

Charity registration number 1155115

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	G Heald J Maxim E Stanton M Smith L Keswick S Solomons
Charity number	1155115
Registered office	c/o The Administrator The Crown & Castle, Market Hill Orford Suffolk IP12 2LJ
Auditor	Ensors Accountants LLP Connexions 159 Princes Street Ipswich IP1 1QJ
Bankers	C Hoare & Co 37 Fleet Street London EC4P 4DQ Barclays Bank plc 4 Church Street Woodbridge IP12 1DJ
Solicitors	Farrer & Co 66 Lincoln's Inn Fields London WC2A 3LH

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

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THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Trust's governing documents, the Charities Act 2011 and FRS 102 Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019.

Objectives and Activities

The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust's objectives are to protect human life, property, and the natural environment in the immediate surroundings of the Alde and Ore estuary. To achieve these objectives we aim to provide, preserve and improve river defences and flood protection. We will always consider the conservation and protection of the natural environment, flora, fauna, features of historic interest and the landscape and beauty of the Alde and Ore estuary.

The Trustees have consulted the guidance available from the Charity Commission for England and Wales on the public benefit requirement of the Charities Act 2011. The Trustees are confident they have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Act.

What We Need to do to Secure the Future

Resilience

The Trust raises funds to enable evaluation of the whole estuary flood defences, to secure capital investment and to safeguard local communities. This will provide flood defence resilience and adaptability in the medium term and beyond.

We are the only charity responsible for the fundraising necessary to enable preparation and submission of Alde and Ore flood defence Business Cases to the Environment Agency (EA). We have been financing the East Suffolk Water Management Board (ESWMB), formerly the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB), to enable them to apply for government grants to complete the necessary works once approval is given by the EA. We also raise money in the event that there is a shortfall between awards from central and local government and the costs of the project.

We started 2023 with some very good news. The ESWMB, as a result of our grants, has been awarded £11.1 million through a government grant from the EA, to improve the Upper Estuary embankments, which are part of Phase 1 of the Whole Estuary Project. A phased approach means we can take action now, to address embankments in the worst condition first, thereby improving flood resistance in those communities at greatest risk.

Our focus now is on supporting the development of an Outline Business Case for Phase 2 of the Whole Estuary Project, which will cover the Lower Estuary. The ESWMB will develop and submit the Phase 2-Lower Estuary Outline Business Case. We understand this is unlikely to cover the estimated delivery costs, so in parallel, we must find more money to close the gap on any shortfall.

Balancing the phasing of the Whole Estuary Project

Taking a phased approach to the Whole Estuary Project is the right thing to do. However, hydraulic modelling shows that, once the Phase 1 Upper Estuary improvements are complete, and if the most extreme event scenario (1:200 plus climate change) were to occur, the result of improved Upper Estuary defences is to capture an elevated flood water level within the channel at the upstream tidal limit at Snape. This is because overtopping spillage into the adjoining floodplain is reduced by the improved embankments. Consequently, these higher water levels travel back downstream into the Lower Estuary system. This then increases the amount of spillover of water entering Flood Cell 4, Sudbourne & Orford. This temporary increase in flood risk is acknowledged and will be managed until Whole Estuary investment is completed. But it does demonstrate the need to complete flood defence improvement along the Whole Estuary so that work in one area does not increase flood risk in another. This has always been the wish of the communities as explained in the Estuary Plan which has gained statutory approval as a Whole Estuary Project.

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The worst case scenario has a low probability of occurring. The ESWMB has identified those properties that may be affected and has found temporary solutions through individual property protection measures. This fix meets the EA's requirement not to increase flood risk temporarily in one area by reducing it in another. But it also means that a permanent solution has to encompass flood defence improvements along the whole of the estuary.

The facts are:

- None of the existing walls are designed to overtop, except for a short section close to Aldeburgh. In 2013, those that did either catastrophically failed, for example Hazlewood marshes, or were partially breached by flows scouring the embankment away as witnessed at Snape Village and Iken.
- The whole Alde and Ore estuary flood risk is hydraulically linked. If any of the walls along the whole estuary were to fail prior to surge peak, the premature drowning out and loss of overtopping flood plain storage results in the surge peak building to an elevated in-channel flow, and compounding all the way upstream to the tidal limit at Snape.

Therefore, whilst investment in defence improvements in the Upper Estuary will be more resilient to the increased overtopping, property flooding again is still possible in this scenario.

So, until the resilience programme of works are completed for the Whole Estuary, and stronger defences are in place to contain more extreme events, communities along the estuary remain at potential risk of serious flooding.

Adaptability

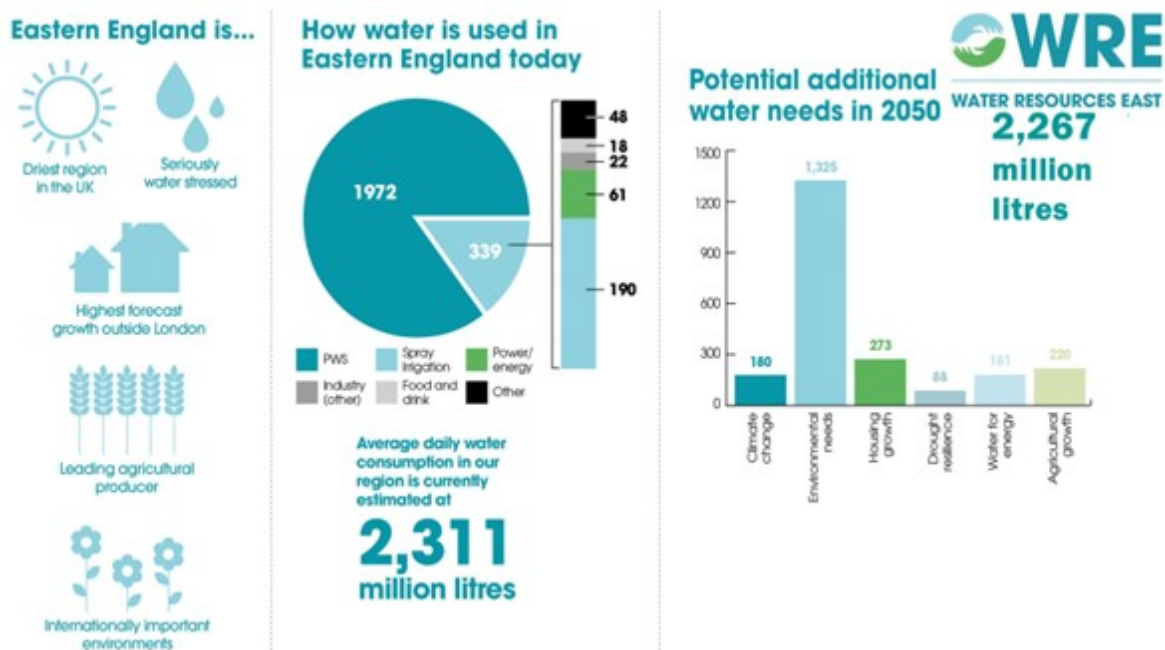
Climate change is happening, and the estuary project takes sea level rise into account. Please take a look at the website World Weather Attribution (www.worldweatherattribution.org). This provides insights into extreme weather events and provides strong evidence of current climate change. The UK statistics are available at <https://climate-change.data.gov.uk/dashboard/climate-and-weather>. The website <https://climate.nasa.gov> also gives more details of the adverse changes that are happening. Paradoxically, while the Aldeburgh and Ore estuary is vulnerable to flooding from North Sea storm surges in the UK, the altered pattern of rainfall in the area is causing water resources to decline.

The UK experienced record-breaking high temperatures and near drought conditions in 2022. This, in turn, led to concern about the security of water availability and increased number of deaths in people aged 65 and over (ONS: Excess mortality during heat-periods: 1 June to 31 August 2022). Regional plans for water resource requirements for the East of England are in place recognising that rain falling in the region may arrive in heavier bursts, and require better storage. In future it may be possible to capture the large amount of fresh water from low lying estuary pastures, provided they are resistant to flooding so rendering improved flood defences is even more important. Please visit wre.org.uk. The chart on the next page demonstrates the current water resource needs.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023



Government and research sources are warning about the impact of climate change, recommending we learn to adapt. The Met Office [metoffice.gov.uk](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk) has useful charts and information on sea level rise.

The Role of the ESWMB in Securing Government Funding

The Trust finances the project team working at the ESWMB. They successfully presented a Business Case to government for grant funding to enable work in the Upper Estuary. This document followed the detailed process stipulated by the EA, involving both technical and financial approval and peer review. The government requires an 'economic value' for a grant to be awarded (i.e. valuations for various factors such as property, agriculture, and archaeology,) calculated using their own guidance. And this is the basis for the grant. After accepting the business case, the EA announced a grant of £11.1 million in January 2023 for Phase 1, the Upper Estuary. This funding includes £3 million from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee local levy funding. Work for the whole estuary will be a 10-11 year programme. The good news is the ESWMB started work on Upper Estuary site ground investigations in 2023 and worked on laboratory and design analyses throughout 2024. An explanation is included in a later section '*The Complexity of the Work Required and Monitored by the EA*'. Work has also started on the Lower Estuary funding applications. The local area EA are supporting this stage with a grant award of £99k to enable the preparation of an Outline Business Case. The Trust will, if necessary, award additional finance to make sure the Outline Business Case is completed and submitted. The current estimates for the Lower Estuary suggest that £10 million will be available from the EA for Phase 2. This leaves a funding gap of about £20 million. The Trust will do its utmost to bridge this gap.

Getting Funds to Ensure the Future of the Alde and Ore Estuary Communities

The communities surrounding the estuary have shown great foresight in working together to initiate this project. Over the last thirteen years these volunteers have worked with the EA, Natural England (NE) and others to try to make this necessary and important project a reality. One of the key outputs of their work was the Estuary Plan which gained approval in 2016 at District and County level and from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. This plan was endorsed by all key statutory bodies and is now a document of material consideration within East Suffolk Coastal planning authority and recognised within the latest Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) update. The latest SMP 7 can be found on the SMP Explorer website <https://environmental.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning> at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/unit/SMP7/ALB14.4>.

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In particular the preferred wishes of the communities for the resilience of design, detailed in the following section, were a key input into the successful submission of the Upper Estuary Business case to the EA. In the 8 years since the creation of the Estuary Plan, the desire of the communities to provide a future for the estuary which is both resilient and adaptable has not changed. In its submission of the Upper Estuary Business Case, the ESWMB has ensured the wishes of the communities are at the forefront of the design. However, some information that lies within the existing Estuary Plan has now been updated by the Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP) to take account of more recent information: the number and type of properties, the project costs and the economic case as well as fundraising initiatives. The addendum is available on their website.

The communities continue to be engaged through the AOCP which has a representative from each town and parish at risk from flooding, as well as from Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council. While we are delighted with the positive outcome of the Upper Estuary for Phase 1 of this Whole Estuary Project its approval has suffered from lengthy delays and has had a severely detrimental effect on the total costs of the project .

The delay arose due to an EA investigation into charges relating to a clay stockpile at Iken. Fortunately, the issue was de-coupled from consideration of the business cases thanks to the work of the AOCP. However, charges were brought against the ESWMB and others. The charges relate to the transfer of significant volumes of material to Iken without having the necessary permits in place. The parties involved, including the ESWMB, pleaded guilty. The ESWMB has received and continues to receive advice from its lawyers with knowledge of such matters to argue its case. A sentencing hearing was to be held in December this year. That has now been deferred to 17-21 March 2025. Currently the EA's position is that the material on site can be neither used nor removed. The Trust is not party to any of these charges though we do hope that the outcome takes into account the importance of the use of this material in wall improvement work and its potential emergency use should we have a significant storm surge, leading to flooding. We understand that Iken Parish Council and the AOCP have supported this plan. The estuary communities would be unnecessarily penalised financially if this important initiative to upgrade flood defences were not considered.

Using the previous government the EA's stated strategy was that:

- "by 2025 we will have created more climate resilient places and infrastructure, by ensuring the nation is prepared for flooding, coastal change and drought
- by 2025 we will be a stronger leader on climate adaptation and resilience, encouraging others to act now on the climate emergency and invest in adaptation
- by 2025 we will be ready for bigger, more frequent incidents and will support those at risk to be more resilient"

The wishes of the communities could not be more aligned and have been and continue to be a driving force on this project. We would hope the new government, as a minimum, supports this and develops it further.

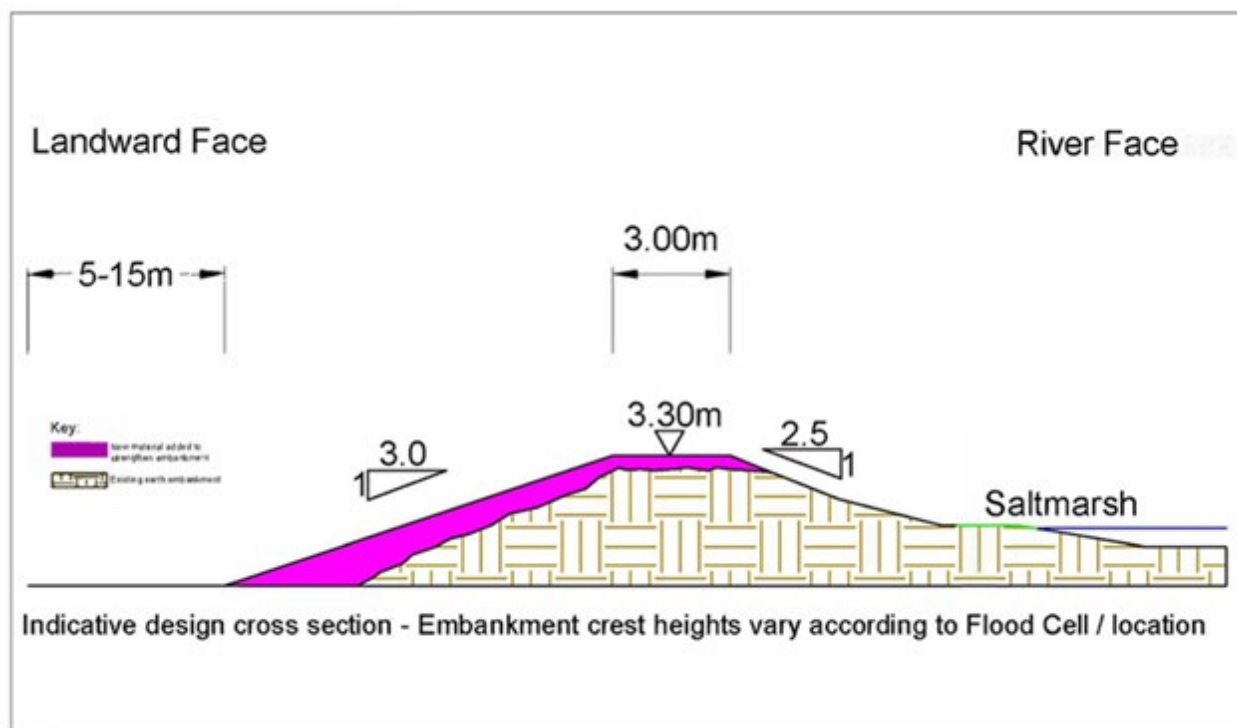
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The Benefits of Making Flood Defences Resilient

The flood defence improvements will protect the communities in a number of ways.



The Issue

The flood defence walls of the Alde and Ore estuary are in poor condition. This makes them vulnerable to storm surge flooding from the sea into the estuary. Many sections of the wall have a standard of service of 10% AEP (Average Exceedance Probability) i.e., vulnerable to a 1-in-10 year flood event. Given the very narrow crest width and steep back face profile of the current walls, the adverse impact of flooding worsens with increased overtopping and some walls have a residual life estimated at less than 5 years. The latest significant flood event was the 2013 East Coast tidal surge, which breached the walls and flooded residential and non-residential properties, wildlife habitats and farmland. Houses and pubs in Snape village, roads and agricultural land were badly flooded. This was determined to be a 1 in 17* year event (6% AEP).

Since the 2013 flooding the ESWMB has carried out emergency improvements to some of the most damaged walls around Aldeburgh and Snape. In addition, major work was done at Havergate Island in 2018 which, by lowering the walls, enabled the RSPB to safeguard the nature reserve's habitats against the increasing frequency of storm surges. It also had the effect of relieving some pressure on other walls in the estuary, reducing the risk of wall damage and flooding. Orford Ness can also take in some flood water due to the lower defences there. But although some walls in Aldeburgh and Snape, for example, have been repaired, significant investment is still required to upgrade all flood defences to an acceptable standard. The approved design takes into account sea level rise caused by climate change. And the upgraded river walls, built to the design illustrated above, will be able to withstand more frequent and much more severe weather events.

The Solution

The proposed design has been approved by the EA and is illustrated above. The approved height of the river walls will be at least 3.3 metres above mean sea level (Ordnance Datum Newlyn) and the width of the top will be increased to 3 metres uniformly. The design will give quick and easy access for machinery to monitor the condition of the walls and, if need be, repair damage.

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The reduction in the angle of the incline of the landward slope will reduce the impact of the dynamic energy within the water as it exceeds, overtops and flows down the landward defence side. The design greatly lowers the force of the retreating flood water so that the walls retain their integrity. Thus, costs for repairs and maintenance should reduce.

The flood defence improvements will upgrade the river walls so that they can retain a 1-in -75-year (1.33% AEP) event within the estuary channel. They will be built to allow a further 300mm to flow over the wall and down the back face without causing failure, thereby managing a 1:200 + climate change overtopping event, taking into account likely sea level in 2050 i.e., an AEP of 0.5% without catastrophic incident. Without flood defence improvements an event of this magnitude could breach the walls, causing major flood damage to properties, infrastructure, water supplies and rare freshwater habitats. The design will hugely mitigate the damage these major flood events can cause. It can also be further adapted in the medium term (20 to 50 years) for climate change and sea level rise and so buys time for future generations to consider ways to adjust to future levels of climate change.

Saltmarsh already present is essential to the structure of a fully functioning estuarine system. It provides a natural flood mitigation service by reducing and damping down wave action which erodes tidal defences over time. However, there is a potential conflict when wall embankments are raised in the estuary, as it may impact saltmarsh health. Sea level rise can outpace and hinder the ability for the saltmarsh to trap sediment and rise out of the water which keeps the system in balance. The threat to saltmarsh is known as coastal squeeze and is recognised by the EA, as the operating authority for existing defences and NE as the environmental regulator. The Alde and Ore estuary coastal zone is therefore subject to robust statutory surveying and monitoring and importantly includes a community commitment of ongoing visual surveys coordinated by the AOCP. The flooding of 89 hectares at Hazlewood marshes and additional actions taken by other landowners to reconnect the flood plain, should ensure the saltmarsh systems can adjust, expand thereby staying in balance in the medium term. The ESWMB, therefore, does not anticipate that coastal squeeze will be a concern over the planned investment period.

Funding the solution

Our flood defence upgrade will be funded by a combination of money from central and local government, a public works loan financed by landowners and a legacy from David Andren (a local resident who was key to the initiation of the Estuary Plan). These sources will be augmented by amounts raised by the Trust from both individual donors and charitable trusts. The Upper Estuary upgrade is being carried out first. The ESWMB and the local communities through the AOCP would naturally like to progress this work as soon as possible. However, the proposed programme of works for the whole estuary will require significant funding and evidence of donations received or to be received is an important factor when seeking government funds. The ongoing 'Iken Clay' case does not help, and we hope that it will be soon brought to a favourable conclusion for the benefit of the communities.

The Benefits

Economically: Every £1 invested in flood defence upgrades benefits the local economy by over £4 (as adjusted for Net Present Value) over the next 25 years, because homes and businesses in each town and village, farmland and freshwater reserves and underground aquifers, along the whole estuary will be protected. This is a positive return on investment for both the local and UK economy.

Enjoyment: Many of us take pleasure in this beautiful environment we are so lucky to have. Everything including accessibility along the extensive network of footpaths, to bird watching and sailing will continue safely, thanks to this work. The internationally renowned concert hall at Snape Maltings and its considerable education outreach programme will be protected. The Maltings buildings have recently been granted Grade II* status by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture & Sport on the advice of Historic England. This too is excellent news for both the local and UK economy as it attracts artists and audiences from all over the world.

Health and wellbeing: Protection of current enjoyable activities and the increased inclusive access to the walls for pushchairs and mobility vehicles will have a positive impact on both physical and mental health. On 1 July 2022 the UK Health and Security Agency published guidance 'Flooding and health: assessment and management of public mental health'. This guidance forcefully presents the case for the imperative to reduce flood risk on physical and mental wellbeing.

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Environment: The estuary lies within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)). It is a wetland site of international importance (RAMSAR convention), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Natura 2000 Special Protection Area. The estuary is described as a complex of 3 rivers (Alde, Butley and Ore) comprising various habitats including intertidal mudflat, salt marsh, a vegetated shingle spit (Orford Ness), saline lagoons and grazing marshes. The whole estuary is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These east coast wetlands which include the Alde and Ore estuary are critically important resting spots on the East Atlantic Flyway, a globally important wild bird superhighway. So important that the RSPB has spearheaded a bid to make this Flyway a new UNESCO World Heritage site and with UK Government support, has successfully been included on the UK's Tentative List of World Heritage sites in April 2023 see <https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/rspb-england/posts/a-bid-to-make-the-uk-s-wild-bird-superhighway-a-new-world-heritage-site>.

The Facts

- Over 1,000 properties are better protected from the risk of flooding. These include over 750 residential properties and nearly 300 non-residential properties.
- Revenue generated by leisure and tourism exceeds £100 million per annum, creating many jobs. The tidal flood defence frontage is 44 kilometres long and provides access to 101 kilometres of public and permissive paths as well as internationally designated wildlife habitats. Natural England's plan for the King Charles III Coastal Path route from Bawdsey to Aldeburgh has been approved. There is already access to footpaths on the estuary walls where this footpath will be designated.
- 59 surface water abstraction points within the floodplain irrigate over 2,630 hectares of vegetable and high value crops vital for nationally important food security.
- 3,335 hectares of arable tidal plain grazing marshes of national importance lie in flood risk areas.
- A number of roads, sewerage treatment plants and electricity substations in the flood plain will be protected. The B1069 road linking Snape village with Snape Maltings, the B1122 from Aldeburgh to Leiston and the A1094 into Aldeburgh are at risk.
- Other infrastructure, whilst not liable to be directly flooded, could be disrupted by local flooded road networks nearby. Notable assets affected include Hollesley, Aldeburgh and Orford Primary Schools, Aldeburgh and Orford Fire Stations, Aldeburgh Community Hospital and access routes to both HMP Warren Hill and HMP Hollesley Bay Prisons.

Longer Term Water Security and Biodiversity

Upgrading the river walls will protect and enable substantial, currently unused, freshwater resources. This will allow farmers to invest in providing improved biodiversity through eco system services such as carbon capture and enhanced food production. Currently within the estuary, the ESWMB pumping stations discharge around 8 million cubic metres of fresh water into the estuary every year, enough drinking water to support 60,000 properties. This could be an important freshwater resource, which as we have seen is rapidly becoming a precious commodity. The importance of sound flood embankment defences to protect this additional licensable resource is obvious. We may fund an additional grant to the ESWMB to evaluate the benefit of protecting this increasingly scarce water resource.

The wall design and extraction of clay locally from the marshes will provide additional surface water storage, maximising the potential for its recovery and reuse. This fresh water can be transferred back upstream not only to grow high value crops but to create a potential for wetland farming (paludiculture) whilst sequestering carbon, cleaning the air and water and providing much needed freshwater bird breeding and over-wintering habitat. Some of this habitat was lost when the wall failed at Hazlewood marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Further, innovative and collaborative partnerships are evaluating how this surface water resource can be captured and stored on farms within larger, but multi-use reservoirs, not only safeguarding the production of high quality locally sourced food, but to provide critical environmental life support in extreme drought conditions to mitigate the worst climate hazards.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

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The upgraded improvements to the river walls and to habitats will deliver sustainable job creation, economic security and enhanced visitor experiences, consistent with mental health and wellbeing goals as set out by the United Nations <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>. The importance of improving biodiversity and stopping its decline is clearly articulated on the website 'United for Life & Livelihoods' website iucn.org. And, more sadly, a recent report has stressed the continuing decline of UK habitats and species, see <https://nbn.org.uk/news/state-of-nature-2023/>.

The Complexity of the Work Required and Undertaken and Monitored by the EA

The works led by the ESWMB on the delivery phase of the project started in February 2023 and regular updates on progress are sent out to the communities. Upgrading the walls is a complex process and is more than just putting more clay on top of them. All the stages in this process have been submitted and approved in the Outline Business Case and considerable work towards final delivery is complete.

Since January 2023 the ESWMB has been focused on the delivery phase of this project. The first stage involving environmental baseline surveys, identifying water vole, mollusc, fish, reptile and bird populations. These assessments are complete and include the locations of protected habitats and nesting sites. This information has been used to formulate Environmental Action Plans for each Flood Cell, that detail the mitigating actions such as targeted grass and vegetation cutting to create improved favourable habitats nearby out of harm's way and robust management that deters wildlife use within the planned construction area. Any remaining animals are captured by licensed qualified specialists and temporarily rehoused to suitable sites.

The ESWMB is working with farmers and landowners where construction activity requires land use change. The aim is to enhance the environment so that there is a biodiversity gain. At this preparatory stage, any known archaeology and heritage assets are mapped to ensure both robust construction staff delivery briefings and highlight potential high-risk areas that are to be supervised under an archaeological watching brief during the construction works.

In late Summer 2023, specialist teams conducted detailed borehole surveys, drilling deep into the ground and extracting core samples of soil for testing. These have been sent to laboratories to confirm the type of material, property strength and water content. These detailed results have been used by design consultants to confirm the design and construction footprint for a given location. The team can then get all required final consents and licences. Health & Safety and supporting works information has been compiled into the mandatory Construction Phase Plans. Naturally this all takes time but, once concluded, construction work can start. The work is continually monitored by internal and external auditors including the EA who manage the walls and borrow dykes (ditches). Once finished the EA then resume responsibility for the walls.

Preparatory work on the site requires the wide-scale reduction in height of vegetation which in turn encourages wildlife to move. All of this is done with the protection of species in mind. The topsoil is stripped from the wall to discourage regrowth of vegetation and recolonisation by wildlife. This material is kept and then used to re-surface the newly constructed works because it contains the local native plants seeds and speeds their recovery and wildlife return.

Temporary facilities will focus on workers' welfare, as well as providing access across fields and over new culvert crossings to the river wall. Clay will then be cut from the marshes, air dried and used to fill the current borrow dyke wherever it is required to stabilise new wall foundation works. During this process, aquatic plant species from the borrow dyke are transferred to the new cut ditch to optimise their growth. The wall itself is stripped of the grass vegetation in stages as works progress and the existing clay slope removed by forming steps, known as bench cutting. The excavation of new clay from the marshes will be hauled onto the wall, placed and compacted in horizontal layers to the right specification, knitting both existing and new soil materials together. The steps cut in the wall enables a strong key into the existing defence and forms a strong bond. This process reduces the likelihood of new works sliding off the existing defence. The improved clay design slope is achieved using a GPS guided bulldozer blade. The final step is to cover the clay with topsoil and seed with specialist tidal grass seed mix, using drills and, finally, reinstating any boundary livestock fencing as the ESWMB depart.

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During 2024 ESWMB consultants completed detailed design work for Flood Cell 06, Snape Maltings. Working closely with Britten Pears Arts representatives, much work has been undertaken to devise a design that is sympathetic to the Maltings, a nationally important heritage asset. The design solution showcases a sensitive merging of flood defence improvements, seamlessly interfacing with the existing infrastructure. The designs have formed a required Listed Building Consent application to East Suffolk Council.

The ESWMB has commissioned civil engineering contractors with specific installation expertise to provide detailed costing estimates for this phase.

Wider embankment design work on the remaining three Upper Estuary Flood Cells is continuing at pace and nearing completion. A 3D construction model has been developed and along with supporting drawing plans will be used to confirm our approach with each local landowner affected by the construction works and identify any final site specific constraints to be captured within the construction phase works plans ahead of delivery.

A great deal of work is now being undertaken to resolve some of the outstanding permits and permissions that are required to be in place before construction work can begin. The relevant statutory authorities are helping to advise on bespoke licence applications for one of the most important and abundant species in the estuary, the water vole.

Current high level timetable

In July 2024 the ESWMB announced the timetable for works along the Whole Estuary.

Spring 2025

Flood Risk Activity Permit received from the EA.

Water Vole licence approval received from Natural England.

Autumn 2025

Snape Maltings construction work begins.

Spring 2026

Construction work on all phase 1 flood cells starts, with a view to completing the work in autumn 2028.

Late 2025

Submission of Lower Estuary Outline Business Case to the EA. Once this is approved preparatory work can start on the Lower Estuary. This will be an extensive and necessary piece of work similar to what has already taken place for the Upper Estuary.

Communications

Following the receipt of government funding for Phase 1, the ESWMB is responsible for communications on the project. The ESWMB use AECOM to host a virtual room which can be accessed at <https://aldeore.exhibition.app/>. This room is updated regularly by the ESWMB with the latest available information on the project. It has been visited over 800 times in the last twelve months.

In addition, the ESWMB will continue to engage with the AOCP at their quarterly meetings. Both we and the AOCP will continue to distribute all newsletters or similar updates from the ESWMB to our subscribers and post them on our website.

Fundraising

What We do with Your Donations

The Trust's strategy continues to focus on giving financial grants to the ESWMB. It is an approved Risk Management Authority who can therefore win Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management-Grant in Aid (FCERM-GIA/FDGIA) from the EA. This, in turn, enables the ESWMB to apply for grants from other parts of central government which still require EA approval. The ESWMB submits an application to the Trust with a description of the work proposed which is then scrutinised by the Trustees. The ESWMB is therefore the major beneficiary of the Trust's fundraising efforts. Any award from a Trust funded grant submission to the ESWMB goes directly to and is managed by the ESWMB.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

We hope grants from the EA and central government will provide at least half of the cost of making the river walls along the entire estuary resilient. We work closely with the ESWMB to understand its cash needs, in particular what finance it needs for its work where government funding is not available. The ESWMB in turn assists us with data and fact checking for our grant applications to charitable trusts and foundations. Of course, we monitor how our grant awards are spent on the work the ESWMB has undertaken and it provides reports to the Trust and EA and updates to the AOCP.

Although the majority of people working on behalf of the AOET are volunteers, it is important to note that there are overhead costs incurred to raise the funding required as well as to maintain the operational elements of the AOET.

How We Raise Funds

Our donations come from individuals, charitable trusts, foundations and local businesses who wish to conserve the estuary, the local community and the environment. We are grateful to all our donors including the individuals and families making one off and regular donations. Our strategy for raising funds has several different focuses but the themes that link them all and drive our work are; the need for the flood defences, the communities who will benefit and, crucially, the organisations who will deliver this work and why we have chosen to work with them.

This is a long-term project so fundraising plans must be responsive to changing needs both in the amount we need to raise and the timescale of the project. The Trust is working with fundraising consultants identifying charitable trusts, foundations and local government sources of funding which support the environment and wildlife habitats. We consider this will be a valuable help to us as we apply for grants from charitable trusts and foundations as well as, potentially, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

We are also working with the same professional charity consultants to assist us with identifying and approaching individuals whose awareness of the impact of the floods and whose philanthropic attitude to the environment and communities may prompt them to become donors. The brief for these consultants is to support the scope and delivery of the Trust's plan for individual giving. The appointment was made after a tender process in 2020 but we are waiting for the successful outcome of the Upper Estuary Business case before assessing the next steps in this campaign. The return on this investment will be seen over the next few years.

The Trust also raises funds through activities open to all in the estuary communities and beyond. This increases public awareness of the need to upgrade the river walls. We constantly need to maintain high-level visibility of this project both within the estuary communities and at a national level if we are to raise the required funding. Community support is important in pressurising government agencies that are crucial to the success of the project.

We organise fundraising events for potential and existing donors. This is another example of our strategy in action where we are looking to develop and bring together the community to help achieve this ambitious project.

Future Fundraising Plans

The EA requires a community contribution towards the cost of any major project. We were very fortunate in having a £3 million gift from farmers and landowners to the ESWMB, valuable donations from the estuary communities, significant support from the local Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and a large grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation for the Upper Estuary. This grant, although referenced in last year's report, also is particularly important because it demonstrated to the EA that the Trust could successfully apply for such grants. The Trust has made a strategic decision to apply for large grants from trusts and foundations of a similar nature who will be able to donate and support this work. Given the time frame of this project we need to be flexible and adapt our plans to make best use of the opportunities as well as reflect the realities of working in partnership with the EA and the ESWMB.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Such community funding and how it is raised has to be part of the Business Case submitted to the EA. The community contribution meant that the ESWMB could press ahead with the project as soon as the government contribution was announced. Although the Business Cases for the Upper and Lower Estuary projects are separate, the whole estuary is a continuous, dynamic environment from Snape to Shingle Street, with a river wall stretching along 44 kilometres down the Suffolk coast. Because of this continuity the Trust encourages unrestricted donations for works on the estuary as a whole. Central and local government grants are crucial for the necessary and successful improvement of our flood defences but, as ever, the Trust continues to aim for a number of different income streams. However, we would not be in the positive position we are without generous individuals and businesses who have chosen to donate before the Business Case outcome. Giving now is an important factor in getting a government grant (currently estimated at £10 million for the Lower Estuary) to prove to Government that the funding gap can be closed. This will be an important input into the future submission of the Business Case for the Lower Estuary. We are currently reassessing our plans and will be seeking a meeting with the EA to discuss this point.

Raising Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Informing communities and increasing their understanding of the long-term benefits of flood defences, is an important aim of the Trust. The estuary remains largely invisible to residents and tourists if they are not walkers, birdwatchers or river users. Many visitors to Aldeburgh, for example, are only aware of danger from the sea and do not know that in 1953 the town was flooded more by water coming up the High Street from the river than from the sea. Some houses had to be demolished and the process of making others habitable again was lengthy. Families were displaced for many months and businesses had to cease trading. Worse still was the farmland rendered unusable for up to 3 years because of salt damage. The 70th anniversary of this devastating event took place in January 2023. Coastal Partnership East, the AOCF and the Trust publicised this story through newsletters and videos. Please take a look at our newsletter dated 29 January 2023 in the news section of our website at www.aotrusted.org.

The Orford Flower Show, traditionally a very popular and well attended event, was the focus of a presentation by the ESWMB, the AOCF and the Trust on the Whole Estuary Project and how it is progressing following the award of £11.1m from the EA. This event allowed us to engage with a wider audience who might not attend other community meetings. And in 2024, with the help of a volunteer committee, we organised a successful flotilla on a beautifully calm sunny day in July. Well over 100 people swam, paddled or rowed from Aldeburgh to Orford on the ebb tide. We are very grateful to our sponsors, and match funders for their support and most importantly to the volunteers and participants who enabled it to happen.

Three further events for existing donors and potential donors enabled the Trust to provide a presentation by the ESWMB on the need for this whole project and to discuss with them our strategy for fundraising. Their support is particularly crucial for the project.

Community initiatives which raise awareness of the Trust's work are also very important. Each year Aldeburgh Bookshop organises the sale of Christmas cards, with illustrations by local artists and photographers, to raise funds for the Trust. We are very grateful to the artists who donated these beautiful images and to Aldeburgh Bookshop who manage the printing, distribution and sales.

We thank all volunteers who helped with these very successful events. If you are interested in organising an event or have an idea for one, please get in touch with us at info@aotrusted.org.

One other exciting aspect of our work (done in collaboration with the consultants) is on an education project for schools around the estuary. Initially started by the AOA (Alde and Ore Association), with a pilot project for 11+ year olds, our project has a focus on working with primary school age children to increase their understanding of the estuary, tides and how storm surges create such a threat to people and the habitat. This project has recently been submitted to the Community Lottery Fund for funding. While we have volunteers who donate their expertise, we are always keen to hear from volunteers who would like to assist with this aspect of fundraising.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The Trust Website

In 2022, the Trust commissioned a new look and content for its website which explores in greater depth the issues facing the Alde, Ore and Butley rivers, the estuary as a whole and the communities nearby. The website has proved very useful in getting our message out to both local and wider audiences. It also provides a platform for our newsletter, sent out to all our subscribers, and for our annual report and accounts, with easier access than the Charity Commission website. We are very pleased that subscribers and others continue to access the website. Social media sites continue to be updated with the aim of informing and engaging people in the project.

Why Do We Work With the ESWMB?

The Trust works with the ESWMB because it is an autonomous public body that manages the water levels behind the river defence walls, known as internal drainage districts. Furthermore, it has been working with the AOCP for some time and is familiar with the Estuary Plan. We work with the ESWMB because of its expertise, local knowledge and, importantly, because as a non-profit Risk Management Authority, ESWMB is authorised to present a case for 'Partnership Funding', a contributing government grant known as Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management- Grant in Aid (FCERM-GIA). The ESWMB has designed and will build the new river defence walls. It has proven experience of such projects. The design is approved by government which is why the EA are prepared to release funds to start the work. In the future, the EA will take over responsibility for the maintenance of the improved walls. We welcome their support.

The local community preferred flood defence strategy as outlined in the Estuary Plan (mentioned earlier) was evaluated by the ESWMB. This was used in the preparation of the Business Case already approved by the EA and will be included in the Lower Estuary Business Case when submitted for approval and a possible FCERM-GIA grant award. The Upper Estuary runs from the bridge at Snape to Sudbourne Marshes and has 11 kilometres of wall. The Lower Estuary runs from there to Hollesley and has 33 kilometres of wall. This difference in length is a key factor in the higher cost of the Lower Estuary upgrade over the Upper Estuary.

It is crucial that the ESWMB gets both technical and financial approval to benefit from FCERM-GIA funds allocation. This approval and release of funds has already enabled the capital project in the Upper Estuary to begin. The ESWMB has significant experience of similar projects and works in conjunction with the EA who oversees its work.

To learn about the ESWMB within the Water Management Alliance, please visit its website at www.wlma.org.uk. Finally it reports annually on its sustainability efforts and its plan can be found at <https://www.wlma.org.uk/net-zero>.

Grants and Estimated Project Costs

On pages 10, 11 and 12 of the 2022 Trustees Report (31 December 2022) which can be found on the Charity Commission website there is a comprehensive history of the costings and grants available from government. Nothing has changed from last year but we know that the ESWMB is working on updating costs and funding for the Whole Estuary. The ESWMB has told us updated numbers should be available by the end of 2024. We will publish these numbers once we get them. And they will feed into an update of the cost/ benefit analysis of the whole project and our funding needs.

We are anticipating the receipt of a number of applications from the ESWMB for the Lower Estuary grant application to government. They cover:

- A new flood model with updated datasets from HR Wallingford who have expertise in this area.
- A grant to evaluate the economic value of water for national food security.
- An environmental assessment by Jacobs which is required for the Outline Business Case.
- The Lower Estuary Business case itself.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Financial Review

The year started very well with approval of the Upper Estuary Business Case. The EA grant of £11.1 million is great news. Despite this good news the fundraising environment remained fragile due to the economic environment. Thus much work remains to secure funding for the Lower Estuary.

The Trust's income decreased to £41,751 (2022: £103,723). Gift Aid recoverable was £5,423 (2022: £5,410). This decline was mainly due to no fundraising events being held. There was no restricted income. Thus total income including bank interest was £62,684 (2022: £105,262).

Expenses for the year included costs of £63,768 (2022: £58,915) much of this related to the development of future plans for fundraising based on the work previously undertaken to support the completion of the Whole Estuary project as explained in the fundraising section. We expected fundraising costs to increase now that we have received government funding. There was also continued awareness-raising through Press, PR and marketing which is mainly through website, newsletters and social media activities. This decreased to £6,098 (2022: £8,408). These costs were minimised as the rebranding was done by volunteers during 2022 and continued into 2023.

No grants were awarded to the ESWMB in 2023 due to the award of the grant from the EA for the Upper Estuary which enabled preparatory work to commence. Costs accrued to the ESWMB at December 2022 and 2023 relate to work done yet to be paid for amounting to £7,455 (2022: £7,455).

During the year governance costs decreased slightly to £16,777 (2022: £18,003). The accounting and audit costs are detailed in note 6 and 8. The increase in audit fees reflects current market trends. We are pleased to say that accounting costs reduced to £9,697 (2022: £11,463).

The fundraising section details the fundraising strategy and awareness raising activities and focuses on the Lower Estuary funding needs. Press, PR and marketing decreased to £6,098 (2020: £12,408). Advertising, printing and design increased slightly due to the rebranding of the video used on the new website £1,529 (2021: £1,259). The design of the new website as well as the copywriting was all done by volunteers so cost nothing. Software to design the website was leased. Going forward both the content of the website and all branded literature can be managed in house which will keep costs down. The Trust continues to have regular income from donors which requires administrative support. This is included in Donor, Care and Support and has increased to £8,667 (2022: £3,470). This includes an event in June 2023 for known supporters.

General expenses increased to £10,652 (2022: £3,632). Included within this are insurance costs of £2,385 (2022: £2,465) and the use of recruitment consultants to recruit 2 new trustees which cost £4,800 (2022: £nil).

The Trust does not employ staff but uses contract help from people on a flexible basis. A competitive tender process is followed for major costs. We would like to thank the support of volunteers who have helped keep ongoing costs as low as possible. We always look at efficient ways to reduce costs.

The net funds/(deficit) available for the year, before grants payable to the ESWMB, totalled (£39,738) (2022: £11,305). Funds carried forward in unrestricted reserves have reduced by £36,987 to £661,676 (2022: £698,663) largely due to amounts paid to fundraising consultants. No restricted income was received in the year but the existing fund was unrestricted, at year end restricted funds totalled £Nil (2021: £2,751). We are very grateful to the Alde and Ore association for unrestricting these funds.

During the year nothing (2022: £42,686) was paid to the ESWMB. At year end the Trust had £683,574 in cash and cash equivalents including £500,000 in a 95 day short term notice account with C. Hoare & Co. In the submission of both the Upper and Lower Estuary Business Cases to the EA by the ESWMB, it is important that any shortfall between EA awards and total estimated project costs can be funded such that the project is viable. The EA grant award in January 2023 took account of what was available from our reserves as well as the amount funded by a loan provided by farmers and landowners. Thus, the Trust aims to increase available funds and ensure it has adequate reserves for the long term success of the embankment walls improvement project. This is particularly important when seeking approval from the Government to get a grant for the Lower Estuary work.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed. They include the need to close the funding gap to secure government funding for the Lower Estuary, and the finalisation of the Iken Clay Case. And, as with all major capital projects, the fragile and volatile global economic outlook compounded by the uncertainty of the new government's approach to the environment and investment. The Trustees keep up to date on the macro-economic environment and get regular updates on the progression of the work of the ESWMB. Other risks facing the Trust are to ensure donations are accounted for correctly, Gift Aid is secured, no conflicts of interest exist and that we comply with General Data Protection Regulations and Fundraising Regulations. The Trustees are mindful of their responsibilities to donors and apply due diligence with respect to grant applications from the ESWMB.

Our Approach to Fundraising

The Trustees review the management of the fundraising risk annually to ensure that the Trust's policies comply with the Code of Fundraising Practice. The Trust is registered with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Fundraising Regulator and pays each an annual fee. Through these organisations, The Trust maintains up-to-date policies for its Fundraising Code of Conduct, Compliments and Complaints and Whistleblowing. The Trustees seek to ensure that volunteers are aware of the Code and adopt good fundraising practice. The Trust is not aware of any failures under those standards during 2023. Similarly, no complaints have been received by us regarding our fundraising activities.

The close adherence to fundraising scrutiny by the Trustees and transparency with donors ensures that we do not unreasonably intrude on anyone's privacy. We are not unreasonably persistent and do not place undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

The Trust has always been fully committed to protecting details of all the people we work with and who support the Trust. In 2020 the Trust appointed external advisors to ensure our continued compliance with GDPR legislation. During 2021 we asked for a GDPR review by our professional fundraising consultants and no issues were identified. The Trustees recognise the importance of keeping data safe and secure. The Trust will continue to engage external advisors on a regular basis to ensure data is compliant and safe.

All branded material for Trust-led fundraising events is designed within the Trust and is closely monitored. We ensure that every aspect of the events meet our standards and gain support from the communities. The Trust does not engage in face-to-face or telephone marketing nor does it conduct street or public collections.

Going Concern

The Trustees recognise the importance of increasing cash funds and keeping costs at an appropriate level as cash reserves will be an important factor when the ESWMB submits its Business Case for the Lower Estuary to the EA to get FCERM-GIA. The Trustees take a thoughtful approach to day to day spending. This has been particularly important since the beginning of the pandemic, inflationary pressures and the prolonged delay in the outcome of the Upper Estuary Business Case submission and resubmission. This has necessitated increased use of volunteers to keep costs low as well as the reduction of unnecessary spend.

In early 2023 the government awarded £11.1 million to the ESWMB for work on the Upper Estuary. In addition, the local EA has awarded a grant of £99,000 and we will supplement this with an anticipated future grant to the ESWMB for the submission of the Lower Estuary Business Case. Furthermore, we continue to receive regular income from donors, and we are applying to trusts and foundations for core funding. We also raised £40,000 from a successful flotilla in July 2024. Thus despite the challenges to fundraising caused by the cost of living crisis plus the lengthy delay in the outcome of the Upper Estuary Business Case, cash reserves remain sound. Therefore, the Trustees consider that the Trust has the funds available to support future grant awards, day to day costs and fundraising initiatives for the foreseeable future. The Trustees have concluded the Trust is a going concern.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Structure, governance and management

The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a constitution with the Charity Commission (Charity Number 1155115) in England and Wales. The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signing the accounts were:

Guy Heald (Chair)
Brian Johnson (retired 19 April 2024)
Lindsay Keswick (appointed 19 April 2024)
Jane Maxim (Fundraising)
Meryl Smith (appointed 19 April 2024)
Sue Solomons (appointed 14 October 2024)
Elizabeth Stanton (Treasurer)

We were sad to see Brian Johnson retire. He has been a stalwart of the project. He was involved from the very beginning of the project and was trustee of the AOET for 11 years. We wish him well. However, we are delighted that we have been able to appoint 3 new trustees who have a keen interest in the estuary. Their bios will be available on the website in the near future.

The Trustees undertake the governance of the Charity. All Trustees are elected Trustees. Trustees can serve a maximum of 12 years. New Trustees are fully apprised about the constitution and workings of the Trust through briefing meetings organised by the existing trustees. Trustees are kept informed of current issues through updates from the Charity Commission, the Fundraising Regulator, NCVO and newsletters from advisors. The Trustees also seek input from external advisors when appropriate.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the Trust.

The Board of Trustees follow a regular cycle of meetings and review the activities of the Trust to ensure they remain focused on its stated objectives.

Future Plans

The Environment Agency's strategy is guided by 3 principles:

- put people and wildlife first: our goal is to create a better place for them
- 80/20: we will focus on the 20% that makes 80% of the difference
- support local priorities: every place and community has its own needs.

These principles are consistent with the 2016 Estuary Plan and the Upper and Lower Estuary Business Cases and they underpin the aims that the Trust and the communities continue to work towards. The Trust's aims could not be more consistent with these principles that inform EA strategy. The excellent economic benefit, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the freshwater habitats of international importance all deserve our commitment to improve and preserve their flood defences.

We are encouraged that the new government's ambitions are to work with the private and charity sectors to help with infrastructure projects that revive the economy and mitigate government funding. This does require mutual respect from both parties.

The strength of support locally driven by volunteers who have worked alongside the EA over a number of years would lead us to hope that the EA, supported by central and local government, will expedite all the necessary approvals as soon as is feasibly as possible. The Trust, by funding this project, is investing to secure the future of our communities, their people, their infrastructure, wildlife and the natural environment for generations to come.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales 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 Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Charity 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 judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable 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 Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

G Heald

Trustee

Dated: 23 October 2024

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust (the 'Charity') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and the 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 Charity's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 Charities Act 2011.

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 Charity 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 Charity'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 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. 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees 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 Charity'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 cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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.

We have obtained sufficient knowledge on systems, controls and operations of the charity, to ensure our audit testing was suitably tailored. The testing performed was designed to include tests of detail together with an assessment of the control environment to enable us to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud. This included work on areas where we consider there is a higher risk of fraud including revenue recognition, management override of systems and controls and transactions with related parties.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, through discussions with the trustees and from our own knowledge and experience of the sector.

To address the risk of fraud we performed the following audit procedures:

- Thorough review of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness and evaluating the rationale of any transactions outside of the normal course of business.
- Assessment of key accounting estimates within the financial statements in order to assess their reasonableness and determine whether there is any bias in management's estimates.
- All team members were informed of the relevant laws and regulations and potential fraud risks at the planning stage and reminded to remain alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance.
- Enquiring of management whether there have been any alleged, suspected or actual instances of fraud during the year.
- Reviewing legal expense accounts for any indicators of litigation or claims.

It is however primarily the responsibility of the trustees to ensure that the charity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

Other matters

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the Charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

This has been done in order for the financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with current Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Charity and the Charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Ensors Accountants LLP

23 October 2024

**Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor**

Connexions
159 Princes Street
Ipswich
IP1 1QJ

Ensors Accountants LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor of the Charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

		Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	41,751	-	41,751	103,723	-	103,723
Investments	4	20,933	-	20,933	1,539	-	1,539
Total income		<u>62,684</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>62,684</u>	<u>105,262</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>105,262</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	5	82,894	2,751	85,645	75,954	-	75,954
Charitable activities	6	16,777	-	16,777	23,865	-	23,865
Total expenditure		<u>99,671</u>	<u>2,751</u>	<u>102,422</u>	<u>99,819</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>99,819</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		(36,987)	(2,751)	(39,738)	5,443	-	5,443
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 January 2023		698,663	2,751	701,414	693,220	2,751	695,971
Fund balances at 31 December 2023		<u>661,676</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>661,676</u>	<u>698,663</u>	<u>2,751</u>	<u>701,414</u>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 22-31 form an integral part of the accounts.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	13		805		-
Current assets					
Debtors	15	9,636		2,097	
Short term deposits	16	500,000		500,000	
Cash at bank and in hand		183,574		219,652	
		<u>693,210</u>		<u>721,749</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	<u>(32,339)</u>		<u>(20,335)</u>	
Net current assets			660,871		701,414
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>661,676</u>		<u>701,414</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	18		-		2,751
Unrestricted funds	19		661,676		698,663
			<u>661,676</u>		<u>701,414</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 23 October 2024

Mr M G Heald
Trustee

Ms E Stanton
Trustee

The notes on pages 22-31 form an integral part of the accounts.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash absorbed by operations	22		(56,112)		(31,745)
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(899)		-	
Interest received		20,933		1,539	
Net cash generated from investing activities			20,034		1,539
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents			(36,078)		(30,206)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			719,652		749,858
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			683,574		719,652
Relating to:					
Cash at bank and in hand			183,574		219,652
Short term deposit			500,000		500,000

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust is a charitable incorporated organisation, registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales. The Charity's registered office is: c/o The Administrator, The Crown & Castle, Market Hill, Orford, Suffolk, IP12 2LJ.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The Charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved following the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities applying FRS 102 rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice which is referred to in the Regulations but which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

1.4 Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Donations are recognised on receipt or when income is certain. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the Charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

Grant income is recognised when the Charity has fulfilled the terms and conditions associated with the grant.

Income is recognised from fundraising events once the event has taken place.

Income from investments is recognised when receivable.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered.

Raising funds comprise of costs incurred in order to promote the work of the Charity and to generate donations.

Charitable activities comprises grants and other direct costs incurred on the Charity's objects.

Support and governance costs are those costs associated with the running and constitutional requirements of the Charity.

All costs are allocated between expenditure categories on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned using an appropriate basis.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Equipment - over three or four years

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the Charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks and other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

Accounts held with notice periods longer than three months are shown as short term deposits.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.9 Financial instruments

The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the Charity's balance sheet when the Charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the Charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Donations	36,328	43,165
Gift aid recoverable	5,423	5,410
Fundraising	-	55,148
	<u>41,751</u>	<u>103,723</u>

Fundraising events

Fundraising events last year included a Flotilla which raised £46,000 and a sale of Attic Art which raised £9,300.

4 Investment income

	2023 £	2022 £
Interest receivable	<u>20,933</u>	<u>1,539</u>

5 Raising funds

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Press, PR and marketing	6,098	-	6,098	12,408
Donor care and support	8,667	-	8,667	3,470
Campaign management	55,449	2,751	58,200	58,915
Advertising, printing and design	2,028	-	2,028	1,529
General expenses	10,652	-	10,652	3,632
Coastal Partnership East	-	-	-	(4,000)
	<u>82,894</u>	<u>2,751</u>	<u>85,645</u>	<u>75,954</u>

Included within general expenses are costs for insurance £2,385 (2022: £2,465) and trustee recruitment fees of £4,800 (2022: £Nil).

Campaign management costs include research related to future fundraising plans and some costs relating to the fundraising events.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

6 Charitable activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Grants payable to East Suffolk Water Management Board	-	5,862
Governance costs (see note 8)	16,777	18,003
	<u>16,777</u>	<u>23,865</u>

No new grants were awarded to the ESWMB in anticipation of the outcome of the Upper Estuary Business Case.

7 Grants payable

Reconciliation of grants payable

	2023 £	2022 £
Commitment at 31 December 2022	7,455	44,754
Commitments made during the year	-	35,387
Grants paid during the year	-	(42,686)
Reversed in the year	-	(30,000)
	<u>7,455</u>	<u>7,455</u>

8 Governance costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Audit fees	7,080	6,540
Accounting	9,697	11,463
	<u>16,777</u>	<u>18,003</u>

9 Net movement in funds

	2023 £	2022 £
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	94	19
	<u>94</u>	<u>19</u>

10 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the Charity during the year.

During the year the charity spent £4,800 (2022: £Nil) towards the future recruitment of two new trustees.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

11 Employees

There were no employees during either year. Volunteers from the community add time, expertise and skills.

12 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 January 2023	551
Additions	899
At 31 December 2023	1,450
Depreciation	
At 1 January 2023	551
Depreciation charged in the year	94
At 31 December 2023	645
Carrying amount	
At 31 December 2023	805
At 31 December 2022	-

	2023 £	2022 £
14 Financial instruments		
Carrying amount of financial assets		
Debt instruments measured at amortised cost (Note 15)	7,348	2,097
Instruments measured at fair value through profit or loss (Note 16)	500,000	500,000
Carrying amount of financial liabilities		
Measured at amortised cost (Note 17)	32,339	20,335
15 Debtors		
Amounts falling due within one year:	2023 £	2022 £
Gift aid recoverable	2,241	961
Prepayments and accrued income	7,395	1,136
	9,636	2,097

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

16 Short term deposits

	2023 £	2022 £
95 day notice deposit account	500,000	500,000

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	8,826	5,533
Accruals and deferred income	23,513	14,802
	32,339	20,335

18 Restricted funds

The income funds of the Charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 January 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Balance at 1 January 2023 £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 December 2023 £
The Alde & Ore Association	2,751	-	2,751	(2,751)	-

The restricted fund was used during the year to support agreed event fundraising efforts.

19 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 January 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 December 2023 £
General funds	698,663	62,684	(99,671)	661,676

Previous year:	At 1 January 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 December 2022 £
General funds	693,220	105,262	(99,819)	698,663

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted 2022 £	Restricted 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Fund balances are represented by:						
Tangible assets	805	-	805	-	-	-
Net Current assets/(liabilities)	660,871	-	660,871	698,663	2,751	701,414
	<u>661,676</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>661,676</u>	<u>698,663</u>	<u>2,751</u>	<u>701,414</u>

21 Related party transactions

Trustees, their close family members and businesses under their control made donations to the charity totalling £140 during the year (2022: £10,584). This comprised of regular donations, plus in the prior year this also included Flotilla entrance fees/sponsorship and bids for auction prizes. None of the donations were restricted.

There were no amounts owed to or from the charity's related parties at the year end or the previous year end.

None of the Trustees received any remuneration, benefits or expenses from the Charity during the current or prior year.

The son of a Trustee designed the new website voluntarily, but received reimbursement for expenses for leased software costs of £835 during the year (2022: £808).

The son of a Trustee owned a venue used by the Charity in the year, the cost for this usage was £1,920 (2022: £Nil).

22 Cash generated from operations	2023 £	2022 £
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(39,738)	5,443
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(20,933)	(1,539)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	94	19
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(7,539)	3,111
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	12,004	(38,779)
Cash absorbed by operations	<u>(56,112)</u>	<u>(31,745)</u>