



Trustees' Annual Report for the period



		Period start date			Period end date		
From	01	12	2024		To	30	11

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	Ros Alexander	Chair		
2	Jim Stephens	Treasurer		
3	Andrew Hinchley			
4	Graham Showell			
5	Chris Hainsworth			
6	William Sutherland			
7	Peter Lack			
8				
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)

Ciaran Shaffrey, Lark Catchment Officer

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 eight year as a registered charity, we have had seven trustees serving on our board throughout the year. 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. In 2025 RLCP was elected by CamEO's steering group to take over the hosting duties of CamEO from Anglian Water and the Rivers Trust.

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 2025.

Staff recruitment

RLCP recruited its first full-time employee to act as our Catchment Officer in 2025. Ciaran Shaffrey will work hard to advance our Lark catchment stakeholder engagement and volunteer management together with working on and coordinating our diverse activities on the Lark chalk-stream flagship initiative in close rapport with Anglian Water.

Building a community-based organisation to deliver river monitoring and conservation:

The river monitoring and conservation activities we aspire to 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 2025 we continued our river restoration activities entering into an agreement with Suffolk Wildlife Trust to collaborate on river restoration on their land.

Citizen Science evidence gathering for our catchment:

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

RLCP CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS

(current and future projects to get involved with)

Water Quality Monitoring

Flow Monitoring

Dissolved Oxygen Monitoring

Sediment Monitoring – MudSpotter

MorPH habitat surveys

Outfall Safari

Invertebrate Monitoring – Riverfly and SmartRivers



We continue 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. In 2025 we pursued our Lark catchment monitoring and evidence gathering activities with grants from St Edmundsbury Town Council and Anglian Water's Get River Positive programme.

Outreach and public engagement:

Educating the public and engaging with our catchment stakeholders is a high priority. In 2025 we pursued these aims with:-

- Community education
- River awareness for local schools
- Engagement with catchment landowner and farming stakeholders
- Water Resources East (WRE) and Lark Water Forum Lark catchment workshops.

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 Edmunds).
- 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. Through 2025 we have undertaken preparation activities for flagship for project planning and RLCP capacity building.

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 where we interacted vibrantly with our partners across the region.

In September RLCP took over the hosting of CamEO from Anglian Water and the Rivers Trust.

RLCP capacity building in 2025:

2025 has been a step up for our charity as we have been able to recruit a full time River Lark catchment officer. Ciaran Shaffrey joined RLCP in September to fulfil the following job description:

- working with partners to develop the current River Lark Catchment Plan into a succession of projects ready for delivery
- maintaining and developing RLCP's GIS capability
- gathering baseline data, including biodiversity surveys and invertebrate sampling to inform proposed works, and monitor the effectiveness of completed work
- overseeing the delivery of larger projects
- working with RLCP volunteers to deliver river restoration works
- helping to build productive relationships with stakeholders and riparian owners
- encouraging regenerative or catchment friendly farming practices in the region
- helping ensure RLCP's medium to long term stability by identifying grant opportunities:
 - applying for small grants
 - assisting in the preparation of larger grants
- developing RLCP as an effective CamEO host and acknowledged leader in the delivery of BNG disseminating information and good practice amongst the wider CamEO catchment organisations contributing to a programme of public engagement and education.

We have also engaged Becky Poynter to support our core administration including managing our website and web-based communication



Ciaran Shaffrey
Lark catchment officer

Becky Poynter
RLCP admin support

River restoration work:

In 2025 there has been a pause in our river restoration activities as we take into consideration the conclusions and recommendations we have been receiving from the Lark Fluvial audit which we report on below.

We have maintained our engagement with the Brecks project post BFER and our chair has been appointed to the board of a new Brecks Landscape Partnership which has been set up to unite communities, landowners, conservation bodies, and local authorities in a shared mission to protect and enhance the Brecks.

In October 2025 we entered into a partnership agreement with Suffolk Wildlife Trust to work on Lark river restoration projects within their land. We carried our preparatory works for restoring the river within Lackford Lakes immediately upstream of the West Stow water recycling site which will be carried out in 2026.



RLCP volunteers doing instream habitat work in spring 2025

Controlling Non-Native Invasive Species and Litter Picking:

In the Lark streams there is a proliferation of Himalayan Balsam which left uncontrolled is very damaging to our native flora. Himalayan balsam colonises the banks of rivers, streams and ditches. Its shallow roots and annual growth habit do little to stabilise the soil along banks, leading to habitat alteration and degradation. RLCP volunteers have been routinely carrying out summer 'Himalayan Balsam Bashing' campaigns and are moving towards establishing a control and eventual eradication approach for the catchment.



Our Balsam bashing volunteers in July 2025

We are also stepping up our litter picking campaigns to keep the River clearer.



Litter picking in Forham and Hengrave in 2025

Citizen Science in the Lark Catchment:

In 2025 our main focus was continuing to deliver into our citizen science monitoring programme as one of the Anglian region's demonstration catchments in the national 'Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative (CaSTCo)' project. The three-year CaSTCo project sponsored by OFWAT ended in 2025. Our main focus in 2025 has been on improving Lark water quality monitoring with Seneye automatic monitoring as well as continuing with water quality and invertebrate monitoring, and MorPH habitat surveys. Through 2025 we have continued to maintain our links with the Anglian Water, EA and Rivers Trust CaSTCo team as prospective funds for continuing the effort are being sort.

An important activity in 2025 was supporting the Lark Fluvial Audit and restoration strategy being delivered by Southampton University with sediment collecting which was carried out by RLCP's Glenn Smithson and Rob Clapham of the EA.



Installing a sediment collecting tube



Sediment samples ready for dispatch

Public Education:

We have been particularly focused on our charity's objective to educate the public about the river and its environs.

For public engagement RLCP gave talks regarding the river Lark to three organisations in 2025:

- Tuddenham Village on 25th February 2025.
- Long Melford Gardeners on 17th March 2025.
- Lackford Village on 17th May 2025.



Graham Showell giving his talk to Long Melford Gardeners

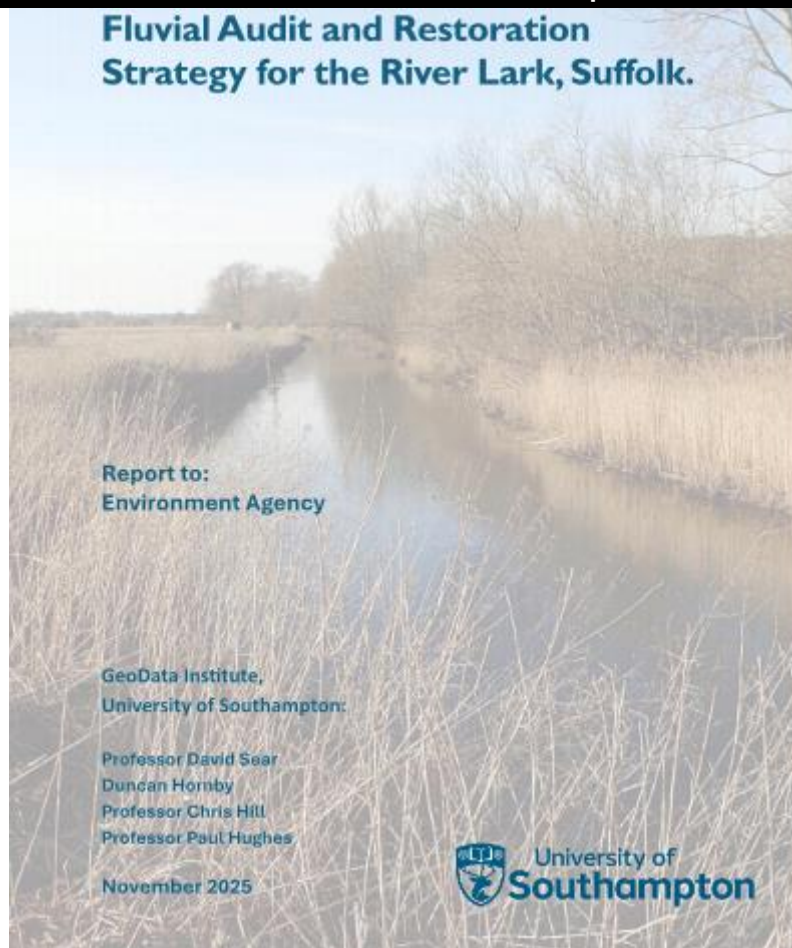
For schools our Chair gave talks to year seven classes at Bury St Edmunds King Edward VI school in May and our newly recruited Catchment Officer gave talks to year 3 classes and a key stage 2 assembly at Bury St Edmunds Guildhall Feoffment primary school in November.

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

In 2023 RLCP 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. In 2025 we have been provided with a ‘Get Rivers Positive’ grant enabling RLCP to recruit our Catchment Officer and continue with Flagship project development efforts.

With EA taking the lead, we have engaged Southampton University in a collaborative agreement to undertake a research project in order to design, collect and analyse data on the River Lark to guide future flagship restoration actions with the objectives to:

- assess the current state of the Lark and provide recommendations for achieving best possible state by 2030 and beyond
- undertake a combination of desk- and field-based data collection including a fluvial audit and network of sediment samplers to better understand and quantify sediment inputs, storage and transport through the catchment
- undertake sediment coring, paleo-environmental analysis and other analysis, which alongside the fluvial audit will determine the ‘feasibility’ for restoration at specifically agreed sites. The outputs will guide future projects to ‘design-phases during flagship implementation
- Train RLCP volunteers to maintain equipment and undertake additional surveys.



The River Lark Fluvial Audit report is now available and RLCP with our Flagship partners have this vital guide to take us through the implementation period of the project.

Outreach, stakeholder and public engagements in 2025:

Lark Water Forum:

The Lark Water Forum is a regular gathering of the significant water stakeholders across the socio-economic sectors of the Lark catchment. RLCP hosts the initiative and our treasurer Jim Stephens is the convener for the Forum.

In 2025 we invited the Forum delegates to the Lark catchment workshops that were organised by Water Resources East (WRE) and held at Tuddenham Village Hall in July and September.

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 held at Bury St Edmunds Guildhall in November 2024.

CamEO's steering group provides strategic direction to the numerous parties that share the common objective of improving the water environment in the 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 chair Ros Alexander and/or our treasurer Jim Stephens.

In September 2025 RLCP took over from The Rivers Trust and Anglian Water the hosting duties for CamEO.

Section D Section E

Achievements and performance Financial review

The charity held a total of £51,042 in funds at the end of the period comprising £49,064 as restricted funds and £1,978 as unrestricted funds.

For the previous year the corresponding sums were a total of £12,649.

For 2025 the charity does not have a reserves policy and does not hold funds in reserve. This will be actively reviewed in 2026 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 2025.

Further financial review details (Optional information)

In 2025 the charity received grant funds from the following donors:

- Environment Agency
- Bury St Edmunds Town Council
- Anglian Water
- RC Browne & Sons

Grant funded expenditure has supported our capacity building for catchment-based approach awareness raising, Lark River restoration works and citizen science, activities on the Lark chalk-stream Flagship project, hosting of CamEO and our outreach campaigns.

Section F

Other optional information

List of Abbreviations:

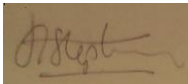

AW	Anglian Water
BFER	The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership (funded by National Lottery)
CaBA	The Catchment Based Approach
CaSTCo	Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative Project
CamEO	The Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Partnership
EA	The Environment Agency
GIS	Geographical Information System
MorPh	Modular river physical field surveys
NRT	Norfolk Rivers Trust
RLCP	River Lark Catchment Partnership
WRE	Water Resources East

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	24 th April 2026	

Receipts & Payments Accounts

Name River Lark Catchment Partnership
 Charity Number 1177318
 For the period from (start date) 1st December 2024 To (end date) 30th November 2025

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		15000		15000	2000
Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers LPS Claims				0	698
WfT CaBA WR021				0	2500
CaBA WR023				0	5000
BSE Town Council CS Grant 2023 - 2024				0	3792
BSE Town Council CS Grant 2024 - 2025				0	3600
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2023				0	9956
AW GDP Flagship Grant No.1		3000		3000	21000
Browne & Son Grant (EA)		10000		10000	
AW GDP Flagship Grant No.2		40000		40000	
Donations	899			899	1768
<i>Sub total</i>	899	68000		68899	50314
A2 Asset & investment sales, etc	0	0		0	0
<i>Total receipts</i>	899	68000		68899	50314
A3 Payments					
Salaries and NI		7567		7567	
HMRC paye		354		354	
Payroll Service		318		318	
Pension contributions		485		485	
RLCP Adminstration services	166	735		901	268
RLCP Donations	100			100	
RLCP Annual Insurance Premium	1336			1336	982
RLCP ARCGIS Licences		657		657	
RLCP Entertainment Expenses				0	537
RLCP Admin & Events Expenses	68			68	667
RLCP Equipment&Materials Expenses	673	2034		2707	322
CamEO hosting expenses		535		535	
BFER Expenses				0	834
RLCP Governance admin and training		960		960	1597
GRP Flagship Grant No.1 Engagement and Coordination costs		2904		2904	17982
GRP Flagship Grant No.2 Growing and Securing RLCP volunteer base costs		6792		6792	
EA Partnership for River Restoration 2023 - Procurement and expenses				0	6335
WfT CaBA WR021 - CS Engagement and Equipment Costs				0	1284
CaBA WR023 - Farm Systems Ltd Payments, coordination and expenses				0	4990
BSE Town Council CS equipment and training procurement and expenses		1663		1663	5821
Hawstead FM Project costs		3159		3159	
<i>Sub total</i>	2343	28163		30506	41619
A4 Asset & investment purchases, etc	-	-		-	-
<i>Total payments</i>	2343	28163		30506	41619
<i>Net of receipts/(payments)</i>	-1444	39837		38393	8695
A5 Transfers between funds	1040	-1040			
A6 Cash funds last year end	2382	10267		12649	3954
<i>Cash funds this period end</i>	1978	49064		51042	12649

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	899	68000	0
	Payments	2343	28163	0
	Cash funds last year end	3422	9227	0
	<i>Total cash funds</i>	1978	49064	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	IT Equipment	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		

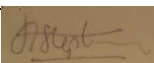
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities				

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

Signature

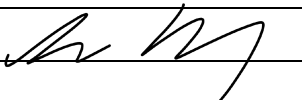
Print name

Date of approval



James Stephens

14th April 2026



Ros Alexander

14th April 2026

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 2025.

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: *Ian Campbell*

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: *24th April 2026*