

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

Period start date Period end date
From 01 07 2023 To 30 06 2024

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name GRIMSARGH WETLANDS TRUST

Other names charity is known by Grimsargh Wetlands Trust, Charity, 1174037

Registered charity number (if any) 1174037

Charity's principal address

204 Preston Road,
Grimsargh,
Preston.

Postcode PR2 5JS

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1.	David Hindle	Chairperson		
2.	Lesley Walker	Treasurer		
3.	Jayne Woollam	Secretary		
4.	Phillip Livsey		Co-opted in 2024, to be ratified by members at the AGM, October, 2024.	Members
5.	John Willan			
6.	Steve Whittam			
7.	Mike Fisher			
8.	Geoff Carefoot			
9.				
10.				

Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Trustee's Responsibilities

The trustees are aware of the Charity Commissioner's guidance on Public Benefit and give regard to it in their administration of the affairs of their charity.

It is understood that that the Trustees and any others could be understood as "managers" in the activities and affairs of the charity are "fit and proper" persons under the terms of the Finance Act 2010.

Where persons become a Trustee for the first time or are elected to be a Trustee after a period of absence, they are invited to meet with the Chairman and Treasurer beforehand in order that they may be thoroughly briefed as to the present situation of the charity.

The Trustees recognise their responsibility to undertake a "risk assessment" of the affairs of the charity on the minimum of at least once a year. They are aware that such risk assessment covers not only financial matters but any activity or use of any property to which the general public has access.

The Trustees have a Health and Safety policy covering the activities of its members and those of the general public whilst such persons are present on any property held in the name of the Trustees. An Accident Book is maintained.

The contents and obligations of the Equality Act 2010 and the 2018 General Data Protections Regulation are known and complied by with the best of the Trustees' ability.

We have a Trustee who is covered regularly by DBS checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service however Trustees very rarely engage with young people and vulnerable adults. We always specify such visitors are to be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult/family member.

Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document	Charitable Incorporated Organisation with voting members, other than trustees.
How the charity is constituted	Trust
Trustee selection methods	A yearly re-election of a third of the trustees by the membership at the annual AGM. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer should stand for re-election annually. Appointment of new trustees is open to anyone who is interested in furthering the Trust's purposes. The role of trustee should be advertised and potential new trustees should be invited to submit a short resume of his/her experience, relevant to the post advertised. A short interview may also take place. Grimsargh Parish Council selected the first trustees, following the submission of a letter of application and an interview.
Additional governance issues (Optional information) You may choose to include additional information, where relevant, about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;• the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;• relationship with any related parties;• trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.	New trustees are advised to read the constitution, the handbook and various policy documents. The charity is a trust which abides by the constitution of a charitable incorporated organisation with voting rights by members. There are potentially 9 trustees. Currently we have 8 trustees. On the 28 th May 2018 Grimsargh Wetlands Trust signed a lease relating to the land, reservoirs and buildings, with Grimsargh Parish Council for a peppercorn rent, for 25 years. Grimsargh Parish Council are the landlords of the site, and the lease does include various caveats, as agreed with Grimsargh Parish Council. Clearly, there are risks associated with managing this type of site. However, the trustees have public liability insurance, the trustees are insured individually, and the trust occasionally liaises with United Utililites, the former owners of the site. The trustees have erected multiple signs around the site warning the public of hazards etc. Volunteers regularly repair or reinstate any damage caused by erosion or vandalism. Trustees risk assess the conditions prior to the volunteer days. Volunteer days occur on a fortnightly basis throughout the year, under normal circumstances. Prior to volunteer days, volunteers are advised via email and the new website, as to what to wear and the type of tools that will be required. Power tools are not allowed to be used on site by volunteers. Volunteers are given a talk at the start of each session regarding hazards and uneven ground etc. Children under 16 are not allowed to volunteer unless accompanied by a responsible adult. This information, including a disclaimer, is now on our new website, where volunteers can register their intention to volunteer on a particular day.

Section C

Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Mission statement – “The maintenance and enhancement of the biological status of Grimsargh Wetlands for the benefit of the local community”.

The charity is established to promote for the public benefit the conservation, protection and improvement of both the physical and natural environment in the area known as Grimsargh Wetlands, Grimsargh by promoting its biological diversity. At the same time, the charity promotes the provision of facilities for recreation for everyone, irrespective of age, infirmity, disability or social or economic need.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

Originally the site was made up of three disused reservoirs, largely neglected and largely inaccessible to the public, especially in winter, as there was no footpath, or the footpath was in a terrible state of disrepair. In 6 years since the establishment of the Trust, the trustees have constructed footpaths, mobility ramps and steps, erected gates, viewing screens and fences that have made this site accessible to all members of the public, including those with mobility issues, wheelchair users and families with pushchairs. The Trust has also installed a sluice, which allows the trustees to regulate water levels to enhance the habitat for wading birds. Tern rafts have also been installed to try and encourage terns to breed on the site. Grimsargh Wetlands is fully accessible to all. The site is free. The trustees have established volunteering opportunities, educational walks and talks, as well as social activities. It is linking people, who would not otherwise come into contact, with each other and thus is creating a better sense of community, via its volunteering and educational opportunities.

The trustees are protecting and conserving the fauna and flora of the site, while simultaneously, encouraging the whole community to enjoy volunteering activities as well as being able to access the site irrespective of the season. This year encroaching raspberry canes have been removed and that has helped the return of the wild primroses and orchids on the south bank of the Mere. Grimsargh Wetlands is special in that it is really three unique sites in one site. The Fen, the Island Lake and the Mere, each site attracting very different flora and fauna, including red-listed curlews, lapwings, oyster catchers and little ringed plovers. In Spring curlews and lapwings appear in large numbers, proof indeed that Grimsargh Wetlands is an important staging post for rare birds. There are many other species of birds, including, breeding tawny owls, barn owls, many species of ducks and geese, terns, herons, buzzards, kestrels, herons, house martins, swifts, swallows, Mediterranean gulls, and a plethora of crows and jackdaws. Badgers, butterflies, hares, deer, frogs, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, and many other insects are regularly seen on the Wetlands. The flora is also rather special, including rare hybrid willow, wild primroses, lichens, liverworts, wild orchids and many more species are to be found on the Wetlands. This year an osprey has been seen passing over the Wetlands, as well as a peregrine falcon and a rare garganey duck. In these days of encroaching urbanisation, it provides an oasis for nature in an otherwise overdeveloped urban sprawl to the north of Preston.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

You may choose to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;

In 2024, trustee Geoff Carefoot successfully applied for a grant of £2,500.00 from the Harold and Alice Bridges Trust, and Secretary, Jayne Woollam applied for a grant of £11,400.00 from the Lancashire Environmental Fund, the result of which will be known at the beginning of July, 2024. We continue to pursue grants from organisations, for example, "Naturesave Trust". However, while we recognise that membership, legacies and fundraising are important sources of revenue, in order to secure the long-term viability of the Trust, we need to plan for its future sustainability. Long-term it is hoped to develop the site further by reinstating an existing building on site from which an income stream could be derived, if it were to be hired out to various groups. Alternatively, a new building could be erected on site for the same purpose.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Achievements of the Charity 2023-2024

1. Membership

Current membership stands at 26.

Trustees voted to keep membership fees at the same level as the previous year, 2023-2024: Individual, £20.00; Volunteer/Student, £10.00; Life, £250.00; Corporate Members £100.00. Corporate Members, Non-Business, have one vote, Corporate Business Membership, have no vote, due to a potential conflict of interest.

New members receive: a membership card; a Grimsargh Wetlands Trust sticker; guided walks; an invitation to the AGM with voting rights, except for Corporate Business Members; a quarterly newsletter and new members receive a calendar.

We hope to expand our membership base in 2024-2025, as we are aware that since Covid, it has declined.

2. Meetings - 1st July 2023- 30th June 2024.

We have held 9 ordinary meetings this year; the AGM took place on the 20th September, 2023. 16 people attended the AGM. All officers were reappointed. Geoff Carefoot, who had formerly been an outstanding trustee, had his position as a newly co-opted trustee, co-opted August 2023, ratified by the members at the AGM in September 2023. The Annual Report is circulated to trustees and members in advance of the AGM.

We co-opted Phil Livsey in January 2024, and his position will hopefully be ratified by the members at the 2024 AGM. Over the years Phil has proved himself a loyal volunteer at our volunteer days, a keen wildlife enthusiast and he has a wealth of experience of environmental issues, himself having worked in environmental health for much of his career.

During 2023 trustees Phil Atkinson and Alan Sargent resigned. Phil resigned in September 2023. There are currently 8 trustees and one vacancy. We hope to co-opt a new trustee with the right skills set for the Trust 2024-2025.

Meetings have been highly productive this year, and a lot has been achieved. Trustees are committed and proactive. Trustees continue to hold robust discussions regarding proposed developments and on-going site maintenance; motions are voted on and a majority vote is acted upon.

Trustees organise guided walks and regular volunteering days for the public benefit, as well as liaising with several volunteering organisations.

Full attendance by trustees at the meetings is nearly always recorded, as noted in the minutes. The Secretary circulates agendas and minutes to the trustees and the clerk to Grimsargh Parish Council.

3. The Website

The website continues to provide information for visitors to the reserve, along with an on-line map showing the location of all the access points and viewing screens, together with a database of the wildlife likely to be seen at the Wetlands. Future events, from volunteer days to guided walks are also bookable online. The quarterly newsletter is also available on-line. Previous newsletters are now archived on the website. The website has already elicited more engagement from the local community and wider public and the trustees believe that it has been a significant achievement for the Trust. We acknowledge the immense support of HAN Communications in assisting Trustees to manage this enterprise.

Han McGivern has also successfully managed our Facebook page during 2023-2024. Facebook provides the Trust with an easily accessible platform to advertise events and recent sightings and again we are indebted to Han for her commitment and professionalism.

4. Fundraising 2023-2024

Fundraising has been a challenge this year, following the passing of the Trust's chief fundraiser, trustee, Andy Small, in 2023. However, money has been raised this year through donations from our stalls at events such as Grimsargh Farmers' Market, Goosnargh and Longridge Show Grimsargh Field Day. Collection tins at guided walks etc have also produced a modest income stream.

It was agreed in 2023 that we would re-launch our Grimsargh Wetlands Calendar and hopefully this will again raise much needed funds in 2024-2025. Geoff Carefoot has also produced packs of greetings' cards to sell, with an aerial view of the Wetlands on the front of the cards.

Trustee, Mike Fisher floated the idea of promoting a "lasting legacy" donation in 2023. The trustees agreed that this was a good idea and hopefully the public will consider leaving a legacy to the Trust, to support projects on the Wetlands funded by their legacy, once this provision has been made available on our website.

We have also received grants from GPC and donations from Longridge and Garstang Masons. The £300.00 grant from GPC was used to fund the construction of a tern raft and was funded originally by Lancashire County Council.

Much of our costs are the "unglamorous" ongoing costs of public liability insurance and employing contractors to maintain the site; securing funding for these costs presents the Trust with a continuing challenge but trustees are currently discussing possible new revenue sources, for example, CIL money from the Parish Council, as the Trust certainly provides leisure provision and open space availability for the community.

5. Newsletter 2023-2024

Mike Fisher continues to produce and circulate an excellent quarterly newsletter, updating volunteers and members with news and progress on the Wetlands. The newsletter is now archived on the website. Mike also writes a biannual article for Grimsargh Parish Council's newsletter. The newsletter continues to be one of the highlights of the Wetlands, a conduit for the Trust to channel its news and progress to the community and the wider public; we are extremely grateful for Mike's hard work and commitment to producing an excellent newsletter.

6. Grimsargh Parish Council

The trustees continue to have an excellent working relationship with Grimsargh Parish Council. The clerk to the Parish Council and Councillors are invited to attend meetings, if necessary, to liaise with the trustees on matters of mutual interest, given that Grimsargh Parish Council owns the freehold of the site. Councillors Terry Cryer and Peter Burton attend the Annual General Meeting and have one corporate vote.

7. Volunteer Days

This year we have held fortnightly volunteering days, for the public benefit during the autumn and winter months, avoiding the bird breeding season. Volunteer days provide the public with physical exercise; the health benefits of working alongside nature have long been established, from improving mood to meeting and getting to know new people, thus reducing social isolation. We regularly attract 10-15 volunteers to our volunteer days.

Due to safeguarding issues, we do not allow any child under 16 to attend volunteering sessions, or guided walks, unless accompanied by an adult.

There is a full risk assessment of volunteering for the Trust on our website, and volunteers are asked to read it carefully before signing up to volunteer with us.

During the summer months of 2023, pop-up volunteer evenings were held to clear pathways and undertake general maintenance.

The schedule of volunteer days is placed on the website and emailed directly to volunteers by the secretary. All volunteer sessions occur at the weekends, on a fortnightly basis, rotating Saturdays and Sundays. We ask everyone to book onto the volunteer day, using the website. A great deal has been achieved during the year by our volunteers and we are very grateful to their support.

8. Maintenance

In the Autumn of 2023, Wilkinson's Landscapers were employed to clear scrub from the embankment slopes and embankment tops, as well as clear willow from the Fen. This clearance has meant that the wild primroses and orchids have been given the opportunity to flourish in Spring and it has allowed a phragmites reed bed to flourish in the Fen, having removed the invasive willow. There is also a phragmites reed bed developing in the northeastern corner of the Island Lake.

9. The Lancashire Environmental Fund.

In July 2023, Steve Whittam submitted an expression of interest to the LEF for a potential project on the Fen.

However, in January 2024, Secretary Jayne Woollam took this submission forward and applied to the LEF for a grant of £11,400.00. The grant was for a new handrail up the public footpath steps, a new gate onto the Fen, replacement fencing along the public footpath and security fencing on the Mere. Grimsargh Parish Council agreed to pay third-party funding to support the grant application.

If successful, the Trust will be meeting its objective to maintain and improve the site. The result of the grant application will be made public in July 2024.

10. On Wednesday 6th September 2023

The trustees held an "Open Evening" in the Village Hall, for the public benefit, on Wednesday 6th September. It was an opportunity to engage with and inform the public about the work of the Wetlands. Prior to the meeting, trustees had delivered promotional flyers to 500 houses in Grimsargh, focusing on the new estates. We had hoped that it would provide an opportunity to recruit new volunteers. Sadly, we recruited only four new volunteers, perhaps a reflection of the difficulties faced trying to attract new volunteers, post-Covid.

11. Volunteering Groups on the Wetlands

The following volunteering organisations came on site to coppice willow and help maintain the Wetlands during 2023-2024, overseen by trustee, Mike Fisher:

Ribble Rivers Trust – Thursday 26th October and Monday 26th February.

Fylde Rangers – Monday 27th November.

Friends of Avenham and Miller Park – Thursday 26th October.

The Trust, for the public benefit, regularly engages with other organisations. The days are mutually beneficial, as the work of the volunteers from these organisations help us to maintain the site, and the cropped willow, used by these groups to shore up river banks, shore up sand dunes and create willow sculptures, clearly is of material use to them, as well as providing the volunteers from the groups with physical exercise and an opportunity to improve their mental well-being by being surrounded by nature.

12. Trail Camera

Trustee, Steve Whittam, procured a trail camera to hopefully record wildlife on the Island Lake.

13. Tree Felling

In November 2023, qualified tree surgeon, Harry Watkinson was employed by the trustees to survey two ash trees. The trees had ash dieback and could potentially be a danger to the public. The tree surgeon heavily pruned the trees.

14. Winter Walk

For the public benefit, the trustees held a Winter Guided Walk on Saturday 30th December. The walk was well attended, and feedback from attendees was very positive.

15. Andy Small Memorial

In January 2024, the trustees approved a proposal to erect a memorial to Andy on the Wetlands. The trustees had been asked to consider this request, following a request from GPC to the trustees to consider the erection of a memorial. The request to GPC had been made by Andy's family.

16. Longridge Masons

In January 2024, the Trust received a donation of £200.00 from Longridge and Garstang. Masonic Lodge

17. Bees

In February 2024, the Trust was approached by a professional beekeeper, Karl Francis, who proposed keeping bees on the Wetlands. While the trustees agreed to this proposal, it was difficult to find a suitable location for the hives and therefore, sadly, this project did not progress.

18. Spring Flower Walk, Saturday 30th March.

For the public benefit, the trustees led a guided walk on the 30th March. Attendance was excellent and the trustees received very positive feedback from the public. It was encouraging that the attendees made generous donations to Grimsargh Wetlands, following the event.

19. New Planning Sub-Committee, March 2024.

In March 2024, a new working sub-committee reconvened to meet to discuss short and long-term plans for the Wetlands. Geoff Carefoot, John Willan and Steve Whittam are members of this sub-committee; they are tasked with holding meetings and reporting their proposals back to the trustees at ordinary meetings.

20. Application for a Schedule 1 Licence, March 2024

David reported that he had obtained a Schedule 1 licence, permitting named trustees, David, Geoff, Steve and John to go onto the islands during the bird breeding season. It was hoped that we could install electric fencing and the little ringed plover cage. However, this has not happened because it was agreed, by a majority of trustees, that electric fencing on the islands was not a viable option.

This year trustees have deliberately kept water levels high on the Island Lake, in an effort to deter mammals, such as foxes, accessing the islands and predated the wading birds' chicks.

Sadly, there has been little success again this year regarding getting the chicks

successfully fledged, suggesting that avian predation is the main problem for wading chicks, not mammalian predation, therefore rendering the installation of an electric fence on the island unnecessary.

It is very disappointing that fledgling success this year among our wading birds has been negligible. The trustees remain committed to try and improve the fledgling success of wading birds on the Wetlands but given the high number of gulls and crows on the Wetlands, this continues to be a huge problem for us.

21. Grant from GPC

In March 2024, Grimsargh Wetlands were awarded a grant of £300.00 from Grimsargh Parish Council, funded by LCC. The award, funded by LCC, was a biological grant for projects in the local area.

22. Sunday 7th April, 2024 – Installation of Geoff's Tern Raft

Having secured a grant from Grimsargh Parish Council, Geoff had produced a tern raft during the winter. On Sunday 7th April 2024, volunteers helped to install the raft on the Mere.

23. RSPB Magazine, April 2024

David reported that he had "put Grimsargh Wetlands on the map nationally" by highlighting its importance in the March edition of the RSPB magazine. David had written a review of his recent book, "Enjoying Birdwatching in Lancashire and Cumbria" and he had written a chapter on Grimsargh Wetlands.

24. Wildlife Highlights 2023-2024

Fauna

The site continues to be a honeypot for wildlife. As well as being an oasis for nature, set in the middle of an area of increasing urbanisation, Grimsargh Wetlands has become an important staging post for flocks of curlew and whimbrel, attracting large numbers of the latter in Spring.

Frequent visitors to the site include endangered species, including lapwing, avocets, oyster catcher, whimbrel, curlew and little ringed plover, amongst large flocks of ducks and geese.

David Hindle and Geoff Carefoot regularly update the ELOC website, reporting ornithological sightings.

The site also attracts mammals, including voles, badgers, stoats, weasels and foxes. There is a plethora of insects too, including damsel and dragon flies.

Flora

Following the clearance of the south embankment of the Mere, there was a profusion of wild primroses and orchids in 2023. There was also an abundance of other spring flowers including, Lesser Celandine, Colt's Foot, and Wood Anemone.

The following were recorded during Spring 2023, Scarlet Elf Cup, Yellow Brain fungus, Rosy Crust fungus, Jelly Ear fungus, and King Alfred's Cake fungus. The site is rich in mosses, fungi, and liverworts. We are hoping to expose limestone in 2024-2025; its exposure will encourage the growth of bee-orchids and other limestone growing flora.

The Future

The trustees are committed to ensuring that Grimsargh Wetlands continues to flourish for wildlife and the community it serves.

The Wetlands is crucial for nature, especially endangered wading birds in northern England.

Moreover, this site is for the public benefit. Apart from the regular volunteering sessions and guided walks, the next one being August 17th 2024, the Wetlands provides local people with a leisure are, a place to walk their dogs, a place to get physical exercise and a place to engage with nature.

New housing developments are encroaching on its perimeter; the public need green spaces. It is vital, that this site is maintained not only for nature, but for a community who needs and uses it.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Details of any funds materially in deficit

Further financial review details (Optional information)

You may choose to include additional information, where relevant about:

- the charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising);
- how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity;
- investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted.

Lancashire Environmental Fund, sponsorship, donations, fundraising, membership, calendar and greetings cards, lasting legacy, Alice and Harold Bridges Trust, collection tins.

Section F Other optional information

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Section G Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

Jayne Woollam

Full name(s)

Jayne Woollam

Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)

Secretary

Date 26th July 2024



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Grimsargh Wetlands Trust

1174037

Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period from	1st July 2023	To	30th June 2024
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
				2024	2023
A1 Receipts					
Membership Fees	330			330	286
Grants	-			-	-
Fund Raising & Sales	205			205	4,352
Parish Council	300			300	-
Donations	1,577			1,577	6,600
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	2,412			2,412	11,238
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Sub total					
Total receipts	2,412			2,412	11,238
A3 Payments					
Insurance	4,099			4,099	3,967
Improvements & Repairs	5,710			5,710	2,000
Equipment	1,566			1,566	1,509
Expenses	580			580	1,092
Sub total	11,955			11,955	8,568
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Sub total	11,955			11,955	8,568
Total payments	11,955			11,955	8,568
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 9,543			- 9,543	2,670
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	21,836			21,836	19,166
Cash funds this year end	12,293			12,293	21,836

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Account	12,293		
	Petty Cash Account	10		
	Total cash funds	12,303		

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

Agreement Error

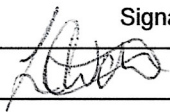
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets				

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets				

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use				

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	LEZLEY WALKER	23/9/2024