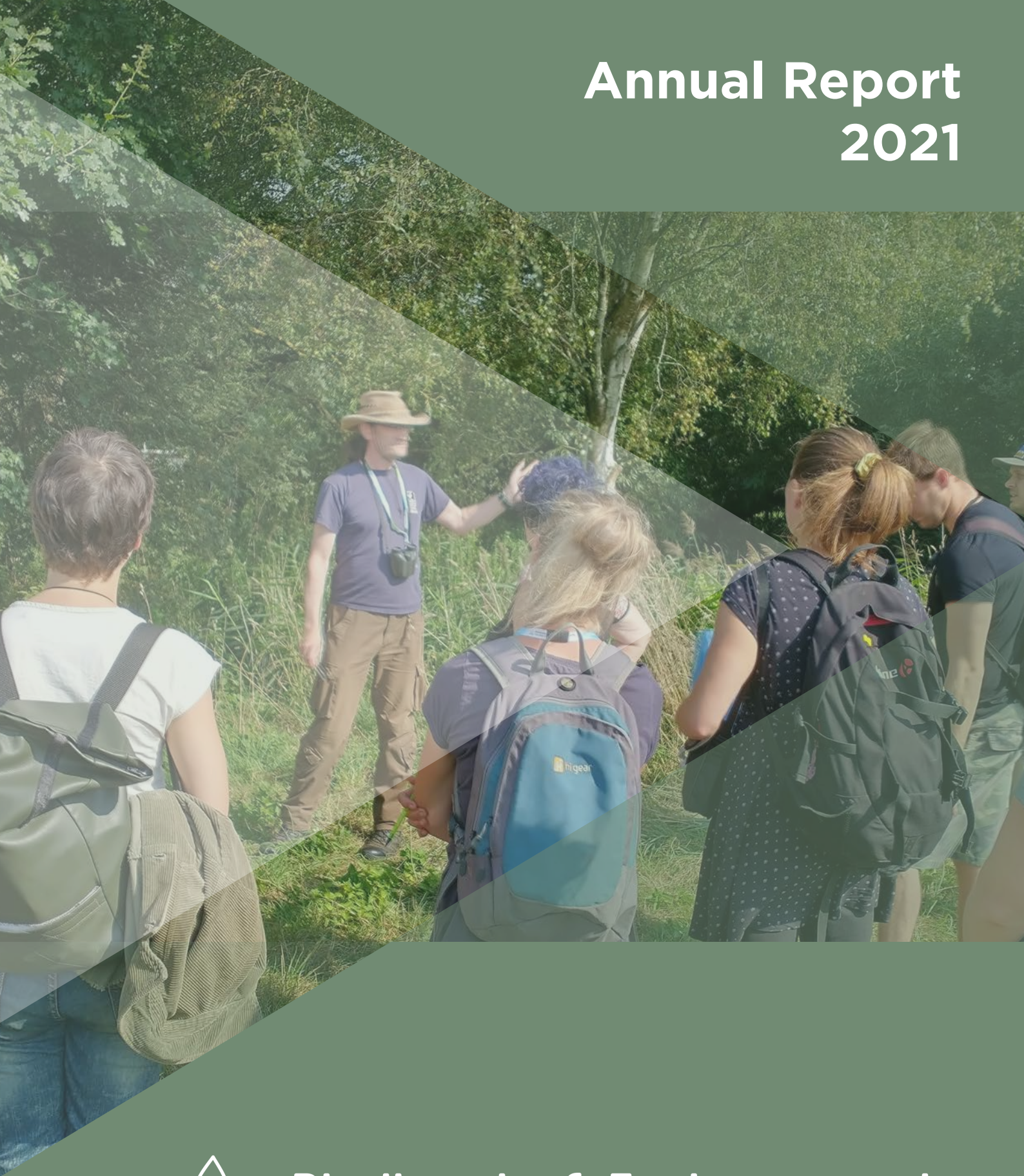


Annual Report 2021



**Biodiversity & Environmental
Education Society**



Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 December 2021

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Biodiversity & Environmental Education Society

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES)
Registered charity in England and Wales - no. 1187828
10 Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 0PB, Suffolk, UK
www.beeanatureguide.org.uk

Letter from the Chair

2021 has been a challenging year for everyone, personally, professionally, emotionally, and physically. BEES charity wasn't spared either. But with the perseverance and dedication of our trustees and volunteers, we launched our very first nature guide training course, the first of its kind in the UK. Built from scratch with the support of two environmental organisations, the British Naturalist's Association (BNA) and the "Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique" (CNB), we are proud to have gotten this high-quality nature guide training course off the ground despite COVID-19 and social restrictions. Our adult course programme is accessible to anyone with no prior background in sciences required, giving its participants the necessary knowledge and tools to be able to lead guided nature walks. We want to make education as accessible as possible to members of the public and pass on knowledge about all aspects of nature and wildlife conservation through topic-specific courses, well-designed handbooks and practical training sessions. Ultimately, we want to create a network of ambassadors for nature to soon offer a range of nature walks as part of a regular programme of the organisation accessible to any members of the public, including individuals, families, young and older adults.



As Chair of the organisation, I would like to thank our Trustees, Lee Fletcher and David Cammaerts, for their continuous trust in BEES and passion for educating people and raising environmental awareness. I would also particularly thank some of our volunteers who worked hard behind the scenes during 2021 and helped running the charity and delivering on its objectives. Our

Trustee Support Officer, Sam Rogers has dedicated a tremendous amount of time, aside of his full-time job, to support the Chair and the charity, from copywriting, to wildlife photography and design of our wonderful handbooks, but also printing, stapling, binding the handbooks, and solving IT issues and helping with other admin tasks. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for his incredible help throughout 2021. Others have also helped behind the scenes to assist with the operations of the course programme and other important admin and financial duties.

But we wouldn't have been where we are today without our participants who trusted us and registered on our first nature guide training course in Suffolk and Norfolk! It has been a real pleasure to meet them online first and then in-person later in the year. A nice bunch of friendly and like-minded people, who are shaping our course programme with their feedback on the organisation and content of our course programme.

Thank you everyone for giving a sense to BEES and what we are trying to achieve to protect our planet, for us and our children.

Anneloes Martinsen

Our Ethos

Our Values

Accessibility

Our course is accessible to all members of the public over the age of 18 regardless of background. Existing knowledge or experience is not necessary, only enthusiasm, interest in the natural world and the willingness to learn. We provide a course programme that is financially accessible.

Sustainability

We manage our resources effectively and efficiently whilst delivering value to the public. We are a charity that is socially, ethically and environmentally responsible. We value creativity and diversity.

Quality

We provide a high-quality learning experience based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence and information. We welcome feedback and continuously endeavour to improve the content of our programme and maintain a high educational standard.

Network and Partnership

We promote trust and bring people and communities together to create a strong network of nature guides and ambassadors for nature. We endeavour to cultivate partnerships and connect with other charities, organisations, community groups, and individuals involved in, and promoting, wildlife and environmental protection, education, and public interest to create an integrated and multidisciplinary network in line with our mission and vision.

Passion

We are all passionate about nature and are committed to inspiring others to share our passion.

Our Vision

Our vision is for all people to live in harmony with, and with respect to, all natural environments and the life forms which inhabit them.

We want a world where people are curious about nature and are able to enjoy it, where people are excited to obtain new knowledge, and where all have the opportunity to develop skills to better safeguard nature regardless of circumstance or background.

Our Mission

To educate the public about all aspects of nature, to raise nature awareness and environmental issues, to give them tools to better protect our natural heritage.





Reference and administrative details

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a registered charity in England and Wales (registration number: 1187828) since 7th February 2020. It is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), whose only voting members are its charity trustees – ‘Foundation’ model constitution.

Address: 10 Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 OPB, Suffolk, UK

Current trustee names:

- Anneloes Martinsen, PhD (Chair)
- Lee Norman Fletcher, PhD
- David Cammaerts, MSc

Website: <https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk>

Email: contact@beeandnatureguide.org.uk



Structure, governance, and management

The CIO's governing document was first approved on 7th February 2020 and last amended on 2nd October 2020.

Since mid 2020, BEES is governed by three passionate and dedicated trustees and during the course of 2021, BEES could rely on the help of a small team of volunteers. Trustees were selected based on affinity, skills and experience, and passion for our cause. The chair holds a long-term friendship with one of the other trustees sharing the same passion and desire to create a network of nature guides throughout the UK. The relationship between trustees and volunteers within the organisation is genuine, friendly, and positive.

Because the charity is still in its infancy, day-to-day administration, financial planning and reporting were done by the trustees and working meetings were organised on a regular basis to keep track of progress and tasks to perform and deliver our objectives. Decisions during trustees' meetings were made by the quorum (per our governing document, the quorum is two charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of charity trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the charity trustees may decide from time to time).



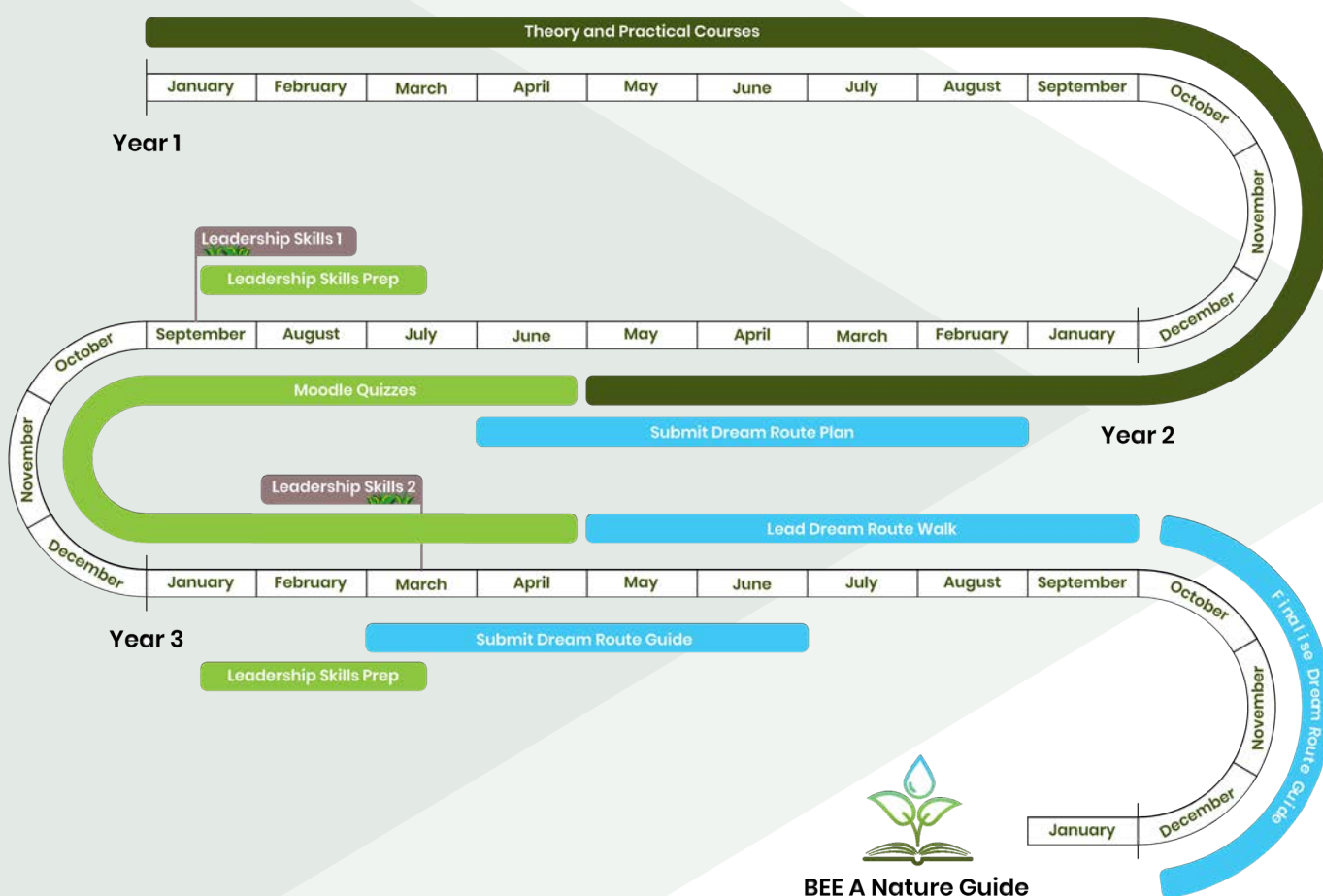
Objectives and activities in the year

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a small charity aiming to grow national awareness and knowledge of nature and environmental issues through adult education: training and supporting all who love and are interested in nature to become skilled nature guides and go on to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with their friends, families, colleagues, and communities.

The objective of BEES is: “For the public benefit, to advance the education of the public in all the aspects of nature and environmental protection” (BEES Governing document).

To do so, we have developed the first low-cost nature guide training course programme in the UK, starting in Suffolk and Norfolk.

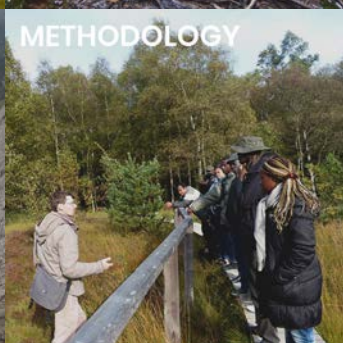
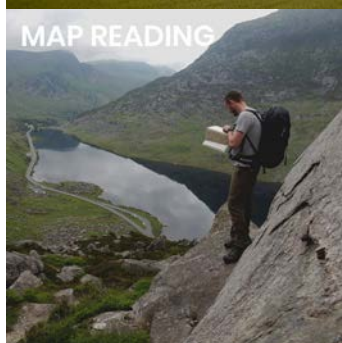
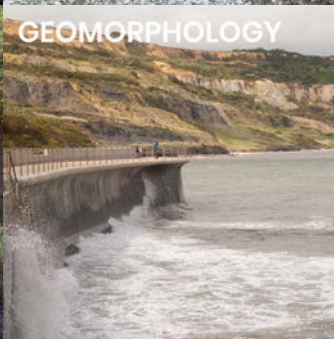
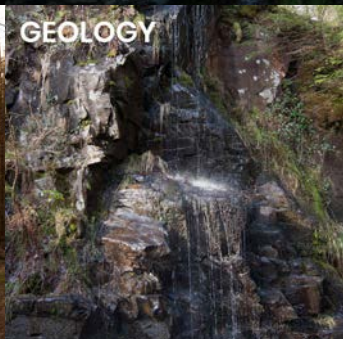
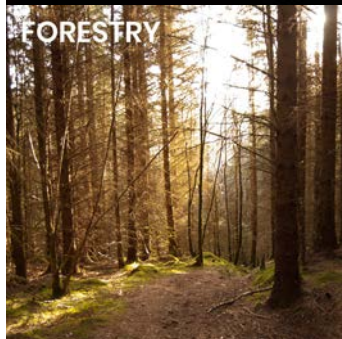
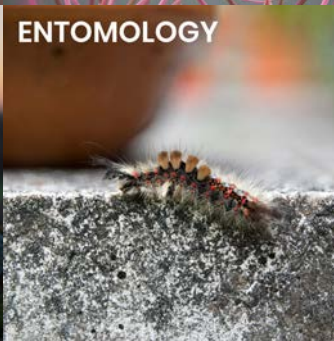
The course programme runs over 3 years:



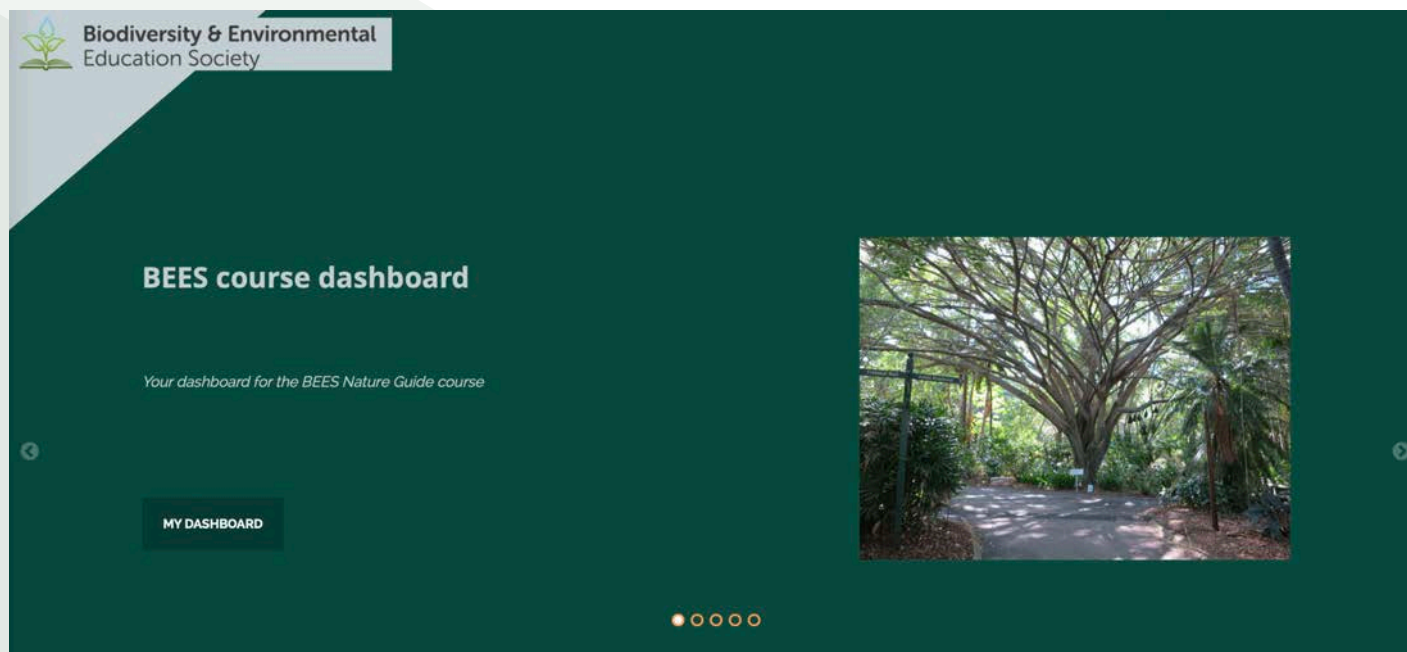
- a first year and a half of theory and practical courses covering in breadth and depth the many facets of the Natural Sciences — from Ecology to Astronomy, Mycology to Earth Sciences, and practical skills in leadership, nature guide methodology, first aid, and navigation (see all of our subjects on the following page)
- a second and third year to practice the participant’s newfound knowledge to foster confidence and leadership skills to lead their own guided walks

Further details about the course programme are available on our website <https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk/the-course>.

BEE A Nature Guide - Subjects



We provide a combination of **online theory** (initially planned as in-person, indoor sessions at local community locations but moved fully online due to COVID-19 constraints), and **outdoor practical** sessions, led by our team of talented teachers, all recruited based on their skills and experience in their relevant fields — these span various backgrounds including academics and researchers, school teachers, naturalist society leaders, professionals, and other community experts. We have developed an online learning platform (see figure of our dashboard) using Moodle, a well-known educational course management system (CMS). Our Moodle learning environment is designed not only for online teaching sessions but also for self-training, including continuous access to session recordings, digital recreations of our written handbooks and other learning material, for interacting with participants and teachers through our BEEHive forum, and with the ultimate objective to develop a network of ambassadors for nature.



The Dashboard of our online learning platform

During our outdoor activities, we visit various natural sites across the East of England — these may for example be sites looked after by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB or Country Parks. Each outdoor session offers the opportunity for participants to learn more about the topics covered during the theoretical stages of learning and for our teachers to illustrate those theoretical concepts with observations made in natural environments.



Outdoor guided walk led by one of our teachers at Lackford Lakes, Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

A third major component of our course is to provide our participants with a **handbook for each subject**. The handbooks are written and edited by our trustees and volunteers, with help from the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique and our expert teachers. We design and publish a printed book for each participant, hand curated by our charity trustees and volunteers and printed using an eco-printer to limit our footprint. We also digitally transform the handbooks so they can be also accessible online through our Moodle learning environment.

We believe that financial circumstance should not be a barrier to environmental education and try to ensure the course is kept as financially accessible as possible. As such, the fee to enrol on the course (currently £320), does not cover the full operating costs of running the programme. The charity relies on fundraising and donations to make up the remainder. No additional charity funds are made from running the course and the fee offers substantial value for money given its breadth and depth, and combination of theoretical and practical training. Our vision is for the course to be able to be delivered free to those of financial hardship so anybody, regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances, may learn.



Sample of our BEES handbooks

We also share knowledge with members of the public by providing articles on some relevant topics about nature on our website and facebook pages so that everyone can be informed.

Statement by the charity trustees:

At the end of 2021, the charity did meet its objectives and complied with its duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit as published by the Charity Commission.

The charity enjoys collaborative links with fellow charitable organisations, the British Naturalist's Association and Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique.



Although new to the UK, our training model has been successfully pioneered by our partners in Belgium, the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique (CNB) registered charity in Belgium. They have trained about 10,000 ambassadors for nature since 1975. We are excited to bring this training method to the UK and help to develop and support a growing community of nature guides. Our course programme also receives the recommendation and support of the British Naturalist's Association (BNA), a registered charity in the UK since 1905. They are the national body for naturalists in the UK and have instituted graded membership to formally recognise specific levels of knowledge and achievement in the field of natural history to those who study and gain field skills both professionally and recreationally.



Our achievements and performance in 2021

In January 2021 and early February 2021, we launched our first nature guide course programme with 11 and 15 adult participants in Suffolk and Norfolk respectively.

Course material:

All trustees, volunteers and teachers worked hard during 2021 to ensure the charity could deliver a course programme of high standards and quality which is as accessible as possible to the adult public.

We worked hard on the preparation of the course material for our different topics. One of our volunteers helped with translating the course material received from our partner charity in Belgium from French into English. The trustees then started reviewing, editing, writing additional material, and adapting the content to the British wildlife, law and natural environment, and improving the course content to create a high-quality educational programme, with the help of our brilliant teachers. We maintained our partnerships with the CNB and the BNA, by meeting with them to discuss our progress and plans for the future. We are grateful for the continuous support of the CNB who have kindly provided their own course material to use as a basis for our own and for providing a lot of wildlife images to illustrate our course handbooks.

In 2021, we delivered the following course topics: ecology, soil science, nature conservation and management, ornithology, herpetology, mammalogy, botany, forestry, mycology, first aid (from a registered provider First Aid For Life (<https://firstaidforlife.org.uk>) delivering a three-year certificate), geology and geomorphology.

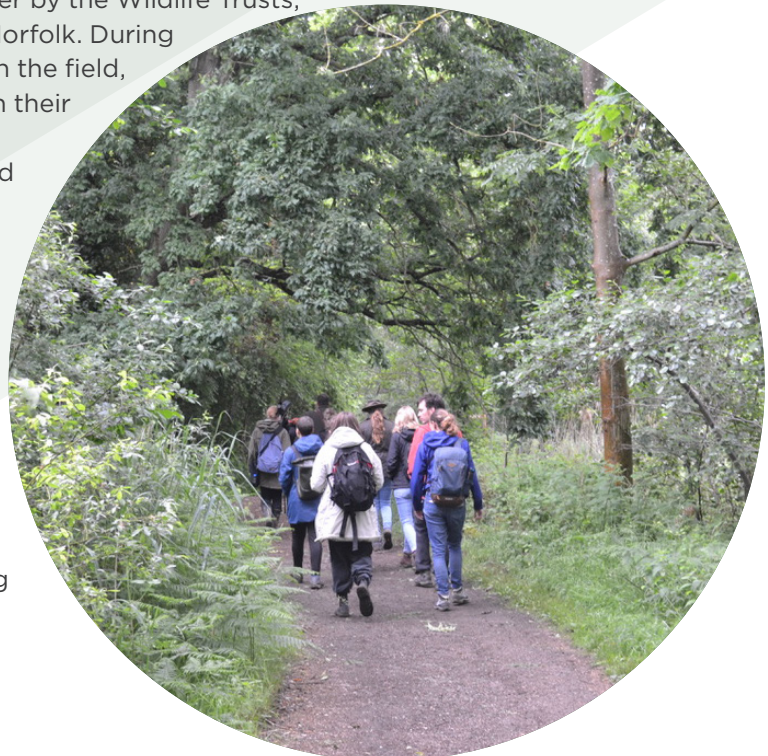
Half of our teachers volunteered to pass on their knowledge to our participants, in the form of an online lecture and for most of them through an outdoor practical sessions. But all worked hard and on a voluntary basis to prepare the course content and material.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we started the course programme fully online using an online learning platform that we developed from scratch in 2020. We had to be creative during the lockdowns and for instance we sent boxes with soil samples and a pH kit to the participants for use during the online practical session of soil science.

As the government restrictions were lifted, we finally met in-person and resumed the outdoor activities, visiting various natural sites being looked after by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB or Country Parks in both Suffolk and Norfolk. During those practical sessions, participants learnt in the field, discovering or rediscovering natural places in their county, becoming more aware of their close environments and why it is crucial to help and protect every little piece of nature.

Some of our volunteers helped us with the preparation of the course programme (course material content, design, or operations), and the running of our activities by moderating our online sessions and assisting the teachers during the outdoor practical sessions.

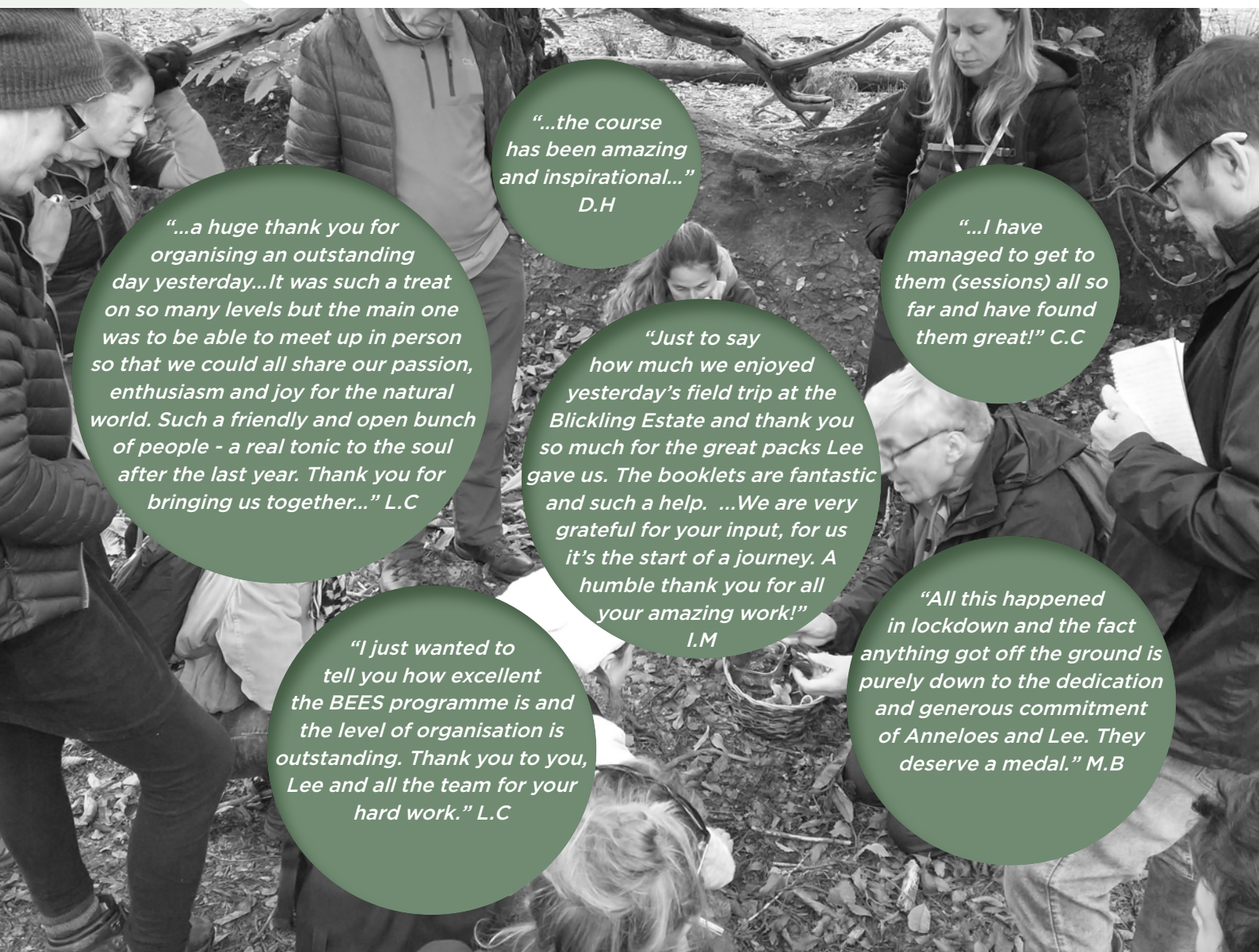
Due to COVID-19, we couldn't deliver all the course topics we had planned. The remaining courses are scheduled for early 2022.



Strumpshaw Fen (RSPB)

Feedback from our participants:

We believe the course programme, from content to its organisation, is an amazing value for money. Because nature can't wait and there is an increasing need for knowledge and actions from the public, everyone at BEES worked hard and as best as they could to achieve the charity's objectives. We received great and encouraging feedback from our participants.



"...the course has been amazing and inspirational..."
D.H

"...a huge thank you for organising an outstanding day yesterday...It was such a treat on so many levels but the main one was to be able to meet up in person so that we could all share our passion, enthusiasm and joy for the natural world. Such a friendly and open bunch of people - a real tonic to the soul after the last year. Thank you for bringing us together..." L.C

"Just to say how much we enjoyed yesterday's field trip at the Blickling Estate and thank you so much for the great packs Lee gave us. The booklets are fantastic and such a help. ...We are very grateful for your input, for us it's the start of a journey. A humble thank you for all your amazing work!"
I.M

"...I have managed to get to them (sessions) all so far and have found them great!" C.C

"I just wanted to tell you how excellent the BEES programme is and the level of organisation is outstanding. Thank you to you, Lee and all the team for your hard work." L.C

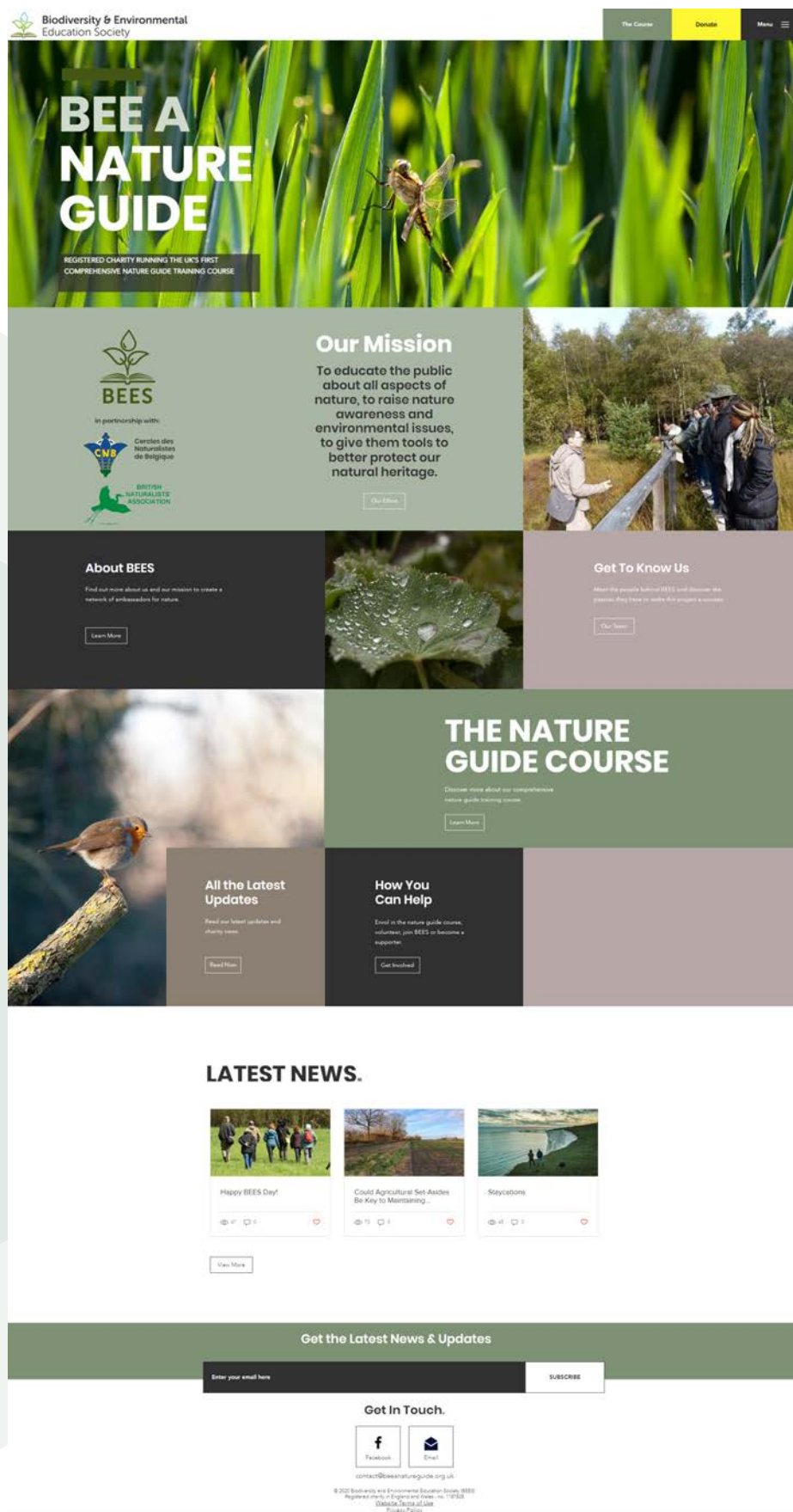
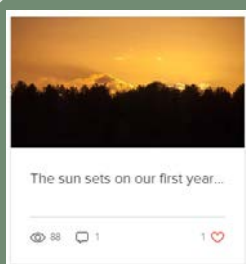
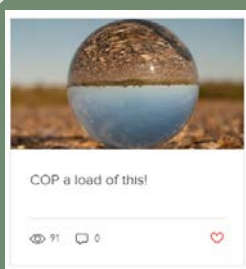
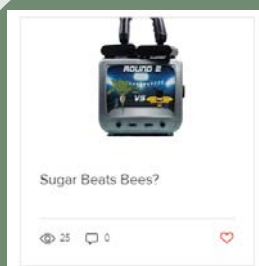
"All this happened in lockdown and the fact anything got off the ground is purely down to the dedication and generous commitment of Anneloes and Lee. They deserve a medal." M.B

Ongoing interest in our course programme:

In 2020, one of our volunteers created a professional-looking website. As mentioned in our previous report, by the end of 2020, visits to our website were increasing and 70 people registered their interest in the course programme by filling out our registration form on the website. By the end of 2020, 23 members of the public registered their interest and then finalised their place on the course by paying the course fees either at the end of 2020 or early January 2021. By mid-January 2021, another 31 people visited the website and filled out the course registration form. In total and by mid-January 2021, 101 members of the public registered an interest in our course programme and the charity officially had 26 participants on the course to make up our very first cohort. This interest was very encouraging and promising for a first year of such an educational programme, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It showed the necessity and importance of having an accessible course programme about biodiversity and natural history, especially in these times of climate change and urgency of protecting our natural heritage for us and future generations. Since we launched our first training programme, 70 more members of the public have registered their interest in our course programme during the course of 2021 (and after the closing date of our first course programme) and are waiting for further instructions regarding the opening of a second cohort (hopefully in 2022).

Growing our visibility:

Some of our volunteers have dedicated some of their time to research and provide short and longer articles we published on our website and facebook pages to keep members of the public informed about current nature conservation and wildlife-related topics. This has also helped us increase our social visibility. Our facebook page had a total of 514 followers at the end of 2021.



Screenshot of Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES)'s website and recent blog posts.

Grants and fundraising:

As we focussed our resources on the preparation and delivery of our course programme, we did not have the time to apply for grants in 2021. We will look at diversifying our fundraising strategy in the coming years to generate a more stable base of resources to support the charity.



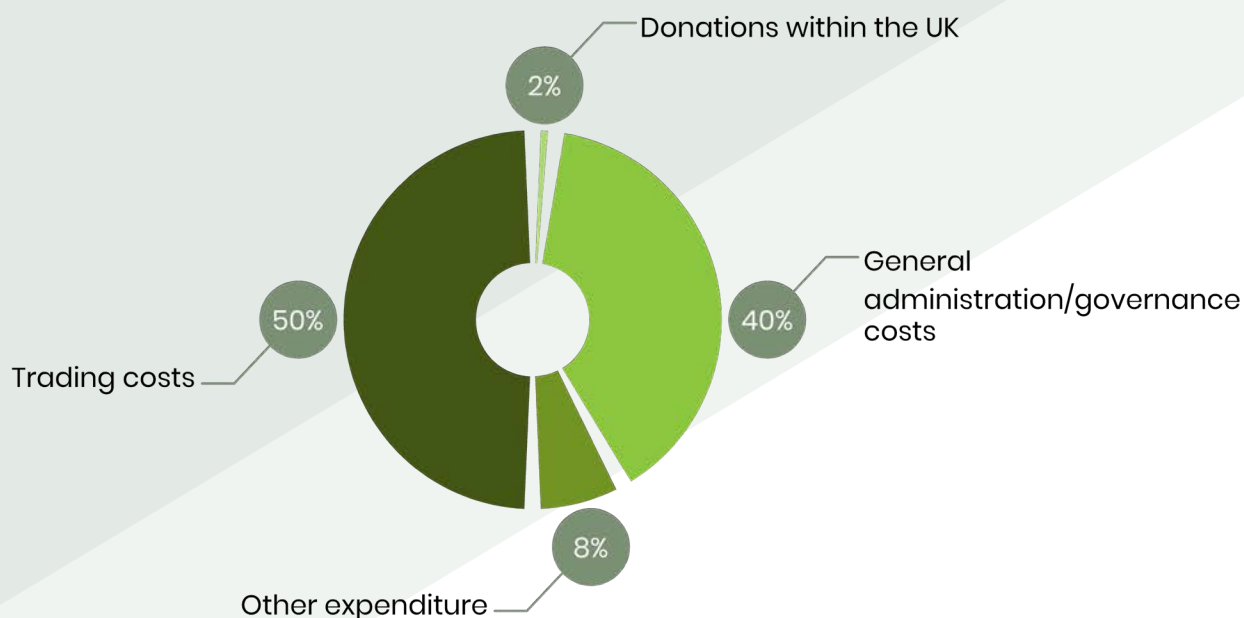
Financial Review

The charity earned £7,497 during 2021 (see our BEES Receipts and Payments Accounts 2021). Our principal source of income in 2021 was the BEE a Nature Guide course fees. The course fees accounted for 98% of the charity's income at the end of 2021. We received some donations from members of the public and had £892 as open balance at the start of 2021.

100% of donations received go towards the operating costs of the course, including to help pay for the following:

- Production of course handbooks - these are designed, printed and bound in-house in order to keep costs, and our carbon footprint, as low as possible
- Cost of visiting wildlife sites - many of our outdoor practical sessions take place on land managed by other great organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts or RSPB. Making use of these fantastic sites for our course usually involves paying a fee or making a donation to those organisations
- Equipment costs - to ensure participants get the most out of our sessions we purchase additional resources, such as identification guides, pond dipping/surveying equipment, digital microscopes, binoculars and hand lenses
- First aid training - our first aid course is provided by an external certified first aid training provider, who charge us for this service

We used £4,688 to pay for our trading costs, costs in relation to the delivery of our charitable activities (course material and equipment, the operating costs of our online learning platform, and travel expenses), for our general administration and governance costs (insurance, professional services, office costs, payroll, tax, and the operating costs of our website), and for advertising and marketing of our course programme. We also gave £90 as donation to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust for letting us use their natural sites to run some of our activities.



At the end of 2021, we had £3,701 left on the bank account. Of these funds, £2,401 will be used for costs relating to the current course cohort over their second and third year of the course programme. We are holding the remaining £1,300 as designated funds (for ongoing website and online learning platform server fees, insurance and professional services) and classed by us not as reserve funds.

We have a Reserve Policy in place stating that no funds should be held in reserve until all costs relating to present charity activity (i.e. relating to the current course cohort) are paid. The charity is currently in its infancy and therefore has very little funds to go towards a reserve.

BEES Receipts and payments accounts 2021

For the Period from: 1/1/2021		To: 12/31/2021	
Receipts	Amount (to nearest £)	Payments	Amount (to nearest £)
Opening balance	£892	Trading costs	
BEE a Nature Guide training course fees	£7,360	Course material	£1,745
Donations from members of the public	£137	Equipment	£120
		Online learning platform operating costs	£170
		Travel	£311
		General administration/governance costs	
		Insurance	£146
		Office costs	£429
		Payroll	£906
		Professional services	£144
		Software subscriptions	£11
		Tax	£143
		Website operating costs	£137
		Donations within the UK	
		Donation	£90
		Other expenditure	
		Advertising and Marketing	£336
Total:	£8,389	Total:	£4,688
Closing balance:	£3,701		



BEES in numbers in 2021



We launched our **1st** nature guide training course in the UK



We operate our course programme in **2** counties – Suffolk and Norfolk



The charity is run by **3** passionate and dedicated trustees



We had **13** teachers who helped prepare the course material for the BEE a Nature Guide training course and passed on their knowledge to our participants



14 volunteers gave up a bit (or more) of their time to help us raise environmental awareness during the course of 2021



26 participants trusted us in our first year and registered on the course in Suffolk and Norfolk



101 members of the public registered their interest in the BEE a Nature Guide course programme



By the end of 2021 we had **514** followers on facebook



We earned **£7,497** in 2021 to deliver our charitable activities



Looking forward

Our main goal for the moment is to settle and establish the course programme in Suffolk and Norfolk. However, we have long-term aims to expand and cover the whole of the UK. We will work towards developing partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and individuals to create a pool of teachers, venues, and volunteers in other counties necessary to establish and make the course programme accessible to members of the public in other regions of the UK.

Short-term objectives for 2022 are mainly to carry on with delivering our nature guide training course to our first cohort of participants in Suffolk and Norfolk, to make the course programme a success from start to finish. Specifically, in 2022, we will be working on the following priorities:

- Finishing the content of the course material for the remaining subjects
- Preparing, formatting, and printing out the remaining handbooks
- Organising and scheduling the theory and practical sessions for the remaining subjects
- Improving our online learning platform by adding quizzes for our participants to test their newfound knowledge, but also by creating activities and stimulating the interaction between participants
- Organising and scheduling the course programme for a second cohort of participants in Suffolk and Norfolk
- Reviewing learning outcomes for our first cohort, and improve where possible by further integrating andragogic principles
- Asking for and receiving feedback from our participants and teachers to continuously improve ourselves and the course programme
- Recruiting skilled volunteers to help the charity develop and meet its long- and short-term objectives. This also includes developing a proper volunteer management policy and selection process
- Working on developing our social visibility and fundraising strategy



Outdoor guided walk led by one of our teachers at Lackford Lakes, Suffolk Wildlife Trust.



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Notes: