



Trustees' Annual Report for the period



From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	01	12	2022		30	11	2023

Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name

River Lark Catchment Partnership

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number (if any)

1177318

Charity's principal address

24, Northgate Avenue

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk

Postcode

IP32 6BB

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	James Stephens	Treasurer		
2	Andrew Hinchley	Chairman		
3	William Cranstoun			Suffolk Wildlife Trust
4	David Palmer		1 st December 2022 to 31 st January 2023	
5	Graham Showell			
6	Caroline Chamberlain			
7	Chris Hainsworth		1 st February 2023 to 30 th November 2023	
8	William Sutherland		26 th October 2023 to 30 th November 2023	
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
20				

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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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

CIO Association Constitution
Association
Elected by members

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

Our trustees are nominated and elected directly by our membership and we ensure that trustees are practitioners who bring a full set of competencies for our board to be effective.

In this our fifth year as a registered charity, we have had six trustees serving on our board throughout the year and we have added a further trustee from October 2023. Our constitution allows for a maximum of twelve trustees and our policy is to continue to attract nominees to add to the board to enhance the good governance and functioning of the charity.

We also enjoy the strong support of the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership within which the Lark Partnership is a sub-catchment.

We have formally adopted an array of policies covering:-

- risk management
- volunteer management
- safeguarding
- complaints handling
- managing conflict of interest
- ensuring equality

Section C Objectives and activities

The River Lark Catchment Partnership's objectives are to conserve, preserve and improve the River Lark and its catchment area for the benefit of the public, in particular but not exclusively by:

- (i) Improving access and encouraging the appropriate use of the River and its environs by members of the public.
- (ii) Educating the public about the River and its environs
- (iii) Facilitating community involvement in the conservation of the River
- (iv) Monitoring the River & its catchment and reporting any issues or concerns to the appropriate bodies having statutory responsibility.

The Trustees of RLCP actively engage in the formulation of the charity's annual action plan and in so doing ensure that they have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. The Trustees constantly reviewed the annual work plan as it was underway for 2023. Statutory declaration on public benefit.

Building a community-based organisation to deliver river conservation:

The conservation activities we aspire to be in line with the charity's objectives require us to develop an effective linked community organisation along the full extent of the river. We intend to do this progressively over the next few years. In 2023 we were able to progress our river restoration activities through the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) and matching grants made to us by the Environment Agency.



Installing brushwood bundles on the Lark near the Lark Valley Golf Course in April

Citizen Science evidence gathering for our catchment:

RLCP is committed to developing a robust approach to collecting the scientific evidence required for improving our catchment in partnership with Anglian Water, Environment Agency and our local Authorities and businesses.

In 2023 we continued to build our Citizen Science programme with volunteer training, water quality and flow gauging activities, GIS mapping and collaboration through the national 'Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative (CaSTCo)' project.



Preparations for flow gauging at the Linnet Tributary site

Outreach and public engagement:

Educating the public and engaging with our catchment stakeholders is a high priority. In 2023 we pursued these aims with:-

- Webinars and public speaking events

- Establishing a pilot to engage with landowner and farming stakeholders in the Linnet Tributary
- Launching the Lark Water Forum.



Charles Rangeley-Wilson leading DEFRA's Chalk-Stream strategy, at the lectern in Bury St Edmunds

The River Lark chalk-stream Flagship Project:

The National Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy was launched in October 2021 as a 'Catchment Based Approach' (CaBA) initiative sponsored by DEFRA, EA and Ofwat by CaBA's chalk stream restoration group which is made up of representatives from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Ofwat, Water UK, WWF, Angling Trust, Salmon and Trout Conservation, The Rivers Trust, Wild Trout Trust and Wildlife Trusts. In 2022 Anglian Water selected the Lark to be the chalk stream 'Flagship' in its area guided by the following criteria:

•**Local Passion**—The creation and development of the River Lark Catchment Partnership charity. Lots of public interest/involvement (Mildenhall & Bury St Ed).

•**Landowners**—Anglian Water are currently building a landowner network for AMP7 WINEP delivery and there are known connections through local partnerships.

•**Scale**—The Lark catchment is large, but the chalk stream sections are of the right scale for this proposal.

•**Designation**—The River Lark currently has no legal designation.

•**Condition**—Across the Lark catchment, waterbodies have moderate or worse ecological status. There is a clear opportunity for improvement (as seen in targeted stretches of the Lark already), but there are also challenges around technical feasibility and timescales of improvements.

We recognised the close alignment of our action plan for the Lark with the chalk stream recovery strategy and engaged with AW as the key community-based partner for the initiative. In September 2023 we entered into a Partnering Agreement with Anglian Water for the Flagship project which will be implemented through AW's 2025 to 2030 business plan.

Wider water sector collaboration and engagement:

The River Lark is a sub-catchment of the Cam and Ely-Ouse catchment (CamEO). Throughout the year we have participated in the regular CamEO 'collaboration and engagement' meetings and other events including the annual conference held in April where interacted vibrantly with our partners across the region.

Celebrating the year's achievements:

In August we held our Evening Summer Garden Party at Fullers Mill where some 50 of our members and volunteers attended. We are so grateful to Annie, Maddie and the team at [Fullers Mill](#) for allowing us to use their beautiful setting, and a big thankyou to Steph Holland for organising the event. For those that couldn't make it, we hope you can join us next year!

River restoration work in 2023:

The year's river restoration works within the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme (BFER) delivered about a 1km stretch of the river from the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds into the South end of the Lark Valley golf course.



The Co-op to Golf Course Reach of the River Lark on the outskirts of Bury St Edmunds

Towards the end of 2022 we worked on all the preparations for the project, particularly the permitting and the engagement with the riparian landowners for their consent. This year we went on to carry out our planned twelve work parties from December through to May 2023 along the reach.

The first work parties carried out in the winter months in all kinds of weather including snow involved shifting masses of material along the long access footpath to our worksite with our trolleys, importing loads of brush bundles and stakes for the construction of flow deflectors, berms and bank protection along the reach and then hauling out vast quantities of trash and litter from the reach.



Taking the litter out – and hauling the materials in



Nothing like a warm drink on a cold day!



Making progress with the brush bundles

Later into the spring we pushed hard to get the works in place in time before we suspended the activities for the bird nesting season.

In April and May, despite unusually wet weather and high flows in the river we managed to fit in two more work parties to start installing pre-planted coir rolls and planting other riparian plants along the reach. We had programmed to continue with the planting of coir grass rolls in the autumn, but the very unusual wet weather led to the river being too flooded and we've postponed the works into next year.



Another flow deflector installed



Coir grass planting

All in all the restoration has worked well, increasing the sinuosity of the river, with the flow deflectors and large woody material promoting scour which mobilised sections of bed material and the brush shelves assisting in collecting some of the fine materials released by the scour process and providing habitat. A huge thankyou to our restoration volunteers led by Glenn for putting up with the rough conditions and pushing through with the work this year.

Citizen Science in the Lark Catchment:

Great strides were made in 2023 in our efforts to develop our citizen science capabilities. We now have volunteers trained and active in:

- Water quality sampling
- Water flow gauging
- Modular river physical field surveys (MoRPh)
- GIS mapping.

Since September 2022, we have been regularly sampling the water from Sicklesmere to Hengrave on the main River Lark, as well as revisiting our tributaries project. Over the year we purchased and trialled handheld Hanna colorimeters, with mixed results and trained several new volunteers to help us collect and test samples as well as adding flow monitoring and dissolved oxygen to what we can investigate. By

Section D

Achievements and performance

May ten of our volunteers had completed two days of SmartRivers training. We had to pause our regular sampling between June and August due to low levels and high vegetation making use of that time to hold another training session for volunteers to learn how to sample and to test the samples and we had our Lovibond equipment re-calibrated. We also carried out flow monitoring for the Linnet tributary in the Ickworth Estate and have been using our new dissolved oxygen metre to test the water on the Linnet.

In November we teamed up with our CaSTCo partners to take part in a filming day at Ickworth, highlighting the importance of citizen science and the collaborative work we do with the Environment Agency and Norfolk Rivers Trust. We also co-hosted two landowner engagement events with Natural England and Norfolk Rivers Trust to encourage landowners to get involved with Citizen Science.



River Lark – Anglian Water’s chalk-stream Flagship Project:

In 2023 RLCP has entered into a Partnering Agreement with Anglian Water (AW) for the preparatory and implementation stages of the Lark chalk-stream Flagship Project. From 2025 to 2030 AW will be implementing the project aimed at significantly improving the health of our precious chalk stream. Our Partnership Agreement with AW provides the framework for us to develop our capabilities as AW’s community partner in the project’s implementation. We have also benefitted from a first grant made to us under the partnership agreement from Anglian Water’s ‘Get River Positive’ scheme to support our participation in the preparation for Flagship from mid-2023 through to the end of 2024

In 2023 we progressed Flagship preparation by supporting Norfolk Rivers Trust who have been commissioned by Anglian Water to deliver a catchment development plan for the Lark and Wissey catchments. We have also been busy developing and promoting our vision for Flagship implementation.

Outreach, stakeholder and public engagements in 2023:***Lark Water Forum:***

Following on from the very successful Lark Water Conference held in November 2022 we inaugurated the Lark Water Forum with a first meeting held at West Suffolk House in March 2023. The Lark Water Forum is a regular gathering of the significant water stakeholders across the socio-economic sectors of the Lark catchment. In 2023 we held meetings in March, June and 1st December. RLCP hosts the initiative and our treasurer Jim Stephens is the convener for the Forum.

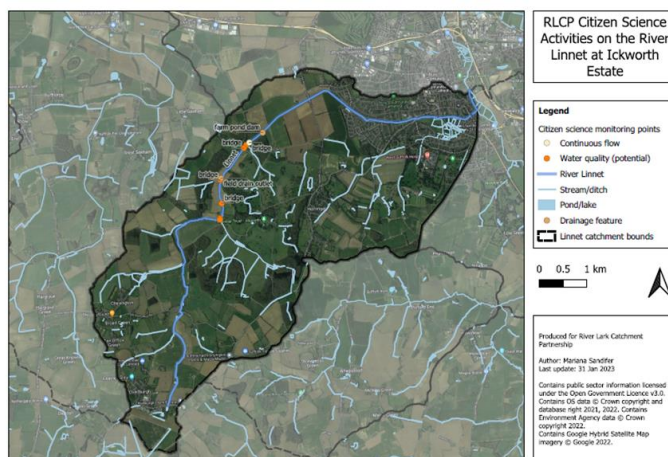
Farmer and landowner engagement:

We made huge strides in 2023 with our farmer and landowner engagement, particularly making use of our ‘water for tomorrow’ grant.

The main effort on landowner and farm business engagement has been trained on the Linnet tributary catchment. Once we have gained experience and tangible results by piloting our effort there, we envisage rolling out the acquired know-how across the Lark more generally. In doing so we have harnessed the relationship we have built with the National Trust Ickworth Estate which occupies a significant portion of the Linnet’s catchment area. Together with NT we have co-invested in building our understanding of the river and its catchment by:

- Assigning Wild Trout Trust to do a detailed walk over survey of the Linnet River. The survey was carried out in January and was followed up by an on-river presentation by WTT of the findings with RLCP, NT, NRT and EA participation in early August
- Carrying out joint citizen science water quality and flow monitoring in the catchment
- Using the powerful attraction of the Ickworth Estate as a visitor and events site for public engagement.

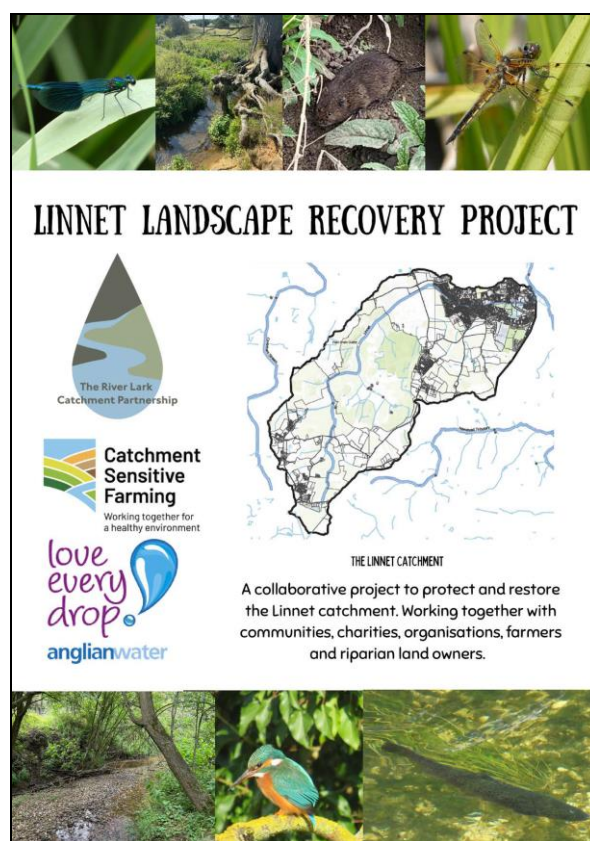
The engagement campaign targeted upwards of thirty landowners and farm businesses, introducing them to the challenges and opportunities of catchment management and more specifically how organisation through a ‘landscape scale’ landowner and farm cluster in a Linnet pilot could address the needs for upland catchment landscape management directed at reducing the loss of fertile soil and the heavy sedimentation loads in the streams at times of storms and floods.



The campaign involved contacting the Linnet farmers by email and phone to notify them, register their interest and then sending them the pamphlet prepared specifically for the campaign. Based on the recorded interest we invited the farmers to an event in October at the NT Ickworth Estate to discuss a prospective Linnet pilot. This was followed up by our participation in a larger farmer contacting event in November hosted by Norfolk Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency for the wider Lark catchment.

Feedback has helped us understand how crucial it is to invest in publicising events so that farmers get the message and are motivated to attend. We need a step change in how we invest in that and we have to consider further investing in appropriate professional media support.

- I. Farmer motivation is very centric on their business advantage. Sharpening up on the link between catchment management needs and the prospective DEFRA payments to farmers for environmental and climate goods and services (through Environmental Land Management (ELMS) schemes: Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI), Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Landscape Recovery) will be important.
- II. It is key to get leading farm businesses pro-actively involved to stimulate wider farmer engagement.



Linnet farmer engagement pamphlet

Public speaking events:

We organised two evening talks by Dr Robin Price, Anglian Water's Director of Quality and Environment in May and by Charles Rangeley-Wilson, Chair of the DEFRA sponsored 'Catchment Based Approach (CaBA)' Chalk Stream Restoration Group in July. Both talks were advertised on-line by Bury Free Press and were well attended in Bury St Edmunds with audiences of about 50 in the room and the same again attending virtually.

The talk by Robin Price summarised the plans for the Lark chalk stream Flagship Project and Anglian Water's 'Get River Positive' initiative in joint venture with Severn Trent. Robin then went on to inform us on AW's Strategic Pipeline Alliance (SPA) water transfer pipeline project which is in construction to bring treated water from the Humber into our region as well as the longer-term reservoir storage projects aimed at relieving the public water supply dependency on the chalk aquifer.



Andrew Hinchley, Jim Stephens, Robin Price and Steph Holland after the talk

The talk by Charles Rangeley-Wilson was on chalk-stream recovery using the rich experience gained over the last two decades or so restoring and regenerating chalk stream habitats in Norfolk, particularly the Nar river. The broad ranging talk gave us all important insights about restoring these sensitive habitats that we can take on board for our Lark flagship project and where our restoration and citizen science programmes can contribute significantly.

Cam and Ely Ouse Partnership participation:

We have kept up our participation in CamEO by attending all their partnership engagement events as well as their conference in April. In April CamEO initiated a steering group with the primary purpose *to provide strategic direction to the numerous parties* that share the common objective of improving the water environment in CamEO Catchment Area, and thereby help CamEO progress towards the **vision of a Cam and Ely Ouse catchment with good quality and resilient water environments, that are protected and enhanced and able to benefit communities and businesses.**

RLCP is a permanent member of the steering group and is represented at meeting by our chairman Andrew Hinchley or treasurer Jim Stephens.

Section E

Financial review

The charity held a total of £3,954 in funds at the end of the period comprising £2,615 as restricted funds and £1,339 as unrestricted funds.

For the previous year the corresponding sums were a total of £7,929.

For 2023 the charity does not have a reserves policy and does not hold funds in reserve. This will be actively reviewed in 2024 together with considerations about any necessary decisions to have funds in reserve.

The charity registers Receipts & Payments accounts. No funds were materially in deficit in 2023.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

In 2023 the charity received grant funds from the following donors:

- Environment Agency
- The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) Water Resources Communications and Engagement Fund administered by The Rivers Trust
- Heritage Lottery Funded Brecks Fen Edge and Rivers Landscape Partnership (BFER)
- Locality grants from West Suffolk Council and St Edmundsbury Town Council
- Anglian Water

Grant funded expenditure has supported our capacity building for catchment-based approach awareness raising, Lark River restoration works, preparation for the Lark chalk-stream Flagship project, pollution action plan and citizen science monitoring efforts, and our outreach campaigns.

Section F

Other optional information

List of Abbreviations:

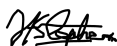

AW	Anglian Water
BFER	The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership (funded by National Lottery)
CaBA	The Catchment Based Approach
CaSTCo	Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative Project
CamEO	The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership
DEFRA	The Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs
EA	The Environment Agency
ELMS	DEFRA's Environmental Land Management Scheme
GIS	Geographical Information System
MoRPh	Modular river physical field surveys
NRT	Norfolk Rivers Trust
NT	National trust
RLCP	River Lark Catchment Partnership
WTT	Wild Trout Trust

Section G

Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	James Stephens	Graham Showell
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer, Trustee	Trustee
Date	2nd April 2024	

Receipts & Payments Accounts

Name River Lark Catchment Partnership
 Charity Number 1177318
 For the period from (start date) 1st December 2022 To (end date) 30th November 2023

Section A Receipts & 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					
CamEO Hosting Grant	2000			2000	2000
EA Vol Restoration (PG/2021/WEIF/EAN/001) and (PG/2122/WEIF/EAN/020)					5000
Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers LPS Claims	1000			1000	
Water for Tomorrow Grant		7597		7597	7500
WfT CaBA WR021		7500		7500	
Localities - Citizen science grants		1074		1074	2850
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022		7358		7358	2621
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2023				0	
AW Lark flagship Support MOU		17000		17000	
CaBA WR023		5000		5000	
Donations	300	0		300	
<i>Sub total</i>	3300	45529		48829	19971
A2 Asset & investment sales, etc	0	0		0	0
<i>Total receipts</i>	3300	45529		48829	19971
A3 Payments					
RLCP Administration services	0			0	935
RLCP Annual Insurance Premium	1194			1194	373
RLCP Web Hosting	29			29	286
RLCP Entertainment Expenses	785			785	1097
RLCP Events Expenses	25			25	
RLCP Materials Expenses	94			94	268
BFER Glenn Smithson Ltd Support Services	1000			1000	
BFER Expenses	35			35	
NCVO Training (AW flagship support MOU)		8041		8041	
GRP Flagship Engagement and Coordination		2802		2802	
Fornham Equipment Grants WSC 2019-20				0	330
EA vol restoration (PG/2122/WEIF/EAN/020) - Permit services G Smithson Ltd				0	500
Water for Tomorrow Admin & Coordination		2648		2648	5323
Water for Tomorrow - CU Abstraction Pilot Contract final payment of 50% on completion		7001		7001	
Water for Tomorrow - Citizen Science Water Quality and Flow Equipment purchases		1652		1652	1065
Water for Tomorrow - LAG support payment				0	1800
Water for Tomorrow - Training and CS support		2088		2088	150
EA river restoration (PG/2122/WEIF/EAN/020) - Costs				0	4260
Localities Citizen Science Grants - Water Quality Equipment purchases		1822		1822	2084
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - EA Permit application EPR/WB3892YM				0	255
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - Wildfish smart rivers training				0	1165
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - Vole Survey				0	101
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - Coordination services		510		510	600
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - Permit services Glenn Smithson Ltd				0	500
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2022 - Procurement of materials and equipment		6849		6849	
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2023 - Procurement of materials and equipment		3551		3551	
WfT CaBA WR021 - Admin & Coordination		4604		4604	
WfT CaBA WR021 - CS Engagement and Equipment Costs		3574		3574	
CaBA WR023 - Farm Systems Ltd Payments		4500		4500	
<i>Sub total</i>	3162	49642		52804	21092
A4 Asset & investment purchases, etc	-	-		-	-
<i>Total payments</i>	3162	49642		52804	21092
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	138	-4113		-3975	-1121
A5 Transfers between funds	0	0			
A6 Cash funds last year end	1201	6728	0	7929	9050
<i>Cash funds this period end</i>	1339	2615	0	3954	7929

Section B

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

	Details	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Receipts	3300	45529	0
	Payments	3162	49642	0
	Cash funds last year end	1201	6728	0
	<i>Total cash funds</i>	1339	2615	0

	Details	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the 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	Laptop Computer	unrestricted		
	Gardening equipment	unrestricted		
	Water Quality Testing equipment	unrestricted		
	River restoration tools	unrestricted		
	River restoration materials	restricted		
	PPE (Waders, Gauntlets, etc)	unrestricted		
	Display kit and Banners	unrestricted		

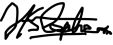
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				

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

Signature


Print name

Date of approval



James Stephens

2nd April 2024



Andrew Hinchley

2nd April 2024

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of River Lark Catchment Partnership CIO

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the River Lark Catchment Partnership CIO (the Charity) for the year ended 30 November 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Ian Campbell

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies:
Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Affiliate Member of the Association of Independent Examiners

Address: 27 Victoria Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3BB

Date: 