



Annual Impact Report and Accounts 2020-2021



Contents

INTRODUCTION:

A message from the Chief Executive	5
Our strategy	6
Our year in a snapshot	8

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Key Achievements and Performance.....	12
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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income & Expenditure	16
Structure, Governance and Management.....	18
Statement of Financial Activities	24
Notes on Financial Activities	26

Reference and Administrative Detail	29
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INTRODUCTION



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Over one million seagrass seeds planted.

A significant undertaking, and an achievement in which everyone involved should be justifiably proud. From the staff to the volunteers, this has been a truly collective effort. The UK's first full-scale seagrass restoration project couldn't have happened without the support of so many people – so thank you to all involved.

But this journey isn't over, indeed this is just the start!

As we face down a climate emergency, and increasingly recognise the scale of the biodiversity crisis upon us, we need scalable solutions, and we need them now. We're at a critical moment in our history when we are told, without even a hint of hyperbole, that *"we are running out of time as a species"*.

In addressing these two crises nature will be our biggest ally. There has never been a more urgent need to revive damaged ecosystems.

The loss of seagrass in the North Atlantic that has occurred over centuries has created a necessity for the start of a period of environmental renewal. At the beginning of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration it is critical that we create projects from strong, collaborative partnerships which rejuvenate our oceans using the best available science.

At Project Seagrass we're inspired to facilitate those partnerships; and support communities, organisations, and governments in working together on a shared mission to transform our coastal seas. We believe that restoring seagrass meadows will provide a foundation for a conversation about wider seascape rehabilitation, after all this is the aim, and at Project Seagrass we are committed to supporting the mainstreaming of this concept. Seagrass meadows are just the start!

I hope that by this time next year we're able to reflect on the announcement of further seagrass restoration projects across all three of the home nations of Great Britain, and to reflect on a schedule of work that will help us to scale these efforts and support communities across the UK.

Is this a pipe dream? I don't think so, but let's see what the 2022 report brings!



Dr Richard Lilley

OUR STRATEGY

Our strategy remains the same today as when we were founded in 2013, and is underpinned by our four key aims:

1. To educate the wider community on the presence and importance of seagrass ecosystems, the services they provide and current seagrass management issues.
2. To build the capacity of stakeholders in the use of standardised scientific methodologies
3. To promote and assist with long-term monitoring of seagrass condition.
4. To support scientific research and conservation measures that help facilitate the long-term resilience of seagrass ecosystems.

To achieve these aims we are organising our workflows through three pillars: **community**, **research** and **action**. It is through these three pillars that we influence and ultimately make progress towards our vision: "A world in which seagrass meadows are thriving, abundant and well managed for people and planet".

2020-2021 Pillar Highlights

Community Outreach



Monthly average of **100k** Twitter **impressions**

2014 Year End
Average = 5.9k

↓
2021 Year End
Average = 100.6k

We have also recorded significant growth on both Facebook and Instagram.



Research Impact



The importance of seagrasses is highlighted in a **new UN report** to which we contributed;

Out of the Blue: The Value of Seagrasses to the Environment and to People

The report was released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) together with GRID-Arendal and UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).



Direct Action

1,000,000

The last of **one million seagrass seeds** were **planted** by our team in Dale, West Wales.

The wrap up of the Seagrass Ocean Rescue project in Dale in March 2021 represents the completion of the first 'meadow scale' seagrass restoration project in the UK.



Community: Through both social and traditional media, in person events, and the development of free educational materials we seek to empower learners of all ages with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to address the interconnected global challenges that seagrass ecosystems are facing. These challenges include, but are not limited to, climate change, environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity. It is particularly important for us to shape our educational workflows to ensure they are accessible to those who may otherwise be marginalised due to poverty and inequality.

Our strategy is explicitly tied to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals since we believe that learning must prepare students and learners of all ages to find solutions for the challenges we face. Education should be transformative and allow us to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change our societies and care for the planet.

Research: Diverse research bringing together multiple disciplines is needed to support policies to recover and sustain healthy seagrass ecosystems. As seagrass research necessarily becomes more transdisciplinary to address complex challenges, it will be critical for scientists and research funders to understand how scientists from different disciplines and regions might collaborate and strengthen the overall evidence base for the better management of seagrass ecosystems.

We will continue to advocate for and conduct the transdisciplinary research that improves our knowledge of seagrass ecosystems. As a supporting partner to the UN Ocean Decade we will respond to their CALL TO ACTION and produce – “The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want”.

Action: On 1 March 2019, The United Nations General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, with the aim to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity.

As partners to this call, we have an ambitious plan for 2021-2026, including the launch of three new seagrass restoration projects in 2021, in Wales, Scotland and England. We are also piloting a seagrass nursery and mechanisation programme in Wales to facilitate the scaling up of harvesting and planting seagrass seeds.



**2021
2030** United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030

OUR YEAR – A SNAPSHOT

Undoubtedly the highlight, and the main focus of our 2020-2021 year was the completion of the planting for **Seagrass Ocean Rescue**; a pioneering partnership with Sky Ocean Rescue, WWF UK and Swansea University to plant over 1 million seagrass seeds over 2ha of seabed in Dale, Pembrokeshire as a pilot scheme. With the planting now complete it is vital we now monitor the meadow as it grows and work with local stakeholders to make the most of the opportunities this new meadow can create. This includes the piloting of a scheme to reward fishers for sensitive behaviour towards the seabed and a programme to create moorings for visiting boats.



Key Stats

This project was the **first** meadow-scale seagrass restoration project in the UK.

Project development, community engagement and seed planting ran over **2 years** from 2019-2021.

Over **1,000,000 seeds** were planted.

The project engaged **92 volunteers** in collecting seagrass seeds.

Thirty volunteers were involved in sorting and separating seagrass seeds.

A whopping **1955 volunteers** were involved in the packing of sand and seeds into hessian bags.

Forty-four volunteers helped plant the bags of seagrass seeds.

Volunteers ranged in age from **three to ninety** and came from Falmouth to Edinburgh.



Our Year In Community



Outreach activities and the continuous development of our Seagrass Education and Awareness (SEA) programme remains the core focus of our 'Education' Pillar.

This year we have added a number of resources to the SEA programme which can be downloaded from our website.

- Four 'Wild Days' resources were added to the Age 0-5 programme.
- Five 'Species Spotlights' were added to the Age 5-7 programme.
- A 'Seagrass Physiology and Photosynthesis' video was added to the Age 11-14 programme.

This year we have added several resources to the SEA programme which can be downloaded from our ProjectSeagrass.org website.

In May 2020 we published a new website at Seagrass.org.uk with a specific focus on UK seagrasses.



We have also continued to grow our online presence across our social media platforms; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Indicative figures of our reach:



(Twitter)

Q1

343.2k Tweet impressions
260 New follower

Q2

262.5k Tweet impressions
223 New followers

Q3

309.6k Tweet impressions
280 New followers

Q4

292.4k Tweet impressions
430 New followers



(YouTube)

Q1

Over 400 views of Evie's 'Earth Live Lesson' from Lizzie Daly and over 700 views of 'Sowing Seagrass seeds in Wales' from Richard Scarse.

Q2

Over 4000 views of 'Using seagrass to fight the climate emergency' from WWF UK

Q3

Over 500 views of 'You might never have heard of seagrass. Here's why you need to' from Razor Science Show (CGTN)

Q4

Over 30,000 views of 'Seagrass Superheroes' with Jason Lewis

Our Year In Research

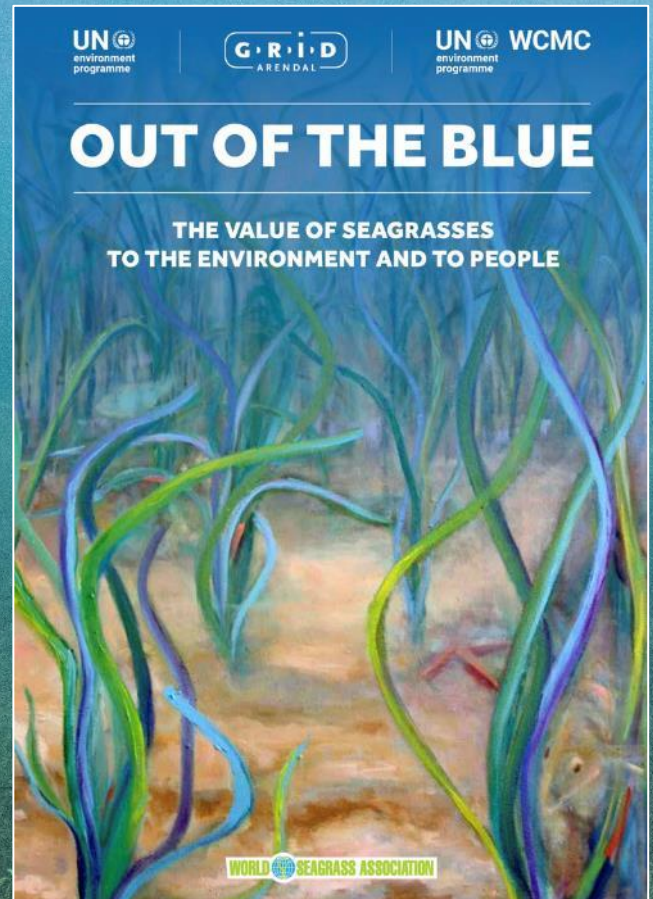


2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development

As a supporting partner the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development are committed to producing “The Science We Need For the Ocean We Want.”

This year we have produced the following peer-reviewed papers:

- McKenzie, L.J., Nordlund, L.M., Jones, B.L., Cullen-Unsworth, L.C., Roelfsema, C. and Unsworth, R.K., 2020. **The global distribution of seagrass meadows.** Environmental Research Letters, 15(7), p.074041.
- Jones, B. L., Nordlund, L. M., Unsworth, R. K., Jiddawi, N. S., & Eklöf, J. S. (2021). **Seagrass structural traits drive fish assemblages in small-scale fisheries.** Frontiers in Marine Science, 8, 354.
- Unsworth, R.K., Higgs, A., Walter, B., Cullen-Unsworth, L.C., Inman, I. and Jones, B.L., 2021, March. **Canopy Accumulation: Are Seagrass Meadows a Sink of Microplastics?** In Oceans (Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 162-178). Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.



At Project Seagrass we were also involved in the publication of the UNEP Report ‘Out of the Blue’

- United Nations Environment Programme (2020). **Out of the blue: The value of seagrasses to the environment and to people.** UNEP, Nairobi.

The publication of such a report by the United Nations represents a significant milestone in putting seagrass ecosystems on the marine conservation agenda.

Our Year In Action



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030

As a supporting partner to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration we are committed to active restoration of seagrass ecosystems.

In 2020-2021 we completed our first **1,000,000 seagrass** seeds pilot project in Dale, Pembrokeshire.

The planning and fundraising for a further **two seagrass restoration projects** has been conducted which are pipelined to begin in 2021-2022.

We have secured funding for a **seagrass mechanisation project** which seeks ways in which we can scale our seagrass restoration effort through the mechanical harvesting and planting of seagrass seeds.

In Scotland we have secured 'Biodiversity Challenge Fund' funding from NatureScot for the creation of a **community-led seagrass restoration project** with Seawilding (SCIO, SC050126) in Loch Craignish, Argyll.

We are actively seeking collaboration and funding for a full-scale Scottish project and to pilot a seagrass nursery in Wales.

We completed the year 2020 to 21 with the successful rolling out of major piece of restoration infrastructure funding from the Welsh Government. This included funding for **survey equipment and a new boat.**



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Following its 2nd anniversary in 2015, Project Seagrass reviewed its success and also evaluated the most pressing threats to coastal seagrass meadows for the coming decade. This led to identification of four key areas where Project Seagrass should focus its efforts:

Education

Influence

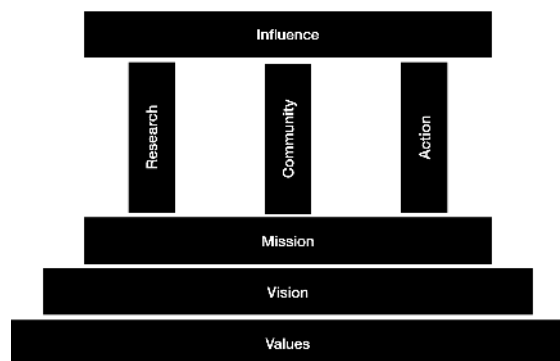
Research

Action

These were presented on the 9th March 2016 at our 'Official Launch' in Cardiff.

In January 2021, these four key areas were reduced to three. The rationale being that the 'Influence' we were having was as result of the other 3 pillars, and what we were achieving through 'education' and its associated activities was the building of a community of people who cared about the future of seagrass ecosystems. It also speaks to our direct engagement with coastal communities as a way of working.

Our organisations 'Pillars' are now therefore Research, Community and Action.



This report presents the highlights of the past year that work towards our three pillars.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PERIOD 2020/21

The period from the 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 marks 7 years since Project Seagrass was founded, 6 years since it became a registered charity in England and Wales and 4 years since it became a registered charity in Scotland. Our Key achievements for this year are broken down below; first by pillar, and then chronologically by Quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: COMMUNITY

Q1. April 2020. To kick off the year we teamed up with Nedret Andre to host an online exhibition; '[Seagrass As Art](#)' with submissions open until 31st May.



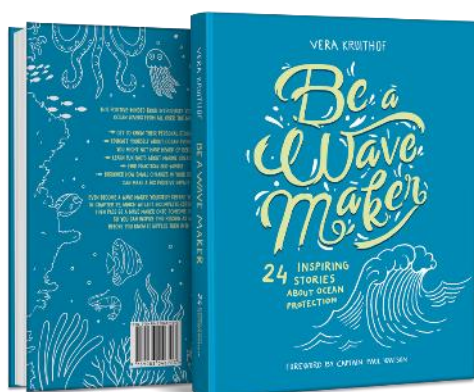
Submissions which can be viewed on our [website](#).

Evie delivered two online talks; '[Seagrass Success](#)' as part of Lizzie Daly's Earth LIVE lesson programme and '[Seagrass meadows](#)' as

part of the “Bring Ocean Science to the classroom initiative.” Rich and the Seagrass Ocean Rescue restoration project featured on Weatherman Walking on BBC Wales.

May 2020. On 22nd May, The International Day For Biodiversity, we launched our UK Seagrass Restoration focussed website [Seagrass.org.uk](https://seagrass.org.uk). Ben gave a seminar presentation to the Faculty of Science and Technology at Bournemouth University on the development of Project Seagrass, and the research we conduct.

June 2020. For World Oceans Day we teamed up with [Earthwatch Europe](https://earthwatch.org) to release a range of educational resources. Ben featured as one of 24 inspiring ocean advocates in the book [Be A Wave Maker](https://www.beawavemaker.com), aimed at children and young adults.



RJ wrote his first blog for Finisterre’s Sunday Broadcast and Rich spoke at Blue Marine Foundations ‘Rewilding the Sea’ Online Conference.

Q2.

Throughout the difficult period of the Covid19 pandemic lockdown in the UK our wider Project Seagrass team that includes staff employed through Swansea University contributed to a whole range of educational and outreach events and materials.

July 2020. The article ‘Restoring our lost seagrass meadows’ ran in the Waitrose Weeend publication.

September 2020: RJ did an online ‘meet the scientist’ for a [Primary School in Wiltshire](https://www.primaryschoolinwiltshire.co.uk)

Q3

November 2020. RJ gave a talk at the The Wildlife Information Centre’s AGM on the importance of global seagrass ecosystems and our restoration work in the UK context. Rich was interviewed by Big Issue North for an article; [Pilot’s new lessons for ‘nursery for fish’](https://www.bigissue.co.uk/news/pilot-new-lessons-for-nursery-for-fish).

Wild Saint launched their ‘Sea Tails’ socks to raise awareness of our work.

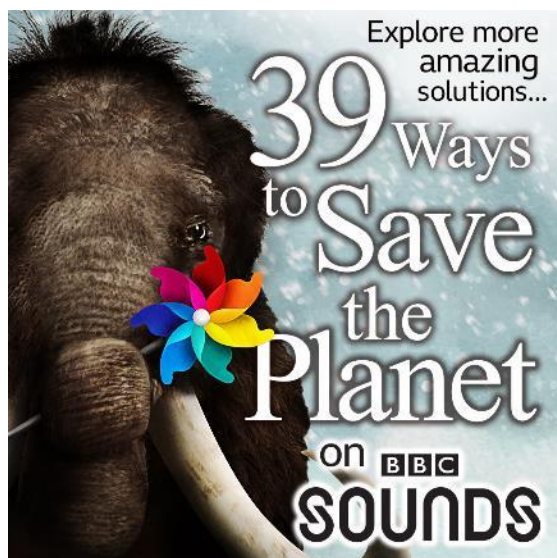
For his achievements through science communication, Ben was selected as a [Planethon Pacer](https://www.planethonpacer.com), a Swedish programme supported by Oatly. RJ also wrote his quarterly Autumn [Underwater Update](https://www.underwaterupdate.co.uk) for Finisterre.

December 2020. RJ spoke about seagrass restoration at the MASTS Research Priorities for Climate Change science conference.

We ran a ‘[Good News Advent Calendar](https://www.goodnewsadventcalendar.co.uk)’ across our social media platform before releasing a ‘[Days of Seagrass](https://www.daysofseagrass.co.uk)’ Christmas video on the 23rd.

Q4

January 2021: Our interview with Radio 4 for their series ‘[39 Ways to Save the Planet](https://www.39ways.com)’ aired.



We were included in '[The Planet Savers of 2020](#)' e-book and RJ did a [MASTS CASTS](#).

February 2021: RJ presented to [Sustainable LSE](#) and to Jersey International Centre of Advanced Studies (JICAS) and Leanne did a [seminar at PLACE](#)

March 2021: Each year ends with both a celebration of World Seagrass Day on March 1st and Seagrass Awareness Month.

RJ presented to both the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences and the European Marine Science Educators Association on the challenges and opportunities for seagrass restoration.

The beginning of 2021 saw a concerted effort by our expanding team to develop a draft seagrass education programme targeted to run alongside our future restoration activities.

Evie and Sam were filmed for [a short film by Jason Lewis](#).



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: RESEARCH

Q1 – Rich contributed to a key scientific paper published in [Nature Communications](#) on how mimicry of key functions in the marine environment can help improve restoration.

Q2 – July 2020: Ben, Rich and Leanne published a paper on the [Global distribution of seagrass meadows](#), which has subsequently been well cited and used by global ocean charity Oceana in strategic planning for future blue carbon campaigns.

Q3 – In October 2020 RJ started work on a project with NatureScot and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh conducting Seagrass meadow surveys and genetic analysis of samples from Scottish waters.

In November 2020, the Project Seagrass team planted more experimental seed planting as part of their Dale pilot project in order to improve the effectiveness of their methods.

December 2020. Throughout December, Ben participated in several UN Ocean Decade workshops and seminars focusing on co-

designing the science we need for the Ocean Decade.

Q4 – January 2021: Ben lead [research documenting the functional role that seagrass plays in supporting fish vital to small-scale fisheries](#), which was subsequently featured on the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development hub.

Feb 2021: Rich, Leanne, Ben and others within the Project Seagrass team published a paper on the [accumulation of plastics in seagrass meadows](#).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: ACTION

Q1 The UK wide Covid19 lockdown commencing in March 2020 meant that conservation actions during this period were minimal.

Q2 August 2020. RJ organised seagrass seed collection at Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve whilst the rest of the team collected seagrass seeds at Porthdinllaen.

During August 2020 a major seagrass seed collection activity took place in North Wales to support a second round of seed planting in Dale. The challenges of Covid19 restrictions limited the capacity of volunteers to be part of the activities.

Q3 November 2020 was a seminal moment in the development and expansion of Project Seagrass through the signing of a funding agreement with the Welsh Government to develop a programme of infrastructure investment to facilitate future seagrass restoration in Wales.

On November 23rd the team deployed [the final BoSS lines in Dale](#), marking 1,000,000 seeds planted since the beginning of Seagrass Ocean Rescue.

Q4

February 2021 saw the ordering of a new seagrass restoration vessel funded by the Welsh Government. As part of the same project funding a major investment in Drones was made enabling purchase of a Wingtra fixed wing drone.

In February 2021 we planted 10000 seagrass seeds at Porthdinllaen in North Wales within mooring scars as part of our Seacology and our Welsh Government projects.

We continued with our partnership with Natural England to conduct the Isle of Scilly Seagrass Monitoring Survey, and continued with our Seagrass-Watch Survey in Porthdinllaen.

In March 2021, Rich commenced the start of a trial with a Welsh fisherman to pilot the use of a Sensitive Ecosystem Responsible Fisher (SERF) Award to encourage fishers to support marine habitat restoration projects. The SERF award enables fishers to obtain immediate benefits from a project whose ecological benefits may take a long time to materialise.

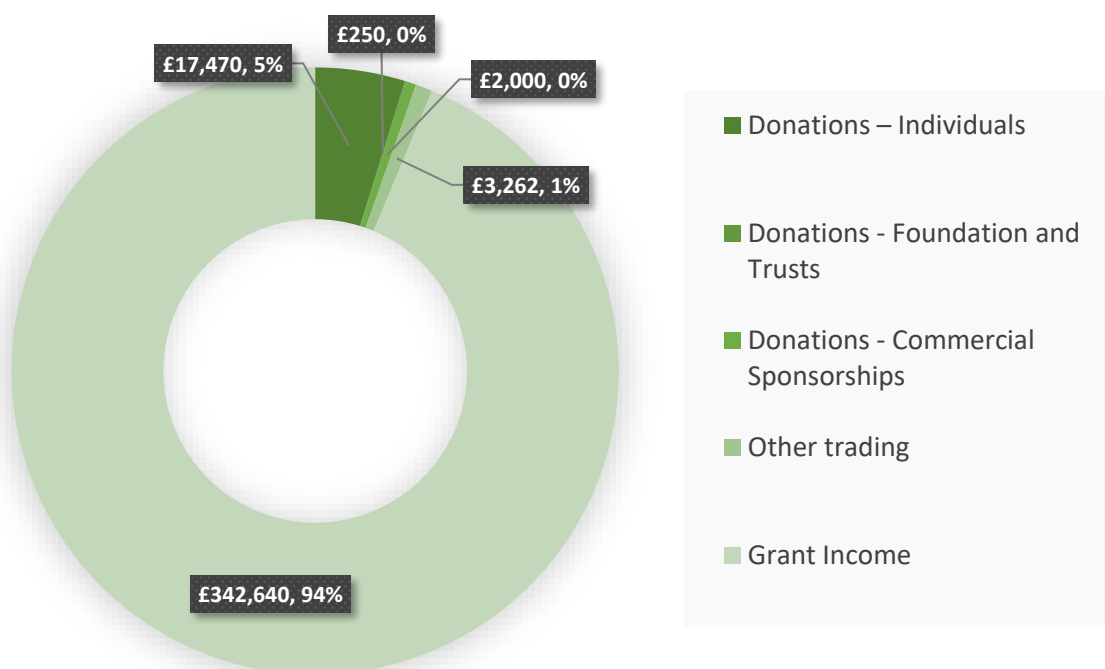
In March 2021 we also deployed three visitor moorings in Dale as part of our seagrass restoration project. The aim of these moorings was to delineate the restoration area and discourage anchoring in the area. The operation of these moorings is a collaboration with the Dale Seagrass Stakeholder Group. Project Seagrass has agreed to act as the manager of funds generated from the voluntary fees raised from their use.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite the ongoing Covid-19 crisis changing the way we work and raise money, 2020-21 was successful financially and has put us in a strong position for the future – a strong position to secure a future for seagrass. We raised over **£365,000** in income, a **2,111.6%** increase on the previous year. Nearly £300,000 of that was granted for one specific project (funded by Welsh Government) which we completed during the financial year. We spent over **£270,000** on our action programmes.

INCOME

GRANT INCOME CONTRIBUTED A SIGNIFICANT £342,640.



£306,000 from the Welsh Government to deliver the RESOW (Wales) project, aiming to support future infrastructure in Wales to enable seagrass restoration operations.

Commercial sponsorships from Haku Taku, Reverse Gear and Emitwise

Nearly £20,000 in donations from the public

£32,000 in funding from the Scottish Government

Continued contributions from Natural England for the Isles of Scilly seagrass monitoring programme

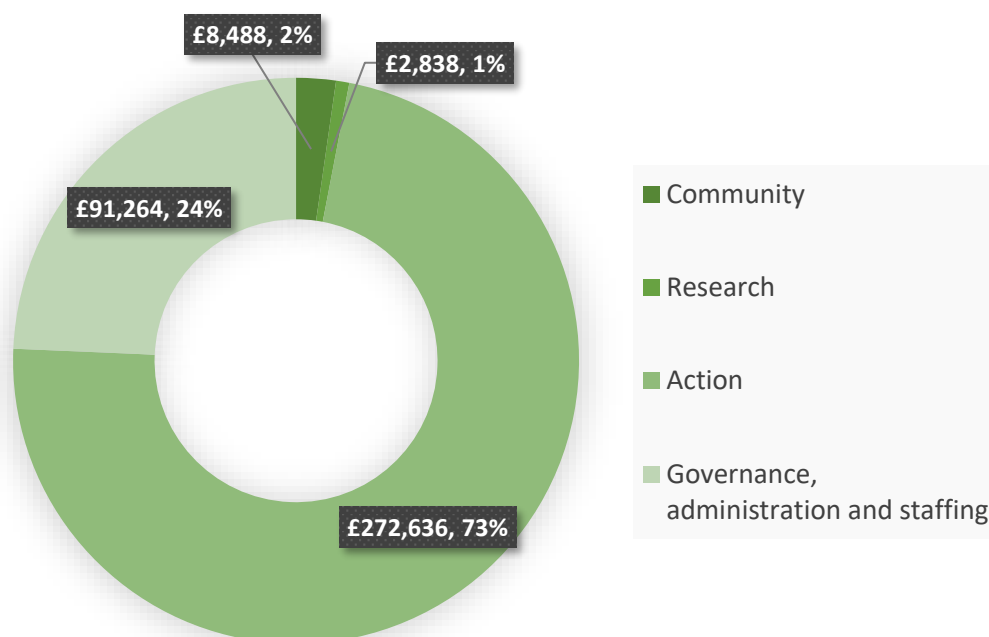
£14,900 from Seacology for the implementation of an Advanced Mooring System trial and associated seagrass planting in North Wales

£10,000 from the William Grant Foundation towards scientific research

2,111.6% increase in income from 2019-2020

EXPENDITURE

WE SPENT £375,226 ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES OVER THE YEAR.



There was significant capital spend of over £200,000 this year largely thanks to Welsh and Scottish Government support. Key significant capital spend included:

- Research Vessel RV Gwenhidw - £103,000.
- MX Aquatic Habitat Echosounder - £18,500
- WingtraOne Survey Drones (2) - £51,000

Thanks to William Grant Foundation, and in collaboration with NatureScot and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, we spent £10,000 conducting a genetic connectivity study for Scottish seagrasses. This has provided the necessary information to give the go ahead for Scotland's first seagrass restoration project.

We also delivered several significant programmes of work this year:

- Seagrass Restoration Stakeholder Strategy in Wales - £27,900
- Stakeholder mapping in the Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation - £18,300
- Special Area of Conservation report and plan - £18,500
- Habitat Suitability Model - £19,000
- Communication materials (including two SAC communication boards - £26,500

With our partners Swansea University, WWF UK and Sky Ocean Rescue we completed the planting of over 1,000,000 seagrass seeds in Dale, Pembrokeshire marking the completion of the UK's first full-scale seagrass restoration project.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO), incorporated on and registered as a charity on 24 July 2015 in England and Wales and 17 August 2016 in Scotland. It is governed by an Association Model Constitution, having been amended following approval by members at an AGM on 2nd May 2015.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees, as defined by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and the Charities Act 2011 and are collectively referred to as “The Trustees”.

The need for a more involved and independent board of trustees was identified by the Senior Executives. Not least the need to have trustees who are chosen for their individual qualifications, experience and skills to cover the gamut of those required for successful governance of the rapidly expanding organisation. The ambition for the period 1st April 2020- 31st March 2021 was to appoint 4 new trustees to the board and to elect a formal Chair. The view of the board at present (given the rapid growth of the organisation) is that from now on there should be between 4 and 12 trustees involved to provide adequate governance for an organisation of this size and ambition.

Trustees may serve two consecutive periods of four years. After serving these periods they must stand down for a minimum of two years before offering themselves for election again. The organisation advertises vacant trustee positions to the public. A register of trustees’ interests is held and regularly updated by the charity.

TRUSTEE INDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING

All new trustees are to be given a formal familiarisation with the organisations business, Charitable Board organisation and

responsibilities by the Chairman and the four Senior Executives as part of an induction process. It is our intention to employ charity staff during the next financial year. Newly appointed staff will work to agreed terms of reference, will be subject to regular performance interviews and are to be given career training opportunities.

ORGANISATION

The Board of Trustees, which administers the Charity, meets regularly and on not less than four occasions per annum.

To set the pay and remuneration of the key management personnel (Executives) and staff in general, the Chairman will make a recommendation for approval by the Board of the Charity. This recommendation follows a meeting with the Directors. It is based on a review of annual performance against certain targets and what the organisation can afford to pay.

Volunteers are central to the successful operation of the Charity. A core group of regular volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the organisation and should be recognised here.

Various sub-committees are constituted as required. The senior Executives, who are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day administration and running of the Charity, act as the link with outside stakeholders. To facilitate effective operations, the Senior Executives have delegated authority – within terms of delegation approved by the trustees – for operational matters. These include finance, employment and developing related activities.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Insofar as it is complementary to its objects, the Charity is guided by both local, national and global policy. The Charity works in close partnership with several organisations,

including Cardiff University, Swansea University, Natural Resources Wales, Nature Scot, Natural England, the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government, Sky Zero and WWF UK, and internationally Stockholm University to help achieve common and strategic objectives in marine education, conservation, and restoration.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

At the heart of the operations are three pillars – Research, Community and Action all of which will guide all the charity’s activities over the next decade. At Project Seagrass we also recognise the growing importance of the digital community (particularly in light of COVID-19) in communicating our marine conservation and education messages. We wish to take positive action to ensure we remain a global, outward facing organisation with a key focus on sustainable development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This year was the first step along this new path and contained some notable achievements and successes. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK in March 2020, and the impact of the subsequent government measures to contain it, have had a dramatic effect on all elements of the Welsh, Scottish and wider UK economy. Restrictions on people’s movement means that project delivery and community engagement has been particularly hard hit.

This situation is unprecedented in modern times. There is currently no certainty about what normality for society will be in the coming years let alone the route back to it. A new strategy requires a different organisational model which was being developed. Creating a realistic sustainable growth plan in these circumstances is extremely challenging.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

In the financial year much was achieved. Work began on a new strategic plan and new

structures and procedures are being introduced for the Charity boards and committees.

As an organisation we have identified the need for more formal policies and procedures to be in place as we continue to grow. In particular, the need to introduce a cashflow forecast, and a risk register to guide the development of a 5-year charity plan.

Our key achievements for the period 2020-2021 highlight just how far we’ve come as a charity in terms of our impact. However, with this growth comes additional responsibilities to ensure we are performing in line with our mission, vision and values.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

If the last seven years has taught us anything at Project Seagrass, it’s that achieving our mission begins with how we build our team and how we work together. We believe; indeed, experience has taught us, that only by bringing together a diverse range of identities, experiences and perspectives can we tackle complex crises. It is only through celebrating and harnessing diversity of experience that we will be able to work towards creating a future where seagrasses and society can truly prosper.

We evidenced our commitment to this when we organised the International Seagrass Biology Workshop in 2016. We included a Code of Conduct to ensure that our event was a safe space for all, no matter of their gender, gender identity, heritage, sexual orientation, or any other factor. It was the first and only event in the workshops 27-year history to do so.

Central to our ethos is a determination to ‘live our values’, and as we embark on this next chapter of our journey, we are committed to creating a work culture of belonging. A work environment where all team members are valued for who they are and given equal opportunity to grow and succeed, with no

discrimination on the basis of their race, colour, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, or identification with any marginalised community in the countries where we work.

Diversity, equity and inclusion can look different in every country, and whilst we have worked to champion and celebrate our Welsh roots, we know we have work still to do if we wish to meet the ideals of the organisation we wish to become.

Project Seagrass is committed to taking clear, concerted steps to diversify our team:

- We will develop inclusive position descriptions that open doors for different types of backgrounds, experiences, and education, and that use language which welcomes a more diverse group of candidates.
- We will ensure our teams foster equity, inclusion, and belonging and that diverse perspectives are valued in decision-making.
- We will intentionally coach and mentor diverse talent.

Whilst we acknowledge our team is currently small, we are expecting to grow our organisation rapidly, and therefore this commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion reflects our vision for the charity we wish to become.

Project Seagrass is committed to taking steps to be more inclusive in our work:

- We will ensure that our team adheres to our Code of Conduct for all events
- We will endeavour to advertise events and volunteer opportunities to all members of society.

We will seek to transform our online platforms to ensure that they use inclusive language and imagery, that is needed to

foster a more diverse marine conservation community.

VOLUNTARY HELP AND GIFTS IN KIND

The contribution of the Volunteers to the success of the organisation remains key both in financial and operational terms. Project Seagrass originated from the passion, drive and energies of the Senior Executives who have continued to work on a voluntary basis. Indeed, volunteers and volunteerism is in the DNA of the organisation. The estimated value of volunteer's efforts in the year in terms of voluntary hours worked is impossible to put a precise figure on but would easily run into the tens of thousands of pounds. A total of £10,257.69 was donated to the charity from fundraising activities.

During the financial year 2020-21 Ben (Executive Director, 0.6 FTE), Rich (Executive Director, 0.6 FTE) and Leanne (Executive Director 0.6 FTE) all worked for Project Seagrass voluntarily. The financial value of this contribution is estimated as being at least ≈£100k.

RESERVES POLICY

The Board has identified a minimum reserve requirement equivalent to three months' operating costs, which will enable the charity to meet commitments as they fall due. At 31 March 2020, the organisation had total reserves of £26,131. However, within this balance are restricted funds of £10,663 relating to operational programmes. These restricted funds are not available for the general purposes of the charity. Unrestricted reserves are currently £7,592. Through regular review of financial performance, open and transparent dialogue with key stakeholders and seeking to identify additional core funding, the trustees aim to improve this position.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Board of Trustees monitors the significant risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk

register will be maintained by the Senior Executives and scrutinised by the Trustees quarterly. The main residual risks are:

1. Insufficient income generated – the employment of a full time Director should generate new income streams for the organisation, and this remains an area for us to focus on.
2. Sufficient fundraising cannot be secured – securing sufficient unrestricted funds to support the full costs of our conservation, education and restoration activities will be addressed in a range of ways through developing our supporter offer, forging new partnerships and demonstrating the value of our activities for corporate support.
3. Asset development – whilst we only have limited assets at present, we need to continue to invest in assets for autonomy and to develop our capacity. There is a need to upgrade and improve our online presence to meet the appetite for a stronger digital offer.
4. The loss of current talent and expertise is one of the greatest risks to the organisation at present.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

COVID-19 has emphasised how linked the wellbeing of our society is to the health of our natural environment. More than ever people have enjoyed their local green and blue spaces and have felt more connected to nature. The calls for a green recovery have also grown stronger, not least because we still have the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss to respond to.

Whilst there are economic and financial challenges to overcome, the appetite for change provides a strong platform for our Charity to play a role in helping people to understand the importance of our coastal and marine environments and to give them information on the actions that can be taken

to protect and restore this resource for the future.

Recent events have also highlighted the inequalities which continue to exist in our society, including digital exclusion. As we develop our digital offer, we will use it as a way of engaging further with people who cannot visit our coastlines in person but wish to learn about our marine environment. We will use this as an opportunity to forge new partnerships to work with harder to reach groups in society.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 4, Charities Act 2011, to have due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission concerning public benefit.

As a dedicated team of seagrass scientists and seagrass enthusiasts, we work to protect seagrass, and through seagrass, we support marine conservation more broadly. The charities main work is in promoting protection of coastal ecosystems and the promotion of sustainable marine resource use.

Each of our programs are aimed at improving the condition of the marine environment. A healthy marine environment will supply benefits to the public; these are often referred to as marine 'ecosystem services'.

The United Nations' Millennium Ecosystem Assessment recognized three types of ecosystem services called provision, regulating and cultural. Each of these is relevant to the marine environment.

Provisioning refers to society's needs for our seas to supply both the wild caught and farmed fish that are an important part of our diet.

Regulating is important for climate; seagrass is a significant contributor to carbon sequestration in the form of 'blue carbon'

Culturally, British seas and coasts are well regarded for recreation, ecotourism and appreciation of natural heritage. When the coastal ecosystem is healthy, it supplies more of these benefits.

Project Seagrass works not only to increase the extent of these benefits, but also to make them publicly available.

During 2019/20 the charity promoted interest and learning on the marine environment through its dedicated SEA (Seagrass Education & Awareness) outreach and education programme and inspired action at the local level through delivery of its SAS (Seagrass Ambassador Scheme) volunteer and community engagement programme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Trustees would like to again thank all our volunteers, members and supporters - individuals, charitable trusts and foundations, public bodies and corporate organisations who have supported our work. This includes Natural England, Emitwise, WWF UK and Sky Ocean Rescue. The recent COVID-19 crisis has reminded us how much loved the work of Project Seagrass is, the importance of its role

within Great Britain and the role it has to play in the wider conservation practice and science community internationally. We know that collaborative working and partnerships (informal and formal) will enable us to confidently face the challenges ahead with our loyal and dedicated team of trustees and volunteers.

APPROVAL OF THE TRUSTEES' REPORT

At the time of approving this report, the Trustees are aware of no relevant audit information of which the group and charity's auditors are unaware. The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken, as a Trustee, in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the group and charity's auditors are aware of that information.

The report was approved by the Board on 31st March 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



31st March 2022 (Chair)

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom General Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

1. Select suitable account policies and then apply them consistently
2. Observe the methods and the principles in the Charity SORP
3. Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent and
4. Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue on that basis.

The Trustees are responsible for maintaining proper 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 the appropriate legislation. 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.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

PROJECT SEAGRASS

Consolidated statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE					
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	1	15,033	3,029	18,062	10,258
Other trading activities	2	3,262	-	3,262	15
Charitable activities	3	1,658	342,640	344,298	6,259
Total income		19,953	345,699	365,622	16,532
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds:		312	1,369	1,681	1,517
Charitable activities	4,5,6	27,517	145,286	172,803	7,664 <i>RESTATED</i>
Total expenditure		27,829	146,655	174,484	9,181 <i>RESTATED</i>
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year before other recognised gains and transfers		(7,876)	199,014	191,138	7,351 <i>RESTATED</i>
Net gains on investment assets		-	-	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)		(7,876)	199,014	191,138	7,351 <i>RESTATED</i>
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		(7,876)	199,014	191,138	7,351 <i>RESTATED</i>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds carried forward from previous year		15,468	10,663	26,131	18,780 <i>RESTATED</i>
Total funds carried forward		7,592	209,677	217,269	26,131 <i>RESTATED</i>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

PROJECT SEAGRASS

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2021

	Note	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets		203,623	1,200
Intangible assets		Not valued	<small>RESTATED</small> Not valued
Total fixed assets		203,623	1,200
Current assets			
Stocks		-	-
Debtors		9,916	-
Cash at bank and in hand		22,219	24,931
			<small>RESTATED</small>
Liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year		18,488	-
Net assets		217,270	26,131
Funds			
Restricted funds		216,301	10,663
Unrestricted funds		969	15,468
Total funds		217,270	26,131

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Donations – individuals	12,783	3,029	15,812	7,880
Donations – companies and trusts	2,250		2,250	-
Other fundraising income	-	-	-	2,378
Total income from donations and legacies	15,033	3,029	18,062	10,258

Donations from trusts and companies do not include any donated services or goods. These have not been included in the financial statements as we are unable to measure reliably the value of the services received in the year.

2 INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Contracts	3,262	-	3,262	-
Merchandise	-		-	15
Total income from other trading activities	3,262	-	3,262	15

All income from other trading activities is unrestricted. While we received income from the sale of merchandise via our online store (operated by TeeMill) over the course of the financial year, this money has not been paid out and will be included in the following financial year. We received income from one contract related to the translation of SeagrassSpotter, and the use of the Project Seagrass research boat to Swansea University for the Seagrass Ocean Rescue project.

3 INCOME FROM CHARITY ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Government grants	-	313,551	313,551	6,259
Other grants	1,658	29,089	30,747	-
Total income from charity activities	1,658	342,640	344,298	6,259

99.5% of grant income over the course of the financial year was restricted. We received seven grants, three of which were from national government (Welsh Government, Scottish Government and Natural England).

4 NON-CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON CHARITY ACTIVITIES	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Community	5,216	3,272	8,488	222
Research	-	2,838	2,838	-
Action	4,500	78,292	82,792	6,608
Governance, administration, and staffing	17,801	60,884	78,685	834
				<i>RESTATED</i>
Total expenditure on charity activities	27,517	145,286	172,803	7,664
				<i>RESTATED</i>

Governance and administration costs include insurance, audit and legal fees as well as other admin costs such as postage, stationery and IT equipment as well as the re-design of the Project Seagrass website which occurred during the financial year. We do not account for any donated software (e.g., Slack, Dropbox) within these costs.

5 STAFF COSTS	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Salaries and wages	47,132	-
Employer's national insurance contributions	3,670	-
Pension contributions	1,779	-
Staffing costs	20,466	-
Total costs of employing staff	73,048	-

One employee received emoluments in the band £40,000 to £50,000 (2019: nil). No trustees claimed expenses during the year for travel and subsistence, and no trustee received remuneration during the year (2019: nil).

Additional staffing costs of £20,466 were incurred in training.

6 STAFF NUMBERS	Total Funds 2021 (£)	Total Funds 2020 (£)
Community	1	-
Research	1	-
Action	1	-
Governance and administration	-	-
Total staff	3	-

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO MADE OUR WORK THIS YEAR POSSIBLE.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND STATUTORY BODIES:

Welsh Government

Scottish Government

Natural England

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS:

Blair Foundation

William Grant Foundation

Seacology

BIAZA

COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS:

Hakutaku

Emitwise

Cardiff University

Reverse Gear

GRID-Arendal

Nick Martin

Wild Saint

Swansea University

We would like to extend our thanks to our valued donors who wish to remain anonymous.

PATRONS, SUPPORTERS, MEMBERS AND GROUPS:

Coychurch Primary

Sunnyside Primary

Awel y mor Primary

PRO BONO SUPPORT:

Finisterre

REFERENCE

& administrative information

Project Seagrass is governed according to charity law by a Board of Trustees, all of whom are unpaid volunteers. Three Senior Executives are unpaid, with the CEO being the only paid individual.

CHARITY NAME

Project Seagrass

CHARITY NUMBER

1162824 (England and Wales)
SC025837 (Scotland)

REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

Project Seagrass
PO Box 412
Bridgend
CF31 9RL

SCOTTISH OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

18/6 Millar Crescent Morningside
Edinburgh
EH10 5HW

TRUSTEES

The Trustees who served during the period from 1 April 2020 to the date of approval of this report were as follows:

Rosslyn Barr

Chair

(From November 2020)

Mike Furness

(From November 2020)

Jake Davies

(From November 2020)

Sarah Pilgrim

(From March 2021)

Benjamin Jones

(Resigned November 2020)

Richard Unsworth

(Resigned November 2020)

Leanne Cullen-Unsworth

(Resigned November 2020)

Rebecca Cullen

(Resigned November 2020)

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

The members of the Senior Management Team were in post for the whole of the year ended 31 March 2021 and until the date of this report unless stated otherwise:

Dr Richard Lilley

Chief Executive

Benjamin Jones

Senior Executive

Dr Leanne Cullen-Unsworth

Senior Executive

Dr Richard Unsworth

Senior Executive

ACCOUNTANTS

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G5 9DW

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

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