



Annual Report & Accounts

**Year Ending
31 December 2022**

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 18th April 2023

At the Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford, Exeter EX6 7UX at 7.00pm

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Chairman's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Election of Officers:

		Proposed	Seconded
Chairman	G Burton	N Armstrong	M Daniels
Vice Chairman	C Randall	L Harris	G Burton
Treasurer	S Churchley	G Burton	M Daniels
Communications Officer	T Utting	A Colston	R Sims
Publications Officer	M Lock	T Utting	N Armstrong
Taw & Torridge Branch Rep	R Turner	K Sims	M Daniels

8. Election of Auditor/Independent Examiner – Thomas Westcott

There will be a break for tea/coffee followed by a talk by John Walters titled "30 years Wildlife Watching in Devon"

Devon Birds

The Society is a registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales (no 1191647) and is governed by its Constitution. The address of the Hon. Secretary is 16 Erme Drive, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 9BN.

Names marked with * denote charity Trustees during the year.

Mr N Baker	President
Mr N Armstrong *	Chairman
Dr C Tyler *	Vice Chairman
Mr M T Daniels *	Secretary
Mr S Churchley *	Treasurer
K Rylands *	County Recorder (Resigned as Trustee - Feb 23)
Mr T Utting *	Promotions & Engagement Secretary
Dr J M Lock *	Publishing Group Representative
G Burton *	Conservation Advisor
P Fitzpatrick*	Conservation Advisor (Resigned Nov 2022)
Mr C Randall *	East Devon Branch Representative
Mr N D'Agorne*	South Devon Branch Representative
Mr J Towers*	Taw & Torridge Branch Rep (Resigned Aug 2022)
Mrs L Harris *	Plymouth Branch Representative
Mr N Armstrong*	Mid Devon Branch Representative
Ms F Freshney *	Ordinary Member
Mr A Colston *	Ordinary Member
Ms K Sims*	Ordinary Member (Resigned Aug 2022)
Mr J Tallowin*	Ordinary Member

Bankers. CAF (Charities Aid Foundation), 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA

Independent Examiner. Thomas Westcott, 47 Boutport Street, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1SQ

The objects of the Society are contained in its Constitution, which is published and a copy available to all Members via the website.

A review of activities and achievements during the year is contained in the Society's Officers' Reports.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 30th March 2022 at the Exeter Court Hotel at 7pm

1. Apologies. Apologies had been received from 13 members.

2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting. The Minutes were accepted as a true record. Proposed by J Tallowin. Seconded by F Freshney.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes. There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report. The Chairman provided an update on various items. He pointed out that a vote would be taken later in the meeting to approve a new Constitution. This follows the agreement in 2019 to move Devon Birds to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The new Constitution will enable the linking of the old and new Charities.

The Chairman reported that Dr P Fitzpatrick and G Burton were co-opted on to Council during the year as Conservation Advisers. There will be a vote later in the meeting to include them as Council Members and Trustees. Their expertise will help to drive Devon Birds plans and strategies for the future.

The Chairman added that R Sims was also co-opted on to Council as Youth Development Officer. This will enable Devon Birds to hopefully recruit younger members. She will also become a Council Member/Trustee after the vote for Election of Officers.

M Goss has stepped down as Chairman of South Devon Branch. He was thanked for his service over the last 6 years. He will be replaced by N D'AGorne.

M Overy has taken over as editor of the Devon Bird Report. M Lock was thanked for his work over the past 12 years. He will continue as Editor of Devon Birds, and as Publications Group Representative. S Beavan stood down from Council during 2021 and was thanked for her service, especially as joint editor of the Devon Bird Atlas.

C Tyler was invited to give an overview of the ongoing Devon Birds Strategy. He reported that a lot of background information had been obtained via contact with the Branches, Reserve Managers and members. Five sub groups have now been set up: Habitat; Sentinel Species; Monitoring and Recording; Education and Partnerships, in order to make progress. The results will be circulated to the membership, as a draft, prior to being adopted.

The Chairman reported that a new website is being worked on. Unfortunately, T Utting who is overseeing the project, and G Collins are unable to attend tonight. The new site will have a greater range of functions, will be based on a standard business platform, and Branches will be able to control their own data. C Wright who built and developed the existing website was thanked for his help and assistance.

The Chairman concluded his report by thanking the members who assist at the Branches and Reserves. Meetings and Field Trips are slowly starting to return, and it is planned to recommence Bird Surveys.

5. Secretary's Report. The Secretary reported that meetings had continued over the past 2 years, mainly using Zoom. The Secretary added that the day trip to Lundy had been cancelled for 2 years due to Covid. The trip will run in 2022 on Sunday 22nd May from Ilfracombe. Tickets are selling well, there are only 24 tickets left as the trip is restricted to 150 passengers. The Secretary thanked everyone who had taken part in the Annual Draw. Takings had not been affected by Covid. The Secretary concluded by asking members to consider volunteering. No special skills are required. Volunteers are always welcome to assist with work at the Branches, Reserves etc

6. Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer had given his apologies. The Chairman explained that the full accounts had been distributed within the Annual Report. Any questions should be sent direct to the Treasurer. The Chairman added that the figures had not been unduly affected or impacted by the Covid pandemic. The accounts had been examined and signed off by Thomas Westcott. The adoption of the accounts was proposed by M Overy, seconded by P Beale. Unanimously approved.

7. Adoption of revised DBWPS (old charity) Constitution prepared by Tozers LLP (our Solicitors) to enable 'Linking' with the new Charity. Unanimously approved.

8. Election of Officers.

		Proposed	Seconded
Conservation Adviser	P Fitzpatrick	N Armstrong	S Churchley
Conservation Adviser	G Burton	N Armstrong	S Churchley
Youth Development	R Sims	N Armstrong	S Churchley
Ordinary Member	A Colston	F Freshney	J Tallowin
Ordinary Member	F Freshney	M Lock	K Rylands
Plymouth Branch Rep	L Harris	C Randall	F Freshney
East Devon Branch Rep	C Randall	J Tallowin	M Lock
South Devon Branch Rep	N D'Agorne	T Utting	K Rylands

Unanimously agreed on block.

9. Election of Auditor/Independent Examiner – Thomas Westcott. Unanimously agreed.

The meeting ended at 7.51pm.

There was a break for tea and coffee followed by a very interesting talk by Barbara, Baroness Young of Old Scone, titled “Twin emergencies – biodiversity and climate change”

Chairman’s Report

Last year, we invested in the future of our Society: the legal structure of the Society was transformed into a modern and effective means to hold and control our assets and protect our interests. We made improvements to the internal process of financial management and commissioned an independent contractor to design and build a new website. We also invested our time in the start of a new strategy (“Devon Birds Strategy”) designed to protect and conserve Devon’s birdlife.

Our work this year is a continuation of the same plan, a reflection of how we might better serve our members’ interests and build on the foundations we’ve laid. We have focussed our activity on the Devon Birds Strategy by reviewing each of the themes for further development: Habitat Protection and Connectivity, Sentinel Species, Monitoring, Education, and Partnerships. Protection and conservation depend on us all. The support we give to these themes must draw on cooperation with other like-minded organisations, both local and national. Partnership will be a central theme as we move forward with our Strategy of protecting and conserving our birdlife.

At the time of writing, after a year in development, our new website will go live in January. Although there will be teething issues at the beginning, the website will offer different features to serve our members and content managers alike.

The impact of the Coronavirus has led to a discussion on how the Council will operate its meetings in the future. In an effort to avoid driving and conserving time and resources, some Council members are keen to experiment on the use of different forums.

Council initiatives and Organisational Improvements

Devon Birds Strategy – planning and progress.

At last year’s AGM, Council announced the development of a new programme or “Strategy” designed to determine the best use of Devon Birds’ resources in funding the conservation and preservation of Devon’s birdlife.

Five priorities or themes were identified for focussing our support: Habitat Protection and Connectivity, Sentinel Species, Monitoring, Education, and Partnerships.

The overall aim of the Strategy is to help create a more inclusive and effective method by which bird conservation and protection can be better supported by the Members of Devon

Birds. It is recognised that some regional conservation activities operate with great effect due to the initiative and drive of individuals, and the goal of any future strategy is to seek ways in which to better support these individuals in their on-going work. In so doing, the strategy should provide the path to a clearer and more sustainable legacy for Devon Birds.

During the summer months, a working group of 5 members met to specifically address the following questions:

- How best can the member volunteers of Devon Birds work to improve habitat conservation in Devon?
- What should be the primary focus for our activities?

In short, it was concluded that our network of birders provides a unique set of data that should be used in a more effective way to promote the wellbeing of our birdlife if it was to be shared with other larger organisations with professional staff. It was agreed that forging partnerships with NGOs such as RSPB, BTO and Devon Wildlife Trust is clearly the way forward. By so doing, Devon Birds might significantly expand its influence as the informational mainstay of conservation efforts across the county.

Habitat Protection

As noted in last year's Annual Report, Council is cognisant of the need to improve the support we give to drive the Habitat conservation section of the new Devon Birds Strategy. It was recognised that our volunteer conservation and reserve managers require a level of support from Council that will strengthen conservation work through the development of site management plans that sustain and improve the biodiversity on our varied habitats.

This year, as part of the Strategy, Graham Burton worked alongside our reserve managers to ensure that each site has an agreed management plan based on best practices in habitat conservation. The intention of the Strategy is threefold: to provide support to our reserve management groups, provide a means for our Trustees to understand and approve the vision in managing the reserves and, on behalf of our members ratify any capital expenditure required to provide suitable resources to drive the work to completion.

Ongoing discussions also include the measures that Devon Birds might take to help establish a system to enhance biodiversity in our varied habitats.

An important subset to Habitat Management is Health & Safety practice at the reserve sites. Graham Burton and the reserve managers have worked together to improve and ensure compliance with standard practice.

Partnership Programme

The partnership working group recognised the need to actively engage with other conservation organisations to build a collective voice in support of conserving Devon's

birdlife. Devon Birds, through its regional groups, already engages with a wide range of other conservation bodies and stakeholder including the Duchy, WWT, RSPB, BTO, DWT and NT, and is always seeking ways to better harmonise with other organisations by working together for bird conservation and education, including sharing our expertise.

Spearheaded by Dr Paul Fitzpatrick, Council members have forged new links and partnerships with several different organisations by participating and representing Devon Birds in an advisory capacity on various committees or liaising and working with likeminded environmental organisations, wildlife groups and individuals including but not limited to DWT, BTO, Exe Estuary Committee, South West Lakes Trust.

Partnerships are key in protecting and enhancing our county's birdlife. Our birdwatching records and survey projects provide the data for others to apply.

Our Partnership leader, Dr Paul Fitzpatrick has announced his retirement. He has taken a position with the BTO. Therefore, Council invites members to volunteer for this important role. Assistance is required to forge connections with other organisations and represent the interests of Devon Birds. Council will provide support to this role.

Sentinel Species

The focus group agreed that one element of the Strategy is to expand our knowledge and prioritise our efforts in support of certain key species which we have named Sentinel Species for Devon. The starting point would be to identify the species of concern and value before enlisting a volunteer force to perform a survey. Deciding on a list of priority species depends on several drivers. Clearly it is a partnership programme. There are suggestions that we might concentrate on species for which Devon is a county stronghold for breeding or over wintering, or alternatively focus on those species in Devon with a total population of fewer than 2,000 pairs nationwide. Similarly, poorly surveyed species like the Rook or Rock Pipit should be a priority. Where are the gaps in geographic coverage?

Deeper collaboration with the BTO, RSPB and DWT is essential before any conclusion can be drawn. The idea of selecting Sentinel Species for further study by Devon Birds is still under discussion.

Monitoring

The focus Group met to discuss method and process. Essentially, the type of monitoring or ringing programme is an important discussion. There is a question on which species should be monitored or ringed, where and why? How should the information be stored and made available? The focus group will continue in discussion.

Again, collaboration with the BTO, RSPB and DWT is essential before any conclusion is drawn.

Education and Communication

The Committee recognised the value of linking or collaborating with further and higher educational establishments to create an opportunity for young people to gain knowledge and experience and provide Devon Birds with a work force for monitoring and conservation activities. It has also recognised the need to promote Devon Birds membership amongst the 16 to 25 age group perhaps in the form of a reduced membership rate. Online training and a wildlife conservation community for young people might be topics for consideration. The focus Group will continue in discussion.

Website Design and Development

After a year of development, the new Devon Birds website has been reviewed by the content owners and Council. It is now undergoing final testing and data migration. It is planned to go live in the middle of January.

The site encompasses almost all the subject matter and detail of the old site, but in a newer, more modern style that will hopefully encourage members to contribute to the site.

Branches will have control of their own pages, as will the Sightings group and Reserve Managers.

A forum will be introduced where members can open discussions, ask questions and put forward ideas. There will be a section for volunteering opportunities, a document archive and access to the Society's documents.

After Just over a year in existence the Devon Birds Facebook Page greeted its 1,000th member in the week before Christmas 2022 and continues to flourish with advice about where to see birds and beautiful photographs.

The Newsletter has received positive feedback. As always, we are looking for people who have a story to tell, which helps to keep the Newsletter vibrant and current.

Youth Development Officer

For some time, Council has expressed concern that there are too few youth members for the good of our Society's future. Council member Rea Sims is in the process of developing a Devon Birds youth programme.

Clearly, Devon Birds needs to focus on attracting more young members to the Society, especially those aged between 16 and 25, and offering a concession of free membership to this age group might help.

Earlier in the year, a Mid Devon field meet was held at DWT Meeth with the express intent of attracting young children and their parents. Regrettably, here was a limited response. Perhaps the location was the wrong choice? The Plymouth Branch arranged two meetings

on a Saturday to advertise Devon Birds and encourage families in a Youth Engagement and Education role at Saltram NT. One was in March and one later in August. Importantly, August was chosen to repeat the event in 2023.

There is a plan to recruit youth leaders from universities and colleges. Our website is linked to social media platforms including Twitter and Instagram feeds and the new forum might help. We still hope to deliver YouTube videos and make Devon Birds more visual on social media, using it to promote opportunities for younger people to become involved and participate in workshops, field studies or the maintenance of our bird reserves.

Support for Research

Council would like to provide ongoing support of Malcom Burgess, the RSPB Conservation Scientist, to carry out further work on the migration of the Pied Flycatcher, however, as yet, an appropriate payment mechanism in line with Charity Commission guidance has not yet been established.

The following outline describes the extent of the project proposal. It is designed to complement the work already undertaken on Flycatcher migration.

The annual altitudinal cycle of the Pied flycatcher. This study is designed to build on the work previously conducted on the migration of Pied Flycatchers by using completely new tags to record light. The results can be used to estimate migration locations and timings, but also temperature and air pressure. Recent work shows the migration route and stopovers for this species, but the air pressure will enable researchers to identify several other behaviours unknown for long-distance migrant songbirds, namely the flying altitude when flying over barriers such as the Sahara, the extent of sea crossing during migration and, the altitude of the stopover and wintering areas. This knowledge can help to refine the geolocation by light analyses, and show if, and exactly when, birds change territory during the winter. It may also help to understand how individual birds respond to adverse conditions faced on migratory flights and how it influences stopover behaviour. This information furthers work on understanding the pressures birds face on migration, which look likely to be a survival pinch point and so influence population size. Funding from Devon Birds will help support the cost of enhanced sensors as well as the cost of a PhD student to analyse the results and write the findings.

Barn Owl Nest Monitoring Project

Funded by Devon Birds and managed by The Barn Owl Trust, this project is designed to remotely monitor wild Barn Owl nest sites. Of the 25 cameras purchased, 10 are now installed. There are agreements with local landowners to monitor 5 more sites and a long list of other sites is to be reviewed for the installation of the remaining cameras, subject to agreement with local landowners. During last year's breeding season, only 4 nests were

successfully monitored. Clearly, the nest box installation process, monitoring and reporting has been slower and less effective than scheduled but the Barn Owl Trust provides assurance that the recruitment of new staff will enable the installation of the remaining cameras and ensure the monitoring of the nest sites.

Devon Birds Wetland Bird Conference, 19 November 2022 at Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford.

The morning session was about WeBS, with BTO's Gill Birtles, WeBS Counter Network Organiser, leading off with the history of wetland bird counting and describing the different types of survey. Core counts are carried out at both coastal and inland sites. They produce the main source of information from which BTO can assess the health of wetland bird populations and the importance of individual sites and look for trends. The Goose and Swan Monitoring Programme is a suite of annual and periodic surveys that monitor the UK's internationally important populations of geese and swans during the non-breeding season. The WeBS Alert system flags up major declines, such as the decrease in Oystercatchers and Grey Plover on the Exe Estuary.

Peter Reay, WeBS Local Organiser for most Devon sites outlined some facts about WeBS in Devon. There are four Local Organisers, covering the Exe and Taw-Torridge Estuaries, the Tamar Complex (part Cornwall) and all other sites. Of the 77 WeBS sites, 13 are estuaries, six are on the open coast, 17 are on Dartmoor, and the rest are lowland lakes, reservoirs, ponds, marshes, rivers and canals. Peter provided the facts drawn from the surveys and spoke about our Goosander counts.

Chris Dee, WeBS Local Organiser for the Taw-Torridge Estuary gave an overview of the way in which his team cover the large and complex Taw-Torridge Estuary.

Martin Overy, WeBS Local Organiser for Exe Estuary and Editor of the DBR, spoke about the estuary counts, trends and distribution. It is the most important WeBS site in Devon, with multiple conservation designations mainly because of its wintering wildfowl numbers and as an Avocet wintering site. The Exe team counts nine separate areas, each subdivided into 35 smaller parcels.

David Price former WeBS/BoEE Local Organiser for Devon and the Exe Estuary, who has been counting on the Exe Estuary for 50 years, gave his own analysis of the vast array of data collected and the type of breakdown which is most useful.

Fiona Freshney, Senior Specialist in Natural England's Ornithology Team, stressed the importance and value of WeBS data to the work of Natural England, enabling assessment of the condition of non-breeding bird populations on designated sites, and underpinning development related planning casework and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

Jon Avon, Project Officer for the Dartmoor Curlew Recovery Project from 2021 gave a very interesting account of the Dartmoor Curlew Recovery Project, including the current situation and solutions for a full recovery.

Ryan Burrell, PhD candidate at Bournemouth University and Project Officer for DCWRG, gave a talk on tracking Oystercatchers and Curlew in Devon.

Morag Angus, Mires Manager for South West Water, outlined progress on peatland restoration in the SW, which involves 10 sites on Exmoor, Dartmoor and in Cornwall.

Adapting to changing coasts. What's in it for nature? Sam Bridgewater, Head of Wildlife and Conservation for Clinton Devon Estates and Estate lead for the Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP), gave a presentation about a project to adapt the lower Otter valley to climate change and recreate salt marsh and mudflats on about 60 hectares of low-grade agricultural land on the lower Otter catchment.

The role of FWAG SW's Regional Wetland Adviser: delivering wetland creation in the SW. A J Bellamy, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Regional Wetland Adviser, described some successful wetland creation schemes achieved in the last two years. Working mostly in Somerset and acting with farmers willing to encourage wildlife, over 70 field ponds, filled in or unmanaged during the early part of the 20th century, have been restored.

Eve Tigwell, BTO Regional Rep and WeBS LO for Somerset, revealed that most WeBS sites in the County are small inland ponds or pits. However, the Somerset Levels complex, including RSPB Ham Wall and several Somerset Wildlife Trust reserves, is the largest and most important in the SW.

In conclusion, this was a very useful conference for WeBS counters and others to see how their efforts contribute to the greater picture of how waterbirds are faring in Devon and beyond. Members were able to meet and discuss the points made at the conference and to talk to counters from other areas, hear what difficulties they face and how they organize themselves.

On behalf of Devon Birds, I'd like to thank all our speakers, and particularly Peter Reay and his team for promoting and managing a very successful conference.

Branch Activity

East Devon Branch

This year, East Devon Branch chose to concentrate on its extensive programme of guided field meets advertised on the website.

Taw & Torridge Branch

Karen Sims reports that the Branch committee experienced both the election of a new Chair and retirement of some long serving members. John Towers retired as branch Chairman and representative on Devon Birds Council while Norman Briden retired as outdoor walk organiser and Vice Chair of the branch. Sarah Conibear, a relatively new member, has taken up the role of branch Chair. The branch still has a vacancy for Vice Chair and importantly, Taw & Torridge requires a member to step forward to volunteer as branch representative on Devon Birds Council.

A full programme of outdoor walks was organised for 2022 and will continue for 2023. After the retirement of Norman Briden, three members came forward and agreed to spread the responsibility of organising and running the monthly meetings. Indoor meetings restarted in November but unfortunately the December meeting was cancelled due to ice and snow. Meetings are arranged through to and including April with the Branch AGM taking place in March prior to that evening's speaker.

The Taw & Torridge Branch is monitoring the progress of the North Devon Biosphere's Nature Recovery Plan. Devon Birds is a signatory and an active participant in tackling the ecological emergency in northern Devon, aligning with the Government's 25 Year Environmental Plan. The NDB is in the process of setting timescales and targets for nature improvement within the reserve.

RHS Rosemoor Bird Survey:

This year, Members of Taw & Torridge were actively engaged in the RHS Rosemoor Bird Survey in Torrington. The survey area is extensive, encompassing both public access areas and private land. Kevin Wigley and Ray Turner have taken on the lead roles in organising the task. An initial meeting was held with the lead person for the RHS and one survey was carried out before Christmas. The next is planned for February 8th. The area to cover is expansive and more volunteers are required. The survey area may have to be adjusted if there is insufficient support with perhaps only the most productive areas surveyed. Although Karen Sims has emailed local area members requesting volunteers, she is also asking new member applicants to step forward to assist with the Survey. Please contact Karen if you are willing to help; instructions and assistance will be available to all applicants.

The RHS has also asked for other taxa to be surveyed and the branch is set to organise Butterfly and Dragonfly surveys with support from other local organisations this summer.

Plymouth Branch

Liz Harris reports that the committee, comprising of 12 members currently, met 5 times during the year.

The 13 outdoor meetings, held during the year, were arranged to target specific species in locations across South Devon from Seaton in the east to Dartmoor and parts of Cornwall,

namely Torpoint and Wadebridge. These meets have been well supported. The Risk Assessment talk beforehand covered precautions regarding Covid.

The Branch arranged two meetings on a Saturday to advertise Devon Birds and to encourage families in a Youth Engagement and Education role at Saltram NT. One was in March and the other in August. August was chosen to repeat the event in 2023.

The first indoor meeting with a guest speaker was held in conjunction with our AGM in November 2022.

Information regarding forthcoming events and Branch activities is sent by email each month to 284 households in our area.

The 2023 programme is available on the website.

Several sites were selected for positioning of nest boxes for House Martins and Swifts in the city and villages nearby to support the House Martin and Swift project. This included Buckland Abbey NT.

The NT has asked for volunteers for bird and butterfly surveys for 2023.

South Devon Branch

Nick and Sara D'Agorne reported that indoor meetings restarted at the new venue, The Courtenay Centre, in Newton Abbot, in February and a broad range of speakers gave presentations to the increasing audience that participated from South Devon.

The bird talks included:

Jo Morten from the University of Exeter, who gave an insight into the detailed behaviour of Oystercatchers on the Exe Estuary.

George Bemment, who shared her incredible knowledge of planning matters and laws that are in place to protect wildlife and how they are implemented.

Dave Smallshire, who gave a presentation covering changes in wetland and farmland wildlife, survey and monitoring, and how advances in communications and technology changed wildlife recording.

India was the focus of Ian Gasper's talk in June, whilst in July, Mike Langman gave an in-depth presentation focussing on Seabird identification.

In the Autumn, the group had presentations about the Arctic Circle from Dave Scott, Scotland's wildlife by Nick and Sara D'Agorne and the migratory Wood Warbler by Malcolm Burgess from the RSPB.

Two field meetings were also held, one at Challacombe Down in the Spring, led by Nick and Sara D'Agorne, with cuckoos aplenty, and the other in August, when Mike Langman shared his knowledge of Seabirds at a very popular birdwatch on Berry Head.

Nick and Sara completed two surveys for the Branch, following a request by local landowners keen to discover what birds they have on their re-wilded land. One, west of Newton Abbot was found to have a Cirl Bunting territory and the other, near Stokeinteignhead has a significant wintering flock of Fieldfares feeding on apples left in the orchard, in addition to Little Owl and wintering Woodcock.

Mid Devon & Exeter Branch

Mid Devon's branch committee has long discussed the idea of changing its name to **Mid Devon and Exeter branch**. The intent is to create a new identity to encourage greater participation from members resident in the Exeter area. The proposal was raised at Council and accepted.

A full schedule of walks or Field Meets was scheduled for the year. Some of the walks were designed to encourage members from different branches to attend which boosted participation.

A family event was held jointly with DWT at Meeth Quarry in April where a guided walk took place. Fewer children attended than was anticipated.

A full list of walks is currently scheduled for 2023. Two audio workshops are to be presented by the Chair of the Wildlife Sound Recording Society.

Again, the Branch can report that Swifts were seen at each of the four churches where Swift boxes and callers were placed in position in the bell towers. Branch members have yet to review all the boxes for evidence of nesting.

Another bird survey is to be scheduled for the new year: a farm near Nymet Rowland plans to rewild. The survey is still to be formally planned.

Fursdon Estate Bird Survey:

DWT and the Fursdon Estate near Thorverton are proposing to develop a habitat management programme. The Mid Devon & Exeter Branch of Devon Birds will document species present within the Estate boundary at different times of the year to establish a baseline and determine the abundance of species. Land use includes parkland, level, boggy

and steep pasture, arable farmland, natural woodland, an orchard and plantations. It is hoped that a monthly, year-round survey will render a valuable indication of the location, habitat and status of each species across the year. Our effort will feed into a wider biodiversity audit that DWT will undertake, having already highlighted a range of key species and associated actions.

In the past, Devon Birds has conducted several bird surveys for the Fursdon Estate. Sadly, it is appearing evident that the Estate has lost a number of resident and seasonal species during the last 40 years possibly due to land use change.

The project is managed by Andrew Thorpe. There are 7 teams of two. All species are recorded but Target Species are noted monthly on a detailed map using the BTO species code. Non-target species are listed separately with an estimate of total numbers on the day of the count.

The three, monthly surveys undertaken to date have yielded interesting results including a resident Barn Owl roosting in the loft of a disused barn.

South Tawton Common Bird Survey

A breeding bird survey of South Tawton (ST) Common in north Dartmoor was conducted in the spring - early summer of 2022. The survey was initiated by the ST Commoners Association to gain knowledge of the value of the Common for wildlife to support the continuation of agri-environment payments. Lack of detailed information on the importance of the Common for breeding bird species was of particular interest. Seventeen volunteers, most of whom are members of Devon Birds, carried out the survey. The survey was designed to provide a baseline for the diversity and abundance of breeding bird species from which future changes could be evaluated.

Under the leadership of Jerry Tallowin, a total of 57 bird species were observed during the survey with 11 species confirmed as breeding, 11 and 25 species were, respectively either probably or possibly breeding. Seven species were using the Common for feeding and 3 species were observed flying over.

Four red-listed species (species of high conservation concern), namely Skylark, Mistle Thrush, Tree Pipit and Linnet were confirmed as breeding on the Common. Skylark were the second most abundant bird observed during the survey with a total of 202 birds counted. Cuckoo, Lesser Redpoll and Yellowhammer, also red-listed species, were recorded as possibly breeding. A total of nine male Cuckoos were counted mainly in areas with scattered trees. There was, however, no apparent relationship with the abundance of Meadow Pipit (an amber-listed species), which is a key host of the Cuckoo. Meadow Pipit was the most abundant species observed with over 400 individuals counted.

Nineteen amber-listed species were recorded during the survey. Common Redstart, Wheatear, Meadow Pipit and Reed Bunting were confirmed as breeding. Mallard, Teal, Snipe, Wren, and Dunnock were all probably breeding. At least 6 pairs of Snipe were present in the bog/mire areas. Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Pied Flycatcher, Willow Warbler, Grey Wagtail, Song Thrush, and Bullfinch were all possibly breeding on the Common in 2022.

Sadly, no Ring Ouzel, Whinchat, Grasshopper Warbler nor Curlew were observed on ST Common in 2022. However, the survey did highlight the importance of South Tawton Common for bird conservation in the region.

Reserve Activity

Godborough Castle Reserve, Kenwith Valley

Reserve Manager Philip Marlow reports that every quarter of 2022 was “non-standard”. It was a year of extremes and the flora and fauna were under stress throughout the year. In mid summer the springs dried up and the ponds were at their lowest levels since they were dug in the nineties. Trees and plants did not know where they were with some of the oaks still carrying the majority of their leaves at Christmas, in spite of the cold snap.

It has been a good year for almost everything apart from birds, which seems perverse for a Reserve managed by Devon Birds. Our wild flower patches are thriving, the woodland glades are developing nicely and butterfly, dragonfly and bee surveys are very encouraging. The local year-round woodland, scrub and hedgerow birds have done well. The nest boxes were a hit in their first year with the tit family. Jays and both Great Spotted and Green Woodpeckers all bred successfully. Buzzard, Tawny Owl and Sparrowhawk were all regulars but did not nest on the reserve this year. The major shortfall was in summer visitors which were well down in the whole area. The mantra from Mike Towns and various advisors since has always been “concentrate on getting the habitats right and the birds will follow” which remains our management credo.

The real disappointment this year was the failure to stop development on the hillside opposite Godborough. The developers went to appeal and just before the appeal was due to open, they agreed a scaled back plan with the local council. This meant that the bulk of the lower hillside opposite Godborough will be upgraded to wildflower meadow and the wooded area covered by mitigation measures. The Inspector concluded that the scaled back plan, the mitigation measures and crucially, the lack of a 5year housing plan meant that the development should be approved. At least we had a partial victory, but it highlights the inadequacy of the existing Planning System.

Looking ahead to 2023 there are no major plans save for fencing off the area around the bottom pond to give as more long grass adjacent to water. We will be able to accomplish this using mainly recycled materials. We are also going to institute a regular monthly bird count along the lines of the BTO bird counts, alongside the other strands of recording on site. The

future of the ELMS should become clearer and hopefully will mean that Godborough will require even less financial input from the County.

Everyone was heartened to see Steve's excellent article in Devon Birds and we will aim for a couple of Devon Birds "Introduction to Godborough" days next year so that more members can see the site.

None of this could have been achieved without the excellent group of volunteers who help out at Godborough all the year round. The group continues to grow in number and expertise, and we are in the virtuous circle of the more we know the more we can discover about the site.

Nick Townsend, Conservation Officer South, reports on the following reserves in South Devon:

South Milton Ley

Alan Pomroy has updated the reserve management plan which has been endorsed by Council. A scheme is being developed to increase the water flowing through the reedbed to improve its conservation value, particularly in the middle and upper reaches. This will involve diverting and holding more water in the upper Ley. The benefits of the annual reed cut are to be assessed.

Data was obtained from South West Water (SWW) on the overflows from the treatment plant. Although these are permitted under their license, the frequency is considered excessive (between 40 and 65 annually over the last few years) and duration unacceptable (between 500 and 1000hrs annually over the same period). SWW refused to provide more details claiming it might prejudice ongoing reviews of their performance by OFWAT. SWW have confirmed that a project is underway to increase the capacity of the overflow tank which should reduce the frequency of spills.

An agreement with the South Milton Parish Council was signed in January 2022 confirming that the paths through the Reserve are designated "permissive". Both the local and visiting public are making good use of the paths. A recycled plastic bench sponsored by a local District Councillor has been installed by the boardwalk and provides an ideal resting spot for those walking through the Reserve.

Routine maintenance including grass cutting, minor repairs and tree surgery continued. Fewer grass cuts were needed this year due to the summer drought. The annual reed cut was completed in January 2022 with around 20 volunteers turning out, but none will be undertaken in winter 2022/23 (much to the disappointment of volunteers).

Mike Passman's daily blog (<http://thurlestonebaybirds.co.uk/>) provides a comprehensive record of the species seen in the area – 186 in total for 2022, well down on previous years. The lower total (the lowest for many years) was attributed to restricted watching time because of COVID regulations; also flooding at South Huish resulted in very few waders dropping in during migration – for example neither Wood or Pectoral Sandpipers were recorded in 2022. Bird flu also took its toll with many Gannet and Kittiwake washed up on the beaches. The highlights included an extraordinary passage of Leach's Petrel on 8 November 2022 when at least 30 were recorded in Thurlestone Bay and a juvenile Black Tern which was present at South Huish for several days in early September.

Alan Pomroy continued to lead the ringing efforts at South Milton, but Covid restrictions and poor weather again reduced ringing opportunities. On 18 January 2023, Alan ringed 87 Chiffchaffs which capture-recapture models suggest that there could be as many as 261 birds over-wintering on the site.

South Huish Meadowlands

The scrapes and meadows have again flooded on many occasions in the last year due to the outfall being blocked by sand after storms. The outfall is the responsibility of the National Trust and eventually they completed restoration work in December 2022, a delay of more than three years. Regrettably a serious crack appeared in the repaired section within a few weeks and further remedial work is required. The outfall is however currently working satisfactorily (end January 2023).

As a result of the flooding, it has not been possible to maintain the water in the scrapes at the optimum level, a particular concern during migration. This has affected the numbers of birds present, particularly waders. It has also affected some of the rare flora which have been submerged for prolonged periods.

For a second year, the Highland Cattle were unable to graze the meadow beyond the scrapes as it was too wet (when not flooded). This area is therefore more overgrown than usual, but it is hoped that this will be redressed in 2023.

When the outfall was eventually repaired an inspection of the reserve revealed that erosion had undermined the control weir as well as the adjacent banks. Temporary repairs were carried out to prevent further deterioration, but further work will be needed when the area has dried out. Also, the silt traps have filled up and the banks of the channels have become overgrown because the cattle could not be put on to the back meadow. Further work will be carried out as necessary.

A joint inspection of the reserve was carried out with the National Trust in July 2022 to align conservation objectives and discuss future management. Our management plan will be updated based on these objectives and discussions. Our current lease expires in October 2023 and renewal is under discussion with the National Trust.

South Huish was again well watched by members as well as numerous visitors.

Prawle Point Reserve

An unprecedented flood affected Prawle Point in June 2022, severely eroding the stream through the reserve as well as pushing over a dry-stone wall and washing out the access road by the car park. The wall and drainage were restored in November 2022 once the road had been repaired by Highways.

The reserve is watched and maintained by a small group of dedicated Devon Birds members but few others.

Pig Nose Valley Reserve

Nothing to report.

Bradiford Reserve

Bradiford Reserve Manager Tim Smith's report on work completed in 2022, wildlife & grazing and work plan for 2023.

Fencing: Both main gate posts have been replaced; some 25m of damaged fencing replaced; a further 10m of fence erected in the southeast corner near the stile to secure the site.

Tree Planting: The trees provided by the Devon Free Tree Scheme were issued too late, in March. Very few have survived. Replacement native species have been ordered from Habitat Aid. Planting is planned for January 2023, when delivered.

Coppicing: Further coppicing of willow has been carried out in the woodland copses.

Himalayan Balsam: Waders were purchased enabling us to get into the river to make a more thorough clearance on the riverbank of the Reserve, and on the further bank. The work is ongoing, but habitat is much improved from last year.

Tidal Scrape: This area has recovered well from works carried out last year to remove encroaching vegetation. A Wader/Wildfowl Roost is under consideration on the west bank of the scrape in 2023.

Wildlife & Grazing

Both Reed & Sedge Warblers bred successfully in good numbers, several immature Reed Bunting were noted, and a pair of Spotted Flycatcher were evident all Summer, usually in the southeast corner. I had not recorded this species on Bradiford before.

Autumn migrants included Green & Common Sandpiper. Teal and Snipe returned early, in good numbers, for the Winter. The Otter is visiting the site regularly, continually using the same track.

The grazing routine continues, utilizing our neighbouring farmer's stock. 17 bullocks grazed the site late August to late November, sheep grazing is planned in Jan/Feb 2023. As a result, we are controlling the growth of grasses, creating some bare soil areas and the wildflowers are really starting to thrive. We intend to continue with this regime in Autumn/Winter 2023/24.

Work Plan 2023

January: Bramble control in preparation for sheep grazing, at the grazier's request and plant up 50 deciduous indigenous trees.

January/February: Sheep grazing

Spring/Summer: Survey grasses and wildflowers. Continue with bumblebee & butterfly transect monitoring. Himalayan Balsam control.

End August: Resume grazing routine.

Velator Reserve

Reserve Manager Jon Turner's annual report for 2022:

Bird news.

117 Species have been recorded this year. Highlights include a Goshawk in April for one day only, a Spotted Redshank out on the scrape for 4 days in late August was a surprise but it or another returned in mid-September attracting a second bird from 21st September until 3rd of October. There were good numbers of Knot recorded here at that time, sometimes as many as 30, and the Black-tailed Godwit flock fluctuated between a few to over a hundred. Redshank and Greenshank were also seen at this time. Both Red-necked and Grey Phalarope were seen about 10 days apart in mid-November on a small pond just south of the reserve in October, a Hobby was over nearby Sherpa marsh in the spring (7th May), and a female type Hen Harrier on 17th December also over nearby Sherpa Marsh. Exotica was a drake Carolina Wood Duck on nearby Wrafton Pond for a couple of days in the summer, a Cuckoo was heard. Despite Cattle Egrets being seen around N Devon, there was only one record of one near the reserve all year. Glossy Ibis was recorded on 11 days this spring occasionally 2 (of the 4 Fremington birds) were together on the scrape. A Little Ringed Plover was recorded on the scrape on 3 days in late April. Siskin was recorded on only 3 days. No record of Grasshopper Warbler this year.

Other news.

Drought:

Along with most of the rest of the country, it was very dry in the summer. This proved challenging – on one hand a lot less grass cutting needed, but on the other many of the

(particularly fruit) trees needed daily watering. None of the Pear trees produced any fruit, and one of them shed all its leaves (despite my daily watering) at the end of the summer, and as the weather cooled and it started raining it produced another crop of blossom!

In December there was a week of very cold weather and frosts which meant the grass wasn't available for the small Rabbit population. Fortunately, I noticed that there was some damage to the fruit tree bark, and I put some protection around them. It remains to be seen if any are permanently damaged.

Duckweed has fluctuated from very little to a complete carpet, depending on time available and help – from the wind, which pushes it to where I can reach it. It must have been reasonably clear in the late summer as once again I ringed double figure numbers of Kingfisher. An Otter once again predated all the juvenile Canada Geese and there has been no breeding of Moorhen or Little Grebe this year.

942 Birds ringed of 36 species. Record is 1,655 in 2011

13,975 ringed since I started in the reserve.

Ringling Secretary's Report prepared by Nik Ward.

Ringling of individual birds helps to fill in important parts of a bird's lifecycle which is often difficult to obtain in other ways. Ringling has occurred at South Milton Ley for many years and is currently operated by Alan Pomeroy as and when time or weather allows. Despite some gaps in coverage during 2022 and several net rides being underwater during the year, ringling coverage 1196 birds of 34 species were processed including 668 warblers. The Slapton Bird Observatory Ringling Group continued to run a Constant Effort Site (see BTO website for further details of the project) and sampled migrant birds moving through the area using the reedbeds in the higher ley and the scrub in the lower ley. Both sites are used to sample short and long-distance migrants such as Reed and Sedge Warbler as well as Chiffchaff and Blackcap. Although recoveries of birds are relatively low on any one single site, when combined with data from other ringling sites on a regional or national basis a better insight into the movements of birds is gained; did they stay somewhere to breed, where did they winter and where did they stop over, information which can help us understand how to help our populations survive the increasingly difficult challenges of climate change.

Devon Birds continued to support the work of the Devon and Cornwall Wader Ringling Group which is targeting oystercatchers on the Exe and Taw estuaries to investigate declines with some initial results reported at the Devon Bird Wetland workshop by Exeter University researchers with further work to be carried out. The group has also been targeting Curlew to fit tags to trace their movements from wintering sites to breeding grounds. As our estuaries become under increasing pressure from human influences, the way in which birds

use them is becoming more and more important to identify refuges which could be implemented by local authorities.

Risk Management

A strategy of Risk Management is incorporated into our Society's management process. The 2022/23 Risk Assessment exercise is currently in progress. Trustees are required to review and assess the risks the Charity faces in all areas of its work across the undermentioned categories and, where necessary, plan for the management and control of those risks:

- governance
- operational risk
- finance risk
- environmental and external risk
- law and regulation compliance risk

Identified risk is reviewed to determine how likely it is to occur and how severe its impact would be if it did occur. High risk assessments are reviewed with the aim of reducing that risk through control procedures. The Risk Assessment policy is maintained on our website together with various policy documents.

Publications

Devon Birds

It is a pleasure to report that Mike Lock, our long-time editor, has agreed to remain on Council for this coming financial year and will continue to edit Devon Birds until we find a successor.

Devon Bird Report

Martin Overy reports that the text of DBR 2021 is in the final stage of review before being sent to the printer. In terms of the production, several section writers had to withdraw at short notice, mostly for health or personal reasons. Thankfully, both Martin and Mike Lock were able to cover for the missing sections. Contributors will be contacted to check on their availability going forward, but it is likely that an advertising campaign will be required this coming spring for new section writers. Please contact Martin Overy if you are able to volunteer and contribute to our flagship report.

Financial position

In relation to the Finances of Devon Birds, there is a separate and comprehensive report prepared by the Treasurer, where it can be seen that the overall financial position continues to be healthy.

Membership of Devon Birds and Changes to Council

Devon Birds has 1,334 members as of 31-December 2022, a net loss 43 on last year.

Council Members Jerry Tallowin, Charles Tyler, Paul Fitzpatrick have each announced their intention of retiring from Council at the end of the year.

Jerry Tallowin, former Vice Chairman and Council Member joined Devon Birds Council in 2014 as an Ordinary Member, before becoming Conservation Officer in 2016. Following Kevin Cox's appointment to the RSPB in 2017, he acted as temporary Chairman for a period until a replacement was found. He became Vice Chairman in 2018. He stood down and became an Ordinary Member again in 2021. As an active ringer, Jerry contributed and led a number of monitoring studies and surveys in Devon for Devon Birds.

Charles Tyler, Vice Chairman since 2021 and Council Member for the last 5 years has also announced his retirement from the Executive and Council. Charles is Professor of Environmental Biology at the University of Exeter and an intrepid field ornithologist. His vision and contribution to the Devon Birds Strategy is a valuable legacy.

Dr Paul Fitzpatrick has also retired from the Council of Devon Birds. Paul was responsible for establishing our links to other likeminded organisations. He made a valuable contribution to the Society. He has taken a position with the BTO.

In addition, John Towers the branch representative of Taw & Torridge retired earlier in the year. John was the voice of this region, and his retirement has left a void on Council. We would welcome a volunteer to take on the role. Karen Sims also stood down as an Ordinary Member.

On behalf of Devon Birds, I'd like to convey our gratitude to all five for their contribution to the success of this organisation and wish them well in their future endeavours.

In Conclusion

The Council of Devon Birds endeavours to meet the expectations of its membership. When completed, our Conservation Strategy will provide accountability and efficiency in the way our Society selects and uses its financial means to support the most important and effective conservation projects and practices.

Co-operative partnerships have been central to our theme for Conservation and Protection. We are conscious of the decline in the population of certain species and in response our Council is developing closer working relationships with other organisations. We expect to develop more relationships and ties in the future as we cooperate in a national effort to share in the responsibility of protecting and conserving our birdlife. Our local branches are following suit involving members in partnering with other organisations at the local level.

It is clear, that as a Society we must place greater emphasis on attracting younger people and maintaining their interest. Hopefully, our new website will help in this endeavour.

The annual Lundy trip will take place as planned on Sunday 21-May, departing Bideford at 8.00am.

Devon Birds is a society of enthusiasts. I encourage you to participate in branch activities and take advantage of the events we are planning for this new year. As a new initiative, Mid Devon & Exeter Branch has two wildlife recording workshops planned in the summer for members to learn practical techniques for recording bird song and other wildlife sounds in the field.

It is a privilege to have been the Chairman of Devon Birds over the past two years and I would like to record my thanks to the Executive Committee and the Council for the support they have shown me. It is a fitting time to thank the members of Devon Birds who support our organisation and donate their time at the local level. Graham Burton will now take the helm as the Chairman of our charity. His expertise in habitat management is central to our Devon Birds Strategy. I wish him every success as he takes our Society forward.

Nicholas Armstrong

Secretary's Report

2022 was again a difficult year following the Covid pandemic. Council Meetings and Executive Meetings were conducted either by Zoom or increasing back to the normality of face to face. The Society's publications through the year were distributed as normal, with a slight delay in the publication of the 2021 Devon Bird Report which will be sent out in early 2023. I am pleased to report that the annual day trip to Lundy resumed in 2022, with 143 people enjoying the trip to the island, from Ilfracombe. The Annual Draw also took place and was well supported.

Mike Daniels

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with the Trust deed and rules of the charity, applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.ⁱ

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Nick Armstrong

Chairman

Treasurer's Report

We ended 2022 in a strong financial position with a surplus of £59k aided by an extremely generous legacy.

If you exclude legacies and large donations as unpredictable income and expenditure on 'Projects and Grants' as discretionary expenditure you are left with what I would call operational costs. At the end of 2022 we had a surplus of £4000 and for 2023 are estimating a deficit of £2000 based upon similar activities as those conducted in 2022.

The transition from a charitable trust legal entity to an association CIO legal entity is now largely complete. From an accounts perspective this is the first year of Devon Birds, Charity no 1191647 so the comparison with 2021 data is omitted and the assets of land, bank account cash and investment are 'carried forward' from the old charity to new.

The Independent Review of this year's annual report identified that our constitution and policies do not fully describe the DB Trustee and Appointments process as required in the Charity Commission template for an annual report. The Exec have taken an Action to update our Operational Framework policy with 2 new sections specifically addressing Appointment of Trustees and Trustee Induction.

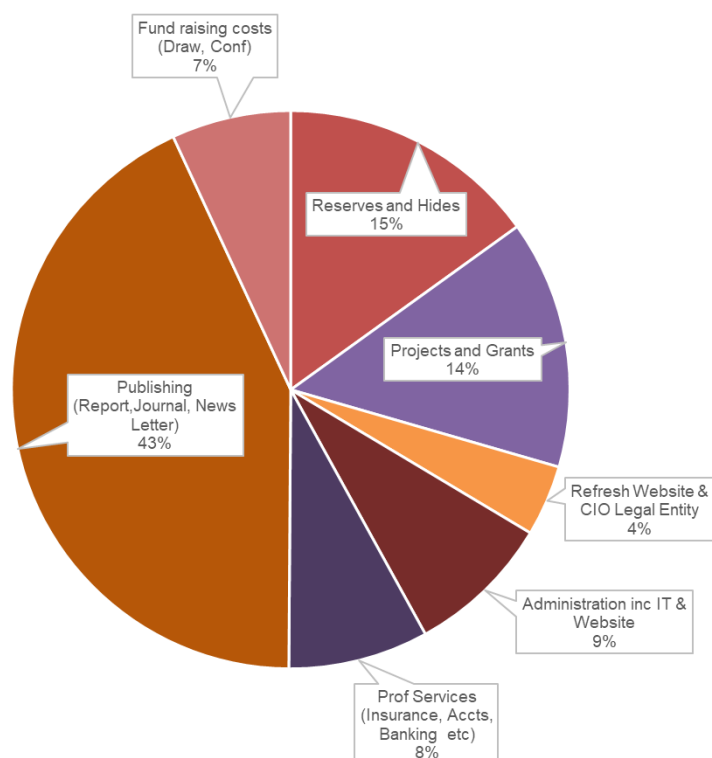
The graphics below give an annualised view of our 2022 Payments and Receipts so you can see the % breakdown of how funds are acquired and spent. Later in the report are the numbers and notes which summarises the formal accounts reviewed by Westcotts.

In conclusion Devon Birds has continued to spend significant funds on meeting its charitable objectives and remains in robust financial health to continue its work for the foreseeable future

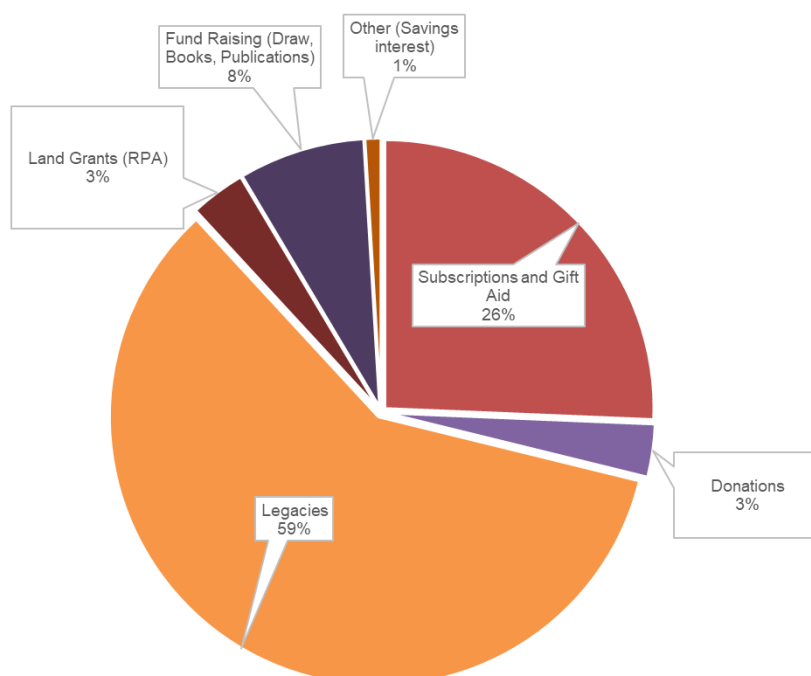
Simon Churchley

treasurer@devonbirds.org.

Payments ~ £60000



Receipts ~ £105,000



RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT account for the period ending 31/12/22				
		General	Restricted	Totals
		2022	2022	2022
Incoming resources	Notes	£	£	£
Subscriptions and tax recovered	2	26,643.51	0.00	26,643.51
Donations, Patrons, Legacies and Tax recovered	2	60,338.15	5,112.00	65,450.15
Sundry sales and events	4 & 5	11,538.34	0.00	11,538.34
Other incoming resources	3	0.00	0.00	0.00
Investment income		782.99	57.95	840.94
		<u>99,302.99</u>	<u>5,169.95</u>	<u>104,472.94</u>
Resources expended				
Publications	6	16,102.66	0.00	16,102.66
Conservation expenses	7 & 8	12,216.81	1,060.12	13,276.93
Other Costs	11 & 12	16,155.35	0.00	16,155.35
		<u>44,474.82</u>	<u>1,060.12</u>	<u>45,534.94</u>
Net incoming/outgoing resources before transfers		54,828.17	4,109.83	58,938.00
Gross transfers between funds		0.00	0.00	0.00
Unrealised gain/losses on investments	13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net incoming/outgoing resources after transfers		54,828.17	4,109.83	58,938.00
Transfer from Unincorporated charity		166,945.22	10,185.85	177,131.07
<u>Fund balance c/f</u>		<u>221,773.39</u>	<u>14,295.68</u>	<u>236,069.07</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES @ 31/12/22					
		Notes		2022	
Fixed assets				£	
South Milton Ley				55,890	
Prawle				1,800	
Godborough				45,984	
Bradiford				17,000	
				120,674	
Investments		14		4,617	
Total fixed assets				125,291	
Current assets		17			
Bank current accounts				3,270	
CAF Deposit a/c				145,119	
Virgin Instant Access				87,680	
				236,069	
Total assets				361,360	
Funds		20			
General				304,408	
Restricted				56,952	
Total funds				361,360	
The fixed assets were transferred from the previous unincorporated charity					
These financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 25/01/2023 and signed on their behalf by the Treasurer.					
					

Free Reserves (as detailed below) are a measure the Charity Commission uses to 'stress test' charity viability. From our perspective, it defines the available funds after contingency which now stand at a healthy £165K (+57k c.f. 2021).

Devon Birds - FREE RESERVES @ 31/12/22				
				£
Total Reserves per Balance Sheet			£361,360	
Less:	Fixed Assets		-£120,674	Value tied up in illiquid Assets (Land)
	Restricted Funds		-£14,296	Cash reserved for specific purposes.
	Working Capital		-£36,109	Our 'FreeReserves' policy is to maintain enough cash reserves to cover normal activities for a 12 month period (with no receipts) based upon the General and Conservation Funds total expenditure for the previous 2 years.
	Project/Grant Committment		-£3,975	Commitment made on future years spend
			£0	This year Commitment
	Facility refresh		-£9,456	Provision for replacement of Huts, Hides and Tools as required. 20% of total replacement cost per annum
	Balance of Debtors/Creditors		-£11,790	Balance of Creditors/Debtors at year end.
FreeReserves			£165,061	
In accordance with the Devon birds Policy (Project Inception and funding policy) , these FreeReserves are retained for the purpose of providing grants or Project funding to activities that further our Objects.				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Allocation	50%	25%	15%	10%
'Budget'	£82,530	£41,265	£24,759	£16,506
				£165,061

In the short term the Trustees believe this conservative approach is appropriate. The Chairs report outlines the ongoing development of a Devon Birds Strategy that will, when complete, link our Charitable objects to actions and projects we plan to embark on to deliver our objects more effectively. The specific actions and projects will inform our financial planning and enable some modelling into the future around which a more informed and objective 'Free Reserves' statement should be possible.

Notes to accounts for year to @ 31/12/22					
1. Accounting Policies					
The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to Devon Birds' financial statements.					
Basis of Preparation					
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities issued in April 2014 - CHARITIES SORP (FRS102), applicable accounting standards and the Charities Act, under the Receipts and Payments convention (prior to 2020 an Accruals convention was applied).					
External Scrutiny					
This year's accounts are subject to an 'Independent Examination'. An Independent Examiners report provides negative assurance, namely that no evidence has been found that suggests that the accounts have not been prepared properly, whilst an Auditor's report provides a positive statement as to whether the accounts show a "true and fair view".					
Fixed assets and depreciation					
Freehold land is not depreciated. A register of other high value assets is maintained but under the Receipts and payments convention depreciation is not accounted for. An annual provision for replacements is made within the FreeReserves calculation.					
Investments					
Investments are shown at market value					
Current account Investments					
Where General Funds are not expected to be required in the short-term (normally up to one year) they may be placed in appropriate bank or building society accounts with a fixed term of no more than one year.					
Incoming Resources					
All income is credited to the relevant fund on a receipts basis.					
Resources Expended					
Resources expended are included in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year paid, inclusive of VAT which cannot be recovered.					
Restricted Funds					
Restricted Funds relate to donations and grants which have been provided on the basis that they are only used to support a particular activity as explained in note 21.					
Unrestricted Funds					
Unrestricted funds are those in the General Fund and are available to be spent at the discretion of Devon Birds Council.					
Change of Legal Status					
From the 1st of January 2022 Devon Birds operated as Association CIO Devon Birds (charity 1191647) having transitioned from DBWPS (charity 228966) a charitable trust. From an accounting perspective 2022 is the first year of a new charity so the previous years comparative figures are not appropriate and the Assets, Investment & Cash are carried forward from the old charity to the new.					

				2022	
				£	
2. Income from donations and legacies					
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Subscriptions				22,782	
Subscriptions tax recovered				3,862	
Donations				3,055	
Donations tax recovered				215	
Patrons				150	
Legacies				56,919	
				86,982	
<i>Restricted funds</i>					
Donations	House Martin and Swift			112	
Donations	Total			112	
Grants	Total			0	
Legacies	Work On Dartmoor			5000	
Legacies	Total			5,000	
Donations+Legacies+Grants				5112	
				2022	
				£	
3. Other Incoming Resources					
<i>General Funds</i>					
				0	
4. Charitable activities					
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
RPA - BPS (Godborough, Bradiford, SML)				2,342	
RPA - HLS (SML)				1,129	
Sundry income				149	
				3,620	
5. Other trading activities					
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Fund Raising (Draw)				1,167	
Wetland Bird Conference tickets				810	
Lundy trip				5,444	
Sale of goods, Books & pubs				497	
				7,918	
6. Publications expenditure					
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Journals				7,190	
Annual Report				8,913	
News Letters				0	
				16,103	

				2022	
				£	
7. Conservation expenditure - Reserve and hide management					
<i>Restricted funds</i>					
					0
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Axe Ringing Group					0
Beesands					440
Bradiford					1,399
Fernworthy					0
Godborough					1,707
Prawle Point					2,490
Roadford					54
Slapton Ringing Group					0
South Huish					6
South Milton Ley					3,622
Velator					49
					9,767
		Total			9,767
8.Conservation expenditure - Conservation Grants					
<i>Restricted funds</i>					
Swift and House Martin					1,060
Work on Dartmoor					0
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
Wetland Bird Conf					1,935
Pied Fly Catcher - Enhanced sensors & Data Analysis					0
Bird Life Cyprus - education					0
Archive sustainability					0
Devon Community Grants					0
Barn Owl Trust					0
Exe Estuary Partnership					515
					3,510
9. Unused					
10.Depreciation					
From 2020 a payments/Receipts approach was adopted for the accounts. As such depreciation and associated assets are no longer reported					

					2022	
					£	
11.Raising funds costs						
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>						
Autumn draw					471	
Bank charges					831	
Lundy Trip					3,925	
Membership Support					366	
Publicity					0	
Postage, Telephone & Broadband					1,007	
Stationery & printing					610	
Website & IT running costs					1,259	
Website technology refresh					53	
CIO legal costs					2,300	
					10,822	
12. Other costs						
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>						
Professional Service (e.g. Ins, Accountancy)					3,817	
Meetings & room hire					983	
Sundry expenses					95	
Travel					438	
					5,333	
13. Unused						
14. Tangible fixed assets - an analysis of opening and closing carrying amounts						
		Freeholds	4263 units - M&G Charibond Fixed Interest Fund Income (GB00BK1KFP80)			
		£	£			
Cost						
At beginning of the year		120,674	5,165			
Acquisitions		0				
Revaluations		0	-548			
Disposals		0				
At end of the year		120,674	4,617			

15. Current assets - Debtors				
A payments/Receipts approach is adopted for the accounts. As such these figures are for information and not formally considered.				
			2022	
			£	
Lundy Trip deposit			435	
Gift Aid on 2022 receipts			108	
			543	
16. Unused				
17. Current assets - cash at bank and in hand				
CAF Bank current account			3,270	
CAF Bank gold account			145,119	
Virgin Bank instant access account			87,680	
Total			236,069	
18. Liabilities - Creditors				
A payments/Receipts approach is adopted for the accounts. As such these figures are for information and not formally taken into account.				
Subscription Prepayments			180	
Invoices expected, but not paid 'in year'.			12,153	
Total			12,333	
19. Trustees remuneration				
No remuneration has been paid or is due to be paid to any Trustee or any person known to be connected with them from the funds of the Charity.				
Travelling and sundry expenses totaling £437.50 have been paid to 2 trustees and 2 non-trustee during the year.				
2021: £370.36 paid to 1 trustees and 1 non trustees.				
20. The funds of the charity this year analysis				
	Fixed assets	Investments	Net current assets	
	£	£	£	
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>				
General	78,017.84	4,617.26	221,773.39	
Total unrestricted funds				
<i>Restricted funds</i>				
Bradiford	8,156.00		0.00	
South Milton Ley	34,500.00		0.00	
Swifts and House Martin Project	0.00		9,275.33	
Work on Dartmoor	0.00		5,020.35	
Total restricted fund	42,656.00		14,295.68	
Total assets	120,673.84	4,617.26	236,069.07	

21. Restricted funds						
		Bradiford	South Milton	Swift and House Martin	Work on Dartmoor	Total
		£	£			£
Balance b/f 31/12/2021		8,156.00	34,500.00	10,185.85	0.00	52,841.85
Receipts				112.00	5,000.00	5,112.00
Bank Interest			0.00	37.60	20.35	57.95
Transferred from Conservation						
		8,156.00	34,500.00	10,335.45	5,020.35	58,011.80
Expenses			0.00	1,060.12	0.00	1,060.12
Grants						
Liquid assets transferred to conservation						
Disposals transferred to conservation						
Balance c/f 31/12/2022		8,156.00	34,500.00	9,275.33	5,020.35	51,931.33
The purposes of these funds are:						
Bradiford	Fixed Asset (£8156)					
South Milton Ley	Fixed Asset (£34500).					
Swifts and House Martins	Liquid Assets to be spent on House Martins and Swifts					
Work on Dartmoor	Liquid Assets to be spent on Dartmoor located projects					

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of Devon Birds.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Devon Birds

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Devon Birds for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of Devon Birds 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 Devon Birds' 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 Devon Birds as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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



Catherine Williams FCA DChA

Independent Examiner

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