

AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE GROUPS OF THE UK

England & Wales · Charity number 1165504

Details

Other names	ARGUK
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-02-10
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	82 Gidley Way Horspath Oxford OX33 1TG
Phone	01865872162
Email	info@arguk.org
Website	http://www.arguk.org/

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE:(1) THE PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND WELFARE OF NATIVE AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES AND THEIR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE UK FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC BY PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NETWORK OF INDEPENDENT AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE GROUPS (ARGS) INVOLVED IN THE CONSERVATION OF THE HERPETOFAUNA OF THE BRITISH ISLES.(2) TO PROMOTE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AT LARGE RELEVANT TO SPECIES AND HABITAT CONSERVATION PERTINENT TO NATIVE AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE POPULATIONS OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND TO PUBLISH THE USEFUL RESULTS OF SUCH RESEARCH FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT.

Activities: Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGS)

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Animals, Environment/conservation/heritage
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-01-31	£40,905	£49,416	-	-
2024-01-31	£66,572	£64,872	-	-
2023-01-31	£33,864	£79,094	-	-
2022-01-31	£65,053	£72,340	-	-
2021-01-31	£98,586	£44,137	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
CHRIS MONK	Chair	2016-02-06
Alice Pawlik		2019-11-21
DR John Baker		2016-09-25
Dr Catharine Wuster		2024-02-06
Erik Paterson		2022-02-24
Frank Syrratt		2021-02-21
Jeanette Hall		2022-02-24
Nigel Hand		2016-09-25
Suzanne Collinson		2021-02-21

Accounts



Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165504

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 January 2025

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Reference and Administrative details

Charity Number:	1165504
Trustees:	Chris Monk (Chair) Frank Syrratt (Treasurer) John Baker Nigel Hand Steve Langham (resigned February 2024) Alice Pawlik Suzie Collinson Jeanette Hall Erik Paterson Catharine Wuster (elected February 2024)
Registered Office:	82 Gidley Way Horspath Oxford OX33 1TG
Independent Examiner:	Sheila Parry FCCA SPX Oxford 19 Paradise St, Oxford OX1 1LD
Banker:	The Cooperative Bank

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution Document following the Association model. The Charity Trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st January 2025.

Trustees' Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK from 1 February 2024 – 31 January 2025

ARG UK's Objectives and Activities

Mission

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs).

Charitable Objectives

The charitable objects of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK are:

(1) the preservation, conservation and welfare of native amphibians, reptiles and their natural environment in the UK for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the development of a network of independent amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs) involved in the conservation of the herpetofauna of the British isles.

(2) to promote education and research activities for the benefit of the public at large relevant to species and habitat conservation pertinent to native amphibian and reptile populations of the British Isles and to publish the useful results of such research for the public benefit.

Strategic themes and activities:

There are currently three themes to ARG UK's work:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK's primary role is to support a network of 40 county-based volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs). Each group works with the species in its locality, and these provide the 'grass roots' of native herpetofauna conservation in the UK; undertaking survey and monitoring, practical conservation tasks, public events and outreach and liaising with stakeholders including local planning authorities, land owners, other conservation bodies, and the wider public. We also support other volunteer groups with an interest in our native herpetofauna in a more informal capacity.

2. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

We promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level and sit on a number of panels and forums. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers, so that we can be more representative at national level.

3. Public outreach and education:

We promote positive messages about amphibians and reptiles with communities and the wider public, through direct engagement at events, workshops, seminars and training days; by working with other NGOs and land managers and the local/national media to develop an engaging and positive narrative; and by developing educational materials for pre-school and school-aged children.

Principles:

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone is welcome! We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, belief, socio economic background or any other characteristic. We aim to be inclusive and proactively break down barriers, encouraging all members of society to become involved with wildlife conservation.
- We work through collaboration, using existing networks or by developing new groups and partnerships.
- We believe people learn most effectively from their peers and enable those we work with to take action within their own networks through mentoring and other forms of support.

Public benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of ARG UK meets with these criteria.

Key Achievements:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK continues to support volunteers engaged in conservation activities, by providing a range of advice and support services. These include our series of Advice Notes, based on expert inputs from specialists from the volunteer groups and other organisations including wildlife NGOs, ecological consultants and statutory agencies. These can all be accessed from the ARG UK website, www.arguk.org, and are also promoted via social media, including our various Facebook groups and Twitter account.

Conferences, meetings, training and outreach

We continued to support the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, which was held in Fareham in Hampshire in February 2024. We were pleased to welcome nearly 200 delegates to an interesting and varied programme covering all aspects of amphibian and reptile conservation. ARG UK presented: 'Suckers for amphibians': Investigating the occurrence of leech predation on amphibians in Southern England', a citizen science project investigating unusual feeding behaviours in a non-native leech, *Batrachobdella algira*, in Southern England. This was a partnership project with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group (HIWARG), The Isle of Wight Reptilium, The Institute of Zoology, Buglife and the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland.

ARG UK also provides practical support to the ARGs through:

- a) Provision of an **umbrella insurance scheme**, at no cost, to affiliated ARGs. This provides public and employer liability for the groups, and enables them to attend public events, run training sessions, surveys and practical conservation tasks for volunteer members and the wider public.
- b) **100% fund** – the ARG UK small grants scheme provides affiliated ARGs with grants of up to £500 for practical conservation to benefit amphibian and reptiles. In 2023-24 we provided a total of £304.48 to North Merseyside Amphibian and Reptile Group (NMARG) to cover the costs of new branded hi vis vests and movable banners to highlight volunteer action and safeguard NMARG volunteers. We would like to thank our corporate sponsor, Habitat Aid, and all of our individual donors for their generous support for this fund.
- c) Provision of **free mini-websites**, enabling small volunteer groups to get up and running at no cost.
- d) Support for **regional meetings** including the annual **Herpetofauna Workers Meeting**, which attracts over 200 delegates and is the main forum for the sector. The ARGs also organise smaller regional meetings, and ARG UK supports other organisations running herpetofauna themed events.
- e) Support and advice with fundraising, administration, training and governance, where requested.

2. Supporting national projects

We coordinated volunteer action for a number of projects of national significance:

Make the Adder Count (MTAC) – We continued to support the Make the Adder Count surveys in 2024-25, and are working closely with researchers at UK CEH to further interrogate this important, long-term data set on our native adder.

Survey and monitoring – The online herpetofauna recording portal, Record Pool in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC), continues to expand and function well with over 72,000 records from nearly 20,000 recorders right across the UK by the end of the 2024-25 year.

National Disease monitoring – We have continued to support the Garden Wildlife Health (GWH) Project (www.gardenwildlifehealth.org), and our volunteers have been proactive in collecting information on amphibians and reptiles showing abnormalities. Our volunteers also provide a frontline resource for new pathogens, such as the deadly *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), a fungal pathogen that has already caused mass die-offs in wild European fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and may pose a threat to our native newts. In partnership with the GWH project, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ARG (HIWARG), Buglife, and The Isle of Wight Reptilium, we have continued to investigate the feeding behaviours of a novel, non-native leech, *Batrachobdella algira* on common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*).

Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG) Support

We support affiliated local ARG groups as needed with advice on setting up and governance and assistance for local conservation projects.

ARGWEB - We have developed an online portal, specifically designed to support the volunteer ARGs, by providing a suite of online tools (apps) to enable groups to manage their members and other stakeholders including land managers and project partners in a GDPR compliant manner. ARGWEB also supports site-based amphibian and reptile surveys to allow for site monitoring, a toad patrol app, to enable patrollers to more easily collate amphibian numbers and patrollers' effort. By enabling site managers and other partners, including ARC and Froglife, to access data for their sites in real time, it also provides a tool for site management. By the end of January 2025, 32 of our county-based groups adopted ARGWEB portals, with nearly 2,500 users signed up to the system and over 750,000 observation records for amphibians and reptiles.

3. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

To promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level we attend or sit on a number of project panels and forums these include: the herpetofauna specialist group, the Great Crested Newt Working Group, the Garden Wildlife Health Project Forum, the Adder Working Group and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. We liaise with other NGOs in the wildlife conservation sector, statutory agencies, local authority and private land managers and the relevant staff of the UK Government's national conservation organisations: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and NatureScot. We also convene internal seminars and regional meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers so that we can be more representative at national level.

4. Public Outreach and Education:

Adder Community Networking – Building on approaches developed in Adders are Amazing! we are continuing to work with volunteers, land managers and local communities to conserve our native adder. In 2024-25 we ran two land manager adder networking days: the first on the Somerset Levels, led by the Reptile and Amphibian Group of Somerset (RAGs) in partnership with the RSPB, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Natural England; and a second on Cannock Chase, supported by Shropshire and Staffordshire ARG (SAS ARG), Forestry England, Cannock Chase Council and the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership. Following on from this we have co-developed a new project on Cannock Chase in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, The Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership, 17 local land managers with support from SAS ARG, Birmingham and Black Country ARG (BB&C ARG), Warwickshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (WART) and Nottinghamshire ARG (Notts ARG). The project was able to secure funding

from DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, to fund extensive volunteer survey effort across the Chase and validate the UKCEH adder habitat model, and support new adder-sympathetic habitat creation and restoration.

Ministry of Justice/HMPPS training and conservation programme 'Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world'— We continued to support the Ministry of Justice project, 'A pond in every prison' which aims to create a pond, or several ponds, in all 119 prisons in England and Wales. In 2024 we completed the second year of activities under the innovation project 'Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world', funded by the HMPPS Grants Programme in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire. We re-visited 14 prisons, expanded the learning from year 1 with a series of practical projects for the prisoners which included pond and habitat creation within the prison grounds, and survey and monitoring activities.

Scottish National Adder Survey for NatureScot—Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) originally commissioned an investigation in 1992-94 into the status and distribution of the adder (*Vipera berus*) in Scotland. A key part of this comprised a questionnaire sent to 1,972 farms which were randomly selected from each 10 km OS grid square across Scotland and the inner isles, to find out more about reptile status in these locations; and a field survey of 17 sites distributed across Scotland anecdotally said to be 'good' for reptiles. In 2022-24, ARG UK and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) were commissioned to repeat the questionnaire and survey to determine whether there has been a significant shift in the baseline established thirty years ago. ARG UK coordinated the physical survey part of the project, and secured permission to visit 16 sites. During 2023-24, volunteer surveyors completed 103 site visits, supported by two spring volunteer and ranger training days. All three widespread Scottish reptiles were recorded, notably the adder, common lizard, and slow-worm, as well as common frog, common toad and small newts, but sadly no sighting of the rarest native Scottish terrestrial reptile, the grass snake.

Secretive Serpents - In partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UK CEH); local conservation NGOs including Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB and National Trust; as well as Forestry England and the Norfolk and Suffolk Biological Recording Centres, we started a survey and monitoring programme supported by Natural England to collect and collate records for reptiles across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. This information will be used to refine our adder habitat suitability model to allow us to identify areas of good habitat, and opportunities for habitat connectivity across the landscape. Although concentrating on adders, the survey aims to find out more about all herpetofauna species including slow-worm, common lizard, grass snake and any amphibians.

The findings from this study will be used to inform conservation efforts to find out which areas will provide the most benefit for creating habitat corridors for adders in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, working with landowners and local stakeholders to create better quality, more joined up habitat.

Publications from 2024 - 25

Elfering, R., Mannix, S., Allain, S., Ambu, J., Crochet, P.A., van Doorn, L., Dufresnes, C., Jehle, R., Julian, A., Baird, F.K. and O'Brien, D., 2024. Extreme genetic depletion upon postglacial colonization hampers determining the provenance of introduced palmate newt populations. *Amphibia-reptilia*, 45(3), pp.349-356.

Gardner, E., Robinson, R. A., Julian, A., Boughey, K., Langham, S., Tse-Leon, J., ... & Bullock, J. M. (2024). A family of process-based models to simulate landscape use by multiple taxa. *Landscape Ecology*, 39(5), 102.

Seilern-Macpherson, K., Lawson, B., Macadam, C., West, P., Reed, N., Gibson, L., Świątek, P., Gajda, Ł., Cunningham, A., Heaven, J., & Julian, A. (2024). Predation of anurans in southern England by *Batrachobdella algira*, a leech previously unknown in the UK. *The Herpetological Journal*. 34. 221-227. 10.33256/34.4.221227.

Future Plans and Next Steps

We will continue to support the ARGs by providing advice and support; representation at the national level; regional and national meetings and by developing, or participating in projects or schemes they can adapt to local use. Other areas where ARGs have asked for support are with fundraising; toad patrolling; and public outreach. Above all, the volunteer groups value being connected, and knowing they are part of a bigger picture, working together to conserve our native amphibians and reptiles. We will also provide continued administrative support to the groups with provision of the free mini-websites, along with the recording and monitoring tools contained within Record Pool and ARGWEB.

We will continue to expand our major conservation campaign for adders, in partnership with other NGOs. We continue to reinforce a narrative highlighting the vulnerability of this iconic native reptile through local and national media, and continue to collect records across the UK to establish baseline distribution data. A part of this programme will include running additional land manager adder networking days in different parts of the country to reach as many land owners and land managers as possible; as well as regional and national meetings. We are planning to run the next in our series of international Vanishing Viper events at the University of Chester in September 2025, and are looking forward to another ground-breaking event that will consider how best to conserve the adder at a landscape level.

More generally, we aim to increase the engagement of the local groups with widespread species surveys (all species), and by allowing for better communication between surveyors working towards common standards monitoring. We will continue to support projects and partnerships that deliver conservation gains for all native species of herpetofauna, and develop opportunities for our volunteers to engage in wider conservation projects, as well as local outreach and conservation.

Specific projects that we will be engaging with in the coming 2025-26 year include: working in partnership with Cannock Chase National Landscape and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to create a film about adders on Cannock Chase; 'Secretive Serpents' – mapping adders in East Anglia and Essex to identify potential for conserving adder sites, and connecting their habitats; 'Travelling toadlets' – a project to better understand how toad metamorphs behave in their first year, and to gather empirical evidence to support common toad welfare. All of these projects have a common 'citizen science' approach, and additional funding bids in 2025-26 will seek to support this outreach and knowledge exchange, and build on the learning from all of these projects, to engage a greater number and diversity of the wider public in amphibian and reptile conservation activities.

And finally, we will aim to continue to run innovative online and in person seminars and workshops focussing on key aspects and discussions that affect reptile and amphibian conservation, and broaden our social media, expanding our portfolio from Facebook and Bluesky into Instagram and other platforms that are widespread, especially with a younger demographic.

Financial Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK for the period from 1 February 2024 - 31 January 2025.

Financial Review:

Review of Results:

We have raised a total of £40,905 since February 2024 (against income of £66,572 in 2023-24), with expenditure of £49,416 (against expenditure of £64,872 in 2023-24). Detailed breakdowns are at the end of this document.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees of ARG UK have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of ARG UK's working capital and to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure to enable ARG UK to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £16,603 (compared with £26,548 of unrestricted reserves in 2023-24) and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specified conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matched assets.

The Board of Trustees considers that reserves as held at year end are sufficient for operating the organisation and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Risk Management:

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, finances, reputation and business of ARG UK. The likelihood and impact of material risks are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at Trustee meetings. The Coordinator updates and assesses the risk management matrix, and has a duty to report any significant changes to trustees.

Structure, governance and management

ARG UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016 with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution which follows the Association model. All members of the organisation and Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. There must be at least four and no more than 11 charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

All trustees were subject to re-election at the first AGM of the organisation, and then subject to retirement by rotation. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Charitable Trustees may exercise all the powers of the organisation subject to the Charity's Act 2011 and the Constitution.

Board appointments are based on the need of the Board of Trustees as a whole to have the skills and experience to agree ARG UK's strategy and policies and monitor their implementation. Every charity trustee must be a natural person. Trustees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, but must be approved by majority vote by the members at the annual general meeting. The Honorary Officer of the Association is the Chairperson. An honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairperson may also be elected by the trustees. The Trustees are listed on page 2.

Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of a member. An organisation or a corporate body that is a member of the CIO may, in accordance with its usual decision-making process, authorise a person to act as its representative at any general meeting of the CIO.

It is the duty of each member of the CIO to exercise his or her powers as a member of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. Membership of the CIO cannot be transferred to anyone else except in the case of an individual representing an organisation which is not incorporated, whose membership may be transferred by the unincorporated organisation to a new representative.

Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 5% of members or three members. An organisation represented by a person present at the meeting, is counted as being present in person.

The Board of Trustees appoint the Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure statutory reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Coordinator is assisted by a small team of volunteers. ARG UK appreciates the extensive support it receives from volunteers without which it would not be possible to carry out such a varied and extensive programme.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Board of Trustees to prepare accounts for financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) which give a true and fair view of ARG UK's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing accounts giving a true and fair view, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts,
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that ARG UK will continue in operation,

The Trustees are responsible for the keeping of accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of ARG UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of ARG UK and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Chris Monk, Chair (appointed February 2016)

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK, CIO (Charity number: 1165504)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 January 2025, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's gross income is between £25,000 and £500,000, and the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), but that an independent examination is required. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) 2019 SORP
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

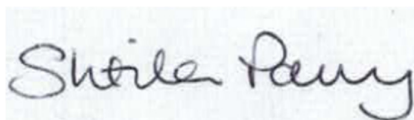
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements set out in the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Sheila Parry FCCA

SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford, OX1 1LD

Date: 22 August 2025

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure) for ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 for the year ended 31 January 2025

		2025			2024		
		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from:	Note						
Donations and legacies	2	15,216	2,029	17,245	4,830	7,820	22,650
Charitable activities	3	22,860	800	23,660	40,472	13,450	43,922
Total		38,076	2,829	40,905	45,302	21,270	66,572
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4	2,929	-	2,929	2,717	-	2,717
Charitable activities	5	45,092	1,395	46,487	52,605	9,550	62,155
Total		48,021	1,395	49,416	55,322	9,550	64,872
Net income / expenditure		- 9,945	1,434	- 8,511	- 10,020	11,720	1,700
Transfers between funds		7,185	- 7,185	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		- 2,760	- 5,751	- 8,511	- 10,020	11,720	1,700
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		26,548	21,158	47,706	36,568	9,438	46,006
Total funds carried forward		23,788	15,407	39,195	26,548	21,158	47,706

Balance Sheet ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 as at 31 January 2025

		2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
	Notes				
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	8		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	1,625		4,135	
Cash at bank and in hand		38,526		44,518	
		<u>40,151</u>		<u>48,653</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	10	- 956		- 947	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			39,195		47,706
NET ASSETS			<u>39,195</u>		<u>47,706</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
General funds	14		23,788		26,548
Restricted funds	14		15,407		21,158
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>39,195</u>		<u>47,706</u>

ARG UK is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): which is a charity registered as a body corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011. This status confers a duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report online with the Charity Commission. Because charitable income is between £25,000 and £500,000, there is no requirement for an audit, but there is a requirement for an independent examination.

For the financial year ended 31 January 2025, ARG UK constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by SORP (FRS 102): and follows the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which have been prepared in accordance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019). The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the trusts ability to continue as a going concern.

Approved by the Board on (needs new 2025 date), and signed on its behalf by:



Chris Monk, Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 13 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2025

1) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019).

Fund accounting policy

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in notes 13 and 14.

Income

Income including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from tax reclaims are included in the statement of financial activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate. Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis. Income from charitable activities includes income recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided) under contract.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The cost of fundraising

This represents the costs of inducing others to make gifts or donations to the charity.

Pensions accounting policy

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme with NEST. The pension cost represents the amount of contributions payable to the scheme in one year.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Fixed assets

Individual assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500.

Depreciation

Depreciation on tangible fixed assets is calculated to write down the cost in equal instalments over their expected useful lives.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2025 (continued)

2) Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	2025 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	2024 Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Donations from individuals						
Individual donations	5,216	2,029	7,245	4,830	7,820	12,650
Grants	10,000	-	10,000	-	-	-
	15,216	2,029	17,245	4,830	7,820	12,650

3) Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	2025 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	2024 Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Events	-	-	-	87	-	87
Ecological / project services	22,860	800	23,660	40,385	13,450	53,835
	22,860	800	23,660	40,472	13,450	53,922

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2025 (continued)

4) Expenditure on fundraising

	Unrestricted funds	2025 Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	2024 Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	2,929	-	2,929	2,717	-	2,717
	<u>2,929</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,929</u>	<u>2,717</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,717</u>

5) Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds	2025 Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	2024 Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Analysis by expenditure type						
Volunteer costs	-	100	100	114	161	274
Website costs	3,531	-	3,531	847	-	847
Office support	657	-	657	1,342	-	1,345
Insurance (ARG UK)	2,159	-	2,159	1,978	-	1,978
Project costs	10,109	1,295	11,404	22,206	5,494	27,700
Staff costs (incl pensions)	26,358	-	26,358	24,449	3,895	28,342
Travel costs	1,638	-	1,638	1,051	-	1,051
Governance costs	640	-	640	618	-	618
	<u>45,092</u>	<u>1,395</u>	<u>46,487</u>	<u>52,605</u>	<u>9,550</u>	<u>62,155</u>

	2025 Total funds	2024 Total funds
	£	£
Analysis by activity type		
Supporting grass roots conservation	34,591	45,411
Volunteer representation at national level	4,941	6,487
Public outreach and education	9,883	12,974
	<u>49,415</u>	<u>64,872</u>

6) Related Party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

7) Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity (CIO) and is, therefore, exempt from Corporation taxation.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2025 (continued)

8) Fixed assets

	Computers and equipment £
Costs	
At 1 February 2024	581
Additions	-
At 31 January 2025	<u>581</u>
Accumulated depreciation	
At 1 February 2024	581
Charge for year	-
At 31 January 2025	<u>581</u>
Net book value	
At 1 February 2024	-
At 31 January 2025	-

9) Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	1,625	4,135
	<u>1,625</u>	<u>4,135</u>

10) Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2025	2024
	£	£
Payroll taxes	356	347
Accruals	600	600
	<u>956</u>	<u>947</u>

11) Independent Examination and other financial service fees

	2025	2024
	£	£
Independent Examiner's fees	180	180
Other financial services from SPX	420	420
	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2025 (continued)

12) Staff costs and employee benefits

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	27,584	30,003
Internship bursary	600	-
Employer's pension contributions	1,103	1,056
Employer's National Insurance	-	-
	<u>29,287</u>	<u>31,059</u>

Average head count: 1 (2024: 1)

No employees received employee benefits of more than £60,000

13) Remuneration of trustees and benefits of key management personnel

No trustees received any remuneration for their roles as trustees.

The full total for governance costs of £600 also includes costs relating to the professional fee for the examiners' report, professional trustee training, and costs of running trustees' meetings (2023-24, £600).

14) Analysis of funds

	As at 2024	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	As at 2025
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds	26,548	38,076	- 48,021	7,185	23,788
Restricted funds:					
100% fund	5,846	1,929	- 305	-	7,470
Sefton sand lizards	670	100	- 511	-	259
Dragons in the Hills	7,185	-	-	- 7,185	-
Northants ARG - adder project	650	800	- 424	-	1,026
Herefordshire ARG	6,807	-	- 155	-	6,652
	<u>21,158</u>	<u>2,829</u>	<u>- 1,395</u>	<u>- 7,185</u>	<u>15,407</u>
	<u>47,706</u>	<u>40,905</u>	<u>- 49,416</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>39,195</u>

14) Analysis of net assets by funds

	General funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	23,119	15,407	38,526
Debtors	1,625	-	1,625
Current liabilities	- 956	-	- 956
	<u>23,788</u>	<u>15,407</u>	<u>39,195</u>

Accounts



Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165504

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 January 2024

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Reference and Administrative details

Charity Number: 1165504

Trustees:

Chris Monk (Chair)
Frank Syratt (Treasurer)
John Baker
Nigel Hand
Steve Langham
Alice Pawlik
Suzie Collinson
Jeanette Hall
Erik Paterson

Registered Office:

82 Gidley Way
Horspath
Oxford
OX33 1TG

Independent Examiner:

Sheila Parry FCCA
SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford
OX1 1LD

Banker:

The Cooperative Bank

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution Document following the Association model. The Charity Trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st January 2024.

Trustees' Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK from 1 February 2023 – 31 January 2024

ARG UK's Objectives and Activities

Mission

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs).

Charitable Objectives

The charitable objects of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK are:

- (1) the preservation, conservation and welfare of native amphibians, reptiles and their natural environment in the UK for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the development of a network of independent amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs) involved in the conservation of the herpetofauna of the British isles.
- (2) to promote education and research activities for the benefit of the public at large relevant to species and habitat conservation pertinent to native amphibian and reptile populations of the British Isles and to publish the useful results of such research for the public benefit.

Strategic themes and activities:

There are currently three themes to ARG UK's work:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK's primary role is to support a network of 40 county-based volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs). Each group works with the species in its locality, and these provide the 'grass roots' of native herpetofauna conservation in the UK; undertaking survey and monitoring, practical conservation tasks, public events and outreach and liaising with stakeholders including local planning authorities, land owners, other conservation bodies, and the wider public. We also support other volunteer groups with an interest in our native herpetofauna in a more informal capacity.

2. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

We promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level and sit on a number of panels and forums. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers, so that we can be more representative at national level.

3. Public outreach and education:

We promote positive messages about amphibians and reptiles with communities and the wider public, through direct engagement at events, seminars and training days; by working with other NGOs and land managers and the local/national media to develop an engaging and positive narrative; and by developing educational materials for pre-school and school-aged children.

Principles:

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone is welcome! We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, belief, socio economic background or any other characteristic. We aim to be inclusive and proactively break down barriers, encouraging all members of society to become involved with wildlife conservation.
- We work through collaboration, using existing networks or by developing new groups and partnerships.
- We believe people learn most effectively from their peers and enable those we work with to take action within their own networks through mentoring and other forms of support.

Public benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of ARG UK meets with these criteria.

Key Achievements:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK continues to support volunteers engaged in conservation activities, by providing a range of advice and support services. These include our series of Advice Notes, based on expert inputs from specialists from the volunteer groups and other organisations including wildlife NGOs, ecological consultants and statutory agencies. These can all be accessed from the ARG UK website, www.arguk.org, and are also promoted via social media, including our various Facebook groups and Twitter account.

Conferences, meetings, training and outreach

We continued to support the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, which was held at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno, Wales, in February 2023. We were pleased to welcome nearly 200 delegates to an interesting and varied programme covering all aspects of amphibian and reptile conservation.

We were also delighted to be able to provide sponsorship for the 22nd European Congress of Herpetology, organised by the Societas Europaea Herpetologica (SEH) and a local organising committee, and hosted by the University of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands during September 2023. Welcoming enthusiastic herpetologists from a total of 27 nations across 4 continents, with 99 presentations and 52 posters, the meeting was also an opportunity to catch up with many of our students and ARG volunteers, and find out more about the various research projects they have been progressing in the previous year. ARG UK presented an update on 'Dragons in the Hills' which was warmly received by colleagues.

In addition to advice, ARG UK provides practical support to the ARGs through:

- a) Provision of an **umbrella insurance scheme**, at no cost, to affiliated ARGs. This provides public and employer liability for the groups, and enables them to attend public events, run training sessions, surveys and practical conservation tasks for volunteer members and the wider public.
- b) **100% fund** – the ARG UK small grants scheme provides affiliated ARGs with grants of up to £500 for practical conservation to benefit amphibian and reptiles. In 2023-24 we provided a total of £1,331.89 to five of our affiliated groups including: £100.49 for The Cairngorms affiliated group to purchase refugia for reptile surveys; £500 to Cent ARG to support purchase of amphibian survey equipment including torches, nets and PPE for the volunteers; £398.18 to Notts ARG to purchase a gazebo, banners and other materials for events; £237.30 to London ARG to purchase materials for amphibian and reptile surveys; and £95.92 to HIWARG to purchase materials for amphibian surveys. We would like to thank our corporate sponsor, Habitat Aid, and all of our individual donors for their generous support for this fund.
- c) Provision of **free mini-websites**, enabling small volunteer groups to get up and running at no cost.

- d) Support for **regional meetings** including the annual **Herpetofauna Workers Meeting**, which attracts over 200 delegates and is the main forum for the sector. The ARGs also organise smaller regional meetings, and ARG UK supports other organisations running herpetofauna themed events.
- e) Support and advice with fundraising, administration, training and governance, where requested.

2. Supporting national projects

We coordinated volunteer action for a number of projects of national significance:

Make the Adder Count (MTAC) – We continued to support the Make the Adder Count surveys in 2023-24, and are working closely with UK CEH to further interrogate this important, long-term data set on our native adder.

Survey and monitoring – The online herpetofauna recording portal, Record Pool in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC), continues to expand and function well with over 63,000 records from over 17,000 recorders right across the UK by the end of the 2023-24 year.

National Disease monitoring – We have continued to support the Garden Wildlife Health (GWH) Project (www.gardenwildlifehealth.org), and our volunteers have been proactive in collecting information on amphibians and reptiles showing abnormalities. Our volunteers also provide a frontline resource for new pathogens, such as the deadly *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), a fungal pathogen that has already caused mass die-offs in wild European fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and may pose a threat to our native newts. In partnership with the GWH project, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ARG (HIWARG), Buglife, and The Isle of Wight Reptilium, we have continued to investigate the feeding behaviours of a novel, non-native leech, *Batrachobdella algira*, that is showing an unusual feeding patterns on common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*), with disease foci in South Devon and the Isle of Wight. Dr Angela Julian presented these findings at the First Global Amphibian and Reptile Disease Conference (GARD) hosted by the University of Knoxville in Tennessee in August 2022, and we are pleased to report that a peer reviewed scientific paper in collaboration with all of our project partners has been accepted for publication in The Herpetological Journal.

3. Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG) Support

We support affiliated local ARG groups as needed with advice on setting up and governance and assistance for local conservation projects.

ARGWEB - We have developed a new system, specifically designed to support the volunteer ARGs, by providing a suite of online tools (apps) to enable groups to manage their members and other stakeholders including land managers and project partners in a GDPR compliant manner. ARGWEB also supports site-based amphibian and reptile surveys to allow for site monitoring, a toad patrol app, to enable patrollers to more easily collate amphibian numbers and patrollers' effort. By enabling site managers and other partners, including ARC and Froglife, to access data for their sites in real time, it also provides a tool for site management. By the end of January 2024, 30 of our county-based groups adopted ARGWEB portals, with nearly 2,500 users signed up to the system and over 750,000 observation records for amphibians and reptiles.

4. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

To promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level we attend or sit on a number of project panels and forums these include: the herpetofauna specialist group, the Great Crested Newt Working Group, the Garden Wildlife Health Project Forum, the Adder Working Group and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. We liaise with other NGOs in the wildlife conservation sector, statutory agencies, local authority and private land managers and the relevant staff of the UK Government's national conservation organisations: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and NatureScot. We also convene internal seminars and regional meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers so that we can be more representative at national level.

5. Public Outreach and Education:

Adder Community Networking – Building on approaches developed in Adders are Amazing! we are continuing to work with volunteers, land managers and local communities to conserve our native adder. In 2023-24 we ran two land manager adder networking days: the first on the Somerset Levels, led by the Reptile and Amphibian Group of Somerset (RAGs) in partnership with the RSPB, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Natural England; and a second on Cannock Chase, supported by Shropshire and Staffordshire ARG (SAS ARG), Forestry England, Cannock Chase Council and the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership. Following on from this we have co-developed a new project on Cannock Chase in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, The Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership, 17 local land managers with support from SAS ARG, Birmingham and Black Country ARG (BB&C ARG), Warwickshire Amphibian and Reptile Team (WART) and Nottinghamshire ARG (Notts ARG). In Phase 1 of the project we were lucky to secure funding from DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, to fund extensive volunteer survey effort across the Chase and validate the UKCEH adder habitat model.

Dragons in the Hills – 2023 represented the final year of activities for a major 3 year partnership project, 'Dragons in the Hills', based in Northern Ireland and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Northern Ireland and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, which ended on 31st March 2023. Working with local partners from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland, as well as other stakeholders including the Ring of Gullion AONB, National Trust of Northern Ireland, NI ARG, Mourne Heritage Trust, Northern Ireland Water, An Tobar Wellness Centre, Bluebell Lane Glamping, Redbranch Bushcraft and other local land owners. In March 2023 we were able to complete all of the scheduled project activities and host a celebratory end of project event at Slieve Gullion Forest Park. led by the Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Board of the National Lottery Heritage fund, welcoming 300 school children and many of our project partners from across the GEO Park for a fun-filled day of activities and awards. Researchers from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) were also able to complete the evaluation with our project participants, demonstrating the impact of this project in engaging, transferring knowledge, and enabling communities to come together to learn more about their natural landscape. We will submit the outcomes from the evaluation process to a peer-reviewed journal in 2024-25.

Ministry of Justice/HMPPS training and conservation programme 'Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world' – We continued to support the Ministry of Justice project, 'A pond in every prison' which aims to create a pond, or several ponds, in all 119 prisons in England and Wales. In 2023-24 we completed the second year of activities under the innovation project 'Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world', funded by the HMPPS Grants Programme in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire. During 2023-24 we re-visited 14 prisons, expanded the learning from year 1 with a series of practical projects for the prisoners which included pond and habitat creation within the prison grounds, and survey and monitoring activities.

Scottish National Adder Survey for NatureScot – Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) originally commissioned an investigation in 1992-94 into the status and distribution of the adder (*Vipera berus*) in Scotland. A key part of this comprised a questionnaire sent to 1,972 farms which were randomly selected from each 10 km OS grid square across Scotland and the inner isles, to find out more about reptile status in these locations; and a field survey of 17 sites distributed across Scotland anecdotally said to be 'good' for reptiles. In 2022-24, ARG UK and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) were commissioned to repeat the questionnaire and survey to determine whether there has been a significant shift in the baseline established thirty years ago. ARG UK coordinated the physical survey part of the project, and secured permission to visit 16 sites. During 2023-24, volunteer surveyors completed 103 site visits, supported by two spring volunteer and ranger training days. All three widespread Scottish reptiles were recorded, notably the adder, common lizard, and slow-worm, as well as common frog, common toad and small newts, but sadly no sighting of the rarest native Scottish terrestrial reptile, the grass snake.

Publications from 2023-24

Carpenter, P., & Julian, A. (2021). An axanthic common frog *Rana temporaria* from Great Britain. Herpetological Bulletin, 158, 40.

Julian, A. M., Langham, S. J., Cooper-Bohannon, R., Raynor, R., Whatley, C., Foster, J., & McKinnell, J. (2024). An overview of the Scottish National Adder Survey 2022-24. Glasgow Naturalist (online 2024), 28 (Part 2).

Kelly, S. J., Kelly, J. S., Gardner, E., Baker, J., Monk, C., & Julian, A. (2023). Improving attitudes towards adders (*Vipera berus*) and nature connectedness in primary-age group children. People and Nature, 5(6), 1908-1921.

Robbemont, J., van Veldhuijzen, S., Allain, S. J., Ambu, J., Boyle, R., Canestrelli, D., ... & Wielstra, B. (2023). An extended mtDNA phylogeography for the alpine newt illuminates the provenance of introduced populations. Amphibia-Reptilia, 44(3), 347-361.

Turner, R. K., Griffiths, R. A., Wilkinson, J. W., Julian, A. M., Toms, M. P., & Isaac, N. J. (2023). Diversity, fragmentation, and connectivity across the UK amphibian and reptile data management landscape. Biodiversity and Conservation, 32(1), 37-64.

Future Plans and Next Steps

We will continue to support the ARGs by providing advice and support; representation at the national level; regional and national meetings and by developing, or participating in projects or schemes they can adapt to local use. Other areas where ARGs have asked for support are with fundraising; toad patrolling; and public outreach. Above all, the volunteer groups value being connected, and knowing they are part of a bigger picture, working together to conserve our native amphibians and reptiles. We will also provide continued administrative support to the groups with provision of the free mini-websites, along with the recording and monitoring tools contained within Record Pool and ARGWEB.

We will continue to expand our major conservation campaign for adders, in partnership with other NGOs. We will reinforce a narrative highlighting the vulnerability of this iconic native reptile through local and national media, and continue to collect records across the UK to establish baseline distribution data. A part of this programme will include running additional land manager adder networking days, in different parts of the country to reach as many land owners and land managers as possible; as well as regional and national meetings. We will also continue to work alongside other NGOs and the Environment LINK to ensure that environmental protections for all amphibians and reptiles remain in place, and legislation continues to protect these species.

More generally, we aim to increase the engagement of the local groups with widespread species surveys (all species), and by allowing for better communication between surveyors working towards common standards monitoring. We will continue to support projects and partnerships that deliver conservation gains for all native species of herpetofauna, and develop opportunities for our volunteers to engage in wider conservation projects, as well as local outreach and conservation.

Specific projects that we will be engaging with in the coming 2024-25 year include: the Cannock Chase Adder Project. We will also complete the final project activities and evaluation of impact of the National Lottery Heritage Funded 'Dragons in the Hills' and will aim to disseminate its findings in peer reviewed journals and at international conferences. All of these projects have a common 'citizen science' approach, and additional funding bids in 2024-25 will seek to support this outreach and knowledge exchange, and build on the learning from all of these projects as well as 'Adders are Amazing!', to engage a greater number and diversity of the wider public in amphibian and reptile conservation activities.

And finally, we will aim to continue to run innovative online and in person seminars and workshops focussing on key aspects and discussions that affect reptile and amphibian conservation, and broaden our social media, expanding our portfolio from FaceBook and Twitter into Instagram and other platforms that are widespread, especially with a younger demographic.

Financial Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK for the period from 1 February 2023 - 31 January 2024.

Financial Review:

Review of Results:

We have raised a total of £66,572 since February 2023 (against income of £33,864 in 2022-23), with expenditure of £64,872 (against expenditure of £79,094 in 2022-23). Detailed breakdowns are at the end of this document.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees of ARG UK have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of ARG UK's working capital and to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure to enable ARG UK to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £26,548 (compared with £36,568 of unrestricted reserves in 2022-23) and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specified conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matched assets.

The Board of Trustees considers that reserves as held at year end are sufficient for operating the organisation and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Risk Management:

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, finances, reputation and business of ARG UK. The likelihood and impact of material risks are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at Trustee meetings. The Coordinator updates and assesses the risk management matrix, and has a duty to report any significant changes to trustees.

Structure, governance and management

ARG UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016 with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution which follows the Association model. All members of the organisation and Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. There must be at least four and no more than 11 charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

All trustees were subject to re-election at the first AGM of the organisation, and then subject to retirement by rotation. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Charitable Trustees may exercise all the powers of the organisation subject to the Charity's Act 2011 and the Constitution.

Board appointments are based on the need of the Board of Trustees as a whole to have the skills and experience to agree ARG UK's strategy and policies and monitor their implementation. Every charity trustee must be a natural person. Trustees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, but must be approved by majority vote by the members at the annual general meeting. The Honorary Officer of the Association is the Chairperson. An honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairperson may also be elected by the trustees. The Trustees are listed on page 2.

Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of a member. An organisation or a corporate body that is a member of the CIO may, in accordance with its usual decision-making process, authorise a person to act as its representative at any general meeting of the CIO.

It is the duty of each member of the CIO to exercise his or her powers as a member of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. Membership of the CIO cannot be transferred to anyone else except in the case of an individual representing an organisation which is not incorporated, whose membership may be transferred by the unincorporated organisation to a new representative.

Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 5% of members or three members. An organisation represented by a person present at the meeting, is counted as being present in person.

The Board of Trustees appoint the Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure statutory reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Coordinator is assisted by a small team of volunteers. ARG UK appreciates the extensive support it receives from volunteers without which it would not be possible to carry out such a varied and extensive programme.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Board of Trustees to prepare accounts for financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) which give a true and fair view of ARG UK's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing accounts giving a true and fair view, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts,
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that ARG UK will continue in operation,

The Trustees are responsible for the keeping of accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of ARG UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of ARG UK and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Chris Monk, Chair (appointed February 2016)

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK, CIO (Charity number: 1165504)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 January 2024, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's gross income is between £25,000 and £500,000, and the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), but that an independent examination is required. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) 2019 SORP
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

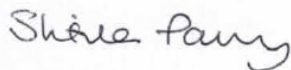
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements set out in the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Sheila Parry FCCA

SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford, OX1 1LD

Date: 26 July 2024

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure) for ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 for the year ended 31 January 2024

		Unrestricted funds £	2024 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	2023 Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from:	Note						
Donations and legacies	2	4,830	7,820	12,650	4,837	1,000	5,837
Charitable activities	3	40,472	13,450	53,922	20,135	7,892	28,027
Total		45,302	21,270	66,572	24,972	8,892	33,864
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4	2,717	-	2,717	2,407	-	2,407
Charitable activities	5	52,605	9,550	62,155	43,310	33,378	76,688
Total		55,322	9,550	64,872	45,717	33,378	79,094
Net income / expenditure		- 10,020	11,720	1,700	- 20,745	- 24,485	- 45,230
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		- 10,020	11,720	1,700	- 20,745	- 24,485	- 45,230
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		36,568	9,438	46,006	57,313	33,923	91,236
Total funds carried forward		26,548	21,158	47,706	36,568	9,438	46,006

Balance Sheet ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 as at 31 January 2024

		2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
	Notes				
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	8		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	4,135		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		44,518		47,214	
		<u>48,653</u>		<u>47,214</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	10	- 947		- 1,209	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			47,706		46,005
NET ASSETS			<u>47,706</u>		<u>46,005</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
General funds	14		26,548		36,568
Restricted funds	14		21,158		9,438
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>47,706</u>		<u>46,006</u>

ARG UK is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): which is a charity registered as a body corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011. This status confers a duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report online with the Charity Commission. Because charitable income is between £25,000 and £500,000, there is no requirement for an audit, but there is a requirement for an independent examination.

For the financial year ended 31 January 2024, ARG UK constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by SORP (FRS 102): and follows the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which have been prepared in accordance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019). The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the trusts ability to continue as a going concern.

Approved by the Board on 27th July 2024, and signed on its behalf by:



Chris Monk, Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 13 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2024

1) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2019).

Fund accounting policy

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in notes 13 and 14.

Income

Income including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from tax reclaims are included in the statement of financial activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate. Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis. Income from charitable activities includes income recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided) under contract.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The cost of fundraising

This represents the costs of inducing others to make gifts or donations to the charity.

Pensions accounting policy

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme with NEST. The pension cost represents the amount of contributions payable to the scheme in one year.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Fixed assets

Individual assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500.

Depreciation

Depreciation on tangible fixed assets is calculated to write down the cost in equal instalments over their expected useful lives.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2024 (continued)

2) Donations and legacies

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations from individuals						
Individual donations	4,830	7,820	12,650	4,837	1,000	5,837
	<u>4,830</u>	<u>7,820</u>	<u>12,650</u>	<u>4,837</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>5,837</u>
			-			-
	<u>4,830</u>	<u>7,820</u>	<u>12,650</u>	<u>4,837</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>5,837</u>

3) Income from charitable activities

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Sponsorship	-	-	-	557	-	557
Events	87	-	87	206	-	206
Ecological / project services	40,385	13,450	53,835	17,518	7,892	25,410
	<u>40,472</u>	<u>13,450</u>	<u>53,922</u>	<u>18,281</u>	<u>7,892</u>	<u>26,173</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2024 (continued)

4) Expenditure on fundraising

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	2,717	-	2,717	2,407	-	2,407
	<u>2,717</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,717</u>	<u>2,407</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,407</u>

5) Expenditure on charitable activities

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Analysis by expenditure type						
Volunteer costs	114	161	275	616	320	936
Website costs	847	-	847	689	-	689
Office support	1,342	-	1,342	660	-	660
Insurance (ARG UK)	1,978	-	1,978	1,762	-	1,762
Project costs	22,206	5,494	27,700	11,522	8,598	20,120
Staff costs (incl pensions)	24,449	3,895	28,344	21,661	23,388	45,049
Travel costs	1,051	-	1,051	5,800	1,072	6,872
Governance costs	618	-	618	600	-	600
	<u>52,605</u>	<u>9,550</u>	<u>62,155</u>	<u>43,310</u>	<u>33,378</u>	<u>76,688</u>

	2024	2023
	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£
Analysis by activity type		
Supporting grass roots conservation	45,411	55,366
Volunteer representation at national level	6,487	7,909
Public outreach and education	12,974	15,819
	<u>64,872</u>	<u>79,094</u>

6) Related Party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

7) Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity (CIO) and is, therefore, exempt from Corporation taxation.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2024 (continued)

8) Fixed assets

	Computers and equipment £
Costs	
At 1 February 2023	581
Additions	-
At 31 January 2024	<u>581</u>
Accumulated depreciation	
At 1 February 2023	581
Charge for year	-
At 31 January 2024	<u>581</u>
Net book value	
At 1 February 2023	-
At 31 January 2024	-

9) Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	4,135	-
	<u>4,135</u>	<u>-</u>

10) Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2024 £	2023 £
Payroll taxes	347	609
Accruals	600	600
	<u>947</u>	<u>1,209</u>

11) Independent Examination and other financial service fees

	2024 £	2023 £
Independent Examiner's fees	180	180
Other financial services from SPX	420	390
	<u>600</u>	<u>570</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2024 (continued)

12) Staff costs and employee benefits

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	30,003	46,402
Employer's pension contributions	1,056	993
Employer's National Insurance	-	-
	<u>31,059</u>	<u>47,395</u>

Average head count: 1 (2023: 2)

No employees received employee benefits of more than £60,000

13) Remuneration of trustees and benefits of key management personnel

No trustees received any remuneration for their roles as trustees.

Trustee Nigel Hand was reimbursed for expenses of £285.70 incurred whilst delivering specialist training events for the Northamptonshire Adder Project funded by The Green Recovery Challenge Fund in 2023-24 (2023: £416.10).

The full total for governance costs of £600 also includes costs relating to the professional fee for the examiners' report, professional trustee training, and costs of running trustees' meetings (2022-23, £600).

14) Analysis of funds

	As at 2023	Income	Expenditure	As at 2024
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	36,568	45,302	- 55,322	26,548
Restricted funds:				
100% fund	6,166	1,012	- 1,332	5,846
Sefton sand lizards	447	250	- 27	670
Dragons in the Hills	2,196	11,493	- 6,504	7,185
Northants ARG - adder project	629	1,708	- 1,687	650
Herefordshire ARG	-	6,807	-	6,807
	<u>9,438</u>	<u>21,270</u>	<u>- 9,550</u>	<u>21,158</u>
	<u>46,006</u>	<u>66,571</u>	<u>- 64,872</u>	<u>47,706</u>

14) Analysis of net assets by funds

	General funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	23,360	21,158	44,518
Debtors	4,135	-	4,135
Current liabilities	- 947	-	- 947
	<u>26,548</u>	<u>21,548</u>	<u>47,706</u>

Accounts



Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165504

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 January 2023

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Reference and Administrative details

Charity Number:	1165504
Trustees:	Chris Monk (Chair) Frank Syrratt (Treasurer) John Baker Nigel Hand Steve Langham Alice Pawlik Suzie Collinson Samantha Kelly (resigned November 2022) Jeanette Hall Erik Paterson
Registered Office:	82 Gidley Way Horspath Oxford OX33 1TG
Independent Examiner:	Sheila Parry FCCA SPX Oxford 19 Paradise St, Oxford OX1 1LD
Banker:	The Cooperative Bank

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution Document following the Association model. The Charity Trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st January 2023.

Trustees' Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK from 1 February 2022 – 31 January 2023

ARG UK's Objectives and Activities

Mission

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs).

Charitable Objectives

The charitable objects of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK are:

- (1) the preservation, conservation and welfare of native amphibians, reptiles and their natural environment in the UK for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the development of a network of independent amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs) involved in the conservation of the herpetofauna of the British isles.
- (2) to promote education and research activities for the benefit of the public at large relevant to species and habitat conservation pertinent to native amphibian and reptile populations of the British Isles and to publish the useful results of such research for the public benefit.

Strategic themes and activities:

There are currently three themes to ARG UK's work:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK's primary role is to support a network of 40 county-based volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs). Each group works with the species in its locality, and these provide the 'grass roots' of native herpetofauna conservation in the UK; undertaking survey and monitoring, practical conservation tasks, public events and outreach and liaising with stakeholders including local planning authorities, land owners, other conservation bodies, and the wider public. We also support other volunteer groups with an interest in our native herpetofauna in a more informal capacity.

2. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

We promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level and sit on a number of panels and forums. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers, so that we can be more representative at national level.

3. Public outreach and education:

We promote positive messages about amphibians and reptiles with communities and the wider public, through direct engagement at events, seminars and training days; by working with other NGOs and land managers and the local/national media to develop an engaging and positive narrative; and by developing educational materials for pre-school and school-aged children.

Principles:

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone is welcome! We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, belief, socio economic background or any other characteristic. We aim to be inclusive and proactively break down barriers, encouraging all members of society to become involved with wildlife conservation.
- We work through collaboration, using existing networks or by developing new groups and partnerships.
- We believe people learn most effectively from their peers and enable those we work with to take action within their own networks through mentoring and other forms of support.

Public benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of ARG UK meets with these criteria.

Key Achievements:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK continues to support volunteers engaged in conservation activities, by providing a range of advice and support services. These include our series of Advice Notes, based on expert inputs from specialists from the volunteer groups and other organisations including wildlife NGOs, ecological consultants and statutory agencies. These can all be accessed from the ARG UK website, www.arguk.org, and are also promoted via social media, including our various Facebook groups and Twitter account.

On-line training and outreach – Regional Meetings

We continued to support the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, which was held on-line in February 2022, responding to on-going concerns about transmission of COVID-19. The meeting was themed around non-native species, and we were pleased to welcome a range of virtual presentations covering snakes, turtles and lizards with over 150 delegates. In October 2022, we were also pleased to facilitate our first face to face regional ARG groups meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, welcoming over 100 delegates to a full day meeting of the South East ARGs at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

In addition to advice, ARG UK provides practical support to the ARGs through:

- a) Provision of an umbrella insurance scheme, at no cost, to affiliated ARGs. This provides public and employer liability for the groups, and enables them to attend public events, run training sessions, surveys and practical conservation tasks for volunteer members and the wider public.
- b) Provision of the 100% small grant scheme. This provides grants of up to £500 for affiliated ARGs to conduct practical conservation tasks, e.g. survey and monitoring equipment, toad patrol PPE, digging ponds, cutting scrub, installing amphibian escape ladders and disease testing. All applications are peer reviewed by specialists drawn from the ARG network. In 2022-23 a grant of £247.15 was made to HertsARG to buy a gazebo and other materials to support public events, and a second grant of £500 to NIARG/HSI to disease screen populations of non-native alpine newts recorded in Ireland (disease screens conducted by the University of Ghent).
- c) Provision of free mini-websites, enabling small volunteer groups to get up and running at no cost.
- d) Support for regional meetings including the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting, which attracts over 200 delegates and is the main forum for the sector. The ARGs also organise smaller regional meetings, and ARG UK supports other organisations running herpetofauna themed events.
- e) Support and advice with fundraising, administration, training and governance, where requested.

2. Supporting national projects

We coordinated volunteer action for a number of projects of national significance:

Make the Adder Count (MTAC) – We continued to support the Make the Adder Count surveys in 2022-23.

Survey and monitoring – The online herpetofauna recording portal, Record Pool in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC), continues to expand and function well with over 56,000 records from nearly 15,000 recorders right across the UK by the end of the 2022-23 year.

National Disease monitoring – We have continued to support the Garden Wildlife Health (GWH) Project, and our volunteers have been proactive in collecting information on amphibians and reptiles showing abnormalities. Our volunteers also provide a frontline resource for new pathogens, such as the deadly *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), a fungal pathogen that has already caused mass die-offs in wild European fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and may pose a threat to our native newts. In partnership with the GWH project, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ARG (HIWARG), Buglife, and The Isle of Wight Reptilium, we have continued to investigate the feeding behaviours of a novel leech that appears to be parasitizing common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*) in larger than usual numbers with disease foci in South Devon and the Isle of Wight. Dr Angela Julian presented these findings at the First Global Amphibian and Reptile Disease Conference (GARD) hosted by the University of Knoxville in Tennessee in August 2022.

3. Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG) Support

We support affiliated local ARG groups as needed with advice on setting up and governance and assistance for local conservation projects.

ARGWEB - We have developed a new system, specifically designed to support the volunteer ARGs, by providing a suite of online tools (apps) to enable groups to manage their members and other stakeholders including land managers and project partners in a GDPR compliant manner. ARGWEB also supports site-based amphibian and reptile surveys to allow for site monitoring, a toad patrol app, to enable patrollers to more easily collate amphibian numbers and patrollers' effort. By enabling site managers and other partners, including ARC and Froglife, to access data for their sites in real time, it also provides a tool for site management. By the end of January 2023, 30 of our county-based groups adopted ARGWEB portals, with nearly 2,500 users signed up to the system and over 750,000 observation records for amphibians and reptiles.

4. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

To promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level we attend or sit on a number of project panels and forums these include: the herpetofauna specialist group, the Great Crested Newt Working Group, the Garden Wildlife Health Project Forum, the Adder Working Group and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. We liaise with other NGOs in the wildlife conservation sector, statutory agencies, local authority and private land managers and the relevant staff of the UK Government's national conservation organisations: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Nature Scot. We also convene internal seminars and regional meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers so that we can be more representative at national level.

5. Public Outreach and Education:

Adder Community Networking – Building on approaches developed in Adders are Amazing! we are continuing to work with volunteers, land managers and local communities to conserve our native adder. In Northamptonshire, the local group are working with communities to monitor their local adder populations, and improve and restore habitat for the adder. This is promoting a better understanding by local residents and businesses, and a sense of the need to champion these timid, and much misunderstood animals. In October 2022 we ran a successful land manager adder networking day based in the Rockingham Forest, enabling 33 attendees from 19 different organizations including: volunteers from 5 ARGs, statutory agencies, NGOs, LA land managers and private estate managers; to discuss reptile conservation in an

informal environment, with an afternoon field trip to visit adder habitats and discuss the practical challenges land managers are facing.

Dragons in the Hills – 2022-23 represented the final year of activities for a major 3 year partnership project ‘Dragons in the Hills’, based in Northern Ireland supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Northern Ireland. Working with our partners from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland, as well as other stakeholders including the Ring of Gullion AONB, National Trust of Northern Ireland, NI ARG, Mourne Heritage Trust, Northern Ireland Water, An Tobar Wellness Centre, Bluebell Lane Glamping, Redbranch Bushcraft and other local land owners; we ran surveys and citizen science training days to find out more about the distribution of the three native amphibians and reptiles of Northern Ireland, the common frog, common lizard and smooth newt; and develop programmes with local communities and schools to conserve them. In the final year of the project researchers from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) were able to complete the evaluation with project participants, demonstrating the impact of this project in engaging, transferring knowledge, and enabling communities to come together to learn more about their natural landscape.

Dragons in the Hills is a community-led project, taking a creative approach to conservation, using arts, crafts, music and story-telling to bind the world of myth and legend with the natural world, alongside more traditional ecological survey techniques and habitat creation and restoration; to deepen the impact of the project and by working across communities encourage some ‘harder to reach’ groups to engage. We engaged local communities and land managers through our ‘Dragons Family Fun Nature Days’ reptile rambles and training days. To reduce barriers to engagement these were free and ‘local’ set in a variety of locations across the two districts. Over the 3 years of the project we reached out to 780 local families, and trained over 200 rangers and volunteers in ecological survey techniques, and community science outreach. We also engaged primary and secondary-aged school children through classroom-based activities and field trips to local sites, with fun and games as well as the nature rambles. The funding allowed us to offer the school days out for free – ensuring that every child had the opportunity to join in. In total the project worked with 12 schools, offering a total of 40 visits and online talks, for nearly 1,000 primary and secondary aged children across Newry, Mourne and Down and Ards and North Down districts. A further 150 children participated in our two schools’ art competitions, entering an impressive array of imaginative and accomplished mixed media art works featuring: drawing, painting, collage, crochet, sculpture, installations and videos.

In November 2022 the Dragons project team attended the NBN Trust Annual Recorders’ Conference at the Natural History Museum in London. The team presented a poster ‘Dragons in the Hills: Engaging citizen-science and community action to conserve Northern Ireland’s amphibians and reptiles’, in partnership with the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. The UCLan team also presented a conference poster ‘Dragons in the Hills: Impacts of a community-based citizen science conservation programme in Northern Ireland on health, wellbeing, and nature connectedness’, at the 24th World IUHPE Conference on Health Promotion, May 15-19 2022, Montreal, Canada.

Ministry of Justice/HMPPS training and conservation programme ‘Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world’– We continued to support the Ministry of Justice project, ‘A pond in every prison’ which aims to create a pond, or several ponds, in all 119 prisons in England and Wales. In February 2022 we also started a new innovation project ‘Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world’, funded by the HMPPS Grants Programme in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire to explore the impacts of improving nature connectedness for prisoners and their families. During 2022-23 we visited a total of 13 prisons, offering group sessions for staff and prisoners themed on amphibians and reptiles, as well as wider discussions about conservation issues. We then expanded the learning with a series of practical projects for the prisoners which included pond and habitat creation within the prison grounds, and survey and monitoring activities.

Scottish National Adder Survey for NatureScot –Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) originally commissioned an investigation in 1992-94 into the status and distribution of the adder (*Vipera berus*) in Scotland. A key part of this comprised a questionnaire sent to 1,972 farms which were randomly selected from each 10 km OS grid square across

Scotland and the inner isles, to find out more about reptile status in these locations; and a field survey of 17 sites distributed across Scotland anecdotally said to be 'good' for reptiles. In 2022-24, ARG UK and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC) were commissioned to repeat the questionnaire and survey to determine whether there has been a significant shift in the baseline established thirty years ago. ARG UK have taken responsibility for the physical survey part of the project, and secured permission to visit 16 sites. During the year, 95 volunteer surveyors were recruited, with 119 visits to the sites, supported by two spring volunteer and ranger training days in 2022-23. All three widespread Scottish reptiles were recorded, notably the adder, common lizard, and slow-worm, but sadly no sighting of the rarest native Scottish terrestrial reptile, the grass snake.

Future Plans and Next Steps

We will continue to support the ARGs by providing advice and support; representation at national level; regional and national meetings and by developing, or participating in projects or schemes they can adapt to local use. Other areas where ARGs have asked for support are with fundraising; toad patrolling; and public outreach. Above all, the volunteer groups value being connected, and knowing they are part of a bigger picture, working together to conserve our native amphibians and reptiles. We will also provide continued administrative support to the groups with provision of the free mini-websites, along with the recording and monitoring tools contained within Record Pool and ARGWEB.

We will continue to expand our major conservation campaign for adders, in partnership with other NGOs. We will reinforce a narrative highlighting the vulnerability of this iconic native reptile through local and national media, and continue to collect records across the UK to establish baseline distribution data. A part of this programme will include running additional land manager adder networking days, in different parts of the country to reach as many land owners and land managers as possible. We will also continue to work alongside other NGOs and the Environment LINK to ensure that environmental protections for all amphibians and reptiles remain in place, and legislation continues to protect these species.

More generally, we aim to increase the engagement of the local groups with widespread species surveys (all species), and by allowing for better communication between surveyors working towards common standards monitoring. We will continue to support projects and partnerships that deliver conservation gains for all native species of herpetofauna, and develop opportunities for our volunteers to engage in wider conservation projects, as well as local outreach and conservation.

Specific projects that we will be engaging with in the coming 2023-24 year include: the HMPPS funded innovation project in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire 'Improving the well-being of offenders and their families by connecting them with the natural world', which aims to understand more about the benefits of nature connectedness for those in a custodial environment; and the NatureScot funded Scottish National Adder Survey. We will also complete the final project activities and evaluation of impact of the National Lottery Heritage Funded 'Dragons in the Hills' and will aim to disseminate its findings in peer reviewed journals and at international conferences. All of these projects have a common 'citizen science' approach, and additional funding bids in 2023-4 will seek to support this outreach and knowledge exchange, and build on the learning from all of these projects as well as 'Adders are Amazing!', to engage a greater number and diversity of the wider public in amphibian and reptile conservation activities.

And finally, we will aim to continue to run innovative online and in person seminars and workshops focussing on key aspects and discussions that affect reptile and amphibian conservation, and broaden our social media, expanding our portfolio from FaceBook and Twitter into Instagram and other platforms that are widespread, especially with a younger demographic.

Financial Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK for the period from 1 February 2022 - 31 January 2023.

Financial Review:

Review of Results:

We have raised a total of £33,864 since February 2022 (against income of £65,053 in 2021-22), with expenditure of £79,094 (against expenditure of £72,340 in 2021-22). Detailed breakdowns are at the end of this document.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees of ARG UK have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of ARG UK's working capital and to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure to enable ARG UK to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £36,568 (compared with £57,313 of unrestricted reserves in 2021-22) and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specified conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matched assets.

The Board of Trustees considers that reserves as held at year end are sufficient for operating the organisation and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Risk Management:

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, finances, reputation and business of ARG UK. The likelihood and impact of material risks are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at Trustee meetings. The Coordinator updates and assesses the risk management matrix, and has a duty to report any significant changes to trustees.

Structure, governance and management

ARG UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016 with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution which follows the Association model. All members of the organisation and Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. There must be at least four and no more than 11 charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

All trustees were subject to re-election at the first AGM of the organisation, and then subject to retirement by rotation. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Charitable Trustees may exercise all the powers of the organisation subject to the Charity's Act 2011 and the Constitution.

Board appointments are based on the need of the Board of Trustees as a whole to have the skills and experience to agree ARG UK's strategy and policies and monitor their implementation. Every charity trustee must be a natural person. Trustees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, but must be approved by majority vote by the members at the annual general meeting. The Honorary Officer of the Association is the Chairperson. An honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairperson may also be elected by the trustees. The Trustees are listed on page 2.

Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of a member. An organisation or a corporate body that is a member of the CIO may, in accordance with its usual decision-making process, authorise a person to act as its representative at any general meeting of the CIO.

It is the duty of each member of the CIO to exercise his or her powers as a member of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. Membership of the CIO cannot be transferred to anyone else except in the case of an individual representing an organisation which is not incorporated, whose membership may be transferred by the unincorporated organisation to a new representative.

Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 5% of members or three members. An organisation represented by a person present at the meeting, is counted as being present in person.

The Board of Trustees appoint the Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure statutory reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Coordinator is assisted by a small team of volunteers. ARG UK appreciates the extensive support it receives from volunteers without which it would not be possible to carry out such a varied and extensive programme.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Board of Trustees to prepare accounts for financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) which give a true and fair view of ARG UK's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing accounts giving a true and fair view, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts,
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that ARG UK will continue in operation,

The Trustees are responsible for the keeping of accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of ARG UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of ARG UK and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Chris Monk, Chair (appointed February 2016)

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK, CIO (Charity number: 1165504)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 January 2023, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's gross income is between £25,000 and £500,000, and the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), but that an independent examination is required. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

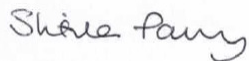
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements set out in the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Sheila Parry FCCA

SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford, OX1 1LD

Date: 18th October 2023

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure) for ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 for the year ended 31 January 2023

		2023			2022		
		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from:	Note						
Donations and legacies	2	4,837	1,000	5,837	7,451	47,510	54,961
Charitable activities	3	20,135	7,892	28,027	9,892	200	10,092
Investments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		24,972	8,892	33,864	17,343	47,710	65,053
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4	2,407	-	2,407	2,521	-	2,521
Charitable activities	5	43,310	33,377	76,687	19,941	49,878	69,819
Total		45,717	33,377	79,094	22,462	49,878	72,340
Net income / expenditure		- 20,745	- 24,485	- 45,230	- 5,119	- 2,168	- 7,287
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		- 20,745	- 24,485	- 45,230	- 5,119	- 2,168	- 7,287
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		57,313	33,923	91,236	62,432	36,091	98,523
Total funds carried forward		36,568	9,438	46,006	57,313	33,923	91,236

Balance Sheet ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 as at 31 January 2023

		2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
	Notes				
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	8		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors		-		423	
Cash at bank and in hand		47,214		91,695	
		<u>47,214</u>		<u>92,118</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	9	- 1,208		- 882	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			46,006		91,236
NET ASSETS			<u>46,006</u>		<u>91,236</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
General funds	13		36,568		57,313
Restricted funds	13		9,438		33,923
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>46,006</u>		<u>91,236</u>

ARG UK is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): which is a charity registered as a body corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011. This status confers a duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report online with the Charity Commission. Because charitable income is between £25,000 and £500,000, there is no requirement for an audit, but there is a requirement for an independent examination.

For the financial year ended 31 January 2023, ARG UK constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by SORP (FRS 102): and follows the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) which was published on 16 July 2014.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which have been prepared in accordance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015), issued in July 2014. The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the trusts ability to continue as a going concern.

Approved by the Board on 17.10.23 and signed on its behalf by:



Chris Monk, Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 13 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2023

1) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015)', issued in July 2014.

Fund accounting policy

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in notes 13 and 14.

Income

Income including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from tax reclaims are included in the statement of financial activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate. Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis. Income from charitable activities includes income recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided) under contract.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The cost of fundraising

This represents the costs of inducing others to make gifts or donations to the charity.

Pensions accounting policy

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme with NEST. The pension cost represents the amount of contributions payable to the scheme in one year.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Fixed assets

Individual assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500.

Depreciation

Depreciation on tangible fixed assets is calculated to write down the cost in equal instalments over their expected useful lives.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2023 (continued)

2) Donations and legacies

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Grants for project activities				
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	-	-	40,000
North Northamptonshire Council/ East Northamptonshire Resource Management Facility Fund	-	-	-	4,999
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>44,999</u>
Donations from individuals				
Individual donations	4,837	1,000	5,837	9,962
	<u>4,837</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>5,837</u>	<u>9,962</u>
			-	-
	<u>4,837</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>5,837</u>	<u>54,961</u>

3) Income from charitable activities

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Training course fees	-	-	-	770
Sponsorship	557	-	557	-
Events	2,060	-	2,060	-
Ecological / project services	17,518	7,892	25,410	9,322
	<u>20,135</u>	<u>7,892</u>	<u>28,027</u>	<u>10,092</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2023 (continued)

4) Expenditure on fundraising

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	2,407	-	2,407	2,521
	2,407	-	2,407	2,521

5) Expenditure on charitable activities

	2023			2022
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Analysis by expenditure type				
Volunteer costs	616	320	936	1,072
Website costs	689	-	689	539
Office support	660	-	660	5,578
Insurance (ARG UK)	1,762	-	1,762	1,541
Project costs	11,522	8,598	20,120	13,686
Staff costs (incl pensions)	21,661	23,388	45,049	44,500
Travel costs	5,800	1,072	6,872	2,603
Governance costs	600	-	600	300
	43,310	33,378	76,688	69,819

	2023	2022
	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£
Analysis by activity type		
Supporting grass roots conservation	55,366	50,638
Volunteer representation at national level	7,909	7,234
Public outreach and education	15,819	14,468
	79,094	72,340

6) Related Party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

7) Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity (CIO) and is, therefore, exempt from Corporation taxation.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2023 (continued)

8) Fixed assets

	Computers and equipment £
Costs	
At 1 February 2022	581
Additions	-
At 31 January 2023	<u>581</u>
Accumulated depreciation	
At 1 February 2022	581
Charge for year	-
At 31 January 2023	<u>581</u>
Net book value	
At 1 February 2022	-
At 31 January 2023	-

9) Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2023 £	2022 £
Payroll taxes	608	582
Accruals	<u>600</u>	<u>300</u>
	<u>1,208</u>	<u>882</u>

10) Independent Examination and other financial service fees

	2023 £	2022 £
Independent Examiner's fees	234	234
Other financial services from SPX	<u>624</u>	<u>624</u>
	<u>858</u>	<u>858</u>

11) Staff costs and employee benefits

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	46,402	43,948
Employer's pension contributions	993	1,178
Employer's National Insurance	-	-
	<u>47,395</u>	<u>45,126</u>

Average head count: 2 (2022: 2)

No employees received employee benefits of more than £60,000

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2023 (continued)

12) Remuneration and benefits of key management personnel

Trustee Nigel Hand was reimbursed for expenses of £416.10 incurred whilst delivering specialist training events for the Northamptonshire Adder Project funded by The Green Recovery Challenge Fund in 2022-23 (2022: nil).

The full total for governance costs of £600 also includes costs relating to the professional fee for the examiners' report, professional trustee training, and costs of running trustees' meetings (2021-22, £300).

13) Analysis of funds

	As at 1 February 2022	Income	Expenditure	As at 31 January 2023
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	57,313	24,972	- 45,717	36,568
Restricted funds:				
100% fund	5,856	1,000	- 690	6,166
Sefton coast sand lizard conservation	250	250	- 52	448
Dragons in the Hills	27,853	4,350	- 30,007	2,196
Northants ARG - adder project	- 36	3,292	- 2,628	628
	<u>33,923</u>	<u>8,892</u>	<u>- 33,377</u>	<u>9,438</u>
	<u>91,236</u>	<u>33,864</u>	<u>- 79,094</u>	<u>46,006</u>

14) Analysis of net assets by funds

	General funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	37,776	9,438	47,214
Debtors	-	-	-
Current liabilities	- 1,208	-	- 1,208
	<u>36,568</u>	<u>9,438</u>	<u>46,006</u>

Accounts



Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165504

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 January 2022

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Reference and Administrative details

Charity Number: 1165504

Trustees:

Chris Monk (Chair)
Frank Syrratt (Treasurer)
John Baker
Nigel Hand
Steve Langham
Alice Pawlik
Samantha Kelly
Jeanette Hall (from January 2022)
Erik Paterson (from January 2022)
Mark Barber (resigned November 2021)
Chris Cathrine (resigned November 2021)
Nicola Morris (resigned December 2021)

Registered Office: 82 Gidley Way
Horspath
Oxford
OX33 1TG

Independent Examiner: Sheila Parry FCCA
SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford
OX1 1LD

Banker: The Cooperative Bank

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution Document following the Association model. The Charity Trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st January 2022.

Trustees' Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK from 1 February 2021 – 31 January 2022

ARG UK's Objectives and Activities

Mission

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs).

Charitable Objectives

The charitable objects of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK are:

(1) the preservation, conservation and welfare of native amphibians, reptiles and their natural environment in the UK for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the development of a network of independent amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs) involved in the conservation of the herpetofauna of the British isles.

(2) to promote education and research activities for the benefit of the public at large relevant to species and habitat conservation pertinent to native amphibian and reptile populations of the British Isles and to publish the useful results of such research for the public benefit.

Strategic themes and activities:

There are currently three themes to ARG UK's work:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK's primary role is to support a network of 37 county-based volunteer amphibian and reptile groups. Each group works with the species in its locality, and these provide the 'grass roots' of native herpetofauna conservation in the UK; undertaking survey and monitoring, practical conservation tasks, public events and outreach and liaising with stakeholders including local planning authorities, land owners, other conservation bodies, and the wider public. We also support other volunteer groups with an interest in our native herpetofauna in a more informal capacity.

2. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

We are keen to promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level and sit on a number of panels and forums. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers, so that we can be more representative at national level.

3. Public outreach and education:

We aim to promote positive messages about amphibians and reptiles with communities and the wider public, through direct engagement at events, seminars and training days; by working with other NGOs and land managers and the local/national media to develop an engaging and positive narrative; and by developing educational materials for pre-school and school-aged children.

Principles:

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone is welcome! We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, belief, socio economic background or any other characteristic. We aim to be inclusive and proactively break down barriers, encouraging all members of society to become involved with wildlife conservation.
- We work through collaboration, using existing networks or by developing new groups and partnerships.
- We believe people learn most effectively from their peers and enable those we work with to take action within their own networks through mentoring and other forms of support.

Public benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of ARG UK meets with these criteria.

Key Achievements:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK continues to support volunteers engaged in conservation activities, by providing a range of advice and support services. These include our series of Advice Notes, based on expert inputs from specialists from the volunteer groups and other organisations including wildlife NGOs, ecological consultants and statutory agencies. These can all be accessed from the ARG UK website, www.arguk.org, and are also promoted via social media, including our various Facebook groups and Twitter account.

On-line training and outreach – The ARG UK Seminar Series and Regional Meetings

Harnessing the expertise of our staff and trustees, we continued to run a themed seminars and events using 'Zoom webinar' as a platform to provide interesting, informative, thought provoking and entertaining evenings with amphibians and reptiles. Using core funds provided by The Garfield Weston Foundation we were able to offer these at no cost to the delegates, allowing more people to participate, and access some of the latest cutting edge thinking and research, from prestigious speakers from across the world. We were also pleased to facilitate two Regional Amphibian and Reptile Groups meetings; a Scottish ARGs meeting on Saturday 30th October, and a South West ARGs regional meeting on 6th November 2021. We were delighted to welcome 1,167 delegates to the 6 meetings and seminars we ran between February 2021-22; with a further 2,018 downloading the online YouTube recordings.

In addition to advice, ARG UK provides practical support to the ARGs through:

- a) Provision of an umbrella insurance scheme, at no cost, to affiliated ARGs. This provides public and employer liability for the groups, and enables them to attend public events, run training sessions, surveys and practical conservation tasks for volunteer members and the wider public.
- b) Provision of the 100% small grant scheme. This provides grants of up to £500 for affiliated ARGs to conduct practical conservation tasks, e.g. digging ponds, cutting scrub, installing amphibian escape ladders and disease testing. All applications are peer reviewed by specialists drawn from the ARG network.
- c) Provision of free mini-websites, enabling small volunteer groups to get up and running at no cost.
- d) Support for regional meetings including the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting, which attracts over 200 delegates and is the main forum for the sector. The ARGs also organise smaller regional meetings, and ARG UK supports other organisations running herpetofauna themed events.
- e) Support and advice with fundraising, administration, training and governance, where requested.

2. Supporting national projects

We coordinated volunteer action for a number of projects of national significance:

Make the Adder Count (MTAC) – We continued to support the Make the Adder Count surveys in 2021, with a further 11 surveys conducted (the 2021 spring programme was impacted by the travel limitations imposed by national COVID-19 restrictions).

Survey and monitoring – The online herpetofauna recording portal, Record Pool in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC), continues to expand and function well with over 51,000 records from over 13,000 recorders right across the UK by the end of the 2021-22 year.

National Disease monitoring – We have continued to support the Garden Wildlife Health Project, and our volunteers have been proactive in collecting information on amphibians and reptiles showing abnormalities. Our volunteers also provide a frontline resource for new pathogens, such as the deadly *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), a fungal pathogen that has already caused mass die-offs in wild European fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and may pose a threat to our native newts, and a novel leech that appears to be parasitizing common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*) in larger than usual numbers.

3. Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG) Support

We support affiliated local ARG groups as needed with advice on setting up and governance and assistance for local conservation projects.

ARGWEB - We have developed a new system, specifically designed to support the volunteer ARGs, by providing a suite of online tools (apps) to enable groups to manage their members and other stakeholders including land managers and project partners in a GDPR compliant manner. ARGWEB also supports site-based amphibian and reptile surveys to allow for site monitoring, a toad patrol app, to enable patrollers to more easily collate amphibian numbers and patrollers' effort. By enabling site managers and other partners, including ARC and Froglife, to access data for their sites in real time, it also provides a tool for site management. By the end of January 2022, 30 of our county-based groups adopted ARGWEB portals, with nearly 2,500 users signed up to the system and over 750,000 observation records for amphibians and reptiles.

Ice Age Ponds Project - we continue to support the major new project led by HART (Herefordshire ARG) working in partnership with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust. "Conserving Herefordshire's Ice Age Ponds" has been awarded £252,600 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to protect the increasingly rare kettle-hole ponds which provide a unique habitat for wildlife. The project aims to map the biodiversity and geology of these ancient glacial ponds in the county, and engage land managers and the wider community with their conservation. As well as signs and walking routes new digital interpretation created by the project will allow people a glimpse into the pre-historic past through their smart phones

4. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

To promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level we attend or sit on a number of project panels and forums these include: the herpetofauna specialist group, the Great Crested Newt Working Group, the Garden Wildlife Health Project Forum, the Adder Working Group and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. We liaise with other NGOs in the wildlife conservation sector, statutory agencies, local authority and private land managers and the relevant staff of the UK Government's national conservation organisations: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Nature Scot. We also convene internal seminars and regional meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers so that we can be more representative at national level.

5. Public Outreach and Education:

Adder Community Networking – Building on approaches developed in Adders are Amazing! we are continuing to work with volunteers, land managers and local communities to conserve our native adder. In Northamptonshire, the local group are working with communities to monitor their local adder populations, and improve and restore habitat for the adder. This is promoting a better understanding by local residents and businesses, and a sense of the need to champion these timid, and much misunderstood animals.

Dragons in the Hills – we have been awarded £100,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Northern Ireland for a 3 year partnership project based in Northern Ireland, running from Jan 2020 – Dec 2022. Working with our partners from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland, and other stakeholders including the Ring of Gullion AONB, National Trust of Northern Ireland, NI ARG, Mourne Heritage Trust, An Tobar, Bluebell Lane Glamping, Redbranch Bushcraft and other local land owners; we are running surveys and citizen science training days to find out more about the distribution of the three native amphibians and reptiles of Northern Ireland, the common frog, common lizard and smooth newt; and develop programmes with local communities and schools to conserve them.

This project is very much community-led, and we are taking a creative approach to conservation, using arts, crafts, music and story-telling to bind the world of myth and legend with the natural world, alongside more traditional ecological survey techniques and habitat creation and restoration; to deepen the impact of the project and by working across communities encourage some 'harder to reach' groups to engage. During 2021 we have been working with local primary and secondary schools across all three AONBs: Ring of Gullion, The Mourne, and Strangford and Lecale; running class room sessions, and field trips to local reserves, to enable the children to find out more about their wildlife. We have also run training sessions for rangers and volunteers from the Mourne Heritage Trust and the National Trust to promote a better understanding of the needs of amphibians and reptiles and how best to conserve them.

Ministry of Justice/HMPPS training and conservation programme – During 2021 we continued to support the Ministry of Justice project, 'A pond in every prison' which aims to create a pond, or ponds, in all 119 prisons in England and Wales. We have been supporting the programme with a series of 'pond days', run at 8 hubs throughout the MoJ estate to train staff and prisoners in pond creation and management as well as the ecological principles underlying habitat creation for amphibians and reptiles. In February 2022 we will start a new innovation project funded by the HMPPS Grants Programme in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire to explore the impacts of improving nature connectedness for prisoners and their families.

Future Plans and Next Steps

We will continue to support the ARGs by providing advice and support; representation at national level; regional and national meetings and by developing, or participating in projects or schemes they can adapt to local use. Other areas where ARGs have asked for support are with fundraising; toad patrolling; and public outreach. Above all, the volunteer groups value being connected, and knowing they are part of a bigger picture. We will also provide continued administrative support to the groups with provision of the free mini-websites, along with the recording and monitoring tools contained within Record Pool and ARGWEB.

We will continue to expand our major conservation campaign for adders, in partnership with other NGOs. We will reinforce a narrative highlighting the vulnerability of this iconic native reptile through local and national media, and continue to collect records across the UK to establish baseline distribution data. A part of this programme will include repeating the 1994 Scottish National Adder Survey commissioned by NatureScot in partnership with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, monitoring 17 sites across Scotland for reptiles; as well as working with local communities across the UK.

More generally, we aim to increase the engagement of the local groups with widespread species surveys (all species), and by allowing for better communication between surveyors work towards common standards monitoring. We will continue to support projects and partnerships that deliver conservation gains for all native species of herpetofauna, and develop opportunities for our volunteers to engage in wider conservation projects, as well as local outreach and conservation.

Specific projects that we will be engaging with in the coming 2022-23 year include the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Dragons in the Hills' partnership project in Northern Ireland with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland. We will continue to work with the Ministry of Justice to increase biodiversity of the estate – literally 'nature unlocked', and to understand more about the benefits of nature connectedness for those in a custodial environment in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire. Although delayed by the restrictions associated with managing the COVID-19 virus epidemic in 2020 and 2021, we are intending to expand this project in 2022-23.

And finally we will aim to continue to run innovative online and in person seminars and workshops focussing on key aspects and discussions that affect reptile and amphibian conservation, and broaden our social media, expanding our portfolio from FaceBook and Twitter into Instagram and other platforms that are more popular with a younger demographic.

Financial Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK for the period from 1 February 2021 - 31 January 2022.

Financial Review:

Review of Results:

We have raised a total of £65,053 since February 2021 (against income of £98,586 in 2020-21), with expenditure of £72,340 (against expenditure of £44,137 in 2020-21). Detailed breakdowns are at the end of this document.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees of ARG UK have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of ARG UK's working capital and to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure to enable ARG UK to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £57,313 (compared with £62,432 of unrestricted reserves in 2020-21) and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specified conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matched assets.

The Board of Trustees considers that reserves as held at year end are sufficient for operating the organisation and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Risk Management:

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, finances, reputation and business of ARG UK. The likelihood and impact of material risks are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at Trustee meetings. The Coordinator updates and assesses the risk management matrix, and has a duty to report any significant changes to trustees.

Structure, governance and management

ARG UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016 with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution which follows the Association model. All members of the organisation and Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. There must be at least four and no more than 11 charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

All trustees were subject to re-election at the first AGM of the organisation, and then subject to retirement by rotation. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Charitable Trustees may exercise all the powers of the organisation subject to the Charity's Act 2011 and the Constitution.

Board appointments are based on the need of the Board of Trustees as a whole to have the skills and experience to agree ARG UK's strategy and policies and monitor their implementation. Every charity trustee must be a natural person. Trustees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, but must be approved by majority vote by the members at the annual general meeting. The Honorary Officer of the Association is the Chairperson. An honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairperson may also be elected by the trustees. The Trustees are listed on page 2.

Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of a member. An organisation or a corporate body that is a member of the CIO may, in accordance with its usual decision-making process, authorise a person to act as its representative at any general meeting of the CIO.

It is the duty of each member of the CIO to exercise his or her powers as a member of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. Membership of the CIO cannot be transferred to anyone else except in the case of an individual representing an organisation which is not incorporated, whose membership may be transferred by the unincorporated organisation to a new representative.

Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 5% of members or three members. An organisation represented by a person present at the meeting, is counted as being present in person.

The Board of Trustees appoint the Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure statutory reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Coordinator is assisted by a small team of volunteers. ARG UK appreciates the extensive support it receives from volunteers without which it would not be possible to carry out such a varied and extensive programme.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Board of Trustees to prepare accounts for financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) which give a true and fair view of ARG UK's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing accounts giving a true and fair view, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts,
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that ARG UK will continue in operation,

The Trustees are responsible for the keeping of accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of ARG UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of ARG UK and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Chris Monk, Chair (appointed February 2016)

Approved by the Board on: 23.06.22

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK, CIO (Charity number: 1165504)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 January 2022, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's gross income is between £25,000 and £500,000, and the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), but that an independent examination is required. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

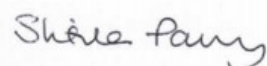
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements set out in the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Sheila Parry FCCA

SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford, OX1 1LD

Date: 28 July 2021

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure) for ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 for the year ended 31 January 2022

		2022			2021		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:	Note						
Donations and legacies	2	47,451	7,510	54,961	45,096	51,005	96,101
Charitable activities	3	9,892	200	10,092	2,485	-	2,485
Investments		-	-	-	-	-	-
Other income		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		57,343	7,710	65,053	47,581	51,005	98,586
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds		2,521	-	2,521	1,707	-	1,707
Charitable activities	4	19,941	49,878	69,819	22,124	20,306	42,430
Total		22,462	49,878	72,340	23,831	20,306	44,137
Net income / expenditure		34,881	- 42,168	- 7,287	23,750	30,699	54,449
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		34,881	- 42,168	- 7,287	23,750	30,699	54,449
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		62,432	36,091	98,523	38,682	5,392	44,074
Total funds carried forward		97,313	- 6,077	91,236	62,432	36,091	98,523

Balance Sheet ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 as at 31 January 2022

		2022		2021	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets			-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	6	423		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		91,695		99,420	
		<u>92,118</u>		<u>99,420</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	7	- 882		- 897	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			91,236		98,523
NET ASSETS			<u>91,236</u>		<u>98,523</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
General funds	12		57,313		62,432
Restricted funds	12		33,923		36,091
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>91,236</u>		<u>98,523</u>

ARG UK is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): which is a charity registered as a body corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011. This status confers a duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report online with the Charity Commission. Because charitable income is between £25,000 and £500,000, there is no requirement for an audit, but there is a requirement for an independent examination.

For the financial year ended 31 January 2021, ARG UK constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by SORP (FRS 102): and follows the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) which was published on 16 July 2014.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which have been prepared in accordance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015), issued in July 2014. The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the trusts ability to continue as a going concern.

Approved by the Board on and signed on its behalf by:



Chris Monk, Chair of Trustees on 23.06.22

The notes on pages 13 to 18 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2022

1) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015)', issued in July 2014.

Fund accounting policy

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in notes 13 and 14.

Income

Income including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from tax reclaims are included in the statement of financial activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate. Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis. Income from charitable activities includes income recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided) under contract.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The cost of fundraising

This represents the costs of inducing others to make gifts or donations to the charity.

Pensions accounting policy

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme with NEST. The pension cost represents the amount of contributions payable to the scheme in one year.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Fixed assets

Individual assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500.

Depreciation

Depreciation on tangible fixed assets is calculated to write down the cost in equal instalments over their expected useful lives.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2022 (continued)

2) Donations and legacies

	2022			2021		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Grants for project activities						
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	-	-	-	15,000	-	15,000
Garfield Weston	40,000	-	40,000	20,000	-	20,000
Dragons in the Hills	-	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Adder Campaign	-	-	-	5,000	-	5,000
Planned (Welsh Govt Leader Programme)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biodiversity Solutions Ltd	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northants ARG - adder project	-	4,999	4,999	-	-	-
	<u>40,000</u>	<u>4,999</u>	<u>44,999</u>	<u>40,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>90,000</u>
Donations from individuals						
Individual donations	7,451	2,511	9,962	5,096	1,005	6,101
	<u>7,451</u>	<u>2,511</u>	<u>9,962</u>	<u>5,096</u>	<u>1,005</u>	<u>6,101</u>
			-			-
	<u>47,451</u>	<u>7,510</u>	<u>54,961</u>	<u>45,096</u>	<u>51,005</u>	<u>96,101</u>

3) Income from charitable activities

	2022			2021		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Training course fees	770	-	770	-	-	-
Educational materials	-	-	-	50	-	50
Sponsorship	-	-	-	200	-	200
Events	-	-	-	110	-	110
Ecological / project services	9,122	200	9,322	2,125	-	2,125
	<u>9,892</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>10,092</u>	<u>2,485</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,485</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021 (continued)

4) Expenditure on charitable activities

Expenditure on raising funds

	2022			2021		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	2,521	-	2,521	1,707	-	1,707
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2,521	-	2,521	1,707	-	1,707

	2022			2021		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Analysis by expenditure type						
Volunteer costs	330	742	1,072	770	99	869
Website costs	539	-	539	467	-	467
Office support	- 9,042	14,620	5,577	898	6	904
Insurance (ARG UK)	1,541	-	1,541	1,444	-	1,444
Project costs	3,223	10,463	13,686	521	3,764	4,285
Staff costs (incl pensions)	22,690	21,810	44,499	15,364	14,041	29,405
Travel costs	361	2,244	2,605	737	2,396	3,133
Governance costs	300	-	300	1,158	-	1,158
	19,941	49,878	69,819	21,359	20,306	41,666

	2022	2021
	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£
Analysis by activity type		
Supporting grass roots conservation	57,118	23,144
Volunteer representation at national level	8,231	3,243
Public outreach and education	16,464	29,520
	81,813	55,907

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2022 (continued)

5) Related Party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

6) Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity (CIO) and is, therefore, exempt from Corporation Taxation.

7) Fixed assets

	Computers and equipment £	£	Total £
Costs			
At 1 February 2021	581	-	581
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 January 2022	<u>581</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>581</u>
Accumulated depreciation			
At 1 February 2021	581	-	581
Charge for year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 January 2022	<u>581</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>581</u>
Net book value			
At 1 February 2021	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 January 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

8) Debtors/Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	-	-
Sundry debtors	-	-
Prepayments	<u>423</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>423</u>	<u>-</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2022 (continued)

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	-
Payroll taxes	582	319
Deferred income	-	-
Other creditors	-	8
Accruals	300	570
	<u>882</u>	<u>897</u>

9) Independent Examination and other financial service fees

	2022	2021
	£	£
Independent Examiner's fees	234	180
Other financial services from SPX	624	390
	<u>858</u>	<u>570</u>

10) Staff costs and employee benefits

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	43,947	26,732
Employer's pension contributions	1,178	1,069
Employer's National Insurance	-	-
	<u>45,126</u>	<u>27,801</u>

Average head count: 2 (2020: 2)

No employees received employee benefits of more than £60,000

11) Remuneration and benefits of key management personnel

No trustees were reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation in 2021-22 (2020: nil).

The full total for governance costs of £300 also includes costs relating to the professional fee for the examiners' report, (2019-20, £1,728).

12) Commitments

	2022	2021
	£	£
Expiring in less than one year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2022 (continued)

13) Movement of funds

	As at 1 February 2021	Income	Expenditure	Funding capital expenditure	Transfers	As at 31 January 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:						
General funds	62,432	17,343	- 22,462	-	-	57,313
Restricted funds:						
100% fund	4,865	2,511	- 1,520	-	-	5,856
Sefton sand lizards	607	-	- 357	-	-	250
Northamptonshire ARG		5,199	- 5,235			- 36
Dragons in the Hills	30,619	40,000	- 42,766	-	-	27,853
	<u>36,091</u>	<u>47,710</u>	<u>- 49,878</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>33,923</u>
	<u>98,523</u>	<u>65,053</u>	<u>- 72,340</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>91,236</u>

14) Analysis of net assets by funds

	General funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	33,923	57,772	91,695
Debtors	423	-	423
Current liabilities	- 882	-	- 882
	<u>33,464</u>	<u>57,772</u>	<u>91,236</u>

Accounts



Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity Number: 1165504

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 January 2021

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Reference and Administrative details

Charity Number: 1165504

Trustees:

Chris Monk (Chair)
Mark Barber (Vice Chair until 05 January 2021)
Chris Cathrine (Vice Chair from 05 January 2021)
Frank Syrratt (Treasurer from 05 January 2021)
John Baker
Nicola Morris
Nigel Hand
Steve Langham
Alice Pawlik
Samantha Kelly

Registered Office:

82 Gidley Way
Horspath
Oxford
OX33 1TG

Independent Examiner:

Sheila Parry FCCA
SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford
OX1 1LD

Banker:

The Cooperative Bank

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution Document following the Association model. The Charity Trustees present their annual report and the charity's financial statements for the year ending 31st January 2021.

Trustees' Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK from 1 February 2020 – 31 January 2021

ARG UK's Objectives and Activities

Mission

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK (ARG UK) is committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and their natural environment by supporting the development of a network of independent volunteer amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs).

Charitable Objectives

The charitable objects of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK are:

- (1) the preservation, conservation and welfare of native amphibians, reptiles and their natural environment in the UK for the benefit of the public by promoting and supporting the development of a network of independent amphibian and reptile groups (ARGs) involved in the conservation of the herpetofauna of the British Isles.
- (2) to promote education and research activities for the benefit of the public at large relevant to species and habitat conservation pertinent to native amphibian and reptile populations of the British Isles and to publish the useful results of such research for the public benefit.

Strategic themes and activities:

There are currently three themes to ARG UK's work:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK's primary role is to support a network of 37 county-based volunteer amphibian and reptile groups. Each group works with the species in its locality, and these provide the 'grass roots' of native herpetofauna conservation in the UK; undertaking survey and monitoring, practical conservation tasks, public events and outreach and liaising with stakeholders including local planning authorities, land owners, other conservation bodies, and the wider public. We also support other volunteer groups with an interest in our native herpetofauna in a more informal capacity.

2. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

We are keen to promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level and sit on a number of panels and forums. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers, so that we can be more representative at national level.

3. Public outreach and education:

We aim to promote positive messages about amphibians and reptiles with communities and the wider public, through direct engagement at events, seminars and training days; by working with other NGOs and the local/national media to develop an engaging and positive narrative; and by developing educational materials for pre-school and school-aged children.

Principles:

Our guiding principles are:

- Everyone is welcome! We do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, belief, socio economic background or any other characteristic. We aim to be inclusive and proactively break down barriers, encouraging all members of society to become involved with wildlife conservation.
- We work through collaboration, using existing networks or by developing new groups and partnerships.
- We believe people learn most effectively from their peers and enable those we work with to take action within their own networks through mentoring and other forms of support.

Public benefit

The Board of Trustees is satisfied that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission, and that the mission, aims and activities of ARG UK meets with these criteria.

Key Achievements:

1. Supporting the grass roots conservation of amphibians and reptiles:

ARG UK continues to support volunteers engaged in conservation activities, by providing a range of advice and support services. These include our series of Advice Notes, based on expert inputs from specialists from the volunteer groups and other organisations including wildlife NGOs, ecological consultants and statutory agencies. These can all be accessed from the ARG UK website, www.arguk.org, and are also promoted via social media, including our various Facebook groups and Twitter account.

In 2020-21 ARG UK produced three new publications:

- ARG UK Advice note 12: Amphibian and Reptile Reintroductions, Guidelines for Amphibian and Reptile Groups, published March 2020
- Dragons in the Hills - the Amphibians and Reptiles of Northern Ireland, published November 2020
- Dragain sna Cnoic - Amphaibiaigh agus reptílí Thuaisceart Éireann, published January 2021

All are available on the ARG UK website www.arguk.org

On-line training and outreach – The ARG UK Autumn Seminar Series

Harnessing the expertise of our staff and trustees, we ran a series of themed seminars and events using 'Zoom webinar' as a platform to provide interesting, informative, thought provoking and entertaining evenings with amphibians and reptiles - the 'ARG UK Autumn Seminar Series'. With the support of The Garfield Weston Foundation we were able to offer these at no cost to the delegates, allowing more people to participate, and access some of the latest cutting edge thinking and research, from prestigious speakers from across the world. We were delighted to welcome 2,044 delegates to the 11 seminars we ran between September 2020- February 2021; with a further 3,373 downloading the online YouTube recordings.

In addition to advice, ARG UK provides practical support to the ARGs through:

- Provision of an umbrella insurance scheme, at no cost, to affiliated ARGs. This provides public and employer liability for the groups, and enables them to attend public events, run training sessions, surveys and practical conservation tasks for volunteer members and the wider public.
- Provision of the 100% small grant scheme. This provides grants of up to £500 for affiliated ARGs to conduct practical conservation tasks, e.g. digging ponds, cutting scrub, installing amphibian escape ladders and disease testing. All applications are peer reviewed by specialists drawn from the ARG network.
- Provision of free mini-websites, enabling small volunteer groups to get up and running at no cost.

- d) Support for regional meetings including the annual Herpetofauna Workers Meeting, which attracts over 200 delegates and is the main forum for the sector. The ARGs also organise smaller regional meetings, and ARG UK supports other organisations running herpetofauna themed events.
- e) Support and advice with fundraising, administration, training and governance, where requested.

2. Supporting national projects

We coordinated volunteer action for a number of projects of national significance:

Make the Adder Count (MTAC) – We continued to support the Make the Adder Count surveys in 2020, with a further 11 surveys conducted (the 2020 spring programme was impacted by the travel limitations imposed by national COVID-19 restrictions).

Survey and monitoring – The online herpetofauna recording portal, Record Pool in partnership with Amphibian & Reptile Conservation (ARC), continues to expand and function well with over 44,000 submissions from nearly 11,000 recorders right across the UK by the end of the 2020-21 year.

National Disease monitoring – We have continued to support the Garden Wildlife Health Project, and our volunteers have been proactive in collecting information on amphibians and reptiles showing abnormalities. Our volunteers also provide a frontline resource for new pathogens, such as the deadly *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), a fungal pathogen that has already caused mass die-offs in wild European fire salamanders (*Salamandra salamandra*) in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and may pose a threat to our native newts.

3. Amphibian and Reptile Group (ARG) Support

We support affiliated local ARG groups as needed with advice on setting up and governance and assistance for local conservation projects.

ARGWEB - We have developed a new system, specifically designed to support the volunteer ARGs, by providing a suite of online tools (apps) to enable groups to manage their members and other stakeholders including land managers and project partners in a GDPR compliant manner. ARGWEB also supports site-based amphibian and reptile surveys to allow for site monitoring, a toad patrol app, to enable patrollers to more easily collate amphibian numbers and patrollers' effort. By enabling site managers and other partners, including ARC and Froglife, to access data for their sites in real time, it also provides a tool for site management. By the end of January 2021, 30 of our county-based groups adopted ARGWEB portals, with 2,092 users signed up to the system and over 500,000 observation records for amphibians and reptiles.

Ice Age Ponds Project - we continue to support the major new project led by HART (Herefordshire ARG) working in partnership with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust. "Conserving Herefordshire's Ice Age Ponds" has been awarded £252,600 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to protect the increasingly rare kettle-hole ponds which provide a unique habitat for wildlife. The project aims to map the biodiversity and geology of these ancient glacial ponds in the county, and engage land managers and the wider community with their conservation. As well as signs and walking routes new digital interpretation created by the project will allow people a glimpse into the pre-historic past through their smart phones

4. Representing the volunteer sector at the national level:

To promote the position and views of the volunteer sector at national level we attend or sit on a number of project panels and forums these include: the herpetofauna specialist group, the Great Crested Newt Working Group, the Garden Wildlife Health Project Forum, the Adder Working Group and the Wildlife Gardening Forum. We also liaise with the relevant staff of the Government's national conservation organisations Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Nature Scot. We also convene internal meetings in order to understand better the views of our volunteers so that we can be more representative at national level.

5. Public Outreach and Education:

Adder Networking Days – Building on approaches developed in Adders are Amazing! we ran the first ‘community’ adder seminar for a community based in Gloucestershire in conjunction with Natural England and other land managers. Trustee Nigel Hand introduced the evening, providing insights into how adders use the space around the village based on radio telemetry. This prompted a lot of interest, and promoted a better understanding by local residents and businesses, and a sense of the need to champion these timid, and much misunderstood animals. In 2021-22 we hope to repeat this ‘community-based’ approach to adder conservation with a community in Northamptonshire, where adders are also frequently spotted in and around the village.

Dragons in the Hills – we have been awarded £100,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Northern Ireland for a 3 year partnership project based in Northern Ireland, running from Jan 2020 – Dec 2022. Working with our partners from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland, and other stakeholders including the Ring of Gullion AONB, National Trust of Northern Ireland, NI ARG, Mourne Heritage Trust, An Tobar, Bluebell Lane Glamping, Redbranch Bushcraft and other local land owners; we are running surveys and citizen science training days to find out more about the distribution of the three native amphibians and reptiles of Northern Ireland, the common frog, common lizard and smooth newt; and develop programmes with local communities and schools to conserve them.

This project is very much community-led, and we are taking a creative approach to conservation, using arts, crafts, music and story-telling to bind the world of myth and legend with the natural world, alongside more traditional ecological survey techniques and habitat creation and restoration; to deepen the impact of the project and by working across communities encourage some ‘harder to reach’ groups to engage. Part of this outreach has included running regular weekly activity sessions with groups of adults with disabilities – who have been busily creating ponds and other types of habitat, and installing locally made interpretive signage. We have also run a local schools’ art competition in the Ring of Gullion AONB, which prompted a fantastic response with over 88 entries from local primary and secondary-aged children.

In 2020 we also produced a four part online mini-series called ‘Dragons in the Hills: Music and Myths by the fireside’. Each episode featured a local community story teller or historian blending historical fact with local myths and legends to tell us more about the rich heritage of the communities living in the Ring of Gullion area. Story telling was combined with locally produced music from local artists of the South Armagh Traditional Arts Partnership and Colleen Savage accompanied by Pdraig Carragher. These stories are all available on the ARG UK YouTube Channel.

Ministry of Justice/HMP training and conservation programme – Due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 epidemic we were unable to continue our training programme in amphibian and reptile ecology and survey techniques with small groups of offenders in a custodial environment. However, we supported the Ministry of Justice project, ‘A pond in every prison’ which aims to create a pond, or ponds, in all 119 prisons in England and Wales. Having contacted all prisons to discuss pond creation – 101 prisons now have ponds; and we are in the process of creating resource packs and signage with the MoJ sustainability team to support a better understanding of the ecology and diversity of ponds and how to manage them in this unique environment.

Future Plans and Next Steps

We will continue to support the ARGs by providing advice and support; representation at national level; regional and national meetings and by developing, or participating in projects or schemes they can adapt to local use. Other areas where ARGs have asked for support are with fundraising; toad patrolling; and public outreach. Above all, the volunteer groups value being connected, and knowing they are part of a bigger picture. We will also provide continued administrative support to the groups with provision of the free mini-websites, along with the recording and monitoring tools contained within Record Pool and ARGWEB.

We will continue to expand our major conservation campaign for adders, in partnership with other NGOs. We will reinforce a narrative highlighting the vulnerability of this iconic native reptile through local and national media, and continue to collect records across the UK to establish baseline distribution data.

Across the UK, we aim to increase the engagement of the local groups with widespread species surveys (all species), and by allowing for better communication between surveyors work towards common standards monitoring. We will continue to support projects and partnerships that deliver conservation gains for all native species of herpetofauna, and develop opportunities for our volunteers to engage in wider conservation projects, as well as local outreach and conservation.

Specific projects that we will be engaging with in the coming 2021-22 year, include the National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Dragons in the Hills' partnership project in Northern Ireland with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and The Herpetological Society of Ireland. We will also continue to work with the Ministry of Justice to increase biodiversity of the estate – literally 'nature unlocked', and to understand more about the benefits of nature connectedness for those in a custodial environment in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire. Although delayed by the restrictions associated with managing the COVID-19 virus epidemic in 2020-21, we are hoping to expand this project in 2021-22.

In 2021-22, we also intend to expand a new programme - Finding Sanctuary – Amphibian and Reptiles in Churchyards and Burial Grounds. A partnership project with Caring for Gods Acre (CfGA), 'Finding Sanctuary' aims to explore the biodiversity of churchyards and burial grounds with a focus on amphibians and reptiles. These are community projects run with church wardens, congregations and local councils; and local volunteers are being encouraged to undertake the recording and monitoring. By embedding the project in the community they are more likely to take ownership, and to want to continue to maintain biodiversity in their churchyards, supporting the animals by changing maintenance practices. These practices will also benefit pollinators and other invertebrates as well as small mammals. The ARGs provide materials and other resources, advice and help with recording, so it is a true partnership.

To date we have found that church communities are very excited about the surveys, especially as they fit in with the Living Churchyard and Eco Church ethos that is currently building momentum. There have also been requests for surveyors to visit local schools and for articles to be written for local parish magazines. Seven of our volunteer ARG groups around England are currently involved monitoring and supporting 50 sites; from Cumbria in the north to Dorset in the south, and from The Wirral in the west to Cambridgeshire in the east.

And finally we will aim to repeat the ARG UK Autumn Seminar Series in 2021 and broaden our social media, expanding our portfolio from FaceBook and Twitter into Instagram and other platforms that are more popular with a younger demographic.

Financial Report for Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK for the period from 1 February 2020 - 31 January 2021.

Financial Review:

Review of Results:

We have raised a total of £98,586 since February 2020 (against income of £54,543 in 2019-20), with expenditure of £44,137 (against expenditure of £46,670 in 2019-20). Detailed breakdowns are at the end of this document.

Reserves Policy:

The Trustees of ARG UK have agreed to maintain unrestricted reserves to meet the requirements of ARG UK's working capital and to meet any temporary shortfall in funds or cover unexpected expenditure to enable ARG UK to fulfil its charitable objectives. Working capital is defined as the equivalent of 6 months' unrestricted expenditure.

The Board of Trustees reviews the Reserves Policy and amount of reserves required annually as part of the budget setting process. The unrestricted reserves at the end of this period were £62,432 (compared with £38,682 of unrestricted reserves in 2019-20) and comply with this policy.

Restricted reserves represent unspent monies received from donors who have specified conditions as to their use on agreed projects. These funds are fully covered by matched assets.

The Board of Trustees considers that reserves as held at year end are sufficient for operating the organisation and therefore continues to adopt a going concern basis in preparing the accounts.

Risk Management:

The Board of Trustees has assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those relating to the operations, finances, reputation and business of ARG UK. The likelihood and impact of material risks are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis at Trustee meetings. The Coordinator updates and assesses the risk management matrix, and has a duty to report any significant changes to trustees.

Structure, governance and management

ARG UK is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1165504) registered on 10 February 2016 with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members. ARG UK is governed by its Constitution which follows the Association model. All members of the organisation and Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. There must be at least four and no more than 11 charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum.

All trustees were subject to re-election at the first AGM of the organisation, and then subject to retirement by rotation. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting; any vacancies not filled at the annual general meeting may be filled. The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded. Charitable Trustees may exercise all the powers of the organisation subject to the Charity's Act 2011 and the Constitution.

Board appointments are based on the need of the Board of Trustees as a whole to have the skills and experience to agree ARG UK's strategy and policies and monitor their implementation. Every charity trustee must be a natural person. Trustees are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, but must be approved by majority vote by the members at the annual general meeting. The Honorary Officer of the Association is the Chairperson. An honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairperson may also be elected by the trustees. The Trustees are listed on page 2.

Membership of the CIO is open to all local constituted volunteer groups whose principal objective is the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles and who, by applying for membership, have indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of a member. An organisation or a corporate body that is a member of the CIO may, in accordance with its usual decision-making process, authorise a person to act as its representative at any general meeting of the CIO.

It is the duty of each member of the CIO to exercise his or her powers as a member of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO. Membership of the CIO cannot be transferred to anyone else except in the case of an individual representing an organisation which is not incorporated, whose membership may be transferred by the unincorporated organisation to a new representative.

Subject to the following provisions, the quorum for general meetings shall be the greater of 5% of members or three members. An organisation represented by a person present at the meeting, is counted as being present in person.

The Board of Trustees appoint the Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure statutory reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Coordinator is assisted by a small team of volunteers. ARG UK appreciates the extensive support it receives from volunteers without which it would not be possible to carry out such a varied and extensive programme.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Board of Trustees to prepare accounts for financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) which give a true and fair view of ARG UK's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing accounts giving a true and fair view, the Board of Trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- Follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts,
- Prepare the accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that ARG UK will continue in operation,

The Trustees are responsible for the keeping of accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of ARG UK. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of ARG UK and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees



Chris Monk, Chair (appointed February 2016)

Approved by the Board on: 16th July 2021

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Amphibian and Reptile Groups of UK, CIO (Charity number: 1165504)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 January 2021, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's gross income is between £25,000 and £500,000, and the charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), but that an independent examination is required. I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

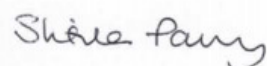
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements set out in the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Sheila Parry FCCA

SPX Oxford
19 Paradise St,
Oxford, OX1 1LD

Date: 28 July 2021

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure) for ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 for the year ended 31 January 2021

		2020-21			2019-20		
		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from:	Note						
Donations and legacies	2	45,096	51,005	96,101	30,178	11,804	41,982
Charitable activities	3	2,485	-	2,485	9,831	2,730	12,561
Total		47,581	51,005	98,586	40,009	14,534	54,543
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds		1,707	-	1,707	2,003	-	2,003
Charitable activities	4	22,124	20,306	42,430	33,321	11,346	44,667
Total		23,831	20,306	44,137	35,324	11,346	46,670
Net income / expenditure		23,750	30,699	54,449	4,685	3,188	7,873
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	3,051	- 3,051	-
Net movement in funds		23,750	30,699	54,449	7,736	137	7,873
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		38,682	5,392	44,074	30,946	5,255	36,201
Total funds carried forward		62,432	36,091	98,523	38,682	5,392	44,074

Balance Sheet ARG UK, Charity number: 1165504 as at 31 January 2021

		2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
	Notes				
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	7		-		194
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors		-		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		99,420		94,391	
		<u>99,420</u>		<u>94,391</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	8	- 897		- 50,510	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			98,523		43,881
NET ASSETS			<u>98,523</u>		<u>44,075</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
General funds	12		62,432		38,682
Restricted funds	12		<u>36,091</u>		<u>5,392</u>
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>98,523</u>		<u>44,074</u>

ARG UK is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): which is a charity registered as a body corporate under Part 11 of the Charities Act 2011. This status confers a duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report online with the Charity Commission. Because charitable income is between £25,000 and £500,000, there is no requirement for an audit, but there is a requirement for an independent examination.

For the financial year ended 31 January 2021, ARG UK constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by SORP (FRS 102): and follows the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) which was published on 16 July 2014.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which have been prepared in accordance with revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015), issued in July 2014. The trustees consider there are no material uncertainties about the trusts ability to continue as a going concern.

Approved by the Board on 16th July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Chris Monk, Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 13 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021

1) Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the revised Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2015)', issued in July 2014.

Fund accounting policy

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in notes 13 and 14.

Income

Income including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Income from tax reclaims are included in the statement of financial activities at the same time as the gift to which they relate. Investment income is recognised on a receivable basis. Income from charitable activities includes income recognised as earned (as the related goods or services are provided) under contract.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The cost of fundraising

This represents the costs of inducing others to make gifts or donations to the charity.

Pensions accounting policy

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme with NEST. The pension cost represents the amount of contributions payable to the scheme in one year.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Fixed assets

Individual assets are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least £500.

Depreciation

Depreciation on tangible fixed assets is calculated to write down the cost in equal instalments over their expected useful lives.

Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021 (continued)

2) Donations and legacies

	2020-2021			2019-2020
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Grants for project activities				
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	15,000	-	15,000	34,000
Garfield Weston	20,000	-	20,000	-
The National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	50,000	50,000	-
The Banister Trust	5,000	-	5,000	-
PLANED (Welsh Govt Leader programme)		-	-	5,309
Biodiversity Solutions Ltd		-	-	2,750
	<u>40,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>90,000</u>	<u>42,059</u>
Donations from individuals				
Individual donations	5,096	1,005	6,101	3,924
	<u>5,096</u>	<u>1,005</u>	<u>6,101</u>	<u>3,924</u>
			-	-
	<u>45,096</u>	<u>51,005</u>	<u>96,101</u>	<u>45,983</u>

3) Income from charitable activities

	2020-21			2019-20
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Educational materials	50	-	50	118
Sponsorship	200	-	200	750
Events	110	-	110	5,946
Ecological / project services	2,125	-	2,125	5,447
	<u>2,485</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,485</u>	<u>12,261</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021 (continued)

4) Expenditure on charitable activities

	Restricted funds	Staff costs	Project activities	Other costs	31-Jan-21	31-Jan-20
Supporting grass[1] roots conservation	925	10,755	365	4,367	16,412	23,549
Volunteer representation at national level[2]	0	1,536	52	624	2,212	3,332
Public outreach and education[3]	19,381	3,073	104	1,247	23,805	17,785
	<u>20,306</u>	<u>15,364</u>	<u>521</u>	<u>6,238</u>	<u>42,430</u>	<u>44,666</u>

[1] Based on 70% time allocation for unrestricted funds

[2] Based on 10% time allocation for unrestricted funds

[3] Based on 20% time allocation for unrestricted funds

5) Related Party transactions

There were no related party transactions.

6) Taxation

The organisation is a registered charity (CIO) and is, therefore, exempt from Corporation taxation.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021 (continued)

7) Fixed assets

	Computers and equipment £
Costs	
At 1 February 2020	581
Additions	-
At 31 January 2021	<u>581</u>
Accumulated depreciation	
At 1 February 2020	387
Charge for year	194
At 31 January 2021	<u>581</u>
Net book value	
At 1 February 2020	<u>194</u>
At 31 January 2021	<u>-</u>

8) Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Trade creditors	-	-
Payroll taxes	318	202
Deferred income	-	50,000
Other creditors	8	8
Accruals	570	300
	<u>897</u>	<u>50,510</u>

9) Independent Examination and other financial service fees

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Independent Examiner's fees	180	234
Other financial services from SPX	390	624
	<u>570</u>	<u>858</u>

10) Staff costs and employee benefits

	2020-21 £	2019-20 £
Wages and salaries	26,732	25,539
Employer's pension contributions	1,069	993
Employer's National Insurance	-	-
	<u>27,801</u>	<u>26,532</u>

Average head count: 2 (2020: 2)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 January 2021 (continued)

11) Remuneration and benefits of key management personnel

No trustees were reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation in 2020-21 (2020: nil).

The full total for governance costs of £1,728 also includes costs relating to the professional fee for the examiners' report, professional trustee training, and costs of running trustees' meetings (2019-20, £494.00).

12) Analysis of funds

	As at 1 Feb 2020	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	As at 31 Jan 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds	38,682	47,581	- 23,831	-	62,432
Restricted funds:					
100% fund	4,785	1,005	- 925	-	4,865
Sefton sand lizards	607	-	-	-	607
Dragons in the Hills	-	50,000	- 19,381	-	30,619
	<u>5,392</u>	<u>51,005</u>	<u>- 20,306</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,091</u>
	<u>44,074</u>	<u>98,586</u>	<u>- 44,137</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>98,523</u>

13) Analysis of net assets by funds

	General funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Cash at bank and in hand	63,329	36,091	99,420
Debtors	-	-	-
Current liabilities	- 897	-	- 897
	<u>62,432</u>	<u>36,091</u>	<u>98,523</u>