

Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust

Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 March 2024

Comprising:	Introduction, Statement of Principal activities and List of Trustees	Page 1
	Chair's Narrative	Page 2
	Receipts and Payments accounts	Page 5
	Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period	Page 6

Introduction

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Principal Activities

The charity's principal activities during the year continued to be, working with volunteers, to further necessary maintenance work and to advance construction and restoration for a navigable waterway between the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Thames and the Cotswold Canals.

Trustees

The following persons served as trustees during the year:

Rachael Banyard (re-elected for a further term of three years on 22 January 2022)

Matthew Carpenter (re-elected for a further term of three years on 22 January 2022)

Michael Handford (re-elected for a further term of three years on 23 March 2023)

Luke Walker (ratified by members at AGM on 22 January 2022 following co-option in May 2021)

Description

Hours worked by volunteers during the year	1807.5	hours
Hours worked by volunteers translated to cash value	£19578	pounds sterling

Chair's Narrative

During the year we have continued our work towards a restored navigable canal through Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire. Two of our trustees attended the IWA-CRT National Conference for Waterways Restoration held at Northampton in April. We attended most meetings of the Wiltshire Swindon and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership, but the December meeting was cancelled, and, at the end of the year, we were waiting to hear from Wiltshire Council who host the Partnership regarding the future of this organisation. At meetings of the Partnership, we report on the work we are doing on the ground.

We have submitted applications to Awards for All for support to purchase a tractor with attachments, like the one they funded for WBCT some years ago. We were disappointed that our second and third applications were not successful and have been in contact with the relevant officers in Wiltshire Council and in Wessex Action for their advice on where we can look for funding, given our current state of organisational development. It is likely that we will reach out to the local Engagement Officer for Awards for All to explain the unhappy history of our dealings with them.

The Canal Partnership has elected a Councillor from Swindon Borough, Marina Strinkovsky, as Vice Chair. Our Chair has had an initial telephone conversation with her to raise questions about what he believes the members of the Partnership other than WBCT and WWRT could and should be doing to help the great project move forward.

During the year our Chair opened a dialogue with Mike Kinch who runs Park Farm about our starting work to dismantle as necessary and to rebuild Oriel Bridge. We learned that he would need us to provide an alternative means of access for the livestock at or close to the present bridge while we are working on it. An approach was made to the local Ministry of Defence establishment at Lyneham to find out if they could deploy a temporary bridge as a training exercise. The response, unfortunately, was that they don't have the kit to help us so, with help from Mike Kinch, two scaffolding ladder beams were moved from Dauntsey to Oriel Bridge to form the bearers for a temporary bridge spanning the existing abutments but enabling access to work on one half of the existing bridge at a time.

Arising from the presentation to Bremhill Parish Council in October 2023, our Chair produced an article for the Parish Magazine explaining how it came to be that WBCT are not doing the maintenance at Foxham. This was passed to WBCT for comment, but it remained clear that their Chair did not wish the article to be published at all, and did not appear willing to understand why it was critical for WWRT's relationship with our local council – who have supported us financially – that a clear and accurate article be placed in the public domain.

We were awarded funding from the Community Benefit Fund associated with our local Solar Energy Park and ordered and took delivery of various equipment which has been useful and will be useful for our work on the canal. The largest single item we purchased was a motorised wheelbarrow which will see service moving materials for the repairs to Oriel Bridge within Park Farm at Foxham.

Also, in preparation for starting work at Oriel Bridge, attempts were made to bring a JCB 813 Powerslide tracked excavator back into serviceable order. We are fortunate that this machine, and others, are available to us on loan from one of our trustees. A pin in the linkage to a control lever had seized and snapped. A replacement pin was made by a friend in Calne, and fitted, and the machine was then tracked to the compound adjacent to Oriel Bridge.

Preparations for starting the work to repair Oriel Bridge during the year included the formation of a compound in an adjacent corner of a field, moving the orange site hut into that compound and research to find a suitable supplier and paint system for the steel beams and parapets from the existing bridge which will be re-used.

The volunteers of Waterway Recovery Group regional team, BITM, have visited to help us with our work on the ground. They completed the work they had started to repair a breach in the spillway at Dauntsey Lock known as Hignetts Hole. Later in the year plans were being made for a visit to Foxham to work on the dismantling of the deck of Oriel Bridge.

Our work parties with local volunteers have continued for a day each week with very few interruptions. Most of our resources are utilised keeping up with vegetation management on sections of the canal totalling 3.5 miles. These are sections cleared by Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and by the successor Group of Friends, but which WBCT are now unwilling to maintain. Our intention is that our having taken over responsibility for these sections helps to maintain public respect for the project amongst the local population.

One item which had not been removed when WBCT removed some of their property from the land at Dauntsey Lock was an old caravan which had been used as a site hut on the canal east of the B4069. This was in the corner of a field owned by the neighbouring farmer and was not sufficiently robust to be towed across the field (which is how the caravan had arrived there). Several work parties worked to dismantle the caravan so that much of the arising material could be recycled – and the remainder properly disposed of.

Two of our Trustees were at the IWA's AGM Day in September to hear a presentation from the leadership of IWA about what they were doing to help waterway restoration trusts such as us. On the day, our Chair took the opportunity to meet, offsite, with a relevant IWA Trustee for a confidential discussion about the issues on the Wilts & Berks Canal which IWA would be able to influence positively if relevant help could be found within the IWA membership.

During the year one of our restoration volunteers offered to establish and maintain a Facebook presence for us. Photos of our progress on the ground – particularly at Oriel Bridge – will be posted for interested people to see on a continuing basis.

WWRT was encouraged to join the WSO Canal Partnership by a senior contact in Canal and River Trust which is the charity that cares for most of the connected and navigable network of waterways in England and Wales. They have a representative who attends the Partnership but our previous attempt to establish a regular dialogue failed. We tried to re-open that connection towards the end of the year and learned that the relevant staff member in C&RT had decided to leave the organisation. They also had resigned their position as an elected trustee of WBCT. It was decided to await the opportunity for a conversation at the 2025 conference. The December meeting of the Partnership was cancelled by the CEO of WBCT.

Two friends of our Chair who live in Calne visited the site of Oriel Bridge in the autumn and one, who was previously a professional in the construction industry, suggested a particular internationally-established paint supplier who might be able and willing to quote the necessary specialist paint system needed for Oriel Bridge.

Early in 2025 we received news from the Central Government level that the proposed reservoir south-east of Abingdon would go ahead. This project has been an ongoing issue for the route of the Wilts & Berks Canal in Oxfordshire for many years. The current proposals include for the diversion of the through-route for the canal around the northern perimeter of the reservoir footprint. There have also been reports in national media about new processes to facilitate national infrastructure projects where there appears to be conflicts with environmental and/or wildlife habitat aspects. It remains to be seen whether the facilitation of waterways restoration projects will feature in the government's thinking and proposals for legislation. Our Chair has reached out to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust – they are now members of the Canal Partnership – for their input in this direction. There were discussions in 2021 about Nature Recovery Networks as the complementary features alongside areas of Biodiversity Net Gain – but no substantive actions taken by the Government since then to the best of our knowledge.

Arising from our membership of the Partnership and the view of members thereof that there should be continuing discussions between WBCT and WWRT, the IWA representative had suggested a specific name from among the WBCT trustees and agreed to try to facilitate that person being nominated as a regular point of contact. We have received assurance from another contact in IWA that the group of three respected contacts in significant ongoing restoration projects was still working on proposals for actions and arrangements the IWA trustees could adopt that would be helpful to restoration trusts.

As has become a regular annual event, our Chair participated in, and successfully completed, the Thames Bridges Trek in September. This provides an opportunity for friends, relatives and members of Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust to sponsor him. The outcome was a significant element of our income for the year.

We remain grateful to our local friends and supporters, to our members, and to the many suppliers and others who support us in so many ways. We remain confident that our work is appreciated and valued – that spirit of goodwill is a great asset for us and a great encouragement to us.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Wessex Waterways Restoration Trust

No (if any)

1174586

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/04/24		31/03/25

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 £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and Memberships	1541		-	1,541	1,541
Grants			-		8,000
Refund of repairs to footbridge		-	-	-	586
Trustees loans	-		-	-	5,800
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	1,541	-	-	1,541	15,927
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	1,541	-	-	1,541	15,927
A3 Payments					
Insurance	663	-	-	663	-
IWA Membership	75	-	-	75	69
Webhosting		-	-	-	270
Marketing	-	-	-	-	-
Surveys		-	-	-	900
Refund to Awards for All		-	-	-	7,706
Accommodation		-	-	-	300
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	738	-	-	738	9,245
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Purchase of assets	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	738	-	-	738	9,245
Net of receipts/(payments)	803	-	-	803	6,682
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	2,963	-	-	2,963	-
Cash funds this year end	3,766	-	-	3,766	6,682

**Statement of assets and liabilities at the
end of the period****CC16a**

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/04/24		31/03/25

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	3,766		-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	3,766	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets				
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Tangible assets	6352	-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Creditors	2900	-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Luke Walker	14/10/2024	