in 2021/22 were muted in comparison. Also, in March 2022, the stock market was badly hit by reverberations from the emerging Russia-Ukraine war, the volatility from which is ongoing.

At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £988,139 (2021: £1,006,264) held as a diversified investment portfolio of £751,475 and net current assets of £236,664.

At £326,542, cash at bank is higher than before (2021: £248,720). A high level of cash is in accordance with BSBI's desire to hold an amount equivalent to at least 12 months' budgeted net expenditure in order to protect against the potential risk of a turn to negative stock market volatility and its impact on the Society's short to medium term operations. This approach has proved sensible when managing the negative impacts of Covid and the war in Ukraine. If markets settle, it may mean that less than usual cash is withdrawn from the investment portfolio in Autumn 2022.

Income

The Board is delighted to report that, at £459,438 (2021: £396,354), total income is +16% versus the previous year. Some of this, such as the huge % uplift in botanical conferences & courses, is the reintroduction of chargeable educational events post Covid. Income from botanical publications, however, reflects that three pre-publication offers were launched in the year (2021/22) including the hugely successful Dandelions Handbook selling almost 450 copies, the best-selling launch of the last five years.

Subscriptions and related Gift Aid rose strongly; +16% to £132k and 30% of unrestricted income, (2021: 31%). As explained earlier, this reflects another year of spectacular, +9%, membership growth (2021 +9%); last year we felt this was a silver-lining of Covid however we are delighted this growth has continued, unabated. Importantly, we now measure membership retention as a key KPI (% of

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members choosing to remain members throughout the year) and we are pleased that this has remained high, at 87% (2021: 90%) in the year regardless of the remarkable growth in membership and these indicators give us confidence that BSBI continues to deliver what members want.

Grants income grew by +21% in the reporting period and continues to be hugely important to BSBI (2022: £91k vs 2021: £75k) and we thank our many partners, whom we name below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

Botanical Data Interpretation and Access income generated £102k (2021 £118k) and we are pleased to help the organisations achieve their aims through our work. This includes Natural England, who funded work on the development of botanical heatmaps to support decision-making around tree planting and other land management. The BSBI continues to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including the National Trust and Plantlife as well as a number of universities and institutes to undertake scientific research on a wide range of topics.

Thousands of members supported the Society this year, and individuals and organisations made donations and contributions of all sizes; from major gifts, sponsorships, grants, for attending events, towards BSBI's important Atlas 2020 project, for sustaining the BSBI Scottish Officer post and gifts in Wills. Whilst some of these are made anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following individuals and organisations who have generously supported BSBI's projects and goals. It also thanks those who have tapped into BSBI's huge botanical resources and supported its aims; without whom BSBI could not continue to achieve all that it does:

Robert Clutterbuck Charitable Trust
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
7 Pillars of Wisdom Charitable Trust
Harrogate & District Naturalists' Society
The Estate of the late Mr Philip H Oswald
Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and its regional network

National Trust
Woodland Trust
Joshua Styles
Thriplow Charitable Trust
Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust
Naturesave Trust

BSBI also thanks Clive A Stace BSc PhD DSc, for a generous gift of botanical publications, reference materials and bookcases to allow BSBI's botanical library archive, based in Harrogate which is available for members' use. We also thank many others encouraged by Clive to give books for this purpose.

The Society also expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies, namely Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA), Naturescot, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continue to be long-term supporters and income received from them contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

Expenditure

Unrestricted Fund expenditure increased by +25% in the year to £484,428 (2021 £386,459). A few notable highlights are covered below.

As explained earlier, there were changes in the staff structure in the year. A new BSBI Fundraising Manager role was created in March 2021 to focus on delivering BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*. The pay costs of this role are reflected in the increase in Expenditure on Raising Funds (Note 5). The Return on Investment (RoI) of this role was recently assessed at 2.1 and this continues to be monitored against expectations.

The pay costs of the new CEO role are reflected in the higher level of Governance Staff Costs and Expenses (Note 6), as are the cost of initiatives undertaken to deliver BSBI's Strategic Plan (£8,987)

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Sadly, despite extending claim windows, most Training & Education grants awarded went unclaimed in the year because of Covid restrictions and the cancellation of botanical courses. This led to the reported net reversal of the cost of grants previously awarded (£1,897).

Valuing Volunteers

BSBI continues to direct the use of its financial resources with great care and is immensely fortunate, as in previous years, in being able to supplement these financial resources with the gift of time freely and generously given by its volunteers, whether via membership of its Board of Trustees and Standing Committees, 300+ members engaged as County Recorders or national plant referees, many of whom played invaluable and guiding roles in swelling BSBI's DDb to more than 50 million records, making it one of the world's largest databases of biological records. Others actively support the plant recording, training and engagement activities led locally by the County Recorders, the efforts of which have culminated in near completion of the huge Atlas 2020 project, the results of which will be published in the *Atlas 2020 Summary* in Spring 2023. As mentioned at page 8, annual reports celebrating their valuable work can be found here: <https://bsbi.org/local-botany>

The nature and scale of volunteer time given to BSBI each year is vast (for example 784,412 new records were added to the BSBI's Distribution Database in 2021/22) and we know that its financial value dwarfs BSBI's income many times over. BSBI is indebted to all of its volunteers. It simply could not fulfil its objectives without them and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; all these people make BSBI the vibrant organisation it is today. Establishing ways in which we can place a more accurate value on this vast volunteer contribution will take time and gradual refinement, however we feel it is increasingly important that we do so.

Summary

Overall, we report on a year of positives and nimbly adapting to change; a step change to return to more normal operations following Covid's significant impact, responding to members' needs to build a second year of strong membership growth and, in a challenging fundraising landscape, many achievements of which to feel proud. BSBI has been led throughout by the Board of Trustees and Julia Hanmer, during her first year as Chief Executive. This strong team will continue to steer the delivery of *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024* and long-term financial sustainability whilst working towards a world where plants thrive and are valued.

4. Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Society was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08553976) on 3 June 2013 with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It is also registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675). It has no share capital.

The Society changed its Articles of Association following a Special Resolution passed at BSBI's AGM on 21 November 2020 to allow Trustees to agree to hold any meeting by suitable electronic means where presence electronically will be deemed equivalent to meeting in person. This change has been beneficial through Covid and the inclusivity and cost saving benefits mean that BSBI will continue to do this from time to time, regardless of the relaxation of Covid restrictions. The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

Board of Trustees (Directors)

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Directors are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Directors, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Directors. One third of the Directors (other than those currently co-

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (17 November 2022) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years. Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post at 31 March 2022 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CJ Miles (Chair)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Prof AI Denholm	Appointed 3 June 2013
Prof MJ Crawley	Appointed 24 July 2013
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014
Dr PR Bisson	Appointed 25 May 2016
Dr JS Faulkner	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Prof A Fitter FRS	Appointed 25 Nov 2017, resigned 19 Nov 2021
Dr S Knapp	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr S Gater	Appointed 4 Dec 2019
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 22 June 2021
Miss KN Jones	Appointed 19 Nov 2021

At present, the membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All Trustees are made aware of their obligations and the charitable company's Articles of Association and are provided with regular updates on its financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission guidance, including "The Essential Trustee" and other Trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of Trustees is targeted as effectively as possible.

Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Company Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive, Head of Science and Finance Manager.

Details of other office bearers, including County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2022*.

The Board, the Staff and the Society's Committees

The Board of Directors are the Society's legal trustees which governs all its activities and is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive (previously Head of Operations) and they together co-ordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

As at 31 March 2022 the Society employed 10 staff (2021: 9), equivalent to 9 full time posts (2021: 7), to work with the principal honorary office bearers in co-ordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its volunteers and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Head of Operations left BSBI in January 2021 and the new Chief Executive Officer began in April 2021 so neither is included in the 31 March 2021 staff numbers above. Historically, there has been a Country Officer for each of the four countries in which BSBI operates, however the Wales Officer role was vacated in March 2020. There are three Science staff (Head of Science, one specialising in data management and one who divides his time between Science & England Officer). Finally, one in each of financial, fundraising, membership and communications roles.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The *BSBI Yearbook 2022* sets out full details of BSBI's seven Committees: four Country Committees and three Permanent Working Committees; the BSBI website also lists the members of Committees and the Board, and provides contact details for each.

The Country Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (comprising in this context Northern and the Republic of Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work and play an important role in the governance structure, working alongside Country Officers to drive engagement at national level and showcase their country's work to the membership and to the wider public.

For example, during the period under review, the **Committee for Scotland** played an important role in the organisation of the Scottish Botanists' Conference, which attracted a record number of participants; the **Committee for Ireland** supported the Ireland Officer with organisation of, and participation in, Ireland's Spring and Autumn Conferences; the County Recorders who sit on the **Committee for Wales** led on recording activity in the absence of a Wales Officer, and pioneered a hybrid Welsh AGM with some people attending via Zoom and some in person; and the recently-launched **Committee for England** held well-attended online Annual Meetings. Editors of the four country newsletters sit on Country Committees, which also played a pivotal role in the development of the three country recoding projects outlined above.

BSBI's three Permanent Working Committees are as follows:

1. The **Events & Communications Committee** organises national events, conferences and field meetings, such as the New Year Plant Hunt and the Annual Exhibition Meeting. It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.
2. The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the Vice-County Recorder network and the panel of plant referees and specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the staff of the BSBI Science Unit. Its Science and Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.
3. The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards training and plant study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants. During the period under review, this Committee launched the "Botany for All" programme and assembled a range of partners from external groups to help deliver the goal of building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skills base.

Investment Policy

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy Statement and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its Investment Manager, Brewin Dolphin.

The Society has an **Investment Committee**, made up of at least three Trustees, which meets once a year with the Society's Investment Manager to review investment performance and to hold them to account. The Investment Committee's responsibilities are set out in a Terms of Reference which underwent its last triennial review in Autumn 2020.

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash, capable of delivering income and portfolio growth combined at 2% over inflation in the long term after expenses. Investment income is accumulated, however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

Trustees recognise the importance of BSBI investing in a socially responsible manner which promotes the protection and health of the natural environment. With that in mind, the Board has been guided by professional advisers and Investment Committee and it approved an Ethical Position Statement (EPS)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

in September 2019 which sets out practical measures taken in pursuit of these aims. The EPS will be reviewed by Investment Committee and the Board in Autumn 2022.

Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical study and research are set out on the BSBI website.

Risk Management

The Trustees have examined the Society's Risk Register documenting the major risks to which the Society is exposed, and in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Society. The Trustees are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate and control the Society's exposure to the major risks. In particular:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive policy of Trustee Indemnity Insurance.
- ii. The Society maintains a balance sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all of its net assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in a number of ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of an independent professional Investment Manager, who follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually; the Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against targets.
- iii. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of the investments being denominated in £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk as a result of running a deficit budget, whilst aiming to maintain its investment base from which it derives income and the capacity for gains. The Society's investment portfolio is managed on a discretionary basis. The individual investments are freely traded and so it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice.
- v. An annual budget is set and approved by the Board which is then applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive and the Finance Manager, and Trustees monitor bank balances so as to ensure that, at any time, the Society has in place sufficient liquid funds to meet its liabilities as they fall due.
- vii. The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020 has had no material impact on the operations or finances of the Society and this is kept under review from time to time. Income from outside the UK represents a very small percentage of the Society's income and BSBI has continued to conduct its activities throughout the biogeographical area encompassing Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to engage with botanists further afield.
- viii. The impact of the Covid pandemic and the appropriate response to the ongoing risks posed are reducing, however the situation continues to be monitored by Trustees. See Note 18.

Financial Reserves Policies

The Board reviewed its Reserves Policy in March 2022. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

- 1) **The General Fund**; this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to raise further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.5M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.
- 2) **The Strategic Development Fund**; this designated fund was created following a decision by the Board in June 2020. Its purpose is to fund the one-off or short-term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

Three Restricted Income Funds are maintained, currently valued at £4,864 (2021: £5,057):

- 1) The **Presidents' Awards Fund** provides for an annual award (currently £400pa) for outstanding contributions to botany.
- 2) The **Welsh Flora Fund** is for small ad hoc grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales.
- 3) The **Scottish Officer Fund** receives income (currently £16kpa) restricted to meet expenditure relating to the post of the Scottish Officer. This fund is normally fully expended during the year.

Note that the **HLF Grant Fund** which represented grant monies received from Heritage Lottery Fund and meets expenditure incurred in delivering the aims of the grant closed in early 2021.

5. Reference and administrative details

Founded	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Present name adopted 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	28 Chipchase Grove, Durham, DH1 3FA
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA
Investment Manager	Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Independent Examiner	WMT, Verulam Point, Station Way, St Albans, AL1 5HE
Legal Advisers	Stone King LLP, 91 Charterhouse St, EC1M 6HR
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr CJ Miles
Honorary Treasurer	On hold
President (and former Chair of Council)	Ms L Farrell
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Principal Officers (continued)

Chief Executive	Ms JC Hanmer
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms J Etherington

Website www.bsbi.org/

6. Covid

The Covid pandemic has had a significant – and, in some cases, permanent - impact on individuals, businesses and organisations worldwide, including BSBI.

Throughout the pandemic, the Board continued to meet regularly, using teleconferencing technology and email to monitor the risks, consider relevant advice and approve mitigating actions. Covid-related control measures were implemented to protect staff, members and others, with suitable changes to normal activities. Committee meetings were held virtually, events and fieldwork had to be cancelled or postponed to protect all involved, however many activities and a wealth of information were provided on BSBI's website and many members enjoyed engaging from home in these new and varied ways and continue to do so. BSBI staff and Trustees kept themselves aware of Government legislation and guidance in each country, followed mitigating actions and shared information appropriately with members. Reflections on Covid are considered in more detail at Note 18.

Trustees are grateful to the dedicated work of staff and volunteers, and are mindful of the impact on workload and morale. BSBI's financial position outlook has been carefully considered and assessed by the Board and although it acknowledges the ongoing uncertain economic and societal impact of the pandemic, which is profound and disruptive, Trustees are confident that the Society remains a going concern and is determined to seek out opportunities and apply the best governance possible to see this maintained into the future.

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

7. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of BSBI for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the appended Accounts 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 year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- 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 adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and 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.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 6th September 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Chair of the Board



Prof AI Denholm, Trustee

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

To the Trustees of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act'), the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act'). You are satisfied that the accounts of the Company are not required by charity or company law to be audited and have chosen instead to have an independent examination.

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 the Company's accounts carried out under section 44(1)(c) of the 2005 Act and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the requirements of Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit go beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company is required by company law to prepare its accounts on an accruals basis and is registered as a charity in Scotland, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in Regulation 11(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records with the accounting requirements of Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 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.



EE Irvine FCA
WMT - Chartered Accountants,
Verulam Point, Station Way, St Albans, AL1 5HE

Dated 7th September 2022

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2022 £	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £
INCOME FROM							
Donations and legacies	2	278,307	16,000	294,307	200,047	29,760	229,807
Charitable activities	3	147,221	-	147,221	145,364	-	145,364
Investments	4	17,820	90	17,910	21,183	-	21,183
Total		443,348	16,090	459,438	366,594	29,760	396,354
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising of funds	5	95,743	-	95,743	57,942	7,783	65,725
Charitable activities	6	388,685	16,400	405,085	328,517	27,657	356,174
Total		484,428	16,400	500,828	386,459	35,440	421,899
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		(41,080)	(310)	(41,390)	(19,865)	(5,680)	(25,545)
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	66,283	335	66,618	65,943	350	66,293
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	(43,135)	(218)	(43,353)	139,212	738	139,950
Total (losses)/gains on investments		23,148	117	23,265	205,155	1,088	206,243
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		(17,932)	(193)	(18,125)	185,290	(4,592)	180,698
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		1,001,207	5,057	1,006,264	813,137	12,429	825,566
Transfer of funds		-	-	-	2,780	(2,780)	-
Net movement in funds as above		(17,932)	(193)	(18,125)	185,290	(4,592)	180,698
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		983,275	4,864	988,139	1,001,207	5,057	1,006,264

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9		751,475		818,355
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	23,681		23,902	
Debtors	11	78,147		79,570	
Cash at bank		326,452		248,720	
		428,280		352,192	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	191,616		164,283	
Net Current Assets			236,664		187,909
Net Assets			988,139		1,006,264
Funds					
Restricted funds	13		4,864		5,057
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund			804,108		880,471
Strategic Development Fund			179,167		120,736
			988,139		1,006,264

For the year ending 31 March 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 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The Directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 6th September 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Chair of the Board



Prof AI Denholm, Trustee

Company registration number 08553976. Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash used in operating activities	17	(22,291)		(2,918)	
Cash generated from interest on deposits		23		40	
Net cash used in operating activities		(22,268)		(2,878)	
Cash flows from investing activities					
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	100,000		70,000	
Net cash provided by investing activities		100,000		70,000	
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		77,732		67,122	
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		248,720		181,598	
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		326,452		248,720	

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2021 £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2022 £
Cash at Bank	248,720	77,732	326,452

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months subsequent to the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

Statement on Public Benefit

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

Recognition of Income

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Recognition of Income (contd)

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Other income, including investment income and donations, is recognised when received.

The Society's County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Plant Distribution Database (DDb), for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Costs of raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Charitable activities comprise those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities - survey and interpretation, botanical education, publications and website, or governance – related costs and expenses which cannot be allocated directly are apportioned on the basis of estimated usage.

Grants for scientific work are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient, except in those cases where the grant is conditional. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and software and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

Investments

Investments are carried at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

Stocks

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

Financial Instruments

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors

Debtors - short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents - cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks.

Creditors - short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Holiday pay accrual

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Pensions

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The only foreign currency the Society currently transacts in is euros.

Taxation

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. Accordingly, its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT, unless it is irrecoverable.

Fund accounting

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds - are those funds where restrictive covenants were established by the original donor(s) as to what expenditure could be charged against them.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES	2022	2021
	£	£
Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	131,961	114,222
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	38,451	23,615
Grants	90,895	60,010
Legacies	17,000	2,200
Total Unrestricted Fund income	278,307	200,047
Restricted Income:		
Grants	-	14,760
Donations	16,000	15,000
	294,307	229,807
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation and access	101,998	117,658
Botanical conferences and courses	9,875	2,888
Botanical publications	35,072	23,818
Journal support and royalties	276	1,000
	147,221	145,364
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income (Restricted £90 (2021 - £NIL))	17,887	21,143
Bank deposit interest	23	40
	17,910	21,183
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff costs of membership stewardship	30,381	30,185
Staff costs of fundraising (Restricted £NIL (2021 – £7,783))	52,999	24,358
Other fundraising costs	351	435
Publicity	2,281	1,726
Investment management costs & finance charges	9,731	8,661
Bad debt write-off	-	360
	95,743	65,725

Membership Stewardship (previously Membership Administration) relates to the Membership Secretary and the time spent by other staff looking after BSBI members and income received from them.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2022 £	2021 £
Botanical Data Interpretation and Access		
Project staff costs (Restricted £16,000 (2021 £15,000))	178,942	180,193
Project staff overhead costs	9,867	9,479
Project direct costs	-	463
Grant direct costs (Restricted £NIL (2021 £3,495))	26,138	14,252
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £400 (2021 £400))	2,894	2,900
Support staff costs and expenses (Restricted £NIL (2021 £8,762))	<u>40,932</u>	<u>34,995</u>
	<u>258,773</u>	<u>242,282</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Conferences and courses	1,139	2,194
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>(1,897)</u>	<u>5,361</u>
	<u>(758)</u>	<u>7,555</u>
Botanical Publications and Website		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications	35,361	29,587
Cost of publication sales	19,123	16,551
Grants awarded for botanical publications	2,250	-
Plant data management and website staff costs	<u>23,470</u>	<u>23,606</u>
	<u>80,204</u>	<u>69,744</u>
Governance costs		
Strategy Implementation Costs	8,987	-
Trustee indemnity insurance	975	1,010
Governance staff costs and expenses	41,606	19,070
Independent Examination	2,250	2,000
Payroll, HR and accounting support services	6,109	6,650
Committee costs and expenses	1,147	472
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	(166)	2,525
Recruitment, other governance costs & expenses	<u>5,958</u>	<u>4,866</u>
	<u>66,866</u>	<u>36,593</u>
Total (Restricted £16,400 (2021 £27,657))	<u>405,085</u>	<u>356,174</u>

The Society makes three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees. (1) Grants for scientific or research work with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000. (2) Grants for training and education are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses and, occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given for plant study or to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. (3) Grants for botanical publications, normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by members.

In total, 19 individuals (2021: 20) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £3,247 (2021: £8,261), which were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above.

Honorary officer costs are expenses of the President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary. Costs of other Board members are included in committee expenses. Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President nor Trustees received remuneration for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is considered to be similar to the amount actually disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £6,147 (2021 - £2,300) were reimbursed to 6 (2021 - 3) individuals who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs. Of these amounts, four Trustees (2021 - One) were reimbursed £610 (2021 - £124).

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £20,038 (2021 - £19,701) from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). Dr S Knapp is also President and Chair of the Linnean Society where during the year BSBI paid £83 (2021 - £189) for the hire of meeting rooms.

Dr M Dean, Trustee from 21 Nov 2020, was an Associate Tutor at Edge Hill University (EHU) until August 2021. BSBI provides EHU with access to its DDb in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Employees Ms JC Hanmer, (Chief Executive from 6 April 2021), Ms JA Houldsworth (Head of Operations until 22 January 2021) and Dr KJ Walker (Head of Science), all received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £49,073 from NE (2021 - £74,810) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data and other work in England. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is able to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford in order to facilitate research. BSBI reported income of £9,000 (2021 - £4,500) from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

8. STAFF COSTS	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries	309,392	262,077
Social Security costs	28,211	21,971
Pension costs	15,120	12,894
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	(166)	2,525
Total staff costs	352,557	299,467

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2021: nil).

The average number of employees during the year was 10 (2021: 8). At the reporting date there were 10 employees (2021: 9) of which, one (2021: two) resident in Republic of Ireland.

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be key management personnel; the Chief Executive (2021: Head of Operations) and Head of Science. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 32% (2021: 30%) of the totals above.

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled and contributions are paid at or above the required rate set by the Pensions Regulator.

No taxable employee benefits were paid during the year (2021 - £NIL).

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

9. INVESTMENTS	2022 £	2021 £
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	818,355	668,160
Investment income retained	17,887	21,142
Investment management charges deducted	(8,032)	(7,190)
Transfers to bank current account	(100,000)	(70,000)
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	66,618	66,293
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	(43,353)	139,950
Market value at the end of the year	751,475	818,355
At Original Cost	617,013	640,319

The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

Equities - UK	23.6%	25.6%
Equities - Overseas	43.0%	39.5%
Bonds	9.3%	7.7%
Global Investments	6.8%	8.4%
Property	4.4%	5.0%
Private Equity	3.4%	3.8%
Other	6.3%	7.2%
Cash	3.2%	2.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical publications	23,681	23,902

Stocks of botanical publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,782 (2021: £4,025). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3.

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	16,775	27,393
Accrued income	56,110	46,744
Prepayments	5,262	5,433
Total debtors	78,147	79,570

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

12. CREDITORS

	2022 £	2021 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	12,103	3,841
Taxation and social security	21,111	25,991
Pensions	3,624	2,441
Holiday pay accrual	8,808	8,974
Other accrued expenses	13,648	17,881
Deferred income	132,322	105,155
Total creditors	191,616	164,283

Deferred income of £78,275 (2021: £73,637) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2022 therefore 75% of such annual subscriptions relating to the remaining nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred. Deferred income also arises in a similar way from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences. £165,767 (2021: £127,485) was added during the year to the £105,155 (2021: £79,867) deferred income balance brought forward and £138,600 (2021: £102,196) was released from it, leaving £132,322 (2021: £105,155) carried forward at year end.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Presidents' Awards £	Welsh Flora £	Scottish Officer £	Heritage Funds £	Total £
At 1 April 2020	2,743	1,626	-	8,060	12,429
Transfer from General Fund	-	-	-	(2,780)	(2,780)
Investment gains / (losses)	683	405	-	-	1,088
Income	-	-	15,000	14,760	29,760
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(15,000)	(20,040)	(35,440)
At 31 March 2021	3,026	2,031	-	-	5,057
Investment gains / (losses)	70	47	-	-	117
Income	54	36	16,000	-	16,090
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(16,000)	-	(16,400)
At 31 March 2022	2,750	2,114	-	-	4,684

The Funds share in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

The Presidents' Award Fund is an expendable fund to provide for an annual award of £400 made to individual(s) by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. The 2021 Award of £400 was made to Dr James Merryweather for his book *Britain's Ferns*.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS (continued)

The Welsh Flora Fund provides grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. One funding application was received during the year which was later withdrawn. There were no disbursements (2021: £nil).

The Scottish Officer Fund receives income which has been donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scottish Officer. The remainder of the Scottish Officer's costs have been met by grant funding.

The Heritage Funds represented two grants from The National Lottery Heritage Fund:

- (1) A grant of £60,000 awarded in October 2018 to fund the costs of a Strategic Review project. Following a transfer of £3k grant expenditure from the General Fund on completion of the work (also see note 14), the final £6k grant claim was made in July 2020 and the fund is now closed.
- (2) A grant of £8,800 awarded in August 2020 to fund the costs of staff time involved in planning and preparing Covid restriction compliant activity such as moving events online, holding safe field meetings. This work was carried out in Autumn/ Winter 2020 and this fund is now closed.

14. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2022 £	2021 £
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	880,471	713,137
Transfer of costs to Restricted Funds	-	2,780
Incoming resources	441,202	366,594
Resources expended	(437,922)	(382,286)
Investment (losses)/gains	20,357	180,246
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	(100,000)	-
At the end of the year	804,108	880,471

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	2022 £	2021 £
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	120,736	100,000
Resources expended	(46,506)	(4,173)
Investment Income	2,146	-
Investment (losses)/gains	2,791	24,909
Designated from General Fund	100,000	-
At the end of the year	179,167	120,736

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure incurred in delivering BSBI's Strategy which will place BSBI on a more financially sustainable footing. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

15. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments	Other Net	Total
	£	Assets	£
	£	£	£
As at 31 March 2022			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,750	-	2,750
Welsh Flora Fund	2,114	-	2,114
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	567,444	236,664	804,108
Strategic Development Fund	179,167	-	179,167
	751,475	236,664	988,139
As at 31 March 2021			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	3,026	-	3,026
Welsh Flora Fund	2,031	-	2,031
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	692,562	187,909	880,471
Strategic Development Fund	120,736	-	120,736
	818,355	187,909	1,006,264

16. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2022, The Society had approved 30 training and research grants totalling £11,485 (2021: 36 grants, £11,403). Grants are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. The commitment at 31 March 2022 represents grants awarded in Spring 2022. Grants awarded before this have either been paid or are accrued at year end.

As at 31 March 2022, BSBI is committed to two three-year term office leases expiring in 2022 & 2023 for the Head of Science and BSBI archives. The total non-cancellable commitment under these leases is £2,417 (2021: £5,667).

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which is onerous.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

17. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	(18,125)	180,698
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	(23,265)	(206,243)
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(17,910)	(21,182)
Investment management charges	8,032	7,190
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	221	2,619
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	1,423	(2,385)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	27,333	36,385
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	(22,291)	(2,918)

18. COVID

As explained in the Annual Report, the Covid pandemic continued to have a significant impact during the year on individuals, businesses and organisations worldwide, including BSBI. We know this triggered all manner of challenges from illness, bereavement, job insecurity, money worries and more.

For BSBI, the human impact on the safety of staff, members and others remained the top priority. As the pandemic unfolded, all field meetings and face to face events were cancelled in favour of online activities. BSBI Trustees closely monitored the situation, issued advice on changes throughout the pandemic and took care to ensure that all Government guidance, including social distancing and other Covid prevention measures, as well as safe working practices for fieldwork, were always followed.

Like most other organisations, BSBI was impacted financially by Covid, although, thanks to the diligence, support and flexibility of Trustees, employees, Committees & volunteers, the impact was mitigated in many ways, whether it be through offering online botanical events, grant funding applications or other measures. We are pleased that it was not necessary to place any employees on Government furlough.

The governance changes made at the November 2020 AGM to update BSBI's Articles of Association to allow the holding of voting at meetings held digitally has since proved invaluable in allowing activities to continue despite Covid restrictions and fortuitously then bringing important longer-term benefits; cost savings, a reduction in BSBI's carbon footprint and increased inclusiveness of particular benefit to those unable to travel to attend meetings through geographical distance, affordability or health reasons. Even so, everyone in BSBI was of course delighted when face to face activities were eventually resumed, allowing learning opportunities to resume and relationships rekindled.

There have been other silver linings of Covid too. We reported here last year an emerging sense the impact of Covid was leading the UK towards a new-found public awareness and appreciation for the natural world and this has once again been borne out by membership metrics which we talked about earlier in this report. Growth again went beyond our expectations: by +9% (2021: +9%) in the year to March 2022. Also, botanical handbooks have sold well: +18% more sold in the year (2021: +8%), probably building on interests sparked by the greater leisure time many people gained during the pandemic.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2022

18. COVID (continued)

A recovery thankfully followed the significant fall in market value of BSBI's investments experienced in Spring 2020, however volatility remained a feature of the year under review; as the world economy found its feet post-Covid, it was struck again, this time by the impact of the disturbing Russia-Ukraine war and its far-reaching impact continues to be felt, especially through oil and other materials' price inflation.

The pandemic has inevitably brought with it a new, challenging, fundraising landscape and BSBI's Fundraising Manager, appointed in Spring 2021, is carefully navigating her way through this to deliver BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*, taking steps closer to delivering the Sustainable Business Model critical to BSBI's success and resilience.

Covid has reshaped BSBI in ways we could not have anticipated, accelerating digital capabilities for example, and it has emerged stronger than before and in great shape to face the future.

Overall, the Board feels it took appropriate measures to carefully navigate through the pandemic and considers that despite the severe disruption of its charitable and scientific activities during the last two years, BSBI remains a going concern and no adjustments have been made to the figures in these financial statements in respect of events since the balance sheet date.

The BSBI Board and Chief Executive remain confident of its ability to deliver *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024* and look forward to the future.

Accounts

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended

31 March 2021

**Registered Charity
England and Wales No. 1152954
Scotland No. SC038675**

Company Registration No. 08553976

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

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BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2021

The Board presents its Annual Report together with the Accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland ("the Society", generally known as BSBI) for the year ended 31 March 2021. Since Charity Trustees are also Directors, this Annual Report is also a Directors' Report as required by S417 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 21-23 and comply with the Society's Articles, the Companies Act 2006, the Charity SORP (Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102)) and applicable law and accounting practice.

1. Objectives and activities

Objectives

The objects of the Society (as stated in its Articles of Association) are:

- to promote the study and understanding of, and interest in, the British and Irish vascular plant and charophyte flora; and
- to support, encourage, carry out and participate in research into the taxonomy, ecology, biogeography and conservation of the British and Irish flora and to co-operate with European and other botanists in matters of mutual interest and concern.

At the start of the period under review, BSBI trustees approved a new Strategic Plan; *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024* and a suite of governance changes to facilitate its delivery. They also agreed to recruit the Society's first ever Fundraising Manager.

The development and subsequent adoption of the Strategic Plan had been made possible thanks to grant funding of £60,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, under its Resilient Heritage initiative, which enabled BSBI stake-holders - trustees, officers, council members and staff - to work with professionals at the acclaimed Bayes Business School and hold a series of meetings and workshops with the aim of distilling the Society's priorities and actions into a new Strategic Plan to steer its activities over the next 3-5 years. The aim was to clarify what BSBI's members in particular, and all those interested in botany, need from the Society; how to streamline decision-making processes; how resources can be deployed even more effectively and reduce the operating deficit; and how best to structure the organisation to attract further resources and appeal to wider audiences.

The resultant Strategic Plan focuses on these three goals:

1. Building a diverse community of botanists to sustain and develop the skill base.
2. Providing high quality, impartial data and interpretation for research and to help address biodiversity loss and climate change.
3. Disseminating information to drive a passion for plants.

Activities

The Strategic Plan is now helping BSBI move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The first of those challenges arrived within days of the adoption of the Strategic Plan, as lockdown restrictions were introduced across Britain and Ireland in response to the first wave of the Covid pandemic.

BSBI was quick to respond to those restrictions: clear guidance was made available via the Society's website and social media platforms; all field and indoor meetings were postponed, cancelled, or moved

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

online; and a programme of safe, local activities to engage botanists under lockdown was devised, promoted and implemented.

An example of this approach was the Garden Wildflower Hunt, launched in April 2020 with a recording app and supporting webpages; its aim was to encourage people to record wildflowers growing in their gardens and within three weeks of the launch, more than 9,000 records had been submitted.

Fortuitously, plant recording for the Society's third plant distribution Atlas (the Atlas 2020 project) had already completed; staff and officers had started on the huge task of collating and validating the plant records collected during several years of fieldwork. By 31 March 2021, more than 50 million plant records were held in the BSBI Distribution Database, one of the world's largest databases of biological records. Eleven new County Recorders were appointed, swelling the network to 191 and new guidance documents were produced to support their volunteer efforts, eg. around mentoring, succession, planning and conservation.

The Society's botanical surveys deliver specific scientific and conservation objectives including the monitoring over time of changes in the geographic ranges of British and Irish wild plants and more detailed recording of the locations and population sizes of the scarcer species including aquatic and montane species. They also support the development and implementation of Government policies on environmental stewardship and the spread of potentially invasive non-native species. The Society has continued to build on its longstanding reputation for providing a recognised evidence base which is increasingly relied on by scientific researchers and conservation practitioners.

Many members were also preparing to participate in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS), in which BSBI is a partner. In autumn 2020, for the first time, data collected by NPMS participants across four of the eleven habitats covered by the scheme were included as part of an experimental Official Statistic within the UK Biodiversity Indicator for Plants of the Wider Countryside.

BSBI usually holds field meetings throughout Britain and Ireland to further its botanical survey programme while introducing new members to the Society, fostering the mentoring of individuals' field identification skills, encouraging members to work together and helping to build a diverse community of botanists to sustain and deliver the skill base. The 2020/21 programme of field meetings and training workshops planned for locations across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales had to be postponed due to lockdown however a series of online workshops and webinars was launched instead, with some of the Ireland activities being funded by National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) and the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR). These webinars were aimed at ensuring that volunteer members and supporters across the Society's geography were still provided with opportunities to improve their ID skills. A new YouTube channel was set up to host recordings of those webinars and to provide links to playlists of in-house and partner videos. By the end of March 2021, the channel had attracted almost 1,000 subscribers and many of the webinars had been viewed thousands of times.

Plant group(s)	Online Training Webinars 2020/21				
	Target area	Funded/charged	No. webinars	Participants on the day	YouTube views
Dandelions	Britain & Ireland	Free	1	312	>4,300
Ferns	Britain & Ireland	£7/ £5	1	Capped at 100	352
Grasses	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS & CEDaR	5	116 - 327	>10,100
Aquatic plants	Ireland	Free/ funded by NPWS & CEDaR	2	143	c1,700
Introduction to botanical recording	Ireland	Free/ funded by Ellen Hutchins Festival	1	36	c700

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By harnessing technology in this way, BSBI was able to continue to implement policies aimed at counteracting the loss of opportunities for the study of whole-plant biology at schools and universities. BSBI's Skills and Training programme was, as usual, able to provide training grants, bursaries and conference grants, although many courses, run by partner organisations, were postponed and most of the grants awarded had to be carried forward.

	Grants			
	2021 applications	2021 awards	2020 applications	2020 awards
Training grant	16	15	30	20
Plant Study grant	1	1	-	-
Science & Research grant	10	3	5	2
Total	27	19	35	22

Each recipient of a BSBI grant is invited to write a short report for publication on the BSBI website, to attend the BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting and offer a poster which is published on BSBI's News & Views blog, about the course they were able to attend, or the research they were able to carry out, thanks to a BSBI grant. Where appropriate, grant recipients are also encouraged to publish the results of their research in a BSBI periodical.

BSBI's annual programme of conferences and exhibition meetings was also impacted by the pandemic; they aim to bring together botanists of national and international standing to mix with the general membership and to pursue themes relevant to the day, and to publicise the results of recent research.

Funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Covid Emergency Fund supported the extra staff time needed to move these events online; this made it possible for more people to attend from across BSBI's geography and beyond, and recordings of talks and online workshops were posted afterwards on YouTube, but opportunities for mingling and networking were severely curtailed. The virtual Annual Exhibition Meeting in November 2020 attracted more than 400 participants; 36 posters were exhibited on an event micro-site and the videos from the event, which comprised 10 talks, a panel discussion and a virtual herbarium tour, had attracted almost 4,000 views by the end of March 2021.

Similarly, the Scottish Botanists' Conference, held online over a weekend in November 2020, attracted a record 250 participants and the videos on the event playlist, comprising four very popular hour-long training workshops and 10 talks, had more than 7,500 views by the end of March 2021. The online Irish Spring Conference was attended by 121 people and the 11 talks have since been viewed over 1250 times.

Test centres for Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) tests also decided, due to the pandemic, not to offer any tests in the year under review: BSBI has, since their inception, participated in the development and promotion of FISCs and helped them become recognised as the industry standard for assessing proficiency (at six levels of competence) in field ID skills. The online Identiplant course, supported by BSBI, took place for the eighth consecutive year with 116 students completing the course.

BSBI's online, Open Access scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, continued to disseminate botanical research by academics and amateurs relevant to the study of the British and Irish flora at no cost to authors or readers. By being available to all – not just BSBI members – it is also helping the Society build capacity and fulfil its obligations to the broader scientific community. 32 scientific papers were published in the second volume of *British & Irish Botany* and a further seven papers in the first issue of the third volume which was published in February 2021.

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The periodicals portfolio was expanded to include a new monthly eNewsletter aimed at keeping both members and supporters updated about BSBI projects, activities, fundraising, news and events, and the suite of country newsletters was augmented by a new newsletter for botanists in England. All these periodicals were made freely available online, and alongside a monthly e-newsletter aimed at botanical recorders and a very popular *News & Views* blog, they have helped the Society engage with the wider botanical community.

The Society's membership newsletter, *BSBI News*, continued to engage and inform botanists at all skill levels; a new initiative, launched in April 2020, to make both one full free article and a five-page sampler of each issue of *BSBI News* available to non-members, served as an eye-catching advertisement for the benefits of membership and as an effective recruiting tool.

New and revised titles in BSBI's Handbook series are published regularly, dependent as ever on the generously given voluntary services of key authors, to bring authoritative titles to members, and to the public at large, at low cost. During 2020-1 two Handbooks were published on different sections of hawkweed *Hieracium* spp., long recognised as one of the most challenging genera in the British flora. A new book on *Britain's Orchids*, written by two BSBI members but published commercially in September 2020, featured BSBI distribution maps; an agreement with the publishers Princeton Press made a 30% discount possible for BSBI members purchasing the book. All these new titles were accompanied by publicity on social media and, where possible, by a dedicated page on the BSBI website and an interview with the lead author(s) on the *News & Views* blog, thereby drawing more traffic to the BSBI website and helping to drive sales.

BSBI seeks to attract members of all ages and backgrounds by setting membership subscriptions at a level affordable to all, with further concessions for students under 25 and for longstanding members over 65. Importantly, BSBI supplements its subscription income with a range of other sources. BSBI has many active volunteers and considers itself very fortunate to be able to draw upon this culture of voluntary service to achieve its charitable objectives at low cost.

Guided nationally by its volunteer expert referees and also by its staff, BSBI supports the botanical survey work carried out by its members as volunteers coordinated locally by its network of volunteer County Recorders. BSBI has the capacity to plan, implement and interpret surveys with particular regard to computer database systems. The Society's outreach and training programmes operate in order to complement and engage a growing membership base to contribute to its research projects, to encourage the wider botanical community to participate in citizen science projects supported by the Society, and to provide both of these groups with the necessary skills to do so.

2. Achievements and performance

The Society is now 185 years old and its principal achievement is in continuing to do what it has always done to great effect: acting as an information exchange for British and Irish botanists, whether in the field or indoors, and from one generation to the next. The Society and its members have always engaged themselves in the accurate recording of plant distributional data and this long tradition continues – as James W White, author of *The Bristol Flora* put it over 100 years ago, "...*finality in field botany is fortunately unattainable*".

Membership

BSBI is delighted to report that total membership has not only continued on an upward trend but has seen a surge, possibly linked, at least in part, to increasing awareness of the importance of the natural world – this has been widely reported in the media as one of the results of the 2020/21 lockdown.

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As of 31 March 2021, membership was +9.2% compared to the previous March, outstripping all expectations and almost exceeding in just one year the target set in BSBI's Strategic Plan to grow membership by +10% over 3 years.

	Membership		
	2021	2020	% Increase
UK, Isle of Man & Channel Islands	2,843	2,642	+7.6%
Ireland	229	169	+35%
Rest of World	59	57	+3.5%
Total	3,131	2,868	+9.2%

This upward trend has continued into the Summer. The positive financial impact of this is described in the Financial Review section 3 below.

Public Benefit

The Trustees complied with the duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Society's core activities include facilitating the recording of the distribution of plants in the wild in its area, and publishing expert works and providing training courses and resources to aid accurate plant identification.

BSBI's comprehensive website, www.bsbi.org/, is fundamental in making information about plant distribution and taxonomy freely available as a service to the botanical community. The website is updated twice weekly and is under ongoing review to keep it as versatile, informative and user-friendly as possible and, importantly, to make it accessible to both the increasing proportion of the membership requiring mobile access to it, often when engaged in fieldwork, and also to the wider public and the botanical community.

The website offers much information on the Society's activities on a free-to-user basis, with more than 270 webpages and a separate digital archive of botanical publications. A growing number of county webpages dedicated to promoting botanical activity and sharing resources for botanical recorders at county level have also helped boost engagement and build capacity at county and regional level, mirroring the national picture and ensuring enduring connectivity at all levels. Many County Recorders responded to lockdown by producing Rare Plant Registers, county checklists and newsletters, and sharing these resources on their county pages.

New webpages were also created to help people participate in BSBI activities; to respond to current issues of concern such as biodiversity loss, nature conservation and restoration; and to help develop plant ID skills. These included a glossary of definitions (native, alien etc.), a page discussing the pros and cons of wild flower seed mixes, and ID pages for popular plant groups (orchids, ferns, grasses, aquatics etc.) aimed at supporting online training webinars and/or attracting and engaging the casual viewer.

Resources such as these are helping to disseminate information to drive a passion for plants and are establishing the society's website as the first port-of-call for both the accomplished botanist and anyone taking their first steps in botanical recording.

During the year under review, there were 510,992 pageviews, an increase of 35% compared to the previous year which saw 379,509 pageviews. BSBI's maps page, where a distribution map can be generated for any plant species recorded in Britain and Ireland and the change in frequency over the decades can be shown, remained the most popular page, attracting 25% more views than in the previous year.

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Although the Identification page saw a 40% increase in pageviews, it was pushed into fourth place by a surge in the popularity of the Training Courses page which lists providers of plant ID courses across Britain and Ireland. See the table below.

Webpage Views 2020/21 vs 2019/20					
Rank	Webpage	Views 2020/21	%	Views 2019/20	%
1	Maps <i>bsbi.org/maps</i>	123,160	24%	98,578	26%
2	Homepage <i>bsbi.org/</i>	71,089	14%	54,860	14%
3	Training Courses <i>bsbi.org/training-courses</i>	17,063	3%	-	-
4	Identification <i>bsbi.org/identification</i>	14,990	3%	10,685	3%
	Total	226,302	44%	164,123	43%

BSBI members, staff and volunteers regularly present lectures to the public and support conservation and outreach projects both locally and nationally – this increased during 2020/21, with online platforms making it possible to reach new audiences across Britain and Ireland. Staff and officers gave talks via Zoom to organisations as varied as the Irish Naturalists' Journal, the Natural History Society of Northumbria, and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre.

BSBI continues to build links with print and broadcast media; during the period under review, the society was featured or mentioned on the BBC website, in periodicals including *The Times*, *The Daily Express*, *Horticulture Week*, *The Landscaper* and *BBC Wildlife* magazine, and in regional newspapers and on local radio stations, thereby introducing the Society, its research and its outreach activities, such as the New Year Plant Hunt, to new audiences. The story of a discovery by a BSBI member of a rare tropical fern in Ireland was covered in *The Guardian*, *the Irish Post* and on Ireland's flagship news programme and was picked up by international news services. Articles about BSBI activities, alone or with partners, also appeared in the newsletters of other NGOs such as the National Federation for Biological Recording, while BSBI's Science Team contributed to RBG Kew's report on the State of the World's Plants and Fungi, providing BSBI data and co-authoring a widely-disseminated scientific paper.

The Society also continues to build its social media profile and members offer plant identification support to the wider public on a weekly basis under the *#wildflowerhour* banner.

	Social media followers		
	31 March 2021	31 March 2020	% Increase
Facebook (Britain)	8,594	6,424	+33%
Facebook (Ireland)	2,902	2,233	+30%
Twitter	35,146	28,594	+22%
Instagram	3,500	2,018	+73%
Total	50,142	39,269	+28%

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In all of these ways, the Society is able to inform the public and those with an interest in conservation and to meet the charitable objects for which it was established. The Board continues to ensure the Society will remain focussed on meeting the needs of both its growing number of volunteers, members and also of the wider public, building on its achievements to date and facing the future with increased confidence.

The adoption and implementation of *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024* will enable BSBI to move forward in a sustainable and resilient way, building on almost two centuries of achievements while being ready to grow and adapt to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and deliver its goals. As outlined in our Strategic Plan, there are both opportunities and threats in our environment which BSBI is well placed to respond to, including providing the data to underpin conservation and land management decisions and strategy to address biodiversity loss and climate change and continuing to develop and broaden interest in botany and address 'plant blindness' and the need and demand for more botanical awareness, skills and training.

3. Financial Review

Overview

The Board of Trustees reports Net Income of £180,698 (2020: Net Expenditure £148,962) for the year under review.

The Board is delighted to report the underlying Operating Deficit (*) has once again reduced year on year such that there is now a long-term positive trend reflecting unwavering focus on delivering the Society's operations in a financially sustainable manner.

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Operating Deficit £000	(20)	(25)	(33)	(61)	(146)	(128)	(178)

*Operating Deficit on the Unrestricted General Fund.

The Board expects the Operating Deficit to increase in 2021/22, however, when there is a focus on reshaping the charity to lay the foundations of long-term financial sustainability.

Investments

Total Return on investments (net losses and income) was £220,195 (2020: -£82,899). As a percentage, this is 27.9% (2020: -10.5%) of the average investment during the year. After very disappointing outcome in 2019/20, reflecting the troubling economic damage of the Covid pandemic, this is a reassuring bounce-back of confidence in a global recovery from the pandemic.

At year end, the Society had Net Assets of £1,006,264 (2020: £825,566) held as a diversified investment portfolio of £818,355 and net current assets of £187,909.

At £248,720, cash at bank continues to be held at a similar level (2020: £181,598). This relatively high level is in accordance with BSBI's desire to hold at least 12 months' budgeted net expenditure in cash in order to protect against the potential risk of a turn to negative stock market volatility and its impact on the Society's short to medium term operations. This approach has proved sensible in the light of the negative impact of Covid on BSBI's investment portfolio and worldwide stock markets.

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Income

At £396,354 (2020: £459,865), income was -14% down on the previous year; much of which is a direct impact of Covid, which had a devastating impact on Conference & Course Income (-90%) as a result of Government restrictions. Investment Income was also badly affected as companies cut dividends in the wake of the pandemic. Similarly, individuals' and organisations' giving decreased as the economic impact widened and donations and one-off grants became harder to secure.

Although grants were also lower in the reporting period, this source continues to be hugely important to BSBI (2021: £75k vs 2020: £125k). £15k grant income is from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (2020: £24k). We thank Heritage Fund and our many other partners, whom we name below, for their continued support of all that BSBI achieves.

Botanical Data Interpretation and Access (previously Botanical Survey and Interpretation) income generated £118k (2020 £90k) and we are delighted to help these organisations - several of whom BSBI has partnered with for many years - achieve their aims through our work. This included Natural England who funded work on a new Red Data List for Great Britain and The Woodland Trust who funded the creation of a new mapping tool to support the government's tree planting targets. The BSBI continues to provide data access to a range of conservation and land management organisations including the National Trust and Plantlife as well as a number of universities and institutes to undertake scientific research on a wide range of topics.

Subscriptions and related Gift Aid rose strongly; +18% to £114k and 31% of unrestricted income, (2020: 23%). As explained earlier, this reflects spectacular membership growth of +9.2% (2020 +2%); an unexpected positive impact of Covid. Interestingly, this growth is despite a necessary increase in membership rates in January 2020. Importantly, we now measure membership retention as a key KPI (% of members choosing to remain members throughout the year) and we are especially proud that this rose to 90% (2020: 89%) in the year. These indicators bear witness to our confidence BSBI is, more than ever, delivering what members want.

The Society continues to be able to deliver on its charitable causes thanks to the generous support of individuals, organisations, trusts and foundations, without whom much of our future ambition would not be possible. In this year, examples of specific support have included donations to BSBI's ongoing Atlas 2020 Appeal, towards sustaining the BSBI Scottish Officer post, and towards new book publications. BSBI is extremely grateful to all donors for their support and looks to continue to develop work that honours these endorsements.

Thousands of people made donations of all sizes, from memberships to major gifts, sponsorships, grants and gifts in Wills. Whilst some donations are made anonymously, BSBI wishes to thank by name the following organisations and individuals who have generously supported BSBI's projects and goals this year and without whom it could not achieve all that it does:

The National Lottery Heritage Fund
Wild Flower Society
Habitat Aid Ltd
Joshua Styles
Harrogate & District Naturalists' Society
The Estate of the late Mr John Horlick Stock

The Society expresses its gratitude to all the other unnamed organisations and individuals who have generously given donations and grants to BSBI this year. Every amount matters for the advancement of the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wild plants.

In addition, national statutory agencies, namely Natural England (NE), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in Ireland and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) continue to

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be long-term supporters and income received from them contributes to supporting those of the Society's staff most closely engaged in the programmes and projects of mutual benefit.

Expenditure

Setting aside Restricted Fund expenditure which is distortive of the underlying trend, expenditure decreased by -13% in the year to £386,459 (2020 £445,503). A few highlights are covered below.

There were several changes in staffing in the year. The fresh approach to fundraising Trustees described in this report last year became a reality when a BSBI Fundraising Manager was appointed to this new role in March 2021 to focus on delivering BSBI's *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023*. The pay costs of this role are reflected in the increase in Expenditure on Raising Funds (Note 5). We reported here last year that pay costs had been saved through short term vacancies in the Wales Officer. As reported above, this post has remained vacant and this saving is apparent in Project Staff Costs (Note 6). BSBI's Head of Operations left in January 2021 and this senior post remained vacant until Trustees recruited BSBI's first ever Chief Executive after year-end. This hiatus is reflected in the costs reported at Note 6.

Sadly, BSBI's normally varied timetable of field meetings, conferences and workshops, usually held throughout the year, was suspended or moved online when face-to-face and learning ended because of Covid restrictions. This explains the vast reduction in Conference & Course expenditure (Note 6)

Valuing Volunteers

BSBI continues to direct the use of its financial resources with great care and is immensely fortunate in being able to supplement these financial resources with the gift of time freely and generously given by its volunteers, whether via membership of its Board of Trustees and Standing Committees, 300+ members engaged as Vice-County Recorders or national plant Referees. Others actively support the plant-recording, training and engagement activities led locally by the Vice-County Recorders, the efforts of which are now culminating in a final push towards completion of the huge Atlas 2020 project, the results of which will be published in the *Atlas 2020 Summary* in Spring 2022.

The nature and scale of volunteer hours given to BSBI each year is vast and we know that its financial value dwarfs BSBI's income many times over. BSBI is indebted to all of its volunteers. It simply could not fulfil its objectives without them and the Board gives its sincere thanks to every person who generously devotes time and effort to helping BSBI thrive; All these people make BSBI the vibrant organisation it is today. Establishing ways in which we can place a more accurate value on this vast volunteer contribution will take time and gradual refinement however we feel it is increasingly important that we do so.

Summary

Overall, we report on a year of mixed fortunes; a year which saw Covid impact significantly on BSBI's charitable activities although it was pleasing to see membership experience its biggest increase in more than 5 years, a change in the senior leadership team where the BSBI's Head of Operations moved on to new challenges in January 2021 and BSBI created its first CEO role. Julia Hanmer took up post as CEO in April 2021 and will steer BSBI on its continuing journey towards long-term financial sustainability whilst continuing to work towards a world where plants thrive and are valued.

4. Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Society was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08553976) on 3 June 2013 with Articles of Association that specify its aims and objects and governance. It is also registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 1152954) and in Scotland (No. SC038675). It has no share capital.

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The Society changed its Articles of Association following a Special Resolution passed at BSBI's AGM on 21 November 2020 to allow Trustees to agree to hold any meeting by suitable electronic means where presence electronically will be deemed equivalent to meeting in person. This change has allowed BSBI to continue its work despite Covid restrictions.

The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which is known as the Board of Trustees, as all Company Directors are also Charity Trustees. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Chief Executive (previously Head of Operations).

Board of Trustees (Directors)

In terms of its Articles of Association, the Society is governed by a Board of Directors, members of which are also Charity Trustees. Directors are elected by the members of the Society in an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board may also co-opt Directors, who then serve until the next AGM. There is a maximum number of 12 Directors. One third of the Directors (other than those currently co-opted) retire by rotation at the next AGM (13 November 2021) and may be re-elected for a renewable term of up to three years, up to a maximum of nine years.

Trustees of the Society, all of whom are elected, who served during the year covered by these accounts and were in post at 31 March 2021 and at the date of approval of these accounts, except as noted, are set out below together with their dates of first appointment.

Dr CJ Miles (Chair)	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr AI Denholm	Appointed 3 June 2013
Prof MJ Crawley	Appointed 24 July 2013
Dr CM Cheffings	Appointed 24 Nov 2014
Dr PR Bisson	Appointed 25 May 2016
Dr JS Faulkner	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Prof A Fitter FRS	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Dr S Knapp	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Mr AD Thomas	Appointed 25 Nov 2017
Ms SH Reece	Appointed 1 Oct 2019, resigned 30 June 2020
Dr S Gater	Appointed 3 Dec 2019
Dr M Dean	Appointed 21 Nov 2020
Dr HJ Crouch	Appointed 5 July 2021

At present, the membership of the Board of Trustees is reserved by the Articles of Association for members of the charitable company. All trustees are made aware of their obligations and the charitable company's Articles of Association and are provided with regular updates on its financial performance and status. Trustees are encouraged to avail themselves of Charity Commission guidance, including "the Essential Trustee" and other trustee training material is made available. Trustees also have unrestricted access to the Board Chair and the Society's staff.

The Board utilises a skills matrix to identify gaps in its group competencies so that selection, induction and training of trustees is targeted as effectively as possible.

Council

Council's role has historically been to advise the Trustees and contribute to the development and maintenance of the Society's scientific and social activities, chaired by BSBI's President. Following recommendations made by Bayes Business School in 2019 to simplify BSBI's governance structure and consultation within BSBI, Council was formally dissolved by a Special Resolution passed at the AGM on 21 November 2020.

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Officers

The principal honorary officers of the Society are the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Honorary General Secretary and Honorary Company Secretary. They are assisted by three staff members: Chief Executive (previously Head of Operations), Head of Science and Finance Manager.

Details of other office bearers, including Vice-County Recorders and the panel of Referees and Specialists, are to be found in the *BSBI Yearbook 2021*.

The Board, the Staff and the Society's Committees

The Directors are the Society's legal trustees and the Board governs all its activities. The Board is assisted on a day-to-day basis by the Chief Executive (previously Head of Operations) and they together co-ordinate the work of the principal honorary office bearers and the staff, and their interaction with the Board and the Society's membership.

As at 31 March 2021 the Society employed 9 staff, equivalent to 7 full time posts, to work with the principal honorary office bearers in co-ordinating, interpreting and supporting the work of its volunteers and in the administration of the Society's affairs. The Head of Operations left BSBI in January 2021 and the new Chief Executive Officer began in April 2021 so neither is included in these numbers. There is normally a Country Officer for each of the four countries in which BSBI operates however the Wales Officer role has been vacant since March 2020 and the permanent Ireland Officer's role is being covered during maternity leave. There are three Science staff (Head of Science, one specialising in data management and one who divides his time between Science & England Officer). Finally; three in financial, fundraising and communications roles.

The *BSBI Yearbook 2021* sets out full details of BSBI's Committees. The National Committees for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (comprising in this context Northern and the Republic of Ireland), give a more localised focus to the Society's work.

We explained here last year that BSBI's new Strategy would result in some changes to the governance structure in the next financial year. One of these changes has been the dissolution of BSBI's Publications Committee and the sharing out of its responsibility for the Society's publications and periodicals between the three remaining Permanent Working Committees. Since November 2020, BSBI's three Permanent Working Committees are as follows:

1. The **Events & Communications Committee** organises national events, conferences and field meetings. It also has oversight of the Society's outreach and social media activities, website and newsletters. It is assisted by the Society's Communications Officer and other staff members as and when required.
2. The **Science & Data Committee** has primary responsibility for BSBI's plant distribution and monitoring studies, including maintaining the Vice-County Recorder network and the panel of plant referees and specialists. It also has oversight of the Society's scientific journal, *British & Irish Botany*, and administers grants to assist the publication of local Floras and similar works. It is assisted by the staff of the BSBI Science Unit. Its Science and Research sub-Committee allocates research grants.
3. The **Skills & Training Committee** co-ordinates these activities for the Society, and awards training and plant study grants. It also has oversight of the Society's series of Handbooks for the identification of difficult plants"

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Investment Policy

The Society's investment powers are governed by the Trustee Act 2000. The Trustees have approved an Investment Policy Statement and have delegated discretionary management of the Society's investments to its investment manager, Brewin Dolphin.

The Society has an Investment Committee, made up of at least three Trustees, which periodically meets with the Society's investment manager to review investment performance and holds them to account. The Investment Committee's responsibilities are set out in a Terms of Reference which underwent its last triennial review in Autumn 2020.

BSBI requires diversification amongst shares, bonds and cash, capable of delivering income and portfolio growth combined at 2% over inflation in the long term after expenses. Investment income is accumulated, however it remains readily accessible through realisation of liquid investments.

Trustees recognise the importance of BSBI investing in a socially responsible manner which promotes the protection and health of the natural environment. With that in mind, the Board has been guided by professional advisers and Investment Committee and it approved an Ethical Position Statement in September 2019 which sets out practical measures taken in pursuit of these aims.

Grant-making Policy

Details of BSBI's Policy in relation to grants for the publication of works on the British and Irish flora, for training and education courses and for botanical research are set out on the BSBI website.

Risk Management

The Trustees have examined the Society's Risk Register documenting the major risks to which the Society is exposed, and in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Society. The Trustees are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate and control the Society's exposure to the major risks. In particular:

- i. The Society has in place a comprehensive policy of Trustee Indemnity Insurance.
- ii. The Society maintains a balance sheet in which listed investments represent substantially all of its net assets. Consequently, it is exposed to market risk which may materially affect its financial performance in any year of account. The risk is mitigated in a number of ways: the investment portfolio is diversified and is subject to the discretionary management of an independent professional Investment Manager, who follows BSBI's Investment Policy and agreed investment risk profile, reporting to the Trustees in writing quarterly and in person annually; the Trustees review the financial performance arising from its operations and its investments separately and take a long-term view of investment performance against targets.
- iii. Exchange rate risk is managed by most of the investments being denominated in £ Sterling.
- iv. The Society is exposed to cash flow and liquidity risk as a result of running a deficit budget, whilst aiming to maintain its investment base from which it derives income and the capacity for gains. The Society's investment portfolio is managed on a discretionary basis. The individual investments are freely traded and so it is possible to withdraw funds on short notice.
- v. An annual budget is set and approved by the Board which is then applied to financial decisions made throughout the year.
- vi. The letting of contracts and payment of invoices is strictly controlled by the Chief Executive (previously Head of Operations) and the Finance Manager and Trustees monitor bank balances so as to ensure that, at any time, the Society has in place sufficient liquid funds to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

- vii. The United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020 has had no material impact on the operations or finances of the Society so far, although this will be kept under review. Income from outside the UK represents a very small percentage of the Society's income and BSBI has continued to conduct its activities throughout the biogeographical area encompassing Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to engage with botanists further afield.
- viii. Although now abating, the impact of the Covid pandemic and the appropriate response to the ongoing risks posed continues to be assessed by Trustees. See Note 18.

Financial Reserves Policies

The Board reviewed its Reserves Policy in December 2020. This Policy sets out why BSBI holds its particular level of reserves and how the Board seeks to ensure financial sustainability.

The Society has two Unrestricted Funds:

The General Fund; this provides Working Capital for the continuation of the Society's activities and as a buffer against fluctuations in income. It affords BSBI the ability to promote itself and, critically, to continue to raise further funds to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. Trustees currently consider that £0.5M is the minimum acceptable level and this is periodically reviewed.

The Strategic Development Fund; this designated fund of £0.1M was created following a decision by the Board in June 2020. Its purpose is to fund the one off or short-term costs of delivering the Strategic Plan; building financial resilience more quickly and effectively than might otherwise be possible. Expenditure from this Fund is reported at Note 14.

Four Restricted Income Funds are maintained, currently valued at £5,057 (2020: £12,429). One is to provide for an annual award for outstanding contributions to botany and the second is for botanical publications relating to North Wales. A third fund receives income restricted to meet expenditure relating to the post of Scottish Officer and, because income has been fully expended during the year, this fund has no carrying value. The fourth fund handles income and expenditure arising from two grants from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. See note 13 for further details.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

5. Reference and administrative details

Founded	1836, as the Botanical Society of London (Present name adopted 2013)
Incorporation	Registered 3 June 2013 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No. 08553976
Registered Office	28 Chipchase Grove, Durham, DH1 3FA
Registered Charity	England and Wales No. 1152954 Scotland No. SC038675
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4TA
Investment Manager	Brewin Dolphin, 12 Smithfield Street, EC1A 9BD
Independent Examiner	WMT, Verulam Point, Station Way, St Albans, AL1 5HE
Principal Officers	
Chair of the Board of Trustees	Dr CJ Miles
Honorary Treasurer	On hold
President (and former Chair of Council)	Ms L Farrell
Honorary General Secretary	Dr S Gater
Company Secretary	Dr S Gater
Chief Executive	JC Hanmer (from 6 April 2021)
Head of Operations	Ms JA Houldsworth (until 22 January 2021)
Head of Science	Dr KJ Walker
Finance Manager	Ms J Etherington
Website	www.bsbi.org/

6. Covid

The Covid pandemic has had a significant effect on individuals, businesses and organisations worldwide, including BSBI.

The Board has continued to meet regularly, using teleconferencing technology and email to monitor the risks created by the pandemic, consider relevant advice and approve mitigating actions. Covid related control measures have been implemented to protect staff, members and others, with suitable changes to normal activities. Committee meetings have been held virtually, events and fieldwork had to be cancelled or postponed to protect all involved, however many activities and a wealth of information have been provided on BSBI's website and many members have enjoyed engaging from home in these new and varied ways. BSBI staff and Trustees have kept aware of Government legislation and guidance in each country, followed mitigating actions and shared information appropriately with members. Covid is considered in more detail at Note 18.

ANNUAL REPORT (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Trustees are grateful to the dedicated work of staff and volunteers, and are mindful of the impact on workload and morale. BSBI's financial position outlook has been carefully considered and assessed by the Board and although it acknowledges the ongoing uncertain economic and societal impact of the pandemic, which is profound and disruptive, Trustees are confident that the Society remains a going concern and is determined to seek out opportunities and apply the best governance possible to see this maintained into the future.

7. Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of BSBI for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the appended Accounts 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 year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- 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 adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and 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.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small companies within part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Chair of the Board



Dr AI Denholm, Trustee

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

To the Trustees of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the 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 Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act'), the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act'). You are satisfied that the accounts of the Company are not required by charity or company law to be audited and have chosen instead to have an independent examination.

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 the Company's accounts carried out under section 44(1)(c) of the 2005 Act and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the requirements of Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit go beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently, I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

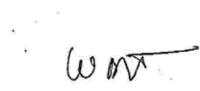
Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company is required by company law to prepare its accounts on an accruals basis and is registered as a charity in Scotland, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in Regulation 11(2) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records with the accounting requirements of Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 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.


EE Irvine FCA
WMT - Chartered Accountants,
Verulam Point, Station Way, St Albans, AL1 5HE

Dated 8 September 2021

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £	Restricted Funds 2020 £	Total Funds 2020 £
INCOME FROM							
Donations and legacies	2	200,047	29,760	229,807	229,555	39,000	268,555
Charitable activities	3	145,364	-	145,364	160,883	-	160,883
Investments	4	21,183	-	21,183	30,427	-	30,427
Total		366,594	29,760	396,354	420,865	39,000	459,865
EXPENDITURE ON							
Raising of funds	5	57,942	7,783	65,725	55,434	-	55,434
Charitable activities	6	328,517	27,657	356,174	390,069	58,101	448,170
Total		386,459	35,440	421,899	445,503	58,101	503,604
OPERATING (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS		(19,865)	(5,680)	(25,545)	(24,638)	(19,101)	(43,739)
OTHER RECOGNISED (LOSSES)/GAINS							
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	9	65,943	350	66,293	74,070	2,788	76,858
Unrealised (losses)/gains on investments	9	139,212	738	139,950	(175,477)	(6,604)	(182,081)
Total (losses)/gains on investments		205,155	1,088	206,243	(101,407)	(3,816)	(105,223)
NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME		185,290	(4,592)	180,698	(126,045)	(22,917)	(148,962)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		813,137	12,429	825,566	939,182	35,346	974,528
Transfer of funds		2,780	(2,780)	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds as above		185,290	(4,592)	180,698	(126,045)	(22,917)	(148,962)
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		1,001,207	5,057	1,006,264	813,137	12,429	825,566

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 March 2021

	Note	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets					
Investments	9	818,355		668,160	
Current Assets					
Stocks	10	23,902		26,521	
Debtors	11	79,570		77,185	
Cash at bank		248,720		181,598	
		352,192		285,304	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	12	164,283		127,898	
Net Current Assets		187,909		157,406	
Net Assets		1,006,264		825,566	
Funds					
Restricted funds	13	5,057		12,429	
Unrestricted funds	14				
General Fund		880,471		713,137	
Strategic Development Fund		120,736		100,000	
		1,006,264		825,566	

Under the Companies Act 2006, s454, on a voluntary basis the trustees can amend the financial statements if they subsequently prove to be defective. For the year ending 31 March 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 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 7 September 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Dr CJ Miles, Chair of the Board



Dr AI Denholm, Trustee

Company registration number 08553976 Charity registration number 1152954 (England and Wales) and SC038675 (Scotland)

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash used in operating activities	17	(2,918)		(96,747)	
Cash generated from interest on deposits		40		123	
Net cash used in operating activities			(2,878)		(96,624)
Cash flows from investing activities					
Proceeds from sale of investments	9	70,000		75,000	
Net cash provided by investing activities			70,000		75,000
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year			67,122		(21,624)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year			181,598		203,222
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year			248,720		181,598

Analysis of Changes in Net Debt

	At 1 April 2020 £	Cashflow £	At 31 March 2021 £
Cash at Bank	181,598	67,122	248,720

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

For the year ended 31 March 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, subject to the revaluation of investments to market value, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) ('Charities SORP') and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

The Trustees have assessed whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate and have considered possible events or conditions that might give rise to significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. This assessment covered a period of 12 months subsequent to the date of approval of these financial statements. The Trustees have concluded that the charity has adequate financial and other resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and that there are no factors of which they are aware which could put in jeopardy the charity's going concern status during or beyond this period. Accordingly, the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis.

Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. The nature of estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

There are no material key sources of estimation uncertainty that could have an impact on the financial statements.

Statement on Public Benefit

Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland is a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS 102) and has selected its accounting policies accordingly.

Recognition of Income

Income is accounted for when the Society has entitlement, there is reasonable certainty of receipt and the amount is measurable. Income is deferred in respect of funding where the funding relates to a future period in order to match it to the expenditure profile. The specific bases used are as follows:

Subscription income and the related Gift Aid (where applicable) is accounted for in the period to which it relates. As subscriptions cover calendar years, the portion attributable to the subscription year falling after the balance sheet date is deferred.

Income from grants and donations for specific purposes received in advance of the related expenditure is carried forward as deferred income. Income is only deferred where restrictions are imposed that amount to pre-conditions for use. Contract income and grants received in arrears are recognised in line with underlying expenditure or activities, or, where appropriate, on a straight line or similar basis.

Legacies are recognised as receivable when the amount receivable is reasonably certain (i.e. probable) as to amount and timing, and not until probate has been granted in respect of the legatee's estate.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Recognition of Income (contd)

Donated facilities are recognised where the value to the Society can be quantified.

Other income, including investment income and donations, is recognised when received.

The Society's Vice-County Recorders are authorised to charge, in their own names, for services in extracting and interpreting data relating to their own area from the Society's Distribution Database, for commercial use, on the understanding that these charges represent a partial recovery of expenses incurred in their voluntary services to the Society. Such transactions are therefore outside the scope of these accounts.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements are recognised as services are supplied.

Costs of raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting income.

Charitable activities comprise those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them. Where employees are engaged in more than one of the Society's charitable activities - survey and interpretation, botanical education, publications and website, or governance – related costs and expenses which cannot be allocated directly are apportioned on the basis of estimated usage.

Grants for scientific work are charged in the year when the offer is given to the recipient, except in those cases where the grant is conditional. Training grants are charged when the conditions attached to the grant or award has been met and disbursement has been approved. Publication grants are charged when disbursed, normally shortly before publication.

Governance costs, which are included in the costs of charitable activities, include those associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the Society and include the professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

The Society's policy is to capitalise expenditure on fixed assets amounting to more than £1,000 per individual item. When fixed assets are recognised, depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life, which for office equipment such as computer hardware and software and other similar assets is estimated at four years. Fully depreciated assets are written off.

Investments

Investments are carried at market value. The related net unrealised gain or loss on the portfolio is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities separately from other income and expenditure. Realised net gains or losses arise on the sale of individual investments and represent the net total of the excess or deficit of net sales proceeds over the original cost.

Stocks

Publications and other stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Financial Instruments

The Society only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities such as debtors and creditors. Financial instruments are initially measured at transaction value. They are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Debtors, Cash at Bank and Creditors

Debtors - short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment losses.

Cash and cash equivalents - cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and demand deposits with banks.

Creditors - short term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

Holiday pay accrual

A liability is recognised for short-term compensated absences where employees have accumulated a right to paid annual leave (holiday pay) but had not fully used it at the balance sheet date. The accrual is measured at the undiscounted salary and social security cost of the future holiday entitlement.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to expenditure on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

Pensions

Staff employment contracts include a provision for an employer's pension contribution based on a fixed percentage of salary to be paid into a personal pension policy established by the member of staff. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Foreign Currencies

Transactions in foreign currencies are translated at rates prevailing at the date of the transaction. Balances denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rate of exchange prevailing at the year-end. All exchange differences are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities. The only foreign currency the Society currently transacts in is Euros.

Taxation

The Society is recognised as a Charity by HMRC and its activities therefore support its primary purpose of delivering its stated charitable objectives. Accordingly, its income and capital gains are exempt from Corporation Tax. Also, Gift Aid income (at 25 pence in £) is recoverable on subscriptions and donations received under a Gift Aid declaration. The Society receives no similar exemption in respect of Value Added Tax (VAT). Income and Expenditure is reported net of VAT, unless it is irrecoverable.

Fund accounting

The Society's accounts are an amalgamation of funds which are defined as follows:

Unrestricted funds – are those funds available for general or designated uses by the Society at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of its stated charitable objectives.

Restricted funds - are those funds where restrictive covenants were established by the original donor(s) as to what expenditure could be charged against them.

All income and expenditure of the Society is included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES	2021	2020
	£	£
Subscriptions (including associated Gift Aid)	114,222	96,841
Donations (including associated Gift Aid) and sundry income	23,615	31,483
Core grants	60,010	101,151
Legacies	2,200	80
Total Unrestricted Fund income	200,047	229,555
Restricted Income:		
Grants	14,760	24,000
Donations	15,000	15,000
	229,807	268,555
3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES		
Botanical data interpretation and access	117,658	90,110
Botanical conferences and courses	2,888	27,869
Botanical publications	23,818	24,627
Journal support and royalties	1,000	18,277
	145,364	160,883
4. INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS		
Investment income	21,143	30,304
Bank deposit interest	40	123
	21,183	30,427
5. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS		
Staff Costs of Membership Stewardship	30,185	27,475
Staff costs of raising other funds (Restricted £7,783 (2020 – NIL))	24,358	19,200
Publicity	1,726	2,625
Investment management costs & finance charges	8,661	6,442
Fundraising costs	435	(308)
Bad Debt write off	360	-
	65,725	55,434

Membership Stewardship (previously Membership Administration) relates to the Membership Secretary and the time spent by other staff looking after BSBI members and income received from them.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

6. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	2021 £	2020 £
Botanical Data Interpretation and Access		
Project staff costs (Restricted £15,000 (2020 £15,000))	180,193	191,152
Project staff overhead costs	9,479	19,972
Project direct costs	463	2,823
Grant direct costs (Restricted £3,495 (2020 £42,701))	14,252	60,249
Grants awarded for scientific work (Restricted £400 (2020 £400))	2,900	2,817
Support staff costs and expenses (Restricted £8,762 (2020 £NIL))	<u>34,995</u>	<u>30,114</u>
	<u>242,282</u>	<u>307,127</u>
Botanical Conferences, Courses and Education		
Conferences and courses	2,194	26,606
Grants awarded for training and education	<u>5,361</u>	<u>7,955</u>
	<u>7,555</u>	<u>34,561</u>
Botanical Publications and Website		
<i>BSBI News</i> and other similar publications	29,587	28,431
Cost of publication sales	16,551	18,142
Grants awarded for botanical publications	-	2,000
Taxonomic database staff costs and website costs	<u>23,606</u>	<u>22,652</u>
	<u>69,744</u>	<u>71,225</u>
Governance costs		
Honorary officer expenses	-	246
Trustee indemnity insurance	1,010	971
Governance staff costs and expenses	19,070	19,230
Independent Examination	2,000	2,000
Payroll, HR and accounting support services	6,650	4,017
Committee costs and expenses	472	5,073
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	2,525	(1,897)
Recruitment, other governance costs & expenses	<u>4,866</u>	<u>5,617</u>
	<u>36,593</u>	<u>35,257</u>
Total (Restricted £27,657 (2020 £58,101))	<u>356,174</u>	<u>448,170</u>

The Society makes three types of grants, each after due consideration by different committees. (1) Grants for scientific or research work with potentially publishable results are normally up to £1,000. (2) Grants for training and education are normally up to £250 and are given towards relevant and appropriate third-party courses and, occasionally, grants of up to £1,000 per annum are given to support graduates studying for higher degrees in subjects particularly close to the Society's objects. (3) Grants for botanical publications, normally up to £1,000 for county Floras written by members.

In total, 20 individuals (2020: 32) were awarded grants in the year and the total value of grants disbursed in the year was £8,261 (2020: £12,772), which were awarded on the basis of applications made by individuals as described above.

Honorary officer costs are expenses of the President, Honorary General Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Company Secretary. Costs of other Board members are included in committee expenses. Expenses reimbursed to Board members are disclosed in note 7 on Related Party Transactions.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Neither the Society's President nor Trustees received remuneration for their services or fees for professional work commissioned by the Society.

Many individuals elect not to claim all amounts due to them under the Society's policies and the total annual amount, although unquantified, is considered to be similar to the amount actually disbursed. Other than in exceptional circumstances, these individuals waive the right to claim expenses for meetings and events attended where an element of personal benefit arises.

The following transactions took place during the year:

Amounts totalling £2,300 (2020 - £8,276) were reimbursed to 3 (2020 - 10) individuals who made expense claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket travel, subsistence and other costs.

Dr CM Cheffings, Trustee, is employed as Ecosystem Analysis Team Leader by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). During the year, BSBI received contract income of £19,701 (2020 - £19,272) from JNCC under its National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) contract.

Dr S Knapp, Trustee, is employed as Head of the Algae, Fungi and Plants Division by The Natural History Museum (NHM). NHM generously hosted BSBI's 2019 AGM there free of charge. Dr S Knapp is also President of the Linnean Society where during the year BSBI paid £189 (2020 - £700) for the hire of meeting rooms.

Mr AD Thomas, Trustee, is Honorary Vice President of The Field Studies Council (FSC). During the year BSBI purchased course accommodation and other similar services from FSC to the value of £NIL (2020 - £7,525) and contributed £NIL (2020 - £2,100) in support of FSC's Young Darwin Scholarship charitable programme for young people to develop the next generation of "Darwins".

Prof MJ Crawley, Trustee, is a Trustee of Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). BSBI has received £NIL income from RHS during the year (2020 - £400) for the distribution of advertising flyers to BSBI members.

Dr S Gater, Trustee, co-leads wildlife tours on a freelance basis for Naturetrek. BSBI has received £NIL income from Naturetrek during the year (2020 - £450) for the sale of advertising space.

Dr M Dean, Trustee from 21 Nov 2020, is an Associate Tutor at Edge Hill University (EHU). BSBI provides EHU with access to its database in exchange for EHU resources such as e-journals.

Ms JA Houldsworth, BSBI employee until 22 January 2021 and Dr KJ Walker, BSBI employee, received remuneration during the year earned in their respective roles as Head of Operations and Head of Science.

Dr KJ Walker's partner, Ms C Pinches, is employed as Principal Scientific Analyst, by Natural England (NE) the Government's Advisor for the natural environment. During the year, BSBI received £74,810 from NE (2020 - £36,000) for the collection, verification & sharing of vascular plant data and other work in England. Also, Dr Walker is a Fellow of UKCEH, through which he is able to use facilities at UKCEH Wallingford in order to facilitate research. BSBI received £4,500 (2020 - £9,000) income from UKCEH during the year under a three-year contract to deliver information re non-native plant species.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

8. STAFF COSTS	2021 £	2020 £
Salaries	262,077	263,065
Social Security costs	21,971	22,368
Pension costs	12,894	12,996
Increase / (decrease) in accrued holiday pay	2,525	(1,897)
Total staff costs	299,467	296,532

No employee earned in excess of an annual equivalent of £60,000 during the year (2020: nil).

The average number of staff during the year was 8 (2020: 9). At the reporting date there were 9 employees (2020: 8) of which, two (2020: one) resident in Republic of Ireland, one of whom was on maternity leave.

The Trustees consider two members of staff to be key management personnel and accordingly uses the designation 'Head' in their job titles. Their combined gross salaries, social security costs and employer's pension contributions constituted 30% (2020: 28%) of the totals above.

The Society fulfils its obligations under the Pension Act 2008 by offering a workplace pension into which eligible employees are automatically enrolled and contributions are paid at or above the required rate set by the Pensions Regulator.

The Society reimburses expenditure incurred by staff in the furtherance of their duties but does not provide any employment benefits.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

9. INVESTMENTS	2021	2020
	£	£
At Market Value		
At the beginning of the year	668,160	826,057
Investment income retained	21,142	30,304
Investment management charges deducted	(7,190)	(7,978)
Transfers to bank current account	(70,000)	(75,000)
Realised (loss)/gain in the year	66,293	76,858
Unrealised (loss)/gain in the year	139,950	(182,081)
Market value at the end of the year	818,355	668,160
At Original Cost	640,319	630,651

The original cost is the cost of the individual investments when first acquired. The investments are managed on a discretionary basis by the Society's investment managers. The investment objective is to generate an income and growth total return of inflation plus 2% per annum over the long term, after expenses. The investments are diversified as follows:

Equities - UK	25.6%	27.7%
Equities - Overseas	39.5%	28.1%
Bonds	7.7%	13.1%
Global Investments	8.4%	7.4%
Property	5.0%	6.6%
Private Equity	3.8%	4.9%
Other	7.2%	6.9%
Cash	2.8%	5.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

10. STOCKS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Botanical Publications	23,902	26,521

Stocks of botanical publications are held by the Society's sales agent, Summerfield Books (2007) Ltd. Provision is made for slow-moving stocks; £4,025 (2020: £4,158). Sales proceeds are shown in note 3.

11. DEBTORS

Debtors	27,393	833
Accrued income	46,744	73,067
Prepayments	5,433	3,285
Total debtors	79,570	77,185

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

12. CREDITORS

	2021 £	2020 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	3,841	19,120
Taxation and social security	25,991	13,061
Pensions	2,441	2,695
Holiday pay accrual	8,974	6,449
Other accrued expenses	17,881	6,706
Deferred income	105,155	79,867
Total creditors	164,283	127,898

Deferred income of £73,637 (2020: £65,554) relates to subscriptions received for the calendar year 2021 therefore 75% of such annual subscriptions relating to the remaining nine months of the calendar year after the balance sheet date are deferred. Deferred income also arises in a similar way from grant, contract or publication income and from advance bookings for field meetings and conferences. £127,485 (2020: £117,218) was added during the year to the £79,867 (2020: £88,049) deferred income balance brought forward and £102,196 (2020: £125,400) was released from it, leaving £105,155 (2020: £79,867) carried forward at year end.

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Presidents' Awards £	Welsh Flora £	Scottish Officer £	Heritage Funds £	Total £
At 1 April 2019	3,523	1,823	-	30,000	35,346
Investment gains / (losses)	(380)	(197)	-	(3,239)	(3,816)
Income	-	-	15,000	24,000	39,000
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(15,000)	(42,701)	(58,101)
At 31 March 2020	2,743	1,626	-	8,060	12,429
Transfer from General Fund	-	-	-	(2,780)	(2,780)
Investment gains / (losses)	683	405	-	-	1,088
Income	-	-	15,000	14,760	29,760
Expenditure on charitable activities	(400)	-	(15,000)	(20,040)	(35,440)
At 31 March 2021	3,026	2,031	-	-	5,057

The Funds share in investment gains and losses only if permitted under the terms of the grant. The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

The Presidents' Award Fund is an expendable fund to provide for an annual award of £400 made to individual(s) by the Presidents of BSBI and the Wild Flower Society for outstanding contributions to botany. The 2020 Award of £400 was made to Dr Alan C Leslie for his book *Flora of Cambridgeshire*.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

13. RESTRICTED FUNDS (continued)

The Welsh Flora Fund provides grants towards botanical publications relating to North Wales. No applications or disbursements were received during the year (2020: £nil).

The Scottish Officer Fund receives income which has been donated specifically towards the employment costs of the Scottish Officer. The remainder of the Scottish Officer's costs have been met by grant funding.

The Heritage Funds represent two grants from The National Lottery Heritage Fund:

- (1) A grant of £60,000 awarded in October 2018 to fund the costs of a Strategic Review project. Following a transfer of £3k grant expenditure from the General Fund on completion of the work (also see note 14), the final £6k grant claim was made in July 2020 and the fund is now closed.
- (2) A grant of £8,800 awarded in August 2020 to fund the costs of staff time involved in planning and preparing Covid restriction compliant activity such as moving events online, holding safe field meetings. This work was carried out in Autumn/ Winter and this fund is now closed.

14. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2021 £	2020 £
General Fund		
At the beginning of the year	713,137	939,182
Transfer of costs to Restricted Funds	2,780	-
Incoming resources	366,594	420,865
Resources expended	(382,286)	(445,503)
Attributable investment (losses)/gains	180,246	(101,407)
Designated to Strategic Development Fund	-	(100,000)
At the end of the year	880,471	713,137

The purpose of the General Fund is to provide working capital for the Society's activities and to provide a buffer against fluctuations in income.

	2021 £	2020 £
Strategic Development Fund		
At the beginning of the year	100,000	-
Resources expended	(4,173)	-
Attributable investment (losses)/gains	24,909	-
Designated from General Fund	-	100,000
At the end of the year	120,736	100,000

The purpose of the Strategic Development Fund is to meet expenditure incurred in delivering BSBI's Strategy which will place BSBI on a more financially sustainable footing. BSBI's Fundraising Manager began employment in March 2021 and those costs are being met from this Fund.

The Funds are held as shown in note 15.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

15. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

	Investments £	Other Net Assets £	Total £
As at 31 March 2021			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	3,026	-	3,026
Welsh Flora Fund	2,031	-	2,031
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Heritage Funds	-	-	-
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	692,562	187,909	880,471
Strategic Development Fund	120,736	-	120,736
	818,355	187,909	1,006,264
As at 31 March 2020			
Restricted Income Funds			
Presidents' Award Fund	2,743	-	2,743
Welsh Flora Fund	1,626	-	1,626
Scottish Officer Fund	-	-	-
Heritage Fund	(5,454)	13,514	8,060
Unrestricted Income Funds			
General Fund	569,245	143,892	713,137
Strategic Development Fund	100,000	-	100,000
	668,160	157,406	825,566

16. COMMITMENTS

As at 31 March 2021, The Society had approved 36 training or research grants totalling £11,403 (2020: 21 grants, £6,171). Grants are normally paid after the completion of the training course or research. The commitment at 31 March 2021 includes training grants awarded in 2020 as well as 2021, the former being unpaid because grantees' botanical fieldwork was disrupted because of Covid restrictions. BSBI will honour these awards to help grantees and maintain its charitable reach.

BSBI is committed to two three-year term office leases expiring in 2022 & 2023 for the Head of Science and BSBI archives. The total non-cancellable commitment under these leases is £5,667 (2020: £6,417). BSBI is committed to rent office space from Cambridge University Botanic Garden (CUBG) for use by BSBI's Scientific Officer under a one-year lease to 30 April 2022. Under this lease, CUBG has, however agreed to waive all charges because the space has been inaccessible due to Covid restrictions. There is therefore no financial commitment at 31 March 2021. In line with FRS102, the resultant cost saving of £1,500 will be recognised in 2021/22 as the concession is received.

BSBI has a contractual commitment of £NIL (2020 £4,502) to Foundation of Social Improvement for it to deliver consultancy work. This cost was grant funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

In the normal course of business, other agreements exist with suppliers, none of which is onerous.

BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

17. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW USED IN OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	180,698	(148,962)
Adjustments for:		
Losses / (gains) on investments	(206,243)	105,223
Dividends and interest from investments and deposits	(21,182)	(30,427)
Investment management charges	7,190	7,979
(Increase) / decrease in stocks	2,619	(3,456)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(2,385)	(25,761)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	36,385	(1,343)
Net Cash inflow/(outflow) generated by/ (used in) operating activities	(2,918)	(96,747)

18. COVID

As explained in the Annual Report, the Covid pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on individuals, businesses and organisations worldwide, including BSBI. We know that many people are still facing all manner of challenges from illness, bereavement, job insecurity, money worries and more.

For BSBI, the human impact on the safety of staff, members and others has remained the top priority. All field meetings and face to face events have been cancelled in favour of online activities although there is a hope to resume normal activities in the coming months when Government guidance allows. BSBI Trustees have continued to closely monitor the situation and issue advice on changes throughout the pandemic and that will continue for as long as it is needed. Trustees have been clear that all current Government guidance, including social distancing and other Covid prevention measures, as well as safe working practices for field work must always be followed.

BSBI has also been impacted financially by Covid although, thanks to the diligence, support and flexibility of Trustees, employees, Committees & volunteers, the detrimental impact has thankfully been mitigated. A good example of this is the successful grant application to National Lottery Heritage Fund's Covid Emergency Fund in July 2020 for £8,800 to help fund the extra working costs of reshaping BSBI to continue to deliver its charitable objectives despite Covid restrictions. The virtual format developed has proved itself to be a valuable and inclusive new tool which BSBI is likely to use even beyond Covid.

Grants awarded in early 2020 to twenty individuals for training & education courses all sadly went unpaid because Covid put a stop to the botanical courses to be attended; however, to their delight, BSBI will honour those grants in 2021.

There have been silver linings of Covid too. We reported last year an emerging sense the impact of Covid was leading the UK towards a new-found public awareness and appreciation for the natural world and this has been borne out by membership metrics. A growth beyond all expectations; by over 9% in the year to March 2021. Also, botanical handbooks have sold well; +8% more sold in the year, probably tapping into an increase in leisure time as a result of home-working and staying local.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

18. COVID (continued)

We reported here last year that BSBI's investments suffered a significant fall in market value to £668k in the final weeks before year end, attributed by BSBI's Investment Managers to the huge uncertainty about companies' economic prospects. We are delighted to report that the recovery that began in Summer 2020 has continued unabated and the portfolio had recovered by +26% to £862k at 30 June 2021. The outlook for investment income, however, remains muted compared to pre-Covid times.

In Spring 2020, Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme was claimed for one employee affected by Covid, however we are pleased to report there were no further instances, nor was there a need to place any employees on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (furlough).

All things considered, the net financial impact in 2020/21 has thankfully been minimal. BSBI feels fortunate to have sustained just one small bad debt, understood to be a result of Covid on the customer's business. Otherwise, payments to BSBI have been largely within terms and cash balances have held up well throughout.

Triggered by the pandemic, BSBI has also made governance changes. Availing itself of pragmatic guidance made available by the Charity Commission and others, Members voted at the November 2020 AGM to update BSBI's Articles of Association to allow the holding of voting at meetings held digitally. This allowed activities to continue despite Covid restrictions. This opened our eyes to the possibility of longer-term benefits; cost savings, a reduction in BSBI's carbon footprint and increased inclusiveness of particular benefit to those unable to travel to attend meetings through geographical distance, affordability or health reasons.

Looking ahead, Covid has begun to shape a future BSBI. The ongoing impacts, insofar as they can be understood and measured, are reflected in BSBI's operational plans and Budget for the coming financial year and beyond. Trustees are confident that Covid has not impacted on the organisation's ability to continue as a going concern and focus now continues on delivery of *BSBI's Strategic Plan 2021-2024*.

Looking even further ahead, it is likely the knock-on effects of Covid will be with us for many years but what form they will take is still impossible to say. In the context of the UK's recovery from economic recession, Trustees are monitoring developments with interest and care. In particular:

- The continued availability of Government Agency grants and contracts; important because BSBI derives circa one third of its income in this way.
- The new fundraising landscape; important as BSBI embarks on delivery of its *Income Diversification Strategy 2020-2023* in order to promote long term financial sustainability.

In summary, the Board feels it is taking all necessary measures and seizing available opportunities to allow BSBI to continue to operate and deliver its charitable objectives throughout the Government's restrictions and beyond.

The Board considers therefore that despite the severe disruption of its scientific activities during the last year, BSBI remains a going concern and no adjustments have been made to the figures in these financial statements in respect of events since the balance sheet date.